

立法會
Legislative Council

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Paper for the House Committee meeting on 23 June 2006

**Proposed overseas duty visit by the
Panel on Environmental Affairs**

Purpose

This paper seeks the permission of the House Committee under rule 22(u) of the House Rules for the Panel on Environmental Affairs (the Panel) to conduct an overseas duty visit to Japan, Denmark and Finland in August 2006.

Background

2. The Panel has been monitoring the progress made in the avoidance and mitigation of environmental pollution, particularly in respect of waste management, air pollution control and water quality management.

3. To tackle the increasingly serious problem of municipal solid waste (MSW), the Administration published “A Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)” in December 2005. It is noted that recovery, recycling and reuse are the three inter-related components to ensure success of waste reduction. The processes of collection, turning recovered materials into useable products and the sale of these products add values to the recovered materials and can create a circular economy that brings business and job opportunities. Nevertheless, the high land and labour costs as well as insufficient recyclable materials collected are the major barriers to the growth of recycling industry in Hong Kong. To this end, the Administration has earmarked Tuen Mun Area 38 for the establishment of the EcoPark to facilitate the development of the recycling industry and to complement other waste reduction initiatives, such as the proposed producer responsibility schemes. Given that the concept of EcoPark is new to Hong Kong, it will be useful for members to get first-hand information on overseas experience in the operation of similar facilities so that they can be in a better position to scrutinize future funding proposals relating to the EcoPark and monitor its progress of implementation to ensure the success of the EcoPark in Hong Kong.

4. The deteriorating air quality in Hong Kong has all along been a major public concern. As power plants make up the largest emission source within Hong Kong, there is a need to reduce emission from power plants so as to improve air quality and safeguard public health. In its Consultation Paper on Future Development of the Electricity Market in Hong Kong – Stage II Consultation published in December 2005, the Administration proposes a package of measures to reduce the emission of power plants, including the development of renewable energy (RE) in Hong Kong. According to the “Study on the Potential Application of RE in Hong Kong”, solar power, wind power, building integrated fuel cell and energy from waste are considered potentially feasible for wide-scale application in Hong Kong. However, there are institutional, economic and land constraints to be resolved before solar and wind energy systems could be employed on a large scale in Hong Kong. As the use of fossil fuels is considered not sustainable in the long run, the development of RE is necessary to reduce the reliance on fossil fuels. Given that the Administration has commissioned two pilot schemes on the use of wind energy, a visit to overseas countries with successful application of RE in large scale will facilitate members’ understanding on the use of RE with a view to monitoring the formulation and implementation of policy on RE in Hong Kong.

5. The lack of a policy on total water management in Hong Kong has all along been the concern of the Panel. As it may not be sustainable in the long run for Hong Kong to rely on Dongjiang as its sole water supply, the Administration has been repeatedly urged to adopt a holistic approach in conserving and recycling the scarce clean water sources. Given that a number of pilot projects on desalination and secondary sewage treatment etc are underway in Hong Kong, overseas experience in the application of total water management will equip members with the knowledge to monitor the formulation and implementation of the relevant policy in Hong Kong.

Details of the proposed overseas duty visit

Objective of the proposed duty visit

6. The purpose of the proposed duty visit is for members to get first-hand information on the latest development in the recycling and disposal of MSW, application of RE in wider scale, measures to improve air quality and water management in overseas countries so that they could be in a better position to advise and monitor the Government in implementing related policies and projects in future.

Proposed timing and places to be visited

7. At the special meeting held on 13 June 2006, the Panel agreed that the proposed duty visit would take place in August 2006. Members also agreed that the delegation would visit Japan, Denmark and Finland. Japan is chosen because it is famous for its eco-towns and advanced technology for waste disposal. The active measures it has taken to improve air quality and reduce global warming also are of

interest to members. Denmark on the other hand is the forerunner in the application of wind power and other forms of RE while Finland tops the world in its water management.

8. A preliminary itinerary for the proposed duty visit is given in **Appendix I**. The detailed programme for the visit will be drawn up in consultation with the host organizations in due course.

