

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1)1851/00-01

(These minutes have been seen by  
the Administration and cleared  
with the Chairman)

Ref : CB1/PL/ITB/1

**Legislative Council**  
**Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 11 June 2001, at 2:30 pm**  
**in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

**Members present** : Hon SIN Chung-kai (Chairman)  
Hon Howard YOUNG, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP  
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP  
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung  
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP  
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

**Members absent** : Hon David CHU Yu-lin  
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

**Public officers attending** : For Items IV and V  
Mr Alan SIU  
Deputy Secretary for Information Technology and  
Broadcasting (2)

For Item IV

Miss Adeline WONG  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Information Technology  
and Broadcasting (B)

Mr SHE Mang  
Principal Inspector (Regional Support), Education  
Department

For Item V

Mr Rex CHANG  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Information Technology  
and Broadcasting (D)

Mr Victor Lam  
Senior Systems Manager, Information Technology Services  
Department

For Item VI

Mr Eddy CHAN  
Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing

Mr M H AU  
Acting Director-General of Telecommunications

Miss Vega WONG  
Assistant Commissioner (Broadcasting), Television and  
Entertainment Licensing Authority

**Clerk in attendance** : Miss Polly YEUNG  
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)3

**Staff in attendance** : Ms Anita SIT  
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)8

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**I Confirmation of minutes of meeting**  
(LC Paper Nos. CB(1) 1352/00-01)

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2001 were confirmed.

**II Endorsement of the draft report of the Panel for 2000-01 to the Council**  
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1465/00-01(01))

2. The Chairman said that in accordance with Rule 77(14) of the Rules of Procedure, the Panel would submit a report for the 2000-01 legislative session to the

Council on 4 July 2001. In this regard, a draft report of the Panel for 2000-01 to the Council had been circulated to members vide the above LegCo Paper. Members endorsed the draft report and agreed to authorize the Chairman and the Clerk to further revise the report in the light of subsequent developments.

*(Post-meeting note: The Panel's report was presented to the Council on 27 June 2001.)*

### **III Date and items for discussion for next meeting**

3. Members agreed that the following two items would be discussed at the next meeting to be held on 9 July 2001-

- (a) progress of the Cyberport project; and
- (b) issues relating to digital divide - the Administration's response to the views of deputations and members.

*(Post-meeting note: At the request of the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chairman, an item on "Report of the Task Force on IT Manpower" had been added to the agenda for the meeting on 9 July 2001.)*

### **IV Information technology programmes for secondary students in summer (LC Paper No. CB(1) 1477/00-01(02))**

4. The Principal Assistant Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (PAS(ITB)B) briefed members on the pilot information technology (IT) training programmes organized by the Government for secondary students in summer 2001.

5. Noting that only 90 schools would have the opportunity to participate in the pilot professional IT training programme for secondary students, Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung enquired whether there were plans to expand the programme to accommodate more secondary schools in future years. In reply, the Deputy Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (2) (DS(ITB)2) advised that having regard to the availability of resources, in particular those to be provided by the sponsoring IT companies, about 210 and 5 000 places would be offered for teachers and students respectively from 90 secondary schools this year. If the programme was well-received by participating schools and students, the Administration would solicit sponsorship from more renowned IT companies with a view to increasing the number of training places in future years.

6. Regarding the pilot scheme to sponsor secondary school leavers to take practical IT training courses, Mr Howard YOUNG enquired about the basis for setting the maximum sponsorship level at \$10,000 or 80% of the total course and examination fees, whichever was the less, for each participant. In reply, DS(ITB)2 advised that the Administration had conducted a survey of the practical IT courses being offered in the

market on the IT skills most commonly required by employers in respect of employees of Form 5 to 7 standards. The amount of \$10,000 represented 80% of the median level of the relevant course and examination fees taken together.

7. The Chairman enquired about the timetable of the pilot scheme and the selection criteria if more than 500 secondary school leavers applied for sponsorship under the scheme. In reply, DS(ITB)2 advised that the Administration would promulgate the details of the scheme, including the practical IT courses covered by the scheme, and invite applications in late June 2001. He also confirmed that only those Form 5 and 7 students who would not further their study after the current school year would be eligible for sponsorship under the scheme. If the total sponsorship requested by the applications received exceeded \$5 million, the Administration would draw lots to select successful applicants.

8. Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung pointed out that the results of the open examinations for Form 5 and 7 students were not yet released when applications for sponsorship under the scheme were invited in late June 2001. Hence, it might be possible that some students applying for sponsorship under the scheme would decide to further their study subsequently. He enquired about the arrangements to deal with the time gap problem.

