

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2) 1004/02-03(06)

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

**Meeting of Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene  
on 28 January 2003**

**Proposed overseas duty visit to Australia and Japan**

**Purpose**

This paper seeks members' agreement for the Panel to conduct an overseas duty visit to Australia and Japan for the purpose of understanding overseas experience in the regulatory control of food, including their food surveillance and food labelling systems.

**Background**

2. The Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene has been closely monitoring the food safety standards and the surveillance systems for the control of local and imported live food animals/poultry, chilled/frozen meat, packaged food and other food products, in order to safeguard public health.

3. Hong Kong relies heavily on food imported from other places. Every year, Hong Kong consumes around 43 million live chickens, 7.3 million other poultry, 2.3 million pigs, 60 000 cattle and 4 500 goats. Among these, about 36 million chickens, 1.8 million pigs, and almost all other poultry, cattle and goats are imported. Local farms only produce poultry (mainly chickens) and pigs. In addition, Hong Kong imports a great variety of packaged food and other food products from other places.

4. The Panel has all along taken a keen interest in the import control of food and the food surveillance measures, to ensure that all food on sale are wholesome, unadulterated and fit for human consumption. Panel members have expressed concern whether the existing legislation and administrative measures for setting food standards, food inspection, laboratory testing, public education and enforcement are adequate and appropriate in protecting public health. The Panel has also held discussions to explore more effective ways to

enhance the hygiene conditions of local farms and markets. In addition, the issue of whether a mandatory labelling system should be introduced for genetically modified food in Hong Kong will be further pursued by the Panel with the Administration.

## **The proposed duty visit**

### Purpose and places for the visit

5. At the meeting on 15 July 2002, the Panel agreed in principle that the Panel should undertake an overseas duty visit in April 2003 to Australia and Japan to study their food regulatory systems. The Panel also agreed to focus the study on the following areas -

- (a) quarantine systems for imported food;
- (b) regulation and procedures for food for export;
- (c) food labelling requirements; and
- (d) licensing and regulation of food business.

6. The proposed overseas duty visit will provide members with first-hand information on the advanced food regulatory systems put in place in Australia and Japan to ensure the safety of food and to protect the public from health hazards caused by the consumption of food. The Panel notes that Australia exports a substantial volume of seafood, meat products and dairy produce to Hong Kong, while Japan relies heavily on imported food which accounts for 60% of the food consumed in the country. The Panel also notes that both countries have implemented a labelling system for genetically modified food. The experience of these countries will provide useful reference for Hong Kong in further improving its food control systems.

7. As regulation of food premises is an important component of public health in any community, the Panel is also interested in the licensing, regulation and enforcement of food safety and hygiene standards imposed on food premises in Australia and Japan.

### Timing for the visit

8. To avoid clashing with the Council and House Committee meetings, it is proposed that the visit should last for nine days, from 13 to 22 April 2003.

### Participants of the visit

9. As the visit will touch on topics which have implications on different trades, consumers and the public, the visit is open to non Panel Members. A circular has been issued to invite members and non-members of the Panel to indicate interest to join the visit. As at 10 January 2003, a total of 8 Members (including 3 non Panel Members) have indicated interest to join the visit. A list of the participants is in **Appendix I**.

### Estimated expenses

10. It is estimated that the expenditure for each Member to undertake the visit to Australia and Japan is about \$40,400 (economy class air passage) or \$64,900 (business class air passage). The proposed budget for the visit is in **Appendix II**.

### **Funding arrangements**

11. As approved by The Legislative Council Commission on 20 February 2001, each Member (except the President) is provided with an overseas duty visit account (ODV account) of \$61,000 for the purpose of duty visits outside Hong Kong organised by committees, other than the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee, of the Council. The fund in the account is for use by the Member in a four-year term. Any expenditure incurred in one term in excess of \$61,000 has to be paid by the Member personally.

### **Advice sought**

12. Members are invited to consider if an overseas duty visit as proposed in paragraphs 5 to 7 should be conducted. Subject to members' agreement, the House Committee's permission will be sought, in accordance with House Rule 22(t), for the Panel to undertake the visit.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
27 January 2003

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

**Proposed overseas duty visit to Australia and Japan in April 2003**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Visit both Australia and Japan (13-22 April 2003)</b>	<b>Visit Japan only (17-22 April 2003)</b>
<i>Panel members</i>		
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP (Chairman)	√	
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP (Deputy Chairman)		√
Hon WONG Yung-kan	√	
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung	√	
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP	√	
<i>Non Panel Members</i>		
Hon CHOY So-yuk		√
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung		√
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee	√	
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>3</b>

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

**Estimated budget for the overseas duty visit to  
Australia and Japan in April 2003**

**Duration of visit** : 13 to 22 April 2003

**Size of delegation** : 8 Members (3 Members will visit Japan only)  
(to be accompanied by one  
Secretariat staff)

Items	Estimated expenses HK\$ (per person)	
	<u>Economy</u>	<u>Business class</u>
1. Return air / train passage		
(a) Hong Kong / Canberra / Melbourne / Hong Kong	10,180	28,000
(b) Hong Kong / Tokyo / Hong Kong	5,950	12,000
(c) Tokyo / Osaka / Tokyo (by rail)	1,820 (28,300 JPY)	2,430 (37,800 JPY)
2. Hotel accommodation		
(a) Canberra and Melbourne		4,000
(b) Tokyo and Osaka		8,834
3. Overseas subsistence allowance		
(a) Canberra and Melbourne		2,528
(b) Tokyo and Osaka		5,890
4. Travel insurance		340
5. Airport tax		875
<b>TOTAL</b> :	40,417	64,897

**NOTE :**

Other expenditure including hospitality, local group transportation, interpretation services and souvenirs will be charged against other votes of the Secretariat.