Funding arrangement

9. As approved by The Legislative Council Commission, each Member (except the President) is provided with an overseas duty visit account of HK\$55,000 for the purpose of duty visits outside Hong Kong organized by committees, other than the Parliamentary Liaison Subcommittee, of the Council during the 2004-08 term. Any expenditure incurred in one term in excess of HK\$55,000 has to be paid by the Member personally. However, if by the end of a term, there are unused balances in Members' overseas duty visit accounts, the funds available will be used to pay those Members who have expended more than their allocation, in proportion to their excess qualifying expenditure.

10. A breakdown of the estimated expenditure of the proposed visit is in **Appendix II**.

Membership of delegation

11. The Panel has agreed that the proposed visit will also be open to non-Panel Members. A list of Members who have indicated interest in participating in the proposed overseas duty visit is in **Appendix III**.

Advice sought

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

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
22 June 2006

Panel on Environmental Affairs

Overseas duty visit

Preliminary itinerary for a 11-day programme to Japan, Denmark and Finland

(Assuming date of departure is 22 August 2006)

(as at 22 June 2006)

Routing: Hong Kong → Tokyo → Sapporo → Tokyo → Copenhagen → Helsinki → Copenhagen → Tokyo → Hong Kong

Date	Tue (22/8/2006)	Wed (23/8/2006)	Thu (24/8/2006)	Fri (25/8/2006)	Sat (26/8/2006)	Sun (27/8/2006)	Mon (28/8/2006)	Tue (29/8/2006)	Wed (30/8/2006)	Thu (31/8/2006)
<i>Tentative activities</i>	Depart for Tokyo	Tokyo Meeting with Tokyo Metropolitan Government representatives to exchange views on the measures to tackle air pollution, global warming, heat effect, management of municipal solid waste (MSW)	Tokyo Site visits to observe the implementation of measures, including separation of MSW at source, green rooftop and control of indoor room temperature etc. Visit a gasification plant	Sapporo Visit Sapporo Recycling Complex, focusing on the recycling of used tires and polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles from source to end-products.		Depart for Copenhagen via Tokyo	Copenhagen Meeting with the relevant authorities and organizations to exchange views on the implementation and usage of renewable energy as well as the vision and plans which the Denmark Government may have in protecting the environment in the long run	Copenhagen Visit wind farms and solar energy facilities	Helsinki Meeting with the relevant authorities and organizations to exchange views on the implementation of the policy on total water management and the vision and plans which the Finland Government may have in protecting the environment in the long run	Helsinki Visit treatment plants for both potable water and sewage Depart for Hong Kong in the afternoon (Arriving at Hong Kong on 1 September 2006)

Panel on Environmental Affairs
Proposed overseas duty visit in August 2006
Tentative estimate of expenditure

Duration of visit : 22 August to 1 September 2006

Routing of visit : Hong Kong / Tokyo / Sapporo / Copenhagen / Helsinki / Hong Kong

Breakdown of expenses

Items	Estimated expenses HK\$ (per person)	
1. Return air ticket (by All Nippon Airways)	<i>Economy class</i> \$19,200	<i>Business class</i> \$34,600
2. Airport tax and fuel surcharge	\$2,768	
3. Hotel accommodation allowance		
(a) Japan	\$7,160	
(b) Denmark	\$1,982	
(c) Finland	\$1,618	
4. Duty visit expenses reimbursement		
(a) Japan	\$4,775	
(b) Denmark	\$1,320	
(c) Finland	\$1,620	
5. Travel insurance	\$370	
TOTAL :	\$40,813	\$56,213

Remarks :

1. Exchange rates adopted -
YEN100 = HK\$6.957
DKK1 = HK\$1.33
EUR1 = HK\$9.85
2. Other expenditure including hospitality, local group transportation, interpretation services (if required), souvenirs and incidental expenses will be charged against other votes of the Secretariat.

Panel on Environmental Affairs

**List of members who have indicated interest in taking part in
the visit to Japan, Denmark and Finland in August 2006**

(Position as at 22 June 2006)

Hon CHOY So-yuk, JP (Chairman)

Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Deputy Chairman)

Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP

Hon LEE Wing-tat

Non-Panel Member

Hon James TO Kun-sun

(Total: 5 members)