

OFFICIAL RECORD OF PROCEEDINGS

Thursday, 20 December 2007

The Council continued to meet at Nine o'clock

MEMBERS PRESENT:

THE PRESIDENT

THE HONOURABLE MRS RITA FAN HSU LAI-TAI, G.B.M., G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JAMES TIEN PEI-CHUN, G.B.S., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE RAYMOND HO CHUNG-TAI, S.B.S.,
S.B.ST.J., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LEE CHEUK-YAN

THE HONOURABLE MARTIN LEE CHU-MING, S.C., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE DAVID LI KWOK-PO, G.B.M., G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE FRED LI WAH-MING, J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE LUI MING-WAH, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS SELINA CHOW LIANG SHUK-YEE, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JAMES TO KUN-SUN

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG MAN-KWONG

THE HONOURABLE CHAN YUEN-HAN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE BERNARD CHAN, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS SOPHIE LEUNG LAU YAU-FUN, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG YIU-CHUNG

THE HONOURABLE SIN CHUNG-KAI, S.B.S., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE PHILIP WONG YU-HONG, G.B.S.

THE HONOURABLE WONG YUNG-KAN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JASPER TSANG YOK-SING, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE HOWARD YOUNG, S.B.S., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE YEUNG SUM, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU KONG-WAH, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MIRIAM LAU KIN-YEE, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE EMILY LAU WAI-HING, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE TAM YIU-CHUNG, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ABRAHAM SHEK LAI-HIM, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LI FUNG-YING, B.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE TOMMY CHEUNG YU-YAN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT CHAN WAI-YIP

THE HONOURABLE AUDREY EU YUET-MEE, S.C., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE VINCENT FANG KANG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WONG KWOK-HING, M.H.

THE HONOURABLE LI KWOK-YING, M.H., J.P.

DR THE HONOURABLE JOSEPH LEE KOK-LONG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE DANIEL LAM WAI-KEUNG, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE JEFFREY LAM KIN-FUNG, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW LEUNG KWAN-YUEN, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ALAN LEONG KAH-KIT, S.C.

DR THE HONOURABLE KWOK KA-KI

DR THE HONOURABLE FERNANDO CHEUNG CHIU-HUNG

THE HONOURABLE CHEUNG HOK-MING, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE WONG TING-KWONG, B.B.S.

THE HONOURABLE RONNY TONG KA-WAH, S.C.

PROF THE HONOURABLE PATRICK LAU SAU-SHING, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE MRS ANSON CHAN, G.B.M., J.P.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT HO CHUN-YAN

THE HONOURABLE MARGARET NG

THE HONOURABLE CHAN KAM-LAM, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU CHIN-SHEK, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LAU WONG-FAT, G.B.M., G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE CHOY SO-YUK, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE ANDREW CHENG KAR-FOO

THE HONOURABLE TIMOTHY FOK TSUN-TING, G.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE FREDERICK FUNG KIN-KEE, S.B.S., J.P.

THE HONOURABLE LEE WING-TAT

THE HONOURABLE LEUNG KWOK-HUNG

THE HONOURABLE CHIM PUI-CHUNG

THE HONOURABLE ALBERT JINGHAN CHENG, J.P.

THE HONOURABLE KWONG CHI-KIN

THE HONOURABLE TAM HEUNG-MAN

PUBLIC OFFICER ATTENDING:

THE HONOURABLE EDWARD YAU TANG-WAH, J.P.
SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

CLERK IN ATTENDANCE:

MR RICKY FUNG CHOI-CHEUNG, J.P., SECRETARY GENERAL

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): There are only 28 Members in the Chamber. Will the Clerk please ring the bell.

(After the summoning bell had been rung, a number of Members entered the Chamber)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): The meeting starts.

MEMBERS' MOTIONS

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Second motion: Establishing a geological park in the eastern part of the New Territories.

I now call upon Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming to speak and move his motion.

ESTABLISHING A GEOLOGICAL PARK IN THE EASTERN PART OF THE NEW TERRITORIES

MR CHEUNG HOK-MING (in Cantonese): Madam President, I move that the motion as printed on the Agenda, be passed.

Madam President, today I move a motion on "Establishing a geological park in the eastern part of the New Territories" on behalf of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB). I have two photographs with me, and you might think that the scenery shown on the photographs can only be found in foreign countries or the Mainland. I frankly tell Members that this is found within the territory of Hong Kong, in the area around the High Island Reservoir and Tolo Channel in the New Territories. Hence, I move this motion today which is based on a report prepared by the DAB last year on the northeastern part of the New Territories. The report is now completed and I hope Members would support my motion today.

Madam President, butterflies in Hong Kong can take shelter in the Fung Yuen Butterfly Conservation Area and coral reefs in Hoi Ha, Sai Kung can take refuge in the Marine Park, but rocks in Hong Kong, which have existed for over 100 million years, are overlooked by us. Other than preserving precious and

valuable geologic spots in a focused manner, another important function of geological heritage is to preserve directly or indirectly the habitats of animals to enhance the diversity of the ecological system. "No blood can be drilled from rocks". Being not a life form, rocks certainly are not exposed to the danger of extinction. However, if we do not protect the geological features properly, these precious rocks will also run the risk of disappearing from the earth. The motion of establishing a geological park proposed by me today seeks to arouse the concern of the Government and the public so that they will be awakened to their disrespect in treating the history of the earth before damage is done to the precious geological features.

"Geological park" or "geopark" is an academic term which Member may find unfamiliar. However, if I mention the unique geoparks found in both sides of the Taiwan Strait, Members will not find these popular tourist spots unfamiliar. The Taining Global Geopark, a famous geopark of our country, centres mainly on the Danxiashan landforms in Guangdong, together with the Zhaixia Big Canyon and eight scenic areas of the Taining Geological Museum. The Yehliu Geopark in Taiwan reached an agreement with the Taining Global Geopark last year to co-operate on such fronts as geology education promotion and academic research in a bid to promote the concept of geopark.

