

立法會

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LegCo Panel on Planning, Lands and Works and LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs

**Minutes of joint meeting
held on Friday, 9 February 2001 at 9:00 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Members of Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP (Chairman)
* Hon LAU Ping-cheung (Deputy Chairman)
* Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, JP
Hon James TO Kun-sun
* Hon WONG Yung-kan
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
* Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, JP
* Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP

Members of Panel on Environmental Affairs

Prof Hon NG Ching-fai (Chairman)
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung

(*Also members of the LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs)

Members attending : Hon NG Leung-sing
Hon CHAN Yuen-han

Members absent : Member of Panel on Planning, Lands and Works

Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP

Members of Panel on Environmental Affairs

Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Hon Bernard CHAN
Hon CHOY So-yuk
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

Public officers attending : Agenda Item II

Mr Gordon SIU
Secretary for Planning and Lands

Mr Kim SALKELD
Deputy Secretary for the Environment and Food

Ms CHANG King-yiu
Deputy Director of Administration

Mrs Ava NG
Deputy Director of Planning

Mr Augustine NG
Assistant Director of Planning

Clerk in attendance : Miss Salumi CHAN
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)5

Staff in attendance : Mrs Queenie YU
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)6

I. Election of Chairman

When the meeting was due to start, a quorum was not present for a joint meeting of the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works (PLW) and Panel on Environmental Affairs (EA). As a quorum was present for a meeting of the Panel on PLW, members agreed that the meeting be chaired by Dr TANG Siu-tong, Chairman of the Panel.

(*Post-meeting note:* A quorum was present for a joint meeting of the two Panels at 9:30 am.)

II. Study on Sustainable Development for the 21st Century

(LC Paper Nos. CB(1)537/00-01(01), CB(1)1107/99-00 and CB(1)765/99-00)

2. The Chairman advised that at the two joint meetings of the Panel on PLW and Panel on EA on 9 December 1999 and 27 January 2000, the Administration had consulted members on the Study on Sustainable Development for the 21st Century (the Study). As a follow-up, this joint meeting was held for the Administration to brief members on the findings of the Study and seek members' support for the establishment of a Sustainable Development Unit (SDU). The Administration planned to submit the relevant staffing proposals to the Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) for consideration at its meeting on 21 February 2001.

Briefing by the Administration

3. The Secretary for Planning and Lands (SPL) highlighted that the Chief Executive (CE) had, in his 1999 Policy Address, announced the intention to establish a SDU to monitor the sustainability impact assessments of major new policy proposals. A series of public consultations conducted between 1999 and 2000 revealed that the community at large was in support of the Study. As part of the Study, the Administration had formulated a definition of "sustainable development" after reviewing the relevant findings from the international, regional and local studies. It was considered particularly important that the definition could reflect the distinctive economic, social and environmental influences on sustainable development in Hong Kong to set the specific local context for the Study. The Administration intended to proceed by the establishment of a SDU by April 2001, with a long-term objective of promoting the concept of sustainable development not only in major decisions by bureaux and departments, but also to day-to-day lives of members of the public.

4. The Deputy Director of Administration (DDA) then briefed members on the staffing proposals for SDU. The Administration proposed to upgrade one of the existing posts of Deputy Director of Administration from D3 to D4 level to head SDU in addition to his present duties. The Administration also proposed to create two

directorates posts to support the head of SDU in his responsibilities relating to sustainable development. One of the post holders would assist in developing the Government's overall sustainability policies and ensuring integration of sustainable development within the Government. The other post holder would be responsible for promoting sustainable development as a community initiative and would serve as the secretary to the proposed Council for Sustainable Development (CSD). DDA undertook to provide the Panel with details of the staffing proposals after the meeting.

(*Post-meeting note:* The information provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)577/00-01 on 13 February 2001.)

Definition and indicators of sustainable development

5. Ms Emily LAU criticized the Administration for adopting a narrow definition of sustainable development which covered only the social, economic and environmental aspects. She was disappointed that the definition did not cover other important aspects, namely, human rights, freedom of democracy and constitutional development. She pointed out that similar views had been expressed by a number of participants at a public consultation forum but were ignored by the Administration. It seemed that the Administration had preconceived views on the subject. In response, SPL clarified that that was not the case. The aspects mentioned by Ms LAU had already been covered by the policy areas of the relevant bureaux. In particular, the direction and timetable for constitutional development were provided in the Basic Law.

