

For information
15 February 2005

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

**Hosting of the Sixth Ministerial Conference
of the World Trade Organization**

Progress Report

Purpose

This paper updates Members of the progress on logistics preparation for the Sixth Ministerial Conference (MC6) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to be held in Hong Kong from 13 to 18 December 2005 at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC).

Background

2. At the meeting of the Panel on 16 November 2004, we reported the progress on the logistics preparation for MC6 (LC Paper No. CB(1)206/04-05(04)). Members raised concerns regarding security, participation of non-government organizations (NGOs), availability of hotel accommodation, etc. We undertook to update the Panel when more details were available.

Accommodation

3. After conducting a procurement exercise in the fall of 2004, the MC6 Coordination Office (MCO) appointed the International Conference Consultants, Ltd and PC Tours & Travel in late December 2004 to be the Hotel Agent to handle hotel accommodation arrangements for MC6 and assist the Administration in conducting a central allocation exercise. The Hotel Agent is actively negotiating with hotels on room blocking. As Grand Hyatt Hong Kong and Renaissance Harbour View Hotel Hong Kong are the two hotels immediately adjacent to the MC6 venue (i.e. HKCEC), we have already secured their agreement to be MC6 Conference Hotels. With the assistance of Hong Kong Hotels Association, the MCO briefed over 50 senior representatives of the

hotel industry in January, updating them on the latest information regarding accommodation arrangements for MC6.

4. The MCO will conduct a briefing on hotel arrangements for WTO members/observers in Geneva in around March 2005.

5. Engagement of the service of the Hotel Agent is entirely voluntary. MC6 participants may elect to make their bookings through the Hotel Agent or make their own arrangements.

Conference Facilities and Information & Communications Technology

6. The MC6 entails a wide variety of conference facilities and information and communications technology (ICT) requirements, including simultaneous interpretation, telecommunications facilities, AV systems, etc. The MCO is working closely with the WTO Secretariat on the details. To coordinate this massive exercise, the MCO has appointed the Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund to be the Project Manager and is in the process of working out detailed arrangements.

Security and Accreditation

7. The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) is responsible for matters relating to security arrangements during MC6. Its primary objective is to ensure the security of all participants in Hong Kong during MC6 and their attendance of the various MC6-related activities at the designated venues, while keeping inconvenience and disruption to the community to the minimum. It will also look after public order and safety. HKPF has set up 9 working groups to look into various aspects :-

- security;
- public order;
- traffic management;
- public relations and publicity;
- command and control;
- tactics and training;
- logistics;
- information technology and communications; and
- manpower and procurement.

8. The HKPF has reviewed and will draw on relevant experience overseas to devise a plan most suitable to Hong Kong (e.g. experience in past WTO Ministerial Conferences, meetings of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, Free Trade Area of the Americas, G8, etc.)

9. We appreciate that NGOs, as with the general public, may like to express views on various issues during the MC6 period. Freedom of expression is most respected in Hong Kong but it would be important to maintain law and order at the same time in the interest of the community at large. We will maintain a dialogue with NGOs as well as any other groups, both locally and from overseas in the run-up to and during MC6, with a view to facilitating their freedom of expression and conduct of orderly and peaceful demonstration activities. Work on this front has already commenced, for example, the MCO met with Hong Kong People's Alliance on WTO in January 2005.

10. In conjunction with the WTO Secretariat, the MCO is working out the details of the accreditation system for participants of MC6.

Transportation

11. The MCO is making arrangements for the provision of suitable transport for delegates attending MC6. Heads of delegation will be provided with chauffeur-driven limousines for their use during MC6. In anticipation of the large number of airport arrivals and departures of MC6 participants before and after the Conference, the MCO is working in close collaboration with relevant government departments and agencies to devise suitable operation plans concerning reception and other hospitality arrangements.

Media, Publicity and Community Relations

12. In conjunction with relevant departments e.g. Information Services Department (ISD), the HKPF, etc. we are working out a comprehensive PR strategy covering the local community, our international interlocutors as well as the local and international media. We aim to approach concerned District Councils in the coming few months. Through our Economic and Trade Offices, we have been informing interested parties of the progress of MC6 preparatory work and will continue to do so. We will also discuss with interested parties in Hong Kong on areas of concern and cooperation.

Social Programmes, Commercial Sponsorship and Liaison Support

13. In anticipation of the large number (about 10,000) of overseas participants attending MC6, we will need to set up a large team of hospitality and liaison officers with proficiency in different languages. Social programmes will be worked out in due course.

14. With the aim to defraying part of the cost for the Conference and making ends meet, the MCO will actively identify possible areas of sponsorship in consultation with the WTO Secretariat and solicit sponsorship from identified parties.

Visit of WTO Secretariat Task Force to Hong Kong

15. The WTO Secretariat has set up a dedicated Task Force to support Hong Kong's hosting of MC6. The Task Force visited Hong Kong from 31 January to 3 February 2005 to discuss with MCO the details of preparation for the Conference.

Dissemination of Information

16. We have and will through our Permanent Representative of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of China to the WTO disseminate information on MC6 preparation to all WTO members / observers as and when necessary. In Hong Kong, we have also maintained close contact with local Consular Corps. We will shortly establish a dedicated web site for MC6.

Way Forward

17. We will keep Members informed of further progress of preparation on MC6 in due course.

Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau
February 2005