

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1642/01-02
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/ITB/1

Legislative Council
Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 8 April 2002, 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 Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP
Hon MA Fung-kwok

Members absent : Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong

Public officers attending : Agenda Items IV, V and VI

Mrs Carrie YAU, JP
Secretary for Information Technology
and Broadcasting

Agenda Item IV

Miss Annie TAM, JP
Deputy Secretary for
Information Technology and Broadcasting (3)

Mr M T WONG
Chief Engineer (CP), Information Technology
and Broadcasting Bureau

Agenda Item V

Ms Eva CHENG, JP
Deputy Secretary for
Information Technology and Broadcasting (1)

Mr K S WONG
Acting Deputy Director-General of
Telecommunications

Agenda Item VI

Mr Michael V STONE, JP
E-government Coordinator,
Information Technology and Broadcasting
Bureau

Ms Joyce TAM
Principal Assistant Secretary for
Information Technology and Broadcasting

Ms Michelle CHAU
Head, Information Technology Division/
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Mr Paul CHEUNG
Principal Amenities Officer
(Grade Management)
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

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

Staff in attendance : Ms Debbie YAU
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)1

I Confirmation of minutes and matters arising
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1414/01-02)

The minutes of the Panel meeting held on 11 March 2002 were confirmed.

II Date and items for discussion for next meeting
(LC Paper Nos. CB(1)1421/01-02(01) and (02))

2 Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 13 May 2002 at 2:30 pm:

(a) Domestic Free Television Programme Service Licence Renewal; and

(b) Digital Divide

3. The Chairman referred to the letter from New World Telephone tabled at the meeting regarding Type II Interconnection with PCCW and suggested that the issue be considered by the Panel at its June meeting. Members agreed.

III Papers issued since last meeting
(LC Paper No. CB(1)1295/01-02)

4. Members noted LC Paper No. CB(1) 1295/01-02 concerning the opening of the public bus terminus and bus services in the Cyberport project.

IV Institutional arrangements for future management of Cyberport project and the latest tenancy position at the Cyberport

Institutional arrangements for future management of Cyberport project
(LC Paper Nos. CB(1)1416/01-02(01) and CB(1)1421/01-02(03))

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (SITB) introduced the Administration's paper on the institutional arrangements for future management of the Cyberport project. In particular, she invited members to support the proposed secondment of two civil servants, one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) and one Chief Engineer to fill two of the senior positions in a private company owned by Financial Secretary Incorporated (FSI) for a period of 18 to 24 months. The salaries and related staff on-costs of the secondees would be fully recovered by the Government from the income collected by the FSI-owned companies.

6. Mr Howard YOUNG expressed his reservation on the proposed secondment since agreement in principle had been reached by the Legislative Council's Cross Party Coalition that the existing civil service establishment of directorate posts should not be increased. However, he would accept the current proposal reluctantly given that the costs for the two posts would be borne by the FSI-owned companies and that they might not be able to recruit suitable candidates from the market to fill the posts in a timely manner. Nevertheless, he considered the proposed secondment an expedient measure and sought assurance from the Administration that the staffing proposal would be cost-neutral. He was gravely concerned whether the Administration would seek to further extend the two supernumerary posts after 18 or 24 months.

7. In response, SITB envisaged that unless unforeseeable circumstances arose, further extension of the two posts might no longer be needed beyond mid 2004 when the Cyberport Portion was up and running. By that time, part of the work undertaken by these two staff, such as monitoring the construction of the Cyberport Portion, recruitment of office and retail tenants and facilitating the establishment of the Cyberport Institute, would diminish and their remaining duties could perhaps be taken up by other staff in the FSI management team. The Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau (ITBB) would continue to monitor and coordinate the Cyberport development within its existing manpower structure. She also assured members that under the proposed arrangement, the Government would recover from the FSI-owned companies the full staff costs of the two secondees and hence, the question of the Government paying for the supernumerary posts would not arise.

8. In this connection, Ms Emily LAU expressed doubt on whether the proposed arrangement was really cost-neutral as the income of the FSI-owned companies, from which the two seconded posts would be paid, was General Revenue. She commented that while the FSI-owned companies would need to recruit its senior staff anyway, they might be able to engage the required staff from the private sector with a lower remuneration package. SITB agreed that this might be possible but direct recruitment from the private sector might incur opportunity costs such as the time and resources required by the staff for familiarization.