Although Hong Kong cannot be compared to Danxiashan, the geology of Chek Mum in the area around Tolo Channel is the same as that of Danxiashan, both of them being a kind of red rock layer called Cretaceous red beds. It is often written in Secondary and Primary school textbooks that "the natural resources in Hong Kong are limited", but, in terms of precious geological features, Hong Kong has a lot to offer other than the familiar Amah Rock in Sha Tin. Unique geological landforms can also be found in the area around the High Island Reservoir and Ninepin Island where rolls of gigantic hexagonal stone columns and walls cover an area of 150 sq km with estimated thickness of about 400 m, the scale of which is rare in the world. Hexagonal volcanic stone columns are not uncommon in the world, but most of them are formed of black basic basalt, but the hexagonal stone columns found in Hong Kong are acidic rhyolite which is very rare in the world. This is also the focus on which the world geopark advocated by the DAB will be established.

These spectacular volcanic columns were formed some 100 million years ago when violent underground igneous activities triggered large-scale volcanic eruptions. Massive amounts of lava, erupted along with the red-hot volcanic ashes, poured onto the ground covering slopes and the earth and formed within

an instant an extensive and massive layer of volcanic ash lavabed. Repeated and intermittent eruptions formed multiple layers of such lavabeds. When these massive areas of volcanic ash lavabeds cooled and gradually solidified into hard rocks, it contracted at a consistent rate and resulted in the rocks with hexagonal joints today.

Madam President, in recent years, one of the directions of preserving monuments and antiquities in Hong Kong is to revitalize them, so as to dispel the impression that they are "so near, yet so distant", an inadequacy of being too lofty and infrangible. The direction of developing geoparks points to the same orientation. Within the geographical region of a geopark, the geological heritage is part of an integral concept of conservation, education and sustainable development. In a word, a geopark should embrace the entire geography of the region, rather than including only relics which have geological significance. Non-geological themes, including but not limited to relics with ecological, archaeological, historic and cultural values, should also be regarded as its indispensable parts so that the entire geological content can be revealed to the people. The Hong Kong world geopark advocated and proposed by the DAB is also modelled on the elements above.

The DAB announced in mid-June this year the proposal of establishing a geopark. The Hong Kong geopark in our concept covers 344 sq km with "One centre and three regions" as the main theme. The geopark will centre on Ma On Shan where a geological museum will be built, and the three regions cover Sha Tin, Sai Kung and Tai Po.

The geopark will consist of four major zones, namely the Ma On Shan waterfront zone, the Ma On Shan iron-mine heritage zone, the High Island Reservoir and Ninpin Island geology scenic zone, and the Tolo Channel geological heritage and landforms scenic zone. On the whole, the park is characterized by Mesozoic volcanic landforms and wave-cut landforms. The geological landscape mainly consists of acidic igneous rocks with hexagonal columnar joints, wave-cut landforms, the Devonian rock stratum and formation in Wong Chuk Kok Tsui (Bluff Head), the Permian rock stratum and formation in Ma Shi Chau, the Cretaceous red beds in Chek Chau (Port Island) as well as the Ma On Shan iron-mine historic trail, and coupled with the existing ecological and humanity resources, the park is a place with scientific and humanistic values.

Madam President, regardless of the scale, any museum will have decent service providing crisp explanation for visitors. Geology, being an inorganic matter, cannot interact with the tourists or citizens. It is thus imperative to establish a museum to properly develop the education part of the park. The museum serves to promote the principles of geological heritage protection, emphasizing the importance of the work of protection. In our concept, we plan to establish an exhibition gallery in the Ma On Shan waterfront zone for public education. Moreover, we wish the Government could restore the region around the present Ma On Shan iron-mine heritage zone so that the public can witness again the only industrial iron mine in the history of Hong Kong and see how damages were done to the natural environment because of mining.

Madam President, geological heritage refers to the long geological history in the evolution of the earth, which leaves its marks today in the form of precious geological natural heritage which cannot be reproduced. In recent years, the conservation of geological heritage has become an international concern. A working group on geological heritage established by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is tasked with the preservation of global geological heritage. The preservation of geological heritage in such countries as the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom is also very comprehensive. For instance, the geological heritage in the United Kingdom is divided into two main groups, one of which is Geological Sites of Special Scientific Interest, managed by Natural England. At present, more than 2 200 such sites have been registered. The other is Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites (RIGS), managed by non-government organizations and funded by Natural England. The international practice in preserving geological heritage mainly takes the form of establishing nature reserves and national geoparks. The DAB advocates the establishment of a world geopark precisely because we wish to further enhance the work of protection and conservation through the geopark promotion scheme on the foundation of the existing country parks and marine parks.

With a population of almost 7 million, Hong Kong possesses the conditions for developing a city geopark. The concept of a metropolitan geopark is a relatively new idea in promoting geoparks. Its major advantage lies in it being able to get rid of the old concept that a geopark has to be built in a location distant from the city, thereby allowing people to discover the

geomorphologic resources of their city. If Hong Kong can successfully apply for listing as a world geopark, it will become the first metropolitan geopark in the world to incorporate the concepts of nature conservation and geological heritage protection into urban planning.

As I have stated above, if monuments and antiquities cannot be revitalized, they only exist in self-admiration and the public will have no way of knowing how to examine and appreciate them. Geological formations are no different from monuments and antiquities for we should seek to preserve their original state. Our purpose of advocating the establishment of a geopark is to strive to preserve the original state of the geological landforms while arouse more public concern for the geological environment around them. Simply put, geodiversity and biodiversity are closely related. If we can properly preserve the geological heritage, we can protect at the same time the fauna, thereby striking a balance in the entire ecological system and boosting the diversity of nature.

Regarding the amendments proposed by Ms Audrey EU and Mr LI Kwok-ying, as their ideas are concordant with my motion of establishing a world geopark, the DAB will support them.

I so submit. Thank you, Madam President.

Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming moved the following motion: (Translation)

"That, as the eastern part of the New Territories has a unique geological environment but the SAR Government does not attach much importance to it, this Council urges the Government to put forward proactive conservation proposals and improve the planning of this area, so as to develop the eastern part of the New Territories into a geological park of conservation, science popularization and tourism value, as well as to make recommendation to the Central Government to strive for its grading as a national geological park and apply to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for its listing as a world geological park."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming, be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Ms Audrey EU will move an amendment to this motion, and Mr LI Kwok-ying will move an amendment to Ms Audrey EU's amendment. The motion and the amendments will now be debated together in a joint debate.