6. Ms Emily LAU was not convinced. While she appreciated the provisions in the Basic Law, she considered that the Administration could assess Hong Kong's performance in the aspect of constitutional development by making a comparison with other countries, just like the comparative assessments on Hong Kong's social-economic performance mentioned in Section 3 of the Executive Summary of the Public Consultation Report (the Report) of the Study. She also queried why the proposed sustainable development tracking indicators under the category of "Political and socio-political issues" listed out in Annex G of the Report had not been included as indicators. SPL advised that indicators were developed for a specific purpose, i.e. for use in the computerised tool to provide a means of evaluating the social, economic and environmental implications of major policy proposals and projects. It was therefore not appropriate to include the proposed indicators on the political aspect. Nevertheless, the set of indicators would be reviewed and, if appropriate, revised from time to time.

7. Miss CHAN Yuen-han pointed out that population had an important relationship with sustainable development of Hong Kong, having regard to its impact on a number of aspects, such as education and housing. She therefore asked why population had not been included as a guiding principle or indicator. SPL responded

that the subject of population had been examined in the context of the previous Territorial Development Strategy Review. It would be examined again under a separate study entitled the “Hong Kong 2030—Planning Vision and Strategy” Study (the Hong Kong 2030 Study).

Proposed establishment of SDU

8. Ir Dr Raymond HO Chung-tai and Mrs Miriam LAU appreciated the Government’s initiative in promoting sustainable development. They were however concerned whether SDU could balance the views and interests of the bureaux/departments concerned and ensure the integration of sustainable development principles into the Government’s major policy initiatives and programmes. Miss CHAN Yuen-han shared their concern. They pointed out that in a number of cases in the past, the Administration had been unsuccessful in coordinating the various bureaux and departments involved in cross-sectoral issues. Ir Dr Raymond HO was also concerned that the establishment of a SDU would not help resolve the problem, but would introduce another level of assessment and therefore, slow down the whole decision-making process.

9. SPL advised that the purpose of sustainability evaluation was to help identify and manage cross-sectoral issues at an early stage. Bureaux and departments would be required to include in their submissions of a policy proposal to the Chief Secretary’s Committee or the Executive Council (ExCo), as the case might be, a statement on the sustainability implications. The SDU would assist bureaux and departments in such sustainability evaluations, analyze their evaluation reports and provide the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) and ExCo with independent advice on the sustainability implications of the policy proposals. With the establishment of SDU, the whole decision-making process should be enhanced. Ms Emily LAU requested the Administration to include in its submissions of proposals to the Legislative Council a paragraph on “sustainability implications”. SPL undertook to consider the need to do so.

10. Mr Albert CHAN Wai-yip supported the establishment of SDU. However, he appreciated the difficulties in applying the concept of sustainable development in the decision-making process involving various bureaux and departments. He quoted an example in which an area affected by aircraft noise was designated for residential development by the Planning Department. Although the area fell outside the noise exposure forecasts (NEF) 25 contour, it was close to the contour and therefore not suitable for residential development as the residents concerned would be affected by the aircraft noise. Mr CHAN asked how SDU would help resolve the problem. SPL advised that the proposed SDU would point out to CS or ExCo the environmental and social impacts of the proposal, including its impact on residents in the vicinity. The final decision would be made by CS or ExCo, as the case might be. At the request of Mr CHAN, SPL undertook to provide members with a flow chart showing the role of

SDU in the process of the formulation and development of a major Government proposal.

(*Post-meeting note:* The flow chart provided by the Administration was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)577/00-01 on 13 February 2001.)

11. Mr Henry WU King-cheong supported the establishment of SDU but was concerned whether it would be established on a short-term or long-term basis. Referring to paragraph 4 of the paper where it was stated that Hong Kong ranked 25th on the United Nations Development Programme Human Development Index, Mr WU asked what improvements could be made in this aspect in five years' time after the establishment of SDU. In response, SPL pointed out that it would take time to develop and put the concept of sustainable development into practice. The SDU would therefore be established on a long-term basis. He believed that with the support of the community in sustainable development, Hong Kong would compare favourably with other countries over time.