9. In reply, PAS(ITB)B advised that the deadline for applications would be around the third week of July 2001. Applicants would be notified about one week after the deadline whether their applications had been approved in principle. The successful applicants would be required to sign and return by 15 August 2001 an undertaking to confirm that they would not further their study. If a successful applicant did not return the undertaking by that date, the approval-in-principle would be withdrawn and his/her place would be allocated to other eligible applicants. Successful applicants should complete the relevant practical IT courses and examinations by the end of October 2001. Those who had signed the undertaking but subsequently pursued further study would be required to return any sponsorship received under the scheme. In reply to Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung's further enquiry, PAS(ITB)B confirmed that those secondary school leavers who had enrolled in the Project Springboard programme and the Youth Pre-employment Training programme would not be eligible for sponsorship under this scheme.

10. Mr Kenneth TING expressed support for the various pilot summer IT programmes. In reply to his enquiry, DS(ITB)2 advised that due to the high demand for camping venues during summer, the IT summer camps held this year could accommodate only 240 students. However, if these IT summer camps turned out to be successful, the Administration would partner with supporting IT companies to organize additional IT camps during other long school holidays.

11. Mr Kenneth TING opined that in training students on the use of computer software, the Administration should be mindful that different platform softwares should be introduced to students so as to broaden their perspective in this regard. In response, the Principal Inspector, Education Department advised that under the professional IT training programme and the IT summer camps, students would be

introduced to a broad spectrum of information and communications technologies, covering both hardware and software products. He confirmed that apart from Microsoft, other platform software such as Linux would be covered in the programme.

12. On the publicity for the pilot summer IT programmes, PAS(ITB)B advised that the Administration would publicize the programmes through the media. Posters and application forms on these programmes would be placed at District Offices and the Job Centres of the Labour Department. The Administration would also distribute the posters and application forms to all secondary schools for their onward distribution to students.

13. The Chairman concluded that Panel members were in support of the programmes. He requested the Administration to closely monitor the response to these programmes and make prompt adjustments so as to benefit as many students as possible.

#### **V Administration of Internet domain names in Hong Kong** (LC Paper No. CB(1) 1465/00-01(02))

14. DS(ITB)2 briefed members on the latest development in respect of the administration of Internet domain names in Hong Kong.

15. Mr Howard YOUNG enquired about the arrangements for existing domain name holders upon the implementation of the new domain name registration fees. In reply, DS(ITB)2 advised that at present, there were about 50 000 registered holders of ".hk" domain names who had been required to pay only a one-off fee of \$200 on registration. The provisional board for the proposed new corporation to take up the administration of Internet domain names in Hong Kong recommended that in line with the relevant international practice and to ensure viable operation of the new corporation, a one-off registration fee and an annual renewal fee, both initially set at \$200, should be charged. Existing domain name holders, who were not subject to annual fee payment, could opt for the new registration arrangements with enhanced services, which included for example, the registration of multiple domain names and the transfer of domain names by accepting a new agreement. DS(ITB)2 further advised that existing domain name holders had been given a one-year option period in this regard. So far, some 5 000 existing domain name holders had exercised the option and over 80% of them had opted for the new registration arrangements.

16. As regards the status of the new corporation responsible for the administration of Internet domain names, DS(ITB)2 advised that in line with the proposal supported in the public consultation, the Government would enter into a memorandum of understanding with the new corporation to provide the latter with a clear mandate to exercise its designated functions and to represent Hong Kong in the international Internet community. He added that similar arrangements were adopted in other economies.

17. In reply to the Chairman, DS(ITB)2 confirmed that the new corporation would take up the administration of domain names in Hong Kong ending with .hk except for the domain name category of "gov.hk" and "edu.hk", which would be administered by the Hong Kong SAR Government and the Joint Universities Computer Centre respectively.

18. On the composition of the board of directors of the new corporation, Senior Systems Manager/Information Technology Services Department (SSM/ITSD) confirmed that the relevant details including the various classes of membership of the corporation and the number of directors to be elected from each class would be stipulated in the memorandum and articles of the new corporation. He further advised that members of the new corporation should elect individuals rather than organizations to sit on the board of directors of the corporation.

19. Mr Kenneth TING said that he would consult the four trade associations in the membership class of "Commerce and Industry" on the proposed composition of the board of directors. DS(ITB)2 remarked that the trade associations' views in this regard might be reflected to the provisional board via their representative on the provisional board.