I will first call upon Ms Audrey EU to speak and move her amendment to the motion. Then, I will call upon Mr LI Kwok-ying to speak and move his amendment to Ms Audrey EU's amendment.

MS AUDREY EU (in Cantonese): President, I move that Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming's motion be amended.

Today's debate is the last one before Christmas. I would like to tell a story about Christmas. One year, a friend of mine visited a retired British geography teacher at Christmas. Overwhelmed by the hospitality of this old gentleman and knowing that he was interested in geography and geomorphology studies, my friend gave the old gentleman a book titled "Geographical Landforms" published by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department of Hong Kong as a Christmas gift. The old gentleman was astounded when he received the present and said, "It never comes to me that Hong Kong, being a cosmopolitan city, will have an avalanche of unusual and spectacular rocks."

The remark of this retired geography teacher is indeed a reflection of the impression a lot of people have about Hong Kong. As stated in the original motion, many people actually know nothing about the spectacular landscapes behind the urban setting of Hong Kong. The amazingly sophisticated workmanship of Mother Nature is found not only in the eastern part of the New Territories, but also in Ng Fan Chau opposite Shek O Beach, Buddha's Palm Cliff on Po Toi Island, and the Vase Rock and Human-head Rock on Cheung Chau, and so on. All along, local geography teachers have relied on these sites to provide field studies to students. These sites are also popular scenic spots frequented by fans of local tours. However, in the past, the Government had made little effort on promotion, neither had it formulated any policy to protect and introduce these sites. As a result, these treasures of nature in Hong Kong are rarely known. On the other hand, I have heard of the worry of many geography teachers that the ecology of those sites may be damaged if a large number of visitors go to those sites. Some of the spectacular geological and

geomorphological features of these sites are rarely found in the world, while some unique features leave visitors with distinct impressions. Certainly, the most famous spot in Hong Kong is the Amah Rock, but there is hearsay that the site has been damaged seriously by graffiti. Actually, in other places in the world, natural beauty and landscape conservation have long since been a concern of aficionados of ecology and governments and have been put under protection. Take the United Kingdom as an example. Tens of dozens of places in the country, including 40 sites in England and Wales and nine sites in Northern Ireland, are designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). North Pennines AONB Geopark, which has been accredited the title of the World Geological Park, is one of these sites. Moreover, 40 sites in Scotland have been designated as National Scenic Areas (NSA) for conservation and promotion of ecological education. Many national parks established overseas are related to the unique natural scenery.

Over the years, a number of conservation areas like country parks and marine parks have been established in Hong Kong. However, as mentioned by Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming in his original motion, the Government has all along overlooked the unique geological environment. Under the existing conservation mechanisms, such as country parks, marine parks and sites of special scientific interest, that is, the so-called SSSI, greater attention is paid to ecology conservation, while geological landscapes are overlooked. The Government must adjust the existing policy and expand the scope of ecology conservation.

Concerning the enhancement of geological landscape conservation, I must emphasize that irrespective of the approach adopted, conservation should be accorded top priority, while other factors, such as tourism and development of the local districts, should come second. Therefore, the amendment proposed by me today focuses mainly on the theme of enhancing conservation.

Be it the development of a geological park or a world heritage site, all development should take into account the ecological carrying capacity. The ecological environment before our eyes is shaped to the present state by the Mother Nature over hundred millions of years, but the ecological carrying capacity is after all limited. Development caused by human beings may easily exceed the carrying capacity of nature, causing damages to the fragile ecology and landscapes, and for unique landscape, no remedy can be made once damage is done.

If we incline excessively towards tourism development and focus mainly on attracting visitors and achieving cost-effectiveness, ecology conservation may easily be overlooked. Therefore, before the commencement of any development, an assessment on ecological carrying capacity must be carried out, so that planning can be made according to the principle of sustainable development, pre-empting any possible damage to the original landscape caused by excessive development.

For this reason, tourism development should be carried out in the form of eco-tourism and in line with the sustainable development of the environment to enable visitors to gain an understanding of nature and nature conservation. At the same time, the itineraries of these tours must be meticulously planned with a view to minimizing the impact of tourism development on the environment, achieving a win-win situation for both mankind and the environment.

Based on the abovementioned principles, the geological park should not be run on a theme-park *modus operandi*, but should instead draw reference from certain existing nature reserves, such as Mai Po Nature Reserve, Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park, and so on, for this approach suits eco-tourism better.

Finally, I would like to point out that, with the recognition of the Central Government and the United Nations, and by turning overseas influence into internal impetus, the unique geological features and spectacular landscapes of the eastern part of the New Territories are given a gilt. This approach may boost the effect of conservation and tourism development. But what if our application is unsuccessful, does it mean that we no longer need to step up our efforts in conserving the geological environment? Or if we successfully get any of these sites listed as a World Natural Heritage Site, does it mean that enhanced conservation of other sites with unique geological environment or spectacular natural landscape other than the eastern part of the New Territories will become unnecessary? Does it mean that without overseas awards or commendations from foreign gods, the spectacular geological landscape in Hong Kong will be unworthy of recognition and the Government does not have to attach importance to it?

Undeniably, gaining international recognition is good, but we must understand that it is only embroidered flowers on brocade. Actually, in the conservation of spectacular geological environment and beautiful landscapes in Hong Kong, the formulation of a comprehensive policy to enhance conservation

by the Government is the prerequisite. Moreover, the Government should take into account the ecological carrying capacity in carrying out proper planning and development according to the principles of sustainable development.

For Hong Kong needs not only a geological park or a few more world heritage sites. What Hong Kong needs is a comprehensive conservation policy on natural scenery and landscapes, which can accord proper conservation to natural scenery. Such a policy will also let the people of Hong Kong learn more about the beautiful features in Hong Kong, so that they will gain a better understanding of this piece of land and cherish it more, and take pride in the local value so established.

If today's debate can prompt the Government to formulate proper conservation policies and measures, it will really be a Christmas present to Hong Kong.

With these remarks, President, I support the original motion.

Ms Audrey EU moved the following amendment: (Translation)

"To delete "improve the planning of this area, so as to develop" after "conservation proposals and" and substitute with "plan the area according to the principle of sustainable development and, taking into account the area's ecological carrying capacity and modelling on a marine park, develop"; and to delete "tourism" after "science popularization and" and substitute with "eco-tourism"."

