

**For discussion
on 17 January 2005**

LegCo Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services

**Policy Initiatives of
the Administration Wing, Chief Secretary for Administration's Office
and the Central Policy Unit**

Introduction

The 2005 Policy Agenda sets out the Government's new and on-going initiatives over the next two and a half years. This note elaborates on the initiatives in the Policy Agenda pertinent to the Administration Wing and the Central Policy Unit. It also gives an account on our other initiatives in the 2004 Policy Agenda.

2005 Policy Agenda

Effective Governance

Initiative

Continuing discussions with the Mainland in reciprocal enforcement of judgments in civil matters.

2. This is an on-going initiative. We briefed this Panel on 22 November 2004 on the progress of the Administration's discussion with the Mainland authorities. To recapitulate, since mid-2002, we have conducted three informal meetings with the Mainland authorities to exchange views on the scope of the proposed arrangement, the issue of finality and the technicalities involved in the recognition and enforcement of judgments in both jurisdictions. These meetings have served to enhance our mutual understanding of each other's legal and judicial systems, and the thinking behind the proposed arrangement. Discussion with the Mainland authorities is continuing. We would report to this Panel again when there is substantive development.

Fund higher education institutions to undertake public policy research, through earmarked grants to be administered by the Research Grants Council.

3. Under the new initiative, the Government will allocate \$20 million a year for three years, with effect from 2005/06, to the University Grants Committee to provide new funding to promote public policy research in higher education institutions.

4. At present, public policy research, as distinct from academic research, is not funded through normal research grants administered by the Research Grants Council of the University Grants Committee.

5. The increased support for public policy research is to address the need for improving the Government's policy-making capabilities. To improve governance, we seek to raise the level of sophistication with which the Government and the community handle policy issues. We need more public policy research from a macro and long-term perspective. Objective and concrete public policy research will help reduce sweeping, politicised and emotional debates, making it easier for the Government and various sectors of the community to reach a consensus on public issues. This will contribute to a more stable and harmonious community.

6. We have agreed on the broad principles with the University Grants Committee. The more detailed administrative arrangements will be worked out later by the Research Grants Council itself.

Environmentally Responsible Development

Initiative

Establishing an engagement process that facilitates public participation in formulating a sustainable development strategy for Hong Kong.

7. This is an on-going initiative. In order to identify clear long-term goals for Hong Kong's sustainable development, the Council for Sustainable Development has proposed and coordinated an engagement process to facilitate the public to participate directly in the formulation of Hong Kong's sustainable development strategy. Working on the principle that the preparation of the strategy should involve a high level of partnership with stakeholders and participation by the community, the engagement process aims to maximise opportunities for public participation and encourages the involvement of different sectors.

8. Following a cross-sectoral stakeholder summit in December 2004, the Council for Sustainable Development is preparing a report on the engagement process, the strategy and the way forward. The Administration is committed to publishing the strategy document by mid-2005. It will focus on the three Pilot Areas covered under the public engagement process, namely: Solid Waste Management, Renewable Energy and Urban Living Space.

Caring and Just Society

Initiative

Conducting specific studies to address various issues arising from the 2004-2033 population projections that impact on Population Policy, with a view to consulting the public and publishing a review report in 2005-06.

9. This is an on-going initiative. The Task Force on Population Policy released its report in February 2003. The report sets out a total of 33 recommendations to address the problems and challenges facing Hong Kong in our demographic trends and characteristics. The relevant bureaux and departments have since been following up the implementation of the recommendations.

10. The Census and Statistics Department published in June 2004 the updated Hong Kong population projections for 2004-2033. These projections further confirm certain prevailing trends such as an aging population and a low fertility rate.

11. The Administration is commissioning specific studies on policies and practices in selected territories in relation to immigration, retirement and childbirth. Upon conclusion of these studies, the Administration will consult the public and the Legislative Council on our proposals. The Task Force plans to publish its next report in 2005-2006.

2004 Policy Agenda

Effective Governance

Initiative

Continuing discussions with the Mainland in reciprocal enforcement of judgments in civil matters.

Progress Made / Present Position

12. This initiative is reported in paragraph 2 above.

Environmentally Responsible Development

Initiative

Promoting the integration of sustainability in the Government and the community.

Progress Made / Present Position

13. Further to the position reported in paragraphs 7-8 above, the Administration has earmarked around \$11 million from the Sustainable Development Fund in the current financial year for implementing stakeholder-led projects that will help raise community awareness of the principles and practices of sustainable development. The Administration also keeps under review the operation of the sustainability assessment system to ensure the sustainability of the Administration's new major policies and programmes.

Administration Wing
Chief Secretary for Administration's Office

Central Policy Unit

13 January 2005