

# 立法會 *Legislative Council*

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## **Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting**

**Paper for the meeting on 13 February 2006**

### **Study of issues related to public service broadcasting**

#### **Purpose**

This paper invites members' views for the Panel to conduct a study on issues related to public service broadcasting, including the proposal for the Panel to undertake an overseas duty visit to acquire first-hand information on public service broadcasting in selected countries.

#### **Background**

2. Issues related to public service broadcasting and the role of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) as a public service broadcaster have received ongoing attention by the Panel. During past deliberation, members have raised concern over a number of salient issues such as the positioning of RTHK as a public service broadcaster, its editorial independence and programming policy, and the need or otherwise for the provision of public access channels in Hong Kong.

3. On 17 January 2006, the Administration announced the appointment by the Chief Executive of an independent committee to review public service broadcasting in Hong Kong. The membership list of the committee and its terms of reference are at **Appendix I and II**. The committee is expected to submit a report on the review to the Chief Executive in October 2006.

4. Members reckon that at present, there is no clear policy on public service broadcasting in Hong Kong. With the advent in technology and growing public concern about how public service broadcasting should be delivered, the Panel has considered it necessary to conduct a study into issues related to public service

broadcasting with a view to formulating certain proposals on the way forward for the consideration of the Administration in deciding on a policy option most appropriate for Hong Kong. Members have agreed in principle that the Panel will compile a report on the study and forward it to the Committee on Review of Public Service Broadcasting before August 2006.

5. In examining the subject, the Panel has also made reference to an Information Note prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat's Research and Library Services Division (RLSD) on "Public Service Broadcasting in Canada, Germany, the United Kingdom and the United States" (IN 12/05-06). Members in general consider that the experience of overseas jurisdictions in implementing public service broadcasting will provide useful reference for the study. In this regard, the Panel has requested the RLSD to conduct a research on public service broadcasting in selected places, the research outline of which has been circulated to members for endorsement. Members also consider it useful to visit selected overseas public service broadcasters with a view to acquiring first-hand information on their experience and exchanging views with the parties concerned.

### **Proposed scope of study**

6. Against the above background, it is proposed that the Panel's study should include the following :

- (a) the current landscape in the delivery of public service broadcasting through RTHK and other commercial TV and sound broadcasting licensees, the problems and concerns which have emerged over the years in the delivery of public service broadcasting; and
- (b) the changing landscape of broadcasting due to technological advancement such as the Internet and digital broadcasting, rising public expectation on broadcasting services and the impact of such developments on public service broadcasting;
- (c) overseas experience in (a) and (b).

### **The proposal for an overseas duty visit**

#### Objective of the proposed visit

7. It is proposed that the visit will focus on overseas public service broadcasting systems and related issues with particular reference to the following areas :

- (a) the accountability, institutional arrangement and funding for public service broadcasters;

- (b) the role of public service broadcasting in the relevant broadcasting market vis-à-vis that of commercial broadcasters;
- (c) editorial independence of public service broadcasting and freedom of expression;
- (d) the impact of technological advancement on the development of public service broadcasting; and
- (e) the provision of public access channels

#### Proposed timing of the visit

8. At the Panel meeting held on 25 January 2006, members agreed to explore the feasibility of visiting selected places during the Easter break in late April 2006 to study different models of public service broadcasting systems. Having regard to the schedule of committee meetings at LegCo during the first three weeks of April 2006 and the intervening public holidays at the proposed places of visit, it is proposed that the overseas duty visit should preferably take place during the week commencing 17 April 2006. The exact dates will however be subject to further consultation with the host organizations.

#### Proposed places to be visited

9. Members are aware that owing to the tight timeframe, the flight time and the time required to meet and exchange views with relevant parties, the visit would not be able to cover a wide range of public service broadcasters worldwide. Having regard to members' views and the initial response from overseas institutions, the following options are proposed for members' consideration :

(a) ***Option 1***

A visit to the United Kingdom, Switzerland (optional) and Germany from 18 April to 26 April 2006. A preliminary programme is at **Appendix III**;

(b) ***Option 2***

A visit to the United States and United Kingdom from 16 April to 22 April 2006. A preliminary programme is at **Appendix IV**; or

(c) ***Option 3***

A visit to Canada, the United States and United Kingdom from 11 April to 21 April 2006. A preliminary programme is at **Appendix V**.