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Ms Audrey EU to Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming's motion, be passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now call upon Mr LI Kwok-ying to speak and move his amendment to Ms Audrey EU's amendment.

MR LI KWOK-YING (in Cantonese): Madam President, I move that Ms Audrey EU's amendment be amended. Madam President, Hong Kong, as a

prosperous cosmopolitan business city, has all along given people the impression of a "concrete jungle", a densely populated urban hub jam-packed with high-rise buildings and swelled with hustle and bustle. This is the general impression people have about Hong Kong, but also a fact cast in iron. Nevertheless, this is only one side of Hong Kong perceived by the public. Indeed, Hong Kong has a lot of beautiful scenic sites and a wealth of undiscovered geological resources, to which we have all along failed to give due attention. Take the eastern part of the New Territories as an example. All kinds of sedimentary rocks and volcanic rocks are found in the area, forming landscapes with kaleidoscopic features resulted from faulting, wave-cut, and so on. The great diversity of geological landscapes facilitates the formation of different ecologies, providing ideal breeding grounds for different species of organisms, including a number of rare species of tremendous ecological value. The establishment of geological parks is the best option to properly protect these geological resources and make good use of them, which is also a world trend.

Indeed, in recent years, countries around the world have begun to attach importance to geological heritage. In 1999, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) introduced a Geopark Programme, aiming to establish 500 global geoparks around the world. China has been very proactive in this respect. On the premise of sustainable development, China adopts an approach which "allows development in conservation and upholds conservation in development" to carry out management and conservation work via relevant government departments. At present, 53 geoparks have been approved as global geological parks, of which 20 are located in China, vastly outnumbering other countries and bringing China to the top of the list.

Madam President, there are a lot of sites with great ecological value and unique geological features in Hong Kong, why do I have to mention Sai Kung in the eastern part of the New Territories in particular? Indeed, Sai Kung has long since been grandly dubbed as the backyard of Hong Kong. Moreover, when the geological park expert consultant of the UNESCO, ZHAO Xun, who is also a professor of the Chinese Academy of Geological Sciences, visited Hong Kong this year, he found some extraordinary sites in Hong Kong, such as the extremely rare rhyolite in hexagonal stacks lying along the eastern part of Sai Kung. The professor is thus of the view that Hong Kong is eligible to apply for listing as a geological park.

With the heightened awareness of conservation, I believe both the SAR Government and the general public understand that many sites in the countryside of Hong Kong, such as the eastern part of the New Territories, carry great value in appreciation and ecology, which are worthy of conservation. All along, the SAR Government has endeavoured to provide protection to animals and plants, as well as sites, of ecological value by legislative means, such as the Country Parks Ordinance, the Marine Parks Ordinance and the Wild Animals Protection Ordinance, and so on. However, the concept of establishing geological parks is relatively unfamiliar to the general public. Besides, the SAR Government has not put in place target-oriented laws and measures for the proper protection and management of rare geological features like the hexagonal rhyolite in Sai Kung East, so as to prevent these precious landscapes from the threat of human damage. It is obvious to all that the existing conservation policy of the Government is lopsided, failing to provide proper protection to geological landscapes while conserving the ecology.

Not only does the Government sit with its arms folded over the issue, as far as I know, some members of society also have some prejudices and misunderstandings about the protection of ecological resources, particularly areas of unique landscape. These people think that rocks and landforms once damaged cannot be restored, and they thus prefer the so-called "Three Don'ts" approach: do not encourage, do not develop and do not legislate, which they consider will provide the best protection to these geological landscapes.

Frankly, with the advanced development in information dissemination nowadays and the growing affection of local citizens and overseas visitors for green tourism, there is no reason that they will not be able to find these beautiful scenic sites, or that they will turn a blind eye or turn a deaf ear to these unique landscapes. The reality is just the opposite. Many community organizations and tourism aficionados have indeed visited these sites on their own to enjoy the scenery and even engage in activities like rock-climbing. If the SAR Government sticks to its negative non-intervention approach, continues to turn a blind eye to this phenomenon and fails to provide protection to geological landscape by legislative and administrative measures, which is how protection of country parks and marine parks is provided at present, I strongly believe that these rare geological landscapes will soon be destroyed by the large number of visitors due to the total lack of regulation.

Having considered the examples of development of geological parks in certain countries and districts, I find that if the Government fails to put in place proper regulation, geological parks will be reduced to a means for making profit and may even be damaged by visitors. However, I must stress that the genuine meaning of establishing geological parks should be protecting resources. If development carried out on the principle of conservation brings a positive outcome, such as generating income from tourism, it should only be regarded as an added-value instead of the primary target for establishing geological parks. I absolutely agree that ecological carrying capacity should be taken into account, and it ought to form the premise of the development of geological parks. On the other hand, the Government should conduct thorough assessments, studies and surveys according to the characteristics of eco-tourism developed in different districts for purposes of preparing the design work.

It has been learnt that the next conference on application for listing will be held by the United Nations in 2008. To secure the best protection for geological landscapes in Hong Kong, to make Hong Kong the first cosmopolitan city with an urban geological park in the world, and to pioneer the protection of geological environment in the city, the SAR Government should act decisively. It should take proactive actions to prepare for the establishment of a geological park, making real efforts to protect the precious geological features for the next generation.

Madam President, I so submit.

Mr LI Kwok-ying moved the following amendment to Ms Audrey EU's amendment: (Translation)

"To add ", including protecting the unique, rare and spectacular geological features of the area and, in particular, safeguarding the stone columns and stone walls with rhyolitic columnar joints, which are found in Sai Kung but rare in the world, from being damaged in the future, the Government should request the Central Government to apply to the United Nations for listing the site as a World Natural Heritage Site" after "the principle of sustainable development". "

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Mr LI Kwok-ying to Ms Audrey EU's amendment, be passed.

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (in Cantonese): Madam President, Honourable Members, good morning. Given the scarcity of land and the large population in Hong Kong, a balance must be struck between economic development and environmental conservation in the use of land resources. Despite that, Hong Kong, occupying an area of 1 000 sq km, is blessed with about 40% of its land being designated for conservation. In these areas not only the environment that embraces eco-diversity is conserved, some geological features, geomorphic forms and rock communities, which are little known to the public, can also be found. Most of these sites are located in remote areas of the countryside, and quite a number of them are located along the coastline of the eastern part of the New Territories. Some of these sites are lined with special geological structures while others are characterized by their extraordinary geomorphic features. Moreover, many of these sites are of academic research, tourism and appreciation interests.

