

(Translation)

Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Press Conference on 9 October 2006

Speaking Note for Honourable SIN Chung-kai, JP, Chairman

On behalf of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting, I wish to welcome you all to this press conference.

2. At present, there is no clear policy on public service broadcasting (PSB). In view of the Administration's appointment of the Committee on Review of Public Service Broadcasting in Hong Kong (the Review Committee) in January 2006 to undertake a review of PSB and its future development, the Panel found it necessary to conduct a study on how PSB can be taken forward in Hong Kong in future, so as to provide useful reference to the Legislative Council (LegCo) as well as the general public.

3. The Panel has held special meetings in March and August 2006 to exchange views with the Administration, the Review Committee, Radio Television Hong Kong and a number of deputations. It has also posted a general notice on the LegCo's website inviting submissions. In addition, a delegation of the Panel visited Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom in April 2006 to acquire first-hand understanding on the development experience of PSB in these countries. The Panel has also made reference to the literature research on the PSB systems of Australia and Germany.

4. After months of work, the Panel has completed its study and published its report today. The study report comprises five chapters. Apart from two chapters which focus on overseas experience and the development of PSB in Hong Kong respectively, Chapter IV of the report presents the Panel's analysis of the key attributes for an effective and sustainable PSB system while Chapter V summarizes the findings of the Panel in this study, which are primarily pointers for future deliberation. As recapitulated in the Executive Summary, the Panel concurs that the future PSB system in Hong Kong should be founded on the core principles of “universality”, “diversity”, “independence” and “distinctiveness”; while “editorial independence” is the core value of a public service broadcaster. The Panel considers that, if set up as an independent statutory body, the future public service broadcaster can operate independently of the Government, free from political and commercial interferences and be accountable to the public. Hong Kong should have at least one public service broadcaster which is supported mainly by public resources to provide full-fledged services. The Panel has explored the funding sources, corporate governance, accountability requirements and programming of the future public service broadcaster. Broader issues such as competition and opening up the airwaves have also been discussed.

5. The Panel wishes to stress that the Government has a responsibility to formulate a policy on PSB. This report aims to highlight a range of key issues which ought to be properly addressed in mapping out the future development of PSB in Hong Kong, as well as the Panel's findings on these issues. We hope that the Review Committee and the Administration, in finalizing their recommendations, will also give due regard to these issues and the Panel's findings. It is our hope that the community can be engaged in active discussion on the way forward for the development of PSB in Hong Kong.