20. Regarding the election of six directors by the "User" membership class, SSM/ITSD advised that in principle, each domain name holder would have the right to elect those directors of the new corporation. The detailed election arrangements would be worked out by the new corporation in due course. In this connection, the Chairman pointed out that with the introduction of registration of domain names for individuals, the number of members in the "User" class might increase considerably. This factor should be taken into account in drawing up the mechanism and procedures for the election of directors from this class.

21. The Chairman concluded that the Panel in principle supported the recommended framework for the administration and assignment of Internet domain names in Hong Kong.

**VI Proposal to engage consultancy service by the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority for enforcement of competition provisions in the Broadcasting Ordinance**  
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1477/00-01(03))

22. The Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing (C/TELA) briefed members on the plan of the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA) to engage the consultancy services of the Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) to assist and advise the Broadcasting Authority (BA) in the handling of competition-related complaints and to draw up an accounting manual for compliance by licensees.

23. Members noted that as the estimated expenditure on the consultancy services would not exceed \$10 million, it would not be necessary to seek funding approval from the Finance Committee for TELA to engage the consultancy services.

24. Mr Eric LI enquired about the Administration's assessment of the long-term requirement of expert and professional services for implementation of the competition provisions under the Broadcasting Ordinance (BO) (Cap. 562) and the reasons for not establishing permanent posts within TELA for the purpose. In reply, C/TELA advised that as the competition provisions in the BO only came into operation in February 2001, the long-term staffing requirements for implementation of the competition provisions should be further assessed when more operational experience was gained. At this stage, it was considered more appropriate and cost-effective to engage the consultancy services of OFTA.

25. In reply to Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung's enquiry on why the consultancy arrangements would not be reviewed until four years later, C/TELA advised that for a meaningful review, a period of four years was considered appropriate for BA to accumulate adequate operational experience in competition-related matters. Notwithstanding, the Administration might conduct the review at an earlier time if circumstances so warranted.

26. Mr Eric LI enquired about the implications of the proposed consultancy arrangements on the manpower of OFTA. In reply, the Acting Director-General of Telecommunications advised that OFTA would need to deploy about half the working time of a senior consultant to assist and advise BA in the handling of competition related complaints. The provision of consultancy services for BA had been taken into account in OFTA's staffing planning for the period concerned. As regards the consultancy services for the preparation of the accounting manual, C/TELA said that if OFTA could not arrange in-house staff to take up the job, it would tender out the job on behalf of TELA.

27. Expressing concern about the cost-effectiveness of the proposed consultancy arrangements, Mr Eric LI and Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung queried whether the arrangements had deviated from the usual Government practice of procuring consultancy services through open tender. In response, C/TELA explained that given the growing convergence in technologies and the increasing interface between telecommunications and broadcasting, procuring the services of OFTA would have the advantage of ensuring consistency in the enforcement of competition provisions in these two sectors. Moreover, OFTA possessed substantial experience in competition matters and had engaged a full range of professionals for handling competition complaints. As regards the consultancy fees charged by OFTA, he advised that on average, the fees charged by private consultancy firms for comparable services were about 40% higher than those charged by OFTA. He added that all along, OFTA had been providing consultancy services for BA on the technical aspects of telecommunications facilities for broadcasting services on agreed charges. Members also noted that OFTA was operating as a Trading Fund.

28. The Chairman shared some other members' concern about the cost-effectiveness of the proposed consultancy arrangements. While he appreciated that TELA could only ascertain the long-term staffing requirements in the light of operational experience, he suggested that where practicable, TELA should make appropriate in-house deployment and training arrangements with a view to building up in-house experts and professionals on competition matters to meet long-term operational needs.

29. Given the convergence in technologies which rendered the boundary between telecommunications and broadcasting far less distinct, Mr CHAN Kwok-keung and Mr Kenneth TING suggested that the Administration should examine the practicability and desirability of merging the functions of TELA and OFTA to enhance the cost-effectiveness of the services of the two organizations.

30. In response, C/TELA said that as both TELA and OFTA fell under the auspices of the Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau, the interface between the broadcasting and telecommunications sectors would be taken into account in formulating relevant policies. As the Telecommunications Authority and BA performed different statutory functions, OFTA and TELA, being the respective executive arm of the two authorities, essentially dealt with two different realms of issues. He however agreed to convey members' views to the Bureau for consideration.

Admin

31. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 3:55 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat  
6 August 2001