Despite the absence of a set of laws stipulating the protection of geological features, geomorphic forms and rocks in Hong Kong, statutory protection is accorded to the geomorphic environment through a number of existing mechanisms. Indeed, a majority of rock communities of spectacular geological and geomorphological value are situated in country parks and marine parks. Therefore, according to the provisions and statutory layout plans of the existing Country Parks Ordinance, the Marine Parks Ordinance and the Town Planning Ordinance, geological environment with scientific interests, including certain specific geomorphic features and rocks, are covered by these ordinances or included in the protection areas. As such, statutory protection has been provided for these sites. Any person causing damage to these sites, including the rocks and the geomorphic features, will be liable to prosecution.

The motion proposed by Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming today focuses mainly on the suitability of establishing a geological park in the eastern part of the New Territories. The eastern part of the New Territories covers a vast stretch of land, including Ma On Shan, Pat Sin Range and the High Island Reservoir in Sai Kung, which are all of high conservation value. At present, a total of nine country parks, four special areas and three marine parks are located in the eastern part of the New Territories, including Sai Kung East Country Park, Ma On Shan Country Park, Plover Cove Country Park (Extension), Ma Shi Chau Special Area, Lai Chi Wo Special Area and Hoi Ha Wan Marine Park, and so on. In addition to country parks, marine parks and special areas, 14 sites of

special scientific interests are also identified in the eastern part of the New Territories. Given the special botanical, geographical or geological features of these sites, they carry various scientific interests worthy of conservation. These include the specific geomorphic features mentioned by a number of Members earlier, such as the rhyolite located in Ma On Shan Country Park, the oldest rock community in Hong Kong located in Plover Cove Country Park and an outcrop of sedimentary rocks located in Plover Cove Country Park (Tung Ping Chau Extension), and so on.

Many people may perhaps think that the Government's conservation policy is focused primarily on ecology conservation to the neglect of geological conservation. Actually, anyone who has been to the several country parks or special areas in the eastern part of the New Territories would have experienced the facilities or docent services provided in these country parks and special areas, which hold, in some measure, special geomorphic features of various scales. Take Ma Shi Chau as an example. The area comprises four islands in the Tolo Harbour, including Ma Shi Chau, A Chau, Yeung Chau and an unnamed island. Geological features of all kinds can be found on these islands, which are explained in the on-site information boards provided along the Ma Shi Chau Nature Trail. Therefore, by following this education trail, we will experience how time has altered the geomorphy of the area, including geographical phenomena like folds, faults and wave-cut platforms, and so on. Visitors, with the aid of the explanation on these boards, will gain an understanding of the land formation process taken place tens of millions of years ago.

Like ecological conservation, geological and geomorphic environment is part of the natural environment and rural landscape. We can step up our conservation work for certain geological and geomorphic environment of scientific or appreciation value to enable appreciation by more people. At present, the number of visitors to certain sites with geological or geomorphic features, such as Tung Ping Chau Marine Park, is small owing to their remote locations, inconvenient access or lack of promotion. It thus gives people the impression that these sites are neglected. However, despite the proximity of certain geomorphic environment, their specialties have not been brought to full demonstration due to the lack of information boards. We thus believe the Government can really put in more efforts in conservation on various fronts like resource management, promotion and environmental education to enhance the knowledge of the public of the geology of Hong Kong. I will introduce our work on these fronts later when I speak again.

Madam President, Honourable Members, the Government is prepared to listen to the views of Members on geological and geomorphic conservation, which will assist the Government in enhancing its efforts in this respect. I will response to Members' speeches later.

I shall stop here. Thank you, Madam President.

PROF PATRICK LAU (in Cantonese): Madam President, as we all know, Hong Kong is a prosperous city famous for its high density and efficiency. However, many people are not aware that the countryside actually makes up more than 70% of the total land area in Hong Kong and various country parks and conservation areas also account for more than 40% of all the land in Hong Kong. The Secretary also pointed this out just now. Many of my friends from abroad told me that they found it uncommon and enviable that Hong Kong people could go from the crowded city centre to a natural environment surrounded by mountains and the sea within a short time. In overseas countries, even if one drives, it will still take a long time before one can come into contact with this kind of natural environment.

Since Hong Kong is endowed with such a singularly advantageous condition, it is all the more necessary for us to cherish Hong Kong's natural environment. In fact, the Secretary also said that for many years, the Hong Kong Government had been very successful in nature conservation. However, compared with the conservation of the natural ecology, it seems that this area has been overlooked. In fact, for many years, the geological societies in schools and universities have made a great deal of effort in conserving the geological environment. I wonder if Members are aware that there is a museum of geology in the University of Hong Kong — even though many people think that rocks are not worth a glance.

These kinds of unique geological features can in fact be found extensively throughout the eastern part of the New Territories. Just now, the Secretary and several Members have also given some examples, including the northern shore of the Tolo Channel, which leads to the Tolo Harbour, particularly in the environs of the Wong Chuk Kok Tsui. There, we can find an exposed sedimentary rocks fault. The formation of this kind of geology took place 370 million years ago in the Devonian. It is the oldest rock formation in Hong Kong and has very high scientific research and education value.

In fact, Members can watch a film explaining how the entire geology of Hong Kong came into being in the Hong Kong Museum of History. This film is very worth watching because it gives an account of the seismic changes that Hong Kong experienced. Therefore, Members can watch it if they have such an opportunity.

Just now, Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming has also explained in detail that most of the Sai Kung Peninsula and its coastal islands are made up of volcanic rocks. Furthermore, he also pointed out why the rhyolitic columnar joints in Hong Kong are such a rarity.

Madam President, for this reason, I agree that the Government should carry out planning on the eastern part of the New Territories according to the principle of sustainable development and develop and preserve the area as a geological park. In fact, the members of my sector also made a similar proposal to the Hong Kong Tourism Board some years ago. Unfortunately, not too many people were interested in working on this area. I hope that this time around, the authorities will consider seriously how proper arrangements can be made in this regard, in particular, how we can start with the planning for conservation, and complement it with more convenient and environmentally-friendly modes of sea and land transport, so as to drive the development of sustainable eco-tourism.