The estimated budget for the aforesaid three options is at **Appendix VI**.

10. Alternatively, within the limited time available, members may also consider visiting a single destination such as the United Kingdom where the delegation may meet with different public service broadcasters, the regulator and industry association(s).

#### Funding arrangement

11. As approved by the Legislative Council Commission, each Member (except the President) is provided with an overseas duty visit (ODV) 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' ODV 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.

#### Membership of delegation

12. As agreed by the House Committee on 11 May 2001, a non-committee Member may join an overseas duty visit of a committee with the consent of the committee and the Member may use the allocation in the Member's ODV account to finance the visit. The House Committee also endorsed the following two guidelines to assist committees in determining the size and composition of a delegation for an overseas duty visit:

- (a) Members of a committee should have priority in participating in an overseas duty visit undertaken by the committee; and
- (b) A delegation undertaking an overseas duty visit should be of a manageable size in order not to create difficulties in logistical arrangements.

#### **Tentative workplan**

13. A tentative workplan is at **Appendix VII**.

#### **Advice sought**

14. Members are invited to consider :

- (a) whether the proposed scope of study in paragraph 6 above should be endorsed;
- (b) the timing of the visit as proposed in paragraph 8 above;

- (c) whether any of the options as set out in paragraph 9 above, or other alternatives should be adopted;
- (d) whether non-Panel Members should be invited to join the proposed duty visit; and
- (e) whether the tentative workplan in **Appendix VII** should be endorsed in principle.

### **The way forward**

15. Subject to members' decision, the Secretariat will issue a circular to invite Panel members to indicate interest in joining the duty visit and liaise with the relevant Consulates-General and Economic and Trade Offices. The permission of the House Committee will also sought for the Panel to conduct the overseas duty visit.

Council Business Division 1  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
10 February 2006

**Committee on Review of Public Service Broadcasting**

**Membership**

**Chairman**

**Mr Raymond Roy WONG, SBS**

Council Member of both the Hong Kong Baptist University and Open University of Hong Kong

**Member**

**Mr CHAN King-cheung**

Chief Editor, the Hong Kong Economic Journal

**Ms May FUNG May-gay**

Member of the Council of the Hong Kong Baptist University

**Professor LEUNG Tin-wai**

Head, Department of Journalism and Communication, Hong Kong Shue Yan College

**Mr PAO Wan-lung**

Publisher, Sing Pao Newspaper Company Limited

**Professor Judy TSUI**

Dean, Faculty of Business, the Hong Kong Polytechnic University

**Mr Mathias WOO**

Creative Director, Zuni Icosahedron

**Committee on Review of Public Service Broadcasting**

**Terms of Reference**

1. To examine the role of, and justifications and public purposes for, public service broadcasting (PSB) in the development of Hong Kong's broadcasting market, against the public financial and other resources required for such broadcasting.
2. To identify issues concerning public accountability for PSB in matters of editorial impartiality, programming policy and good governance.
3. To identify measures for the Administration to evaluate the effectiveness of PSB and arrangements through which the public can participate in such a process.
4. To recommend, in the light of the above, an appropriate arrangement for the provision of PSB in Hong Kong.
5. To recommend implementation plans for the short, medium and long terms.

**Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting  
Overseas duty visit in April 2006**

**Preliminary Itinerary**

**Option 1 : Hong Kong → U.K.(London) → Switzerland (Geneva\*) → Germany (Frankfurt/Mainz) → Hong Kong**

<b>April 2006</b>							
<b>Monday</b>	<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Friday</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	
	<b>18</b> Depart Hong Kong (0940 hrs)  Arrive London (1555 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>  <i>Hotel</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>	<b>19</b> Visit <u>BBC,</u> <u>Channel 4 and</u> <u>Ofcom</u>  <i>Inland Transport</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>  <i>Hotel</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>	<b>20</b> Visit  Depart London (1510 hrs)  Arrive Geneva* (1750 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>  <i>Hotel</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>	<b>21</b> Visit <u>EBU,</u> <u>WRTVC*</u>  <i>Inland Transport</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>  <i>Hotel</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>	<b>22</b> Depart Geneva* (1115 hrs)  Arrive Frankfurt (1235 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>  <i>Hotel</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>	<b>23</b>	
<b>24</b> Visit <u>ARD</u>  <i>Inland Transport</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>  <i>Hotel</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>	<b>25</b> Visit <u>ZDF</u>  Depart Frankfurt (1355 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> <i>To be confirmed</i>  <i>Hotel</i> <i>N.A.</i>	<b>26</b> Arrive Hong Kong (0705 hrs)					

\* If Geneva is skipped, the delegation can lengthen its visit in London.



**Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting  
Overseas duty visit in April 2006**

**Preliminary Itinerary**

**Option 2 : Hong Kong → USA (Washington, D.C.) → U.K. (London) → Hong Kong**

<b>April 2006</b>						
<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>	<u>Sunday</u>
						<b>16</b> Depart Hong Kong (1015 hrs)  Arrive Washington, D.C. (1725 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed
<b>17</b> <u>Visit CPB and PBS</u>  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed	<b>18</b> <u>Visit</u>  Depart Washington, D.C. (2155 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> N.A.	<b>19</b> Arrive London (1010 hrs)  <u>Visit BBC</u>  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed	<b>20</b> <u>Visit Channel 4 and Ofcom</u>  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed	<b>21</b> <u>Visit</u>  Depart London (1820 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> N.A.	<b>22</b> Arrive Hong Kong (1320 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> N.A.  <i>Hotel</i> N.A.	

**Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting  
Overseas duty visit in April 2006**

**Preliminary Itinerary**

**Option 3 : Hong Kong → Canada (Toronto) → USA (Washington, D.C.) → U.K. (London) → Hong Kong**

<b>April 2006</b>						
<u>Monday</u>	<u>Tuesday</u>	<u>Wednesday</u>	<u>Thursday</u>	<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>	<u>Sunday</u>
	<b>11</b> Depart Hong Kong (1525 hrs)  Arrive Toronto (1855 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed	<b>12</b> <u>Visit CBC</u>  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed	<b>13</b> <u>Visit</u>  Depart Toronto (1740 hrs)  Arrive Washington, D.C. (1905 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed	<b>14</b> <u>Visit CPB</u>  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed	<b>15</b>  <i>Inland Transport</i> N.A.  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed	<b>16</b>  <i>Inland Transport</i> N.A.  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed
<b>17</b> <u>Visit PBS and NPR</u>  Depart Washington, D.C. (2155 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> N.A.	<b>18</b> Arrive London (1010 hrs)  <u>Visit BBC</u>  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed	<b>19</b> <u>Visit Channel 4 and Ofcom</u>  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed	<b>20</b> <u>Visit</u>  Depart London (1820 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> To be confirmed	<b>21</b> Arrive Hong Kong (1320 hrs)  <i>Inland Transport</i> To be confirmed  <i>Hotel</i> N.A.		

**Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting  
Overseas duty visit in April 2006**

**Preliminary Budget (Overall)**

Option	Route	Estimated expenses (HK\$)							
		Airfare <sup>1</sup>		Airport tax	Hotel accommodation <sup>2</sup>	Meal and other allowances <sup>2</sup>	Travel insurance	Total	
		Business class	Economy class					Business class	Economy class
1 (Appendix III)	Hong Kong → London → Geneva → Frankfurt → Hong Kong	49,450	13,030	2,000	8,484	5,656	300	<b>65,890</b>	<b>29,470</b>
2 Appendix IV)	Hong Kong → Washington, D.C. → London → Hong Kong	43,166	31,181	3,000	4,843	3,249	300	<b>54,558</b>	<b>42,572</b>
3 (Appendix V)	Hong Kong → Toronto → Washington, D.C. → London → Hong Kong	63,000	35,900	3,000	8,696	5,797	350	<b>80,843</b>	<b>53,743</b>

Note 1: The prices quoted are indicative only. They are the regular fares which may be subject to variation under special season promotional offers.  
If the overseas duty visit is finalized, the Secretariat will also obtain quotations from different travel agents.

2 The actual amount will vary according to the relevant exchange rates.

**Tentative workplan**

11 March 2006	Special Panel meeting to receive views from deputations
Late April 2006	Overseas duty visit
May 2006	Panel meeting to discuss the outline of the report and, if needed, consult the public or parties concerned on specific issues
Late June/early July 2006	Preliminary draft report for internal deliberation
Late July 2006	Submission of the Panel's report to the Committee on Review of Public Service Broadcasting