



世界自然(香港)基金會
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To: Panel on Environmental Affairs and Panel on Planning,
Lands and Works,
Legislative Council Attn: Mrs. Mary Tang

From: Ms. Karen Woo Your Fax No.: 2869 6794

Your Tel. No.: 2869 9211 Page(s): 3 (Including this page)

Date: 9 May 2003

Subject: **Panel on Environmental Affairs and Panel on Planning, Lands and Works –
Joint Meeting on 14 May 2003**

Dear Mrs. Tang,

Thank you for your letter of 29 April 2003 (Your Ref.: CB1/PL/EA) to our Executive Director (Ms. Winnie Sek) inviting us to give views on the sustainable development in Hong Kong.

WWF Hong Kong believes that 'sustainable development' is about improving the quality of human life whilst living within the carrying capacity of supporting ecosystems. To achieve sustainable development, all three criteria - environmental sustainability, social equity and economic viability – must be given equal weighting. Biodiversity is an important indicator of the health of our environment and the ability of the ecosystems to maintain life-supporting processes essential to human well-being. By moving towards more sustainable development, the direct and indirect impacts on biodiversity can be significantly reduced.

WWF Hong Kong applauds the recent establishment of the Council for Sustainable Development (CSD) and supports the terms of reference of the CSD to promote sustainability in Hong Kong especially the consultation on and formulation of a sustainable development strategy for Hong Kong within 12 to 18 months.

We consider that the sustainable development strategy should set out a clear vision based on the community's aspirations and consensus without compromising environmental sustainability and social equity. It should have clear objectives and goals for the long-term future of Hong Kong. The strategy should also recommend frameworks and



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institutions for integrated development and conservation, and ways to create a regional and global alliance for sustainability.

Moreover, to put sustainable development into practice, WWF Hong Kong would like to recommend some rules of thumb for government and CSD's consideration in the formulation of the sustainable development strategy which ultimately would help put development on a more sustainable path. These include:

1. Standards against which proposed development and investment are checked for acceptability, for example:

- ❖ Strategic environmental impact assessment and social impact assessment
- ❖ Environmental and social appraisals for all policies (e.g., Population Policy, Housing Policy and Transport Policy), plans and programmes at international, regional (e.g., Pearl River Delta Region) and local levels
- ❖ Demand management measures with reference to the ecological footprints of Hong Kong to keep development in line with the earth's environmental carrying capacity
- ❖ Consideration of alternative, sustainable means to meet the needs within established limits and targets
- ❖ Protecting irreplaceable elements of the natural and cultural heritage and maintaining the current natural biodiversity and cultural heritage
- ❖ Avoiding developments or land use which will adversely or irreversibly affect critical natural capital
- ❖ Enhancement of natural biodiversity as an integral part of any development project
- ❖ Resource pricing to reflect environmental and social costs incorporating the "Polluter Pays Principle", to make explicit the full environmental and social costs and benefits of any development

2. Participation and support of the public to sustainable development, including:



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- ❖ To raise public awareness, the public should have free access to information on sustainable issues (e.g., sustainability impact assessment on major policies and projects, environmental audits, eco-labeling). This would help people to make investment and consumption choices which favour sustainable development
- ❖ Public participation and consideration of development options in partnership with government, industry and development agencies
- ❖ Establishment, with local communities and concerned NGOs, of integrated conservation and development strategies, for the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity and sustainable development

Ultimately, the socio-economic causes of biodiversity loss must be dealt with if sustainable development is to be achieved. WWF Hong Kong looks to all sectors of the society – government, business and industry, academics and the public - to commit and input to the above process of formulating the sustainable development strategy for Hong Kong.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely,

Karen Woo
Conservation Officer
WWF Hong Kong