

立法會
Legislative Council

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Paper for the House Committee meeting on 24 June 2005

Proposed overseas duty visit by the Panel on Health Services

Purpose

This paper seeks the permission of the House Committee under rule 22(t) of the House Rules (HR) for the Panel on Health Services to undertake an overseas duty visit to Thailand, Norway and Ireland for the purpose of studying the countries' experience in implementing anti-smoking legislation.

Background

2. The Panel on Health Services is tasked to monitor Government policies and issues of public concern relating to medical and health services. In the current session, the Panel discussed the Administration's proposed amendments to the Smoking (Public Health) Ordinance at three meetings in January, February and April 2005. The proposed expansion of the statutory no smoking areas and the enforcement of the legislation is one of the major areas of concern of the Panel. To enable members to have a better understanding of overseas experience, the Panel agreed at its meeting on 14 March 2005 that the Panel should make a duty visit to obtain first-hand information on the implementation of anti-smoking measures in selected overseas countries. The Panel also agreed that the visit should be open to Members intending to join the Bills Committee likely to be formed to scrutinise the Smoking (Public Health) (Amendment) Bill when introduced into the Council, and other Members.

Details of the visit

Countries to be visited

3. The countries to be visited are Thailand, Norway and Ireland. In Thailand, smoking is totally banned in air-conditioned restaurants, food courts and function centres as well as a list of other specified places. Ireland and Norway imposed a complete ban on smoking in restaurants, pubs and bars with

effect from 29 March 2004 and 1 June 2004 respectively. Specifically, the visit aims to study -

- (a) anti-smoking policies in the countries concerned and the public's receptiveness of the policy;
- (b) whether the anti-smoking legislation has achieved the intended policy objective and the problems encountered in enforcement of the legislation;
- (c) the economic impact of the smoking ban on the catering and hospitality industries; and
- (d) new measures, if any, being considered to address the problems and concerns arising from the implementation of the smoking ban.

Visit programmes

4. The visit will be from Wednesday, 10 August 2005 to Saturday, 20 August 2005. In Thailand, Members will meet with the Ministry of Public Health, Action on Smoking and Health Foundation, Thailand Health Promotion Institute and Committee on Public Health of the Senate. In Norway, Members will meet with the Ministry of Health and other relevant organisations. In Ireland, Members will meet with the Department of Health and Children and Office of Tobacco Control.

5. With the assistance of the Royal Thai Consulate-General in Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices in Singapore, London and Brussels, detailed visit programmes are being drawn up by the relevant ministries of the countries concerned.

Members of the delegation

6. Three Members (including one non-Panel Member) have indicated interest in joining the visit. The names of these Members are in **Appendix I**.

Funding arrangements

7. As approved by The Legislative Council Commission, each Member is provided with an overseas duty visit account of \$55,000 for the purpose of duty visits outside Hong Kong organised by committees, other than the Parliamentary Liaison Committee, of the Council. The fund in the account is for use by the Member in a four-year term. Any expenditure incurred in excess of the available balance in a four-year term has to be paid by the

Member personally.

8. A preliminary estimate of the expenditure to be incurred by each participating Member for the duty visit is about \$30,300 (economy class air passage) or \$60,900 (business class air passage). A breakdown of the estimated expenditure is in **Appendix II**.

Advice sought

9. HR 22(t) provides that should any Panel consider it necessary to undertake any activities outside Hong Kong under the name of the Council, the prior permission of the House Committee shall be sought.

10. The House Committee's permission is sought for the Panel to undertake the overseas duty visit as proposed.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
23 June 2005

Appendix I

Members who have indicated their intention to join the proposed overseas duty visit by the Panel on Health Services

Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo

Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP

Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH

Panel on Health Services

Proposed overseas duty visit in August 2005

Tentative estimate of expenditure

Duration of visit 10 to 20 August 2005

Routing of visit Hong Kong / Bangkok / Oslo / Dublin / Hong Kong

Breakdown of expenses

Items	Estimated expenses HK\$ (per person)	
	<u>Economy class</u>	<u>Business class</u>
1. Return air ticket	11,500	42,100
2. Airport tax and fuel surcharge	2,200	
3. Hotel accommodation		
(a) Bangkok	984	
(b) Oslo	5,518	
(c) Dublin	3,247	
4. Duty visit expenses reimbursement		
(a) Bangkok	656	
(b) Oslo	3,679	
(c) Dublin	2,165	
5. Travel insurance	340	
TOTAL :	30,289	60,889
SAY :	30,300	60,900

NOTE :

Exchange rate as at 21 June 2005 -

HK\$19.63 = 100 THB

HK\$123.03 = 100 NOK

HK\$980.55 = 100 EUR