Madam President, Hong Kong people are very fond of photography, and they have made considerable achievements in photographing nature. I wonder if Members still remember that there are countless Ten Outstanding Photographers in Hong Kong. I remember that many years ago, when I was learning photography, I would often go to Sha Tin to practise my skills. In those days, Sha Tin was still a countryside that had not yet been urbanized. The area was most scenic and the villages, farmland and buffalos in those days made it the ideal place to take pictures of natural scenery. Unfortunately, Sha Tin is very different nowadays. In view of this, if such a geological park can be given wide publicity, photographers will get some good news.

At present, a lot of people have never visited some statutory historical monuments located in remote areas due to inconvenient transport. I believe that in order to successfully develop the eastern part of the New Territories into a geological park, it is necessary to put in place, with particular caution, a sea and land transport network in that area, so as to ensure that appropriate development

can be carried out on the premise of not damaging the natural environment, the natural ecology and the scenery while attracting more members of the public and tourists to these special places to appreciate another aspect of this "concrete jungle" called Hong Kong.

However, I wish to remind Members that before actually developing a geological park and the related facilities, we must first of all formulate a well-conceived set of guidelines for the protection and management of geological heritage, so as to pre-empt damaging the geological features of that area in the absence of protection when building the complementary facilities for eco-tourism. I believe that the authorities should team up with the relevant departments in universities and carry out careful studies with various geological experts and organizations, so as to formulate a set of guidelines. This will be the most appropriate course of action.

Thank you, Madam President.

MR WONG KWOK-HING (in Cantonese): Madam President, it seems that the rocks around us are the most ordinary of all things. For example, in our daily life, we use rocks to build houses and roads and to decorate and line the interior of buildings such as lift lobbies, kitchens and toilets. However, it is not the case that we can use all kinds of rocks freely.

Madam President, apart from having beautiful patterns, this natural resource called rock also has another valuable aspect. It is precious like wild animals and in order to prevent any damage to it, its protection is called for.

There are a lot of beautiful rocks in Hong Kong. Earlier on, in conjunction with relevant groups, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department held "The Most Beautiful Rocks Voting" and chose the 10 most beautiful rocks in Hong Kong. The rocks selected can be classified into two kinds. The first type of rocks are those with peculiar shapes, including the Amah Rock, Lion Rock, the Devil's Hand at Wong Chuk Kok Tsui, the Ascending Divine Turtle on Po Toi Island and the Divine Hog at Chi Ma Wan.

The other type of rocks chosen are not lumps of rocks standing alone but stretches of rocks that give hills their beautiful shapes or coasts their winding outlines. The rocks chosen include the shale on Ping Chau, which everyone is

familiar with. On holidays, schools or parents would take children to Ping Chau to study the characteristics of shale.

In fact, other rocky coasts worthy of study and investigation by all of us and children alike include the hexagonal rocks on High Island and the Moon Rocks on North Ninopin Island. If we look at the contorted hexagonal volcanic stone columns located at the eastern dam of the High Island Reservoir, we will find it is indeed very unique. Earth movements caused the hexagonal rock columns to become contorted and since the contorted spot is a point of weakness in the rock, subsequently, the intrusion of basalt rock took place, thus giving the rock its peculiar shape.

Madam President, all these rocks are the treasures of Hong Kong. This is because all these beautiful rocks are the divine creations of nature and it would have been practically impossible for nature to sculpt them without taking tens of millions or millions of years of time. Therefore, they highly deserve our treasuring them. This year is the Year of the Pig. On 14 February, my wife and I went to Cheung Chau purposely to look for the Rock of the Divine Hog. It is a piece of granite exposed to weathering and marine erosion, which gradually turned it into the shape of a hog. One can see the head, the snout, the mouth and one of the very lively ears of the hog clearly in the picture. It is so plump that it looks very cute. It looks as though it were giving its blessings to Hong Kong. With the guidance of residents on Cheung Chau, I found the right way easily and was able to have a look at this cute piece of rock.

Why did I cite such an example? Because the efforts of the Government in publicity and education are inadequate, such that a lot of Hong Kong people are not aware that there are so many precious and interesting rocks around us. Since we are not aware of them, we do not know how to locate them and appreciate them, still less value and treasure them. The most common form of damage to rocks is to engrave words and scribble graffiti on them. A perfectly fine piece of rock, such as the Lovers' Rock on Bowen Road, is often covered with whimsical inscriptions in lurid colours and even splashed with red paint. Part of it may even have been chiselled and taken away as souvenirs. I found this a most sorry sight. Doing so will seriously damage the beauty of these rocks and we should not continue to tolerate such incidents.

Furthermore, apart from their aesthetic value, these beautiful rocks also serve an important function in the conservation of organisms. In particular, the

rocks along the coast are the habitats of a lot of marine organisms. One need only take a walk among the rocks at the coast to find that there are many interesting small creatures in the rock crevices, such as small crabs and other crustaceans and they are very cute. If we do a poor job in conservation, thus leading to pollution and the accumulation of rubbish, these marine organisms will lose their habitats and become homeless, and they will not be able to breed.

In view of this, we agree with this motion which suggests the need to establish a geological park in the eastern part of the New Territories. Doing so will conserve the rocks formed in a unique geology as well as maintain the balance of the natural ecology. However, I believe that this concept of conservation should not be confined to the eastern part of the New Territories alone and should be extended to cover all the precious rocks and natural resources throughout the New Territories and on the outlying islands. For example, there are a lot of unusual rocks and precious natural rock resources in the western part of the New Territories. In fact, quite a number of the 10 most beautiful rocks I mentioned just now are found in the western part of the New Territories. In addition, the Silver Mine Bay and Silver Mine Cave in Mui Wo are also engraved in the memory of Hong Kong people. I believe that it is worthwhile for the Government to expand the scope of this idea policy-wise, instead of limiting it to the eastern part of the New Territories.

Madam President, at present, Tung Ping Chau is one of the four marine parks. People who have been there all know that a good job in conservation has been done there and there are people tasked with reminding visitors not to litter, smoke or take away any natural object, not even a shell fragment, from the marine park or they are liable to prosecution. If the Government adopts such an approach in conservation, I believe it will be possible to achieve the greatest effect in conservation. If the Government can give this greater publicity, we will be able to make use of these precious rocks, which are a kind of natural resources in Hong Kong, to promote the development of tourism and culture in Hong Kong because this is a most desirable course of action.