12. Referring to paragraph 4 of the paper, Ms Emily LAU noted that Hong Kong did not compare well with other developed economies in terms of education attainment, adequacy of housing and provision of open space. She asked whether these three aspects would be accorded priorities by SDU. SPL advised that SDU would, in addition to steering and overseeing the work of integrating sustainable development within the Government, provide analysis and support to the proposed CSD. It was however too early to say whether SDU would accord priorities to the three aspects concerned.

Promotion of sustainable development through public education

13. Mr Abraham SHEK Lai-him considered sustainable development a very important concept for Hong Kong and therefore supported the establishment of SDU. He also pointed out that public education was vital for the dissemination of the concept of sustainable development.

14. Mr Martin LEE Chu-ming referred to the Executive Summary of the Report where it was mentioned that sustainable development would be achieved "through the efforts of the community and the Government" and that "a fundamental aspect is education, motivation and engagement of the people and Government in the concept of sustainable development". Mr LEE supported this approach and stressed the importance of community participation in promoting the concept of sustainable development. In his opinion, the message of environmental protection could be effectively disseminated through students to their families. For example, arrangements could be made for students to participate in a clean up exercise on a beach. They could then share their experiences with their families and make them aware of the need for environmental protection.

15. SPL shared Mr Martin LEE's views and said that joint efforts would be made by SDU, Education Department and Environmental Protection Department to educate the young generation in this aspect. The Assistant Director of Planning also informed members that promotional activities had been organized for students and teachers as appropriate, including slogan competition for secondary schools, drama competition for primary schools, and workshops for primary and secondary school teachers and universities. In addition, discussion had also been held with Education Department on how the concept of sustainable development could best be incorporated into the school curriculum. The SDU would study in detail effective means for raising awareness of the public on the concept of sustainable development.

Regional strategy

16. Professor NG Ching-fai supported the establishment of SDU under CS's Office. In view of the limitation of resources of Hong Kong, Professor NG enquired whether SDU would consider the strategy for sustainable development on a regional basis so that Hong Kong and the adjacent areas could complement each other. SPL pointed out that the Administration was reviewing the Territorial Development Strategy under the "Hong Kong 2030 Study" which involved examination of Hong Kong's links with southern China, particularly the Pearl River Delta Region and the area's planning proposals in relation to those of Hong Kong. The SDU might, in consultation with the Planning and Lands Bureau, work out a suitable long-term strategy at a later stage.

Centralized landscape policy

17. Mr LAU Ping-cheung suggested the Administration to make reference to Singapore and Shanghai, and formulate a centralized landscape policy for Hong Kong which set out a fixed ratio of green areas and sitting out areas for each development proposal. SPL saw the need for such a policy and undertook to suggest SDU to invite the relevant bureau to accord priority to study the issue.

Admin

Agriculture and fisheries resources

18. Mr WONG Yung-kan supported the Study but was concerned about the sustainable development of the agriculture and fisheries industries. Mr WONG referred to the Executive Summary of the Report where it was mentioned that the area of cultivated land in Hong Kong had declined by more than 50% between 1954 and 1996, and that infrastructure development and increased marine pollution had imposed pressure on fisheries resources. Mr WONG pointed out that a majority of members of the industries aged between 35 and 50 and were concerned about their employment prospects. He therefore urged the Administration to formulate a policy for the conservation of agriculture and fisheries resources. SPL appreciated the concern of the industries and would suggest SDU to invite the relevant bureau to

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Admin study sustainable development of the agriculture and fisheries industries. Moreover, the Administration would put forward some initial proposals on the overall conservation policy for public consultation in the coming few months.

Way forward

Admin

19. At the request of Ms Emily LAU, SPL undertook to brief members on the work progress of SDU around June/July 2001.

(*Post-meeting note:* The staffing proposals relating to the establishment of SDU were endorsed by ESC and FC on 21 February and 9 March 2001 respectively.)

III. Any other business

20. The meeting ended at 10:30 am.

Legislative Council Secretariat

18 April 2001