9. Noting that the Administration had previously proposed in 1999 to create the two supernumerary directorate posts only for a period of three years, Ms Emily LAU queried whether the present proposal seeking further extension of the posts was the result of the Administration's under-estimate or inaccurate assessment at the outset. In response, SITB pointed out that the Administration had stated clearly in its initial staffing proposal that they would assess the continued need for the posts towards the end of the 3-year period. It had reviewed the need for the posts accordingly and had come to the view that they should be extended for the justification set out in the paper.

10. Referring to paragraph 5 (b) of the Administration's paper, Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung was concerned about the Cyberport Coordinator's role in monitoring the sale of the Residential Portion to safeguard the Government's interests as a landlord and vendor; and how such interests could be safeguarded when there was no further direct involvement of Government officials after the period of 18 to 24 months.

11. In response, SITB explained that the seconded Government officers were expected to settle most of the legal issues and contractual specifications in relation to the sale of the Residential Portion during their 18 to 24 months of office when the Cyberport project was also at its peak period. To supplement, the Deputy Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (3) (DS/ITB(3)) explained that to safeguard the Government's interests, a secured accounts structure would be established whereby an independent security trustee would be engaged to apply the proceeds of the sales of the Residential Portion strictly in accordance with the terms stipulated in the Project Agreement. The Government would need to be directly involved in the following six months for setting up the said structure. When the secondment of the government officers ceased, ITBB would continue to monitor the project with its existing staffing resources.

12. On tenancy matters, the Chairman remarked that a full-scale Board of Directors of the FSI-owned companies should be formed early to take over the role of the Committee on Admission of Cyberport Office Tenants in advising on matters relating to the selection and admission of office tenants. In this regard, SITB advised that the Administration was considering expanding the composition of the Board of Directors of the FSI-owned companies to facilitate the development of the Cyberport project.

13. In view of the cost-neutral nature of the staffing proposal, Mr MA Fung-kwok asked whether it was necessary for the proposal to be endorsed by the Establishment Subcommittee (ESC) and Finance Committee (FC). In reply, SITB said that although the staffing proposal would not result in increased expenditure, the Administration would still have to seek the approval of ESC and FC as technically speaking, the two existing supernumerary posts had to be extended to provide for the secondment. In reply to members, DS/ITB(3) said that the Administration planned to submit the proposal to the ESC on 15 May 2002.

14. The Chairman sought members' views on the staffing proposal. Ms Emily LAU expressed her reservation while other members noted the proposal without taking a position.

Tenancy position for Phase I Building

(LC Paper Nos. CB(1)1430/01-02(01) and CB(1)1432/01-02)

15. SITB thanked members for providing an opportunity for the Administration to clarify recent reports on the tenancy position for the first phase (CI) of the Cyberport. DS/ITB(3) then took members through the paper prepared by the Administration.

(Post-meeting note: the said paper was issued to members after the meeting vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1432/01-02)

16. Ms Emily LAU pointed out that recent reports on the unsatisfactory tenancy position of CI had aroused the serious concern of Members and the public. In this regard, she reiterated her objection to the way the Cyberport project was first taken forward and questioned the efficacy of the Government's role as a proactive market enabler which was also highlighted by the Financial Secretary in his 2002-03 Budget Speech.

17. On the economic role of the Government, SITB pointed out that in implementing the Cyberport project, the Government was in fact seeking to provide a world class Information Technology (IT) infrastructure. It was common for overseas governments to take the lead in implementing infrastructural projects beneficial to the economy as a whole. She referred members to the Sophia Antipolis Science Park in France which faced similar circumstances as the Cyberport project when it was first implemented some 30 years ago. Today, however, it was an acclaimed world class science park. SITB also urged members to view the Cyberport project in a positive light as it had already succeeded in clustering certain multinational IT companies like the GEIS International Incorporation and the Finnish company Sonera SmartTrust Limited.

18. Ms Emily LAU noted from the Administration's report that a total of 10 companies had indicated interest in becoming tenants of the CI Building and enquired on the latest progress of the negotiation on tenancy. She also sought further information on the three companies that had signed the tenancy contracts, in particular whether they would set up new business in the Cyberport or simply relocating their office premises.

