

For information

16 November 2004

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

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

Progress Report

Purpose

This paper informs 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.

Background

2. At its meeting on 7 July 2003, this Panel supported Hong Kong making a formal offer to host the MC6. Following WTO's acceptance of Hong Kong's hosting offer, this Panel was consulted on 13 April 2004 on the proposed budget and staffing of the event. A budget of \$256 million for hosting MC6 was subsequently approved by the Finance Committee on 14 May 2004.

Date and Venue

3. The WTO General Council, at its meeting on 20-21 October 2004 held in Geneva, decided that the MC6 should be held in Hong Kong from 13 to 18 December 2005. The Conference is being planned to be held in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC). A Press Centre as well as an NGO Centre are also being planned to be housed in the HKCEC. The Accreditation Centre will be located on the ground floor of the Hong Kong

Central Library.

Events and Participation

4. Broadly speaking, MC6 comprises three main types of events, viz. (a) formal meetings; (b) negotiation sessions; and (c) Host's hospitalities. Formal meetings will include an opening ceremony, plenary meetings, accession ceremonies for newly acceded WTO members (if any), etc. The WTO Secretariat will be closely involved in formulating schedules and programmes for the Conference.

5. Apart from the Host Government and WTO Secretariat staff, MC6 participants will include three main groups, viz. (a) Delegates; (b) Media; and (c) NGOs. A strong presence of the media is also expected. NGO events are an integral part of the Conference. The accredited NGOs are expected to take an active part by organising meetings, seminars, exhibitions, fairs etc.

MC6 Coordination Office

6. The Trade and Industry Department (TID) is taking a leading role in the logistical preparation for MC6. An MC6 Coordination Office (MCO) has been established in TID to handle such preparations. MCO is working hand-in-hand with the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in Geneva as well as in close liaison with other key departments in the Government.

7. The hosting of MC6 is a government-wide project. All bureaux and departments concerned have been briefed and will provide full support to make the event a success. To coordinate the concerted efforts of bureaux/departments and other organisations, as well as to oversee the planning and implementation, a Steering Committee, chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Commerce and Industry) and comprising senior directorate representatives from various bureaux and departments, has

been set up in August 2004. Six working groups have also been set up under the Steering Committee to be responsible for the following key areas of work: (a) accommodation; (b) conference facilities and information & communications technology; (c) transport and airport reception; (d) security and accreditation; (e) media, publicity and community relations; and (f) social programmes, commercial sponsorship and liaison support. Details of these are provided in the ensuing paragraphs.

Accommodation

8. We anticipate MC6 will be attended by about 11,000 participants. With the assistance of the Hong Kong Hotels Association and the Hong Kong Tourism Board, MCO has embarked on a room blocking exercise with hotels. MCO is also in the process of finalising the appointment of a housing agent to handle matters relating to hotel accommodation arrangements, including the appointment of conference hotels (mainly those meeting certain criteria such as convenient access to HKCEC, provision of around 200 rooms or 40% of its room inventory to MC6 participants, etc.). Following discussion with the housing agent (when appointed) and the WTO Secretariat, we hope to announce the hotel accommodation booking and allocation details to WTO members early next year.

Conference Facilities and Information & Communications Technology

9. MCO is working closely with the WTO Secretariat and HKCEC manager in drawing up the space allocation plan for HKCEC to provide practicable solutions to meet the various requirements of WTO. MC6 also entails a wide variety of conference facilities and information and communications technology (ICT) requirements, including simultaneous interpretation, telecommunications facilities, AV systems etc. MCO will work closely with the WTO Secretariat on the details of the facilities and equipment

required, and arrange for their procurement/hiring and installation in time to meet the holding of MC6.

Transport and Airport Reception

10. MCO will arrange for the provision of transport (including cars as well as shuttle service) between the airport and conference hotels, and between conference hotels and the HKCEC, for MC6 participants. Heads of delegations will be provided with chauffeur-driven limousines during the MC6 period. MCO will also work out arrangements to facilitate the arrival and departure of MC6 participants at the Hong Kong International Airport and other border control points, including transfers and hospitality arrangements.

Security and Accreditation

11. 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 the different meetings and activities taking place in the venues designated for MC6 functions. It will also look after public order and safety. HKPF has set up a number of working groups to look into areas including traffic management, public order, PR and logistics etc, with a view to drawing up security plans and contingency measures in close consultation with MCO and other bureaux and departments. It will also review good practice and experience of events held overseas and devise strategies that best suit MC6.

12. On security of the venue, only persons and vehicles which have undergone an accreditation process and obtained a personalized accreditation badge (accreditation labels for vehicles) may have access to the venues designated for MC6 functions. The MCO is working closely with the WTO Secretariat and HKPF in developing an accreditation system for MC6.

Media, Publicity and Community Relations

13. Given that MC6 is a global event, MCO will work out a comprehensive PR strategy covering the local community (in particular District Councils), our international interlocutors as well as the local and international media. One main objective of the PR strategy would be to enable the local community to better understand the importance and benefits of the multilateral trading regime to Hong Kong's economic development. We hope this would help to encourage the community to be welcoming to all the MC6 participants that will come from all over the world. We are mindful of the possible inconvenience that might be caused to the public, such as increased traffic flow or some special localized traffic arrangements in some areas. We will try our best to strike a balance between ensuring the smooth conduct of MC6 and the safety of all the participants on the one hand and minimising inconvenience to the community on the other.

Social Programmes, Commercial Sponsorship and Liaison Support

14. While trade negotiations will be the core activities of MC6, as the host, we will provide some hospitality and social programmes and take these opportunities to showcase the different facets of Hong Kong as an Asia world city. We will host a welcoming dinner for ministers and hope to include some appropriate cultural performances during the dinner. MCO will continue to work with Hong Kong Tourism Commission and Hong Kong Tourism Board on this front.

15. MCO will also work out with the WTO Secretariat on the sponsorship guidelines to increase public awareness and support, as well as to defray some costs of organising the event.

Way Forward

16. We will continue to make preparation for MC6, and will keep members of this Panel informed of progress made from time to time.

Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau

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