

Extract from Minutes of Meeting held on 11 May 2006
Meeting and Luncheon between Legislative Council Members and
Tuen Mun District Council Members

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III. Promoting environmental industries and construction of an exhibition centre in Tuen Mun

15. Ms CHEUNG Yuet-lan said that the Government's plan to construct the proposed EcoPark in Tuen Mun was controversial. Tuen Mun residents were worried about the environmental problems arising from the EcoPark. Nevertheless, having considered various views, TMDC considered that recycling industries would help promote local community economy and employment and therefore unanimously endorsed the construction of the EcoPark in Tuen Mun Area 38. She suggested that the Administration should consider constructing various facilities in Tuen Mun district to develop an industrial chain, thereby turning Tuen Mun into a centre of environmental industries. Ms CHEUNG remarked that, on this basis, an ecopark alone failed to facilitate the development of environmental industries. Hence, a working group of TMDC proposed, after deliberations and discussions with the trade, that the Government should construct an industrial exhibition centre in the district to develop Tuen Mun into a focal point of environmental industries. She also remarked that the existing industrial buildings in Tuen Mun district were available for development, coupled with the fact that 16% of the local population was young people and 10% of the residents had post-secondary qualifications or above, these were favourable conditions for developing Tuen Mun district into a centre of environmental industries. Moreover, she suggested that the Administration should consider how the 92 hectares of industrial land in the district could best be used to develop Tuen Mun into the industrial heartland of the Pearl River Delta. Ms CHEUNG hoped that LegCo Members would seriously consider the findings and recommendations of TMDC's working group on the future industrial development in Tuen Mun district and support the construction of an industrial exhibition centre there.

16. Mr YIM Tin-sang pointed out that as the industries operating within the EcoPark were not labour-intensive, the establishment of the EcoPark might not be able to improve the employment situation in the district. Pointing out that the Working Group on Development and Planning of Tuen Mun district under TMDC would prepare a report to comprehensively review the long-term planning of Tuen Mun district with objectives and specific proposals in respect of the overall future planning and development of the district, he considered it inappropriate at the present stage to treat environmental industries as the only key direction of development.

17. Miss SO Oi-kwan pointed out that the poor planning of Tuen Mun district and inadequacy of supporting transport facilities gave rise to traffic and other community problems. She called on the Government to explore ways to facilitate the overall development of local industries. Miss SO was of the view that the promotion of local community economy in Tuen Mun over the years had failed to improve the employment situation of local residents. Hence, the establishment of the EcoPark was a starting point for improving the local community economy. Given that environmental industries were polluting trades, TMDC would step up monitoring their environmental impacts on the district in future.

18. Mr TAI Yin-chiu opined that the inadequacy of ancillary transport facilities in Tuen Mun district had driven investors away, which was the major reason for the stunted economic development of the district.

19. Mr Edward PONG said that various sectors across the community had negative views on industrial development. As they were of the view that industries in Hong Kong had no prospects, they initially thought that there would not be any major problem for placing obnoxious facilities in the industrial land in Tuen Mun and did not take a position. Subsequently, they realized that such facilities would give rise to various problems and raised strong opposition. He hoped LegCo Members could help correct the concept to make the community at large understand that industries in Hong Kong still had potentials for further development.

20. Ms FONG Lai-man remarked that if traffic and environmental problems could be solved, the establishment of the EcoPark in Tuen Mun might as well be an ideal starting point for development. She was dissatisfied that the Government did not show any concern about the health and working environment problems faced by those working in Tuen Mun. For instance, the setting up of the PAFF would pose serious hazards to the health and safety of those working in Shiu Wing Steel Mill and residents nearby. Ms FONG hoped that LegCo Members would care about the potential hazards of dangerous facilities posed to residents in Tuen Mun district.

21. Ms CHEUNG Yuet-lan added that the Ecopark was located next to the PAFF which would pose hazards to those working inside as well as residents in Tuen Mun. TMDC had clearly stated its objection to the setting up of the PAFF in the district. Ms CHEUNG suggested that the Government should locate the PAFF elsewhere and allocate the 40 hectares of land to the EcoPark to meet the needs of the trade and promote the development of environmental industries.

22. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming remarked that the EcoPark project had been endorsed by the Public Works Subcommittee and Finance Committee of LegCo on 15 February and 24 March 2006 respectively. He noted TMDC members' views on the development of environmental industries in the district. How the environmental industries in Tuen Mun should be promoted in future and how these industries gave impetus to the development of local community economy would be open for joint study by various parties in future.

23. The Convenor thanked TMDC for its views and noted the different views of TMDC members on the EcoPark.

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Legislative Council Secretariat
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