19. In response, DS/ITB(3) said that the Administration could not disclose details of the negotiations until they were concluded. She nevertheless informed members that the 10 companies in question would prefer to synchronize the Cyberport leases with their existing lease commitments and rest their final decisions upon the completion of the ancillary and shared IT facilities/services. She undertook to provide updates on the tenancy position in its next progress report in July.

20. As regards the three companies to which about half of the Phase CI offices in Cyberport had been let, DS/ITB(3) recapped that according to the information provided by them in the application forms, Pacific Century CyberWorks (PCCW) would move some of its IT-related business to the Cyberport while GEIS International Incorporation and the Finnish company Sonera SmartTrust Limited found the Cyberport infrastructure useful to develop new business and services. The latter two companies had already indicated that they would make announcements on their business plans in the Cyberport in due course.

21. Given that the IT industry had entered a phase of consolidation after the bursting of the Internet boom bubble in early 2000, Mr Eric LI was concerned about the indecision of the 14 companies which had signed Letter of Intent (LOIs) in 1999. He considered that the Administration should seek the views of the top management of these companies instead of engaging in protracted negotiation which might not yield any firm result. He urged that occupancy of the office accommodation should best tie in with the completion of the Residential Portion to ensure that the latter could serve the housing need of the employees of the IT companies in the Cyberport as originally intended. To attract potential Cyberport tenants, Mr LI called for more flexible leasing terms in the early stage such as shorter leasing period, longer rent-free period for fitting out etc. These measures could help create a strategic cluster of IT companies to give impetus to further growth.

22. DS/ITB(3) noted Mr Eric LI's views and suggestions. She also confirmed that at present, none of these 14 leading IT companies that had signed LOIs to be anchor tenants had withdrawn. In fact, some of them had applied for office space in phases CII or CIII and negotiations were underway. However, pending confirmation of tenancy, the Administration was not in a position to reveal the details at this stage. She reported that according to the Lands Department, consent on the sale of residential units could not be issued until end 2002 to early 2003 the earliest. Moreover, it was believed that most of the IT companies in the Cyberport would rent, instead of purchase, residential accommodation for their staff.

23. Since the uptake of the Cyberport office was not as keen as previously envisaged, Mr MA Fung-kwok urged the Government to draw up a contingency plan to deal with the situation of poor response. He nevertheless cautioned that measures such as reduction in rental would have a significant impact on the local property market and stressed the need for the Administration to make early proactive preparation.

24. SITB assured members that apart from negotiations on practical leasing arrangements for office space in different phases of the Cyberport with interested companies, the Administration would adopt a very proactive and cautious approach in the face of the current economic conditions. It would

continue to work closely with PCCW in actively marketing the Cyberport as the southern gateway to China. The Administration would also take the opportunity of international fora to introduce and promote the Cyberport to overseas companies as it had done on the occasion of the International Telecommunication Union Telecom Asia in 2000. Other initiatives to place the best soft infrastructure at the Cyberport included the setting up of the Cyberport Institute by the University of Hong Kong to introduce and run market-driven courses in co-operation with some major IT companies. SITB stressed that the attractiveness of the Cyberport should lie in its state-of-the-art facilities and support infrastructure. IT companies would unlikely be attracted solely by low rental.

25. In response to Mr MA Fung-kwok's suggestion of setting up a digital entertainment centre in case the tenancy take-up rate remained low, DS/ITB(3) stressed that irrespective of the tenancy take-up rate, companies engaged in digital entertainment were welcome to apply for office space in the Cyberport.

26. Ms Emily LAU referred to the Legislative Council Brief on the Cyberport Project Agreement issued by the Administration on 17 May 2000 and noted that the Administration had decided to drop the take-up guarantee which Pacific Cyber Group (PCG) had agreed to provide. In this connection, she enquired on details of the take-up guarantee and expressed grave concern about the Administration's projection that demand for office space would greatly exceed supply when the Internet boom had already collapsed in early 2000.

