

**Extract from the minutes of  
LegCo Panels on Planning, Lands and Works  
and Environmental Affairs  
Joint meeting held on 9 December 1999**

X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X

**II Study on Sustainable Development for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)533/99-00(01) and a set of power-point presentation material tabled at the meeting and circulated to members thereafter vide LC Paper No. CB(1)598/99-00)

2. With the consent of the Chairman, the Administration displayed a video show on sustainable development. Mr Chandran NAIR of Environmental Resources Management (ERM) then briefed members on the preliminary findings of the Study on Sustainable Development for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century (SUSDEV 21) with audio-visual aids.

3. Noting the cost of about \$40 million for the whole programme for promoting sustainable development, Miss Christine LOH sought information on the cost of SUSDEV 21. The Director of Planning (D of P) said that consultancy fees for the main study accounted for about half of the above sum. He would provide a breakdown of the cost in writing.

Admin

4. Miss Emily LAU was disappointed that human rights, the legal system, and the pace of democracy and constitutional development had not been adopted as the guiding principles or indicators of sustainable development. In response, D of P explained that the selection of indicators was based, amongst others, on measurable criteria and suitability for predictive analysis. The elements mentioned by Miss LAU were governed by law and difficult to be measured. Miss LAU was unconvinced and opined that the pace of democracy could be measured by the number of directly elected seats in LegCo and the size of the electorate for the Chief Executive. Without these elements, the picture of sustainable development would be incomplete. She requested including these elements as indicators. D of P said that matters falling outside the recommended indicators could be covered under "Other Issues" in the Computer Aided Sustainability Evaluation Tool being refined as part of the Study. As the second round of consultation on SUSDEV 21 was under way and the proposed indicators had yet to be finalized, the Administration would consider Miss LAU's views.

5. Mr HUI Cheung-ching was of the view that the to-be-established Sustainable Development Unit (SDU) should be placed in the appropriate Government hierarchy to enable it to discharge its monitoring functions effectively. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands (Environment) (DS/PEL(E)) advised that the Administration would take into consideration public views and overseas

experience in deciding where SDU should be placed. The Administration recognised the importance of positioning SDU at the right level so that it had the ability to involve Government departments and bureaux in the process of sustainable development, to provide analysis and to maintain the Computer Aided Sustainability Evaluation Tool within Government.

6. Mr Martin LEE said that it would be difficult for the general public to understand the meaning of sustainable development from what had just been presented. In that sense, he found the presentation disappointing. He stressed the importance of using simple layman language to put across the meaning of sustainable development to members of the public and involving the community in implementing sustainable development. He further opined that the process should also embrace the development of democracy because different needs could only be balanced if everyone in the community had a say in matters that affected him/her.

7. DS/PEL(E) acknowledged the member's concern about the need to use appropriate language in promoting sustainable development. He said that the problem was not unique to Hong Kong. The Administration had been in communication with different countries such as Europe and Canada to see how best the problem could be tackled. The Administration was also fully aware of the importance of bringing the community into partnership in the process.

8. Mr Chandran NAIR pointed out that the concept of sustainable development was a complex issue. How to get this across to the general public was not easy. The job of the consultants was to come up with principles for public discussion. He clarified that the consultation kit on the Study was available in both English and Chinese. The video on the subject had a Putonghua version as well. To communicate with different walks of life, the consultant need to exercise flexibility and use different languages. Simple layman terms would be used when introducing the concept to the man in the street.

9. D of P supplemented that the Study consultants had deliberately adopted a more comprehensive definition of sustainable development to cover the necessary details. Members were invited to give view on the suggested definition. D of P also stressed that the subject of sustainable development had been widely discussed in different sectors in the first round of consultation, including schools. Slogan and drama competitions were being organised to enhance public understanding and awareness, in particular among the younger generation.

10. Mr WONG Yung-kan was concerned about the implications of sustainable development on food hygiene, fishery and farming. D of P explained that the concept of sustainable development was not directed at a specific policy area but was relevant to planning and decision making in different policy domains.

11. Noting that the second round of consultation on the findings of SUSDEV 21 would last until 31 January 2000, members agreed to schedule one more meeting to further examine the subject.

Action

(*Post-meeting note:* The meeting was subsequently scheduled for 27 January 2000 at 4:30 pm.)

**X X X X X X X X X X X X X X X**