With these remarks, I support the motion.

MR DANIEL LAM (in Cantonese): Madam President, the Heung Yee Kuk fully supports the motion of "Establishing a geological park in the eastern part of the

New Territories" moved by Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming today. In addition to Lantau Island and the outlying islands, the eastern part of the New Territories, Sai Kung in particular, has been described as "the backyard of Hong Kong" and a lot of people from overseas have even formed tour groups solely for the purpose of having a look at this "backyard of Hong Kong", which is well-known to nature lovers in all countries, with a view to exploring this piece of jewel of nature.

Just as Mr CHEUNG said in today's motion, while the eastern part of the New Territories has a unique geological environment, the SAR Government does not attach much importance to it, so this large expanse of natural scenery cannot be enjoyed by the public and tourists, nor can it become a conservation area founded on the concept of sustainable development. The Heung Yee Kuk supports the motion moved by Mr CHEUNG and urges the Government to put forward an active conservation proposal and improve the planning for that area, so as to develop the eastern part of the New Territories into a geological park with conservation, science popularization and tourism value. This motion is timely and appropriate.

Concerning the point that artificial attractions do not offer lasting appeal to tourists, we can see this point from the recent announcement by the Disneyland that its number of visitors has dropped this year. However, in the case of the eastern part of the New Territories, which possesses beautiful natural sceneries, various kinds of geographical features and places suitable for science popularization, its appeal and the possibility of sustainable development are permanent in nature. This is a treasure bestowed by providence on Hong Kong people. If we fail to cherish it and allow these resources to be destroyed by people or turned into land for urban development, we can only face our posterity with shame.

At present, in the eastern part of the New Territories, apart from the Sai Kung East Country Park, which was established in 1978, there is only a marine park established in recent years. Unfortunately, the focus of marine parks lies too much in the beautiful bays, the underwater ecology and the long coastline, however, the galore of diverse and unique geographical features was singularly omitted. Apart from the field trips to these places organized by geography teachers in primary and secondary schools for their students, on other days, these precious resources just lay there quietly, waiting for us to explore, use and protect them properly.

Madam President, the Heung Yee Kuk is of the view that the Government should conduct as soon as possible studies on these geological features of conservation, science popularization and tourism value located in the eastern part of the New Territories, so as to formulate comprehensive, well-devised and sustainable planning on conservation and proposals. And it should also make recommendations to the Central Government, lobby for its grading as a state geological park and make an application to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for listing the area as a world geological park. This will enable the natural geographical features and resources of Hong Kong to receive proper protection and enrich the content of sustainable development in Hong Kong, thereby enhancing the capital for eco-tourism in Hong Kong.

With these remarks, I support the motion and the amendments.

MR WONG YUNG-KAN (in Cantonese): Madam President, in this discussion on a geological park, Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming has unveiled a series of blueprints. I have seen all those places, including the Tolo Channel, when sailing on the sea when I was small. We have been fishing in the area ever since we were small, so I saw those places every day and it did not occur to me that there was anything special about them as I was used to seeing them. One can describe this situation as "returning from a treasure trove empty-handed".

In fact, for over a decade, we have thought that the geology of the New Territories is very special. Often, when we had outings with friends, we found that the Tolo Harbour was, as the Secretary said I can tell you that fishermen call this small island "Snake Island". The nameless island he referred to was in fact the Snake Island. It was linked to another piece of land together with Ma Shi Chau, Yeung Chau and Centre Island. This is the name used by fishermen, but I do not know what academics call it. It shows that we are also aware of the need to conserve these valuable places.

In the past few years, in fact many people have visited the area surrounding Ma Shi Chau and they think that it is a very special place. Recently, the Salvation Army organized an activity at Sam Mun Tsai on the culture of fishermen and the issue of conservation was also included. In view of this, we have repeatedly appealed to visitors to protect those places in addition to appreciating their aesthetic and research value. I also raised this issue in the

last meeting of the Country and Marine Parks Board of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department — ever since my appointment this year, I have repeatedly put forward this proposal, in the hope that all of us can take this issue seriously.

Apart from the issue relating to rocks I left out one point just now. There is also another place called Hung Shek Mun, which is also very special. If we set off from Tolo Harbour in a boat, it will only take an hour and a half to reach Ap Chau. If we savour the geological landscape of this area carefully, we will feel as though we were in heavenly waters. In those days, when the Government wanted to enact legislation to designate some places as marine parks, the colleagues representing the northeast part of the New Territories, for example, those in the Tai Po District Council, also fully supported the designation of those places as marine parks. The three marine parks are all located in the New Territories and they include Hoi Ha Wan, Yan Chau Tong and Tung Ping Chau. These marine parks are all located in the New Territories and the DC members concerned also lent their full support at that time. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming was the Chairman at that time and he also wholeheartedly recommended this measure.

Another issue worthy of consideration is how protection can be given. Whenever I went to those places, or when I was not in a good mood, I would take a boat and sail for half a day to vent my pent-up emotions. When I looked at the sea and the rocks in all sorts of odd shapes, I would feel very happy. This is probably my own way of thinking, but there is also such a culture among fishermen. Up till now, we have never caused any damage. As far as we know, we have all along treasured those places. Members can see that places such as the environs of the High Island Reservoir and many other rocks have been damaged. This is in fact the consequence of development carried out by the Government. For this reason, when the Government carries out development in the future, it should consider how these cliffs and rocks with special value or ecological interest can be protected, so that our posterity can also enjoy them in future.

Madam President, apart from the need to protect geological features, there are also several other issues that we have raised here and they have to do with our Buddhist pines and incense trees. Some of these plants are not found in country parks. I have repeatedly asked the Government how it would protect Buddhist pines in the Country and Marine Parks Board. If we look at the

present trend, people stealing Buddhist pines are expanding their activities from Nam She Wan to Hong Kong Island here. If this trend continues without the Government finding any way to protect them, even trees will be dug away, not to mention rocks. What should we do?