27. In response, DS/ITB(3) clarified that pursuant to the LOI signed with PCG, PCG had undertaken, inter alia, to sign a long-term lease as one of the anchor tenants and to provide a take-up guarantee to take up certain percentage of space if the take up rate of Cyberport Portion was poor. This meant that PCG could in turn sub-let the space to their selected companies. This in effective would provide PCG with a "take-up right". The Administration considered that this might not be desirable when the nature of the business of the companies should be ascertained in the light of the objective of the Cyberport. In the subsequent discussions on the Project Agreement, the Administration believed that dropping PCG's take-up guarantee or PCG's take-up right would be appropriate. Nevertheless, PCG had duly produced LOIs from 14 companies which indicated interest in becoming anchor tenants.

28. Mr Albert CHAN queried whether the unsatisfactory take-up of office space in the Cyberport would have an implication on public funds. He reiterated his concern about the Government's past and future capital contributions, and the expected investment return. He also urged the Administration to report the updated financial situation in future progress reports for members' reference.

29. In this connection, DS/ITB(3) recapped that pursuant to the Project Agreement signed with Cyber-port Limited (CPL), the Residential Portion Land Value of the Cyberport at the time of the grant of Development Right at \$7.80098 billion (which already included the estimated cost of around \$1 billion for infrastructural works) was the Government's equity contribution to the project. CPL was responsible for the total construction cost of both the Cyberport Portion and the Residential Portion. As at December 2001, it had already spent more than \$1.6 billion on the project. DS/ITB(3) further explained that revenue would be derived from the sale of the units in the Residential Portion and surplus sales proceeds would be put under trust and shared by the developer and the Government according to their respective contributions. As the Residential Portion was not yet put up for sale, the projected investment return could not be provided at this stage. She added that the rental income to be generated from the Cyberport Portion would belong to the three FSI companies.

Admin

30. Regarding Mr Albert CHAN's request for information on the financing arrangements of the Cyberport project, the Chairman suggested that in future progress reports to the Panel, the Administration should include a short section outlining the financing arrangements for the project. Where information on expenditure or income was available as the project progressed, members should be updated accordingly. The Administration agreed.

Admin

31. Regarding Ms Emily LAU's suggestion that the Administration should provide information on tenancy position on a monthly basis, the Chairman considered that the Administration should inform members of the progress in the tenancy position in its next progress report in July 2002. However, if there was any significant development in the interim period, the Administration should provide the Panel with an information paper and members could then decide whether the subject should be brought up for discussion. Members and the Administration agreed.

Admin

V Creation of Class Licence for In-building Telecommunications Systems under Section 7B(2) of the Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap 106)

(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1332/01-02)

32. With the aid of power-point presentation, the Acting Deputy Director-General of Telecommunications (ADDG/Tel) briefed members on the Administration's paper.

33. Mr Albert CHAN welcomed the proposal and hoped that it could be implemented as soon as possible. He sought clarification on the arrangement and procedures with regard to the issuance of class licence for existing in-building telecommunications systems. Noting that some existing operators of

in-building telecommunications systems might deliberately delay the opening up its network facilities to other operators such that residents' choice of telecommunications networks or service operators was restricted, Mr CHAN asked if any measures were in place to safeguard against such abuse.

34. In response, ADDG/Tel confirmed that under the Telecommunications Authority (TA)'s proposal, only property owners/owners' corporation (OCs) would be eligible to become class licensees for the establishment and maintenance of in-building telecommunications systems. Existing contractors/operators of in-building telecommunications system might approach the relevant property owners/OCs to enter into agreements with the latter to appoint them to install and operate the systems on behalf of the property owners/OCs. Regarding the right of access into buildings, ADDG/Tel advised that such rights were provided under section 14 of the Telecommunications Ordinance (TO). The In-building Coordination Team set up under the Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA) would help to coordinate and resolve requests from different network operators for access to buildings. While section 14 of the TO allowed access to buildings, section 15 provided for the mechanism for handling disputes on compensation. ADDG/Tel recalled that since the enactment of the Telecommunications (Amendment) Ordinance in 2000, no such disputes had been referred to the Court.

35. Mr Albert CHAN recalled that in some housing estates, certain network operators offered the property owners/OCs free installation of in-building networks on condition that the property owners/OCs would grant the operator(s) the right to operate the network for some 20 years. Given that only the property owners/OCs would become class licensees under the new regime, he sought confirmation from the Administration on whether the aforesaid practice was in order. Noting that the class licensee could authorize the incumbent contractor/operator to negotiate with other operators seeking access to the in-building network on the interconnection charges, he cautioned that the authorized incumbent contractors might abuse their positions and impose unreasonably high charges on other operators requesting interconnection. Mr CHAN enquired about the sanctions, if any, for abusing such right.

36. In response, ADDG/Tel and the Deputy Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (1) (DS/ITB(1)) reiterated that only the property owners/OCs, not the network contractors/operators, could be class licensees and that the conditions and obligations of a class licence would rest with the property owners/OCs. However, the property owners/OCs might enter into a maintenance agreement of say, five or ten years, with the network contractor to settle the maintenance fee by installments.

37. As regards concerns about abuse by the incumbent in-building network contractor, DS/ITB(1) advised that granting an exclusive right to a certain contractor (i.e. disregarding the right of access of other operators) might be in

breach of section 19B of TO which specified that a contract between the licensee and the contractor was void if the resident was unreasonably restricted or deprived of the right to have access to the public telecommunications services of his choice. Sections 7K, 7L and 7M of the TO also provided for competition safeguards against anti-competitive acts which sought to restrict competition from other network contractors. In this regard, ADDG/Tel supplemented that any incumbent contractor who had installed and operated an in-building telecommunications network without being authorized by the property owners/OCs might contravene section 8(1) of the TO. On summary conviction, the person might be liable to a fine of \$50,000 and imprisonment for two years.

38. In the case where there was no OC for the building or where the OC was not functioning properly after an in-building network had been set up, Mr Albert CHAN sought clarification on the party to be contacted for interconnection arrangements as the existing network contractor/operator for the in-building network was neither a class licensee nor authorized by the property owners/OCs.

39. Regarding the practical problems depicted by Mr CHAN, ADDG/Tel said that where no OC was formed, the In-buildings Coordination Team would render assistance as appropriate in helping to identify the contact party for interconnection arrangements. DS/ITB(1) added that pursuant to the existing contracts which the Administration were aware of, the contractor setting up the network usually dealt with issues in relation to interconnection. So far, the TA had not received any enquiries or complaints on difficulties in seeking the relevant contact parties.

40. Referring to Mr YEUNG Yiu-chung's enquiry on whether the class licensees could impose charges on other operators seeking interconnection or individual residents requesting services via the in-building network, ADDG-Tel confirmed that the class licensee, not the network operator/contractor, could charge interconnection fees on other operators seeking access. In case of disputes over the level of interconnection charge, TA could, at the request of the parties, determine the level of interconnection charge on a cost-based basis, including a reasonable cost of capital. Besides, the OCs could set charges on individual households/residents for other value-added services such as booking various leisure and sports facilities through the in-building telecommunications system.

41. Given that no application, approval or registration for the class licence was required and no physical licence was involved under TA's proposal, the Chairman suggested that to assist the OCs which might lack the necessary technique and knowledge, OFTA might consider providing a fee-charging service on request to pre-qualify the contract to be entered into by the OC with the contractor/operator. Alternatively, OFTA could prepare a model version

of such contract with a guidance note for reference by OCs when engaging a contractor to set up the in-building telecommunications network.

42. In response, ADDG-Tel informed members that a three-page information note highlighting key points of the consultation paper had been prepared by OFTA to facilitate briefing of OCs by the In-building Coordination Team. On the Chairman's suggestion, he considered it feasible for the OFTA to advise whether the provisions of a contract were in compliance with the statutory requirements of the class licence. Whether a fee should be charged for such service would need to be further considered. However, OFTA would be cautious in considering requests for legal advice on the terms of the contract between the licensee and the contractor/operator.

Admin

VI Online booking services under the Electronic Services Delivery Scheme

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1421/01-02(04))

43. With the aid of power-point presentation, the Head of the Information Technology Division/ Leisure and Cultural Services Department (H, IT/LCSD) took members' through the Administration's paper. She also conducted a demonstration on badminton court booking and registering as a patron online under the Electronic Service Delivery (ESD) Scheme.