Regarding rocks, even the corals at the bottom of the sea were damaged and they were pulled and taken away for research purposes. I think that the Government should step up the protection in this regard. As regards the question of whether the establishment of a geological park is tantamount to causing damage, I do not subscribe to such a view. If a place is appreciated by all people, there will naturally be a heightened awareness of protection. Of course, we have all along opposed the spraying of paints on valuable rocks with aesthetic value by some people, as this will make a mess of those rocks. I believe that it is unreasonable to scribble graffiti at those places, nor should this be tolerated.

We agree that apart from conservation, the Government should also find ways to instil vitality into these places. From the example of the Danxiashan on the Mainland, it can be seen that there is also a Buddhist culture in the coastal region. Therefore, I hope that apart from treasuring them, the Government should also carry out proper studies. In addition to developing a geological park, it should also protect the geology and environment of the northeastern part of the New Territories or Hong Kong as a whole. Certainly, we do not mean that we do not want to see any development whatsoever, only that in the course of development, we should also treasure certain things. Madam President, I so submit.

MR SIN CHUNG-KAI (in Cantonese): Country parks account for 40% of the total area of Hong Kong and the majority of the country parks and marine parks can be found in the eastern part of the New Territories. Various types of natural scenery formed by such rocks as granite, tuff and basalt in these parks and the coral reefs in marine parks have attracted many members of the public to visit these parks for appreciation.

Although the Government recently announced that there had been an increase in the overall area of coral reefs in Hong Kong, according to my experience and understanding and as I have taken part in diving to take a look in the sea, I found that in recent years, the water quality in the eastern part of the New Territories has in fact deteriorated. While diving, I found that I could not even see my own fingers and there were many particulates. This is probably

due to the popularity of eco-tourism in recent years. Concerning the motion under discussion today, the Democratic Party is concerned about whether further developing existing country parks would damage the existing natural environment of the eastern part of the New Territories. Furthermore, it is debatable whether Hong Kong meets the requirements for establishing a geological park. However, so long as the premise of ensuring sustainable development is adhered to, the Democratic Party will support the proposal of establishing a geological park, therefore, we will support Ms Audrey EU's amendment and Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming's original motion.

Next, I wish to explain our position on Mr LI Kwok-ying's amendment. The Democratic Party does not oppose the conservation of unique geological features. However, the Democratic Party has reservation about whether the Central Government should be requested to apply to the United Nations for listing the area as a World Natural Heritage Site. Looking at the natural heritage in various parts of the world, we think that in comparison, the natural landscape in Hong Kong does not make the grade. To take the Karst landscape in Southern China, which was formally declared a natural heritage in June this year, as an example, it covers Yunnan, Sichuan and Guizhou and has a total area of 50 000 sq km. The famous Yunnan Stone Forest is also found in it.

Another place that I have been to is the Wulingyuan Scenic Area in Zhangjiajie, Hunan. There are over 3 000 peaks of various odd shapes, over 800 streams, as well as Karst grottos, waterfalls and natural forests, 22 species of plants under first-grade and second-grade state protection and 28 species of animal under first-grade state protection.

Madam President, in citing all of these examples, I wish to point out that according to the criteria of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, there are stringent requirements on application for listing as a World Natural Heritage Site and they include: (1) to contain superlative natural phenomena or areas of exceptional natural beauty and aesthetic importance; (2) to be outstanding examples representing major stages of Earth's history, including the record of life, significant ongoing geological processes in the development of landforms, or significant geomorphic or physiographic features; (3) to be outstanding examples representing significant ongoing ecological and biological processes in the evolution and development of terrestrial, fresh water, coastal and marine ecosystem and communities of plants

and animals; and (4) to contain the most important and significant natural habitats for in-site conservation of biological diversity, including those containing threatened species of outstanding universal value from the point of view of science or conservation. Madam President, I wish to stress that these four requirements are fairly stringent. The Democratic Party believes that the Government's present task, which we very much support and a number of Honourable colleagues have mentioned in their speeches, is to focus on providing greater protection to the natural landscape in the eastern part of the New Territories, which is the backyard of Hong Kong, so that our next generation can continue to have such a precious natural heritage.

Madam President, I have looked up the relevant information and found that there are two groups of geological parks. Just now, Mr LI Kwok-ying said that there were 20 in China. According to the information on the Internet, I found 18 of them in Wikipedia. Regarding the first group, Members are familiar with it and they include such places as Zhangjiajie, Huangshan and Danxiashan, which I have mentioned just now. They are all first-grade geoparks. In view of this, there is no problem in developing a geological park in Hong Kong. I am not very familiar with the several geological parks at the end of the list and they include such parks as Leiqiong Geopark and Funiushan Geopark in Guangdong. We will support the development of a geological park.

However, if we go through the list of world heritage compiled by the United Nations, we will see that a considerable number of them are found in China. On this list, there are two types of world heritage, one being natural heritage and the other being cultural heritage. I think those in China account for about 30 of them. Certainly, I hope that one day, we will do such a good job in conservation that we can make an application, however, at this stage, if we want to apply for listing as one of the United Nations World Natural Heritage Sites, it seems that we still have some way to go compared with the shortlisted candidates. However, I think it is incumbent upon the Government to make efforts in conservation. We also support the comments relating to conservation made by various Honourable colleagues earlier in the debate. The Democratic Party wishes to reiterate today that we support Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming's original motion and Ms Audrey EU's amendment.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any other Member wish to speak?

MR LAU KONG-WAH (in Cantonese): President, in these two days, the DAB has proposed two motions in succession. Yesterday, Members talked about the culture of Hong Kong style cafes and hoped that an application for listing can be lodged with the United Nations. Today, Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming proposed that the northeastern part of the New Territories be developed into a geological park or a state-level geological park. He also hopes that an application can be made to the United Nations. The common characteristic shared by these two motions is that, as a number of Members have observed, we wish to convey the message that apart from being a concrete jungle, apart from being a financial centre and apart from being an economic metropolis, Hong Kong's local culture and unique natural scenery are also capable of attracting overseas and mainland tourists and they are welcome to look at them. Of course, the Hong Kong public is more familiar with Hong Kong style cafes, however, when it comes to the geology of hexagonal columns, a lot of people have no understanding of them and have no idea of their value even when looking at them. I think that Hong Kong's next generation should receive education in this regard. I believe that it is most worthwhile to promote education on the local