44. Ms Emily LAU welcomed the proposal as following the launch of the new online booking system, it would not be necessary for people to queue up for venue reservation. She asked whether those who did not use Internet booking would still be able to reserve venues through the conventional channels such as queuing up. Noting that there would be a control mechanism under which a person could only reserve two sessions per venue per day, Ms LAU was concerned whether this arrangement would cause inconvenience to coaches who needed to arrange sufficient sessions for their classes. Mr MA Fung-kwok concurred with Ms LAU and enquired whether patrons making multiple bookings on one occasion would be accorded with lower priority in future Internet booking in order to ensure fairness.

45. In response, the Principal Amenities Officer (Grade Management) Leisure and Cultural Services Department (PAO(GM)/LCSD) confirmed that the Internet booking system was only an additional option to the conventional booking channels at the counter and by telephone. He anticipated that the new Internet booking services would help reduce counter booking and hence, eliminate long waiting queues. He also clarified that the restriction on each person to reserve two sessions per day would only apply to bookings for peak hours. This arrangement was intended to prevent abuses such as monopolizing the booking or not using the booked sessions. Users must present the booking confirmation slip for checking prior to using the sessions.

46. Mr Howard YOUNG supported the plan and enquired whether payment for reserved sessions could be made through tonal telephone and whether the telephone operators of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) would provide assistance to persons making telephone bookings. On the electronic magazine function added to the patron registration system, he was also concerned about the size of the e-Magazine given that the capacity of many email boxes was no more than 2 megabytes.

47. In reply, PAO(GM)/LCSD confirmed that at present, real time payment could only be made through Internet booking. Payment for telephone booking must be settled over the counter within three days. Operators would provide assistance for telephone booking Monday to Friday from 8:30 am to 5:00 pm and on Saturday from 8:30 am to 12:00 noon. An interactive Voice Response System also provided telephony service to the public daily from 7:00 am to 9:00 pm. On the capacity of the e-Magazine, H. IT/LCSD said that even when a lot of items were selected, it only took up 22 000 bytes. Each patron could customize the e-Magazine by filtering only the events and programmes that they were interested in.

48. On reservation of soccer pitches, PAO(GM)/LCSD pointed out that drawing lots two to three months prior to the reserved date as currently implemented in the New Territories would be phased out by end June 2002. Thereafter, reservation of soccer pitches in the New Territories would be made on a first-come first-served basis through the Internet, telephone or over the counter, as in the case of urban districts.

49. Given that there was a keen demand for soccer pitches in the New Territories, Mr Albert CHAN was worried that some soccer teams might be disadvantaged and called for public consultation before implementing the change. In response, PAO(GM)/LCSD pointed out that the first-come first-served system had worked effectively in the urban districts and the Administration would review the new arrangements after its implementation in the New Territories. In this regard, the Chairman suggested that the matter should be pursued at the Panel on Home Affairs if members so wished.

50. Mr MA Fung-kowk enquired whether the introduction of the Internet booking system would result in savings on staff costs in the longer term. In response, PAO(GM)/LCSD said that the LCSD would keep its manpower position under regular review.

51. In anticipation that users might log onto the online booking system shortly before 7:00 am in order to secure bookings, Mr SIN Chung-kai reminded the Administration about the uneven distribution of caseload, especially the heavy caseload shortly before 7:00 am when the Internet booking commenced. In response, H. IT/LCSD confirmed that under the ESD, the system could handle at one time around 230 transactions per minute and 15 000

transactions per hour. She said that such handling capacity could meet the anticipated demand.

VII Any other business

- Proposed overseas duty visit to South Korea
(LC Paper No. CB(1) 1421/01-02(05))

52. The Chairman referred members to the discussion paper prepared by the Secretariat and informed members that after preliminary discussion with some Panel members, he would propose that the Panel should conduct a duty visit to South Korea in order to gain a better insight into its fast growing IT sector. He then invited members' view on the suggestion. Mr MA Fung-kwok considered it highly worthwhile to pay the duty visit to South Korea. On the timing of the visit, Mr Howard YOUNG said that where practicable, he would prefer to schedule the visit for early or end September 2002. The Chairman summed up that as members had agreed in principle to the proposed duty visit to South Korea, he would instruct the Secretariat to issue a circular to invite members to indicate their intention to participate in the visit.

(Post-meeting note: the said circular was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1479/01-02 on 12 April 2002.)

53. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:35 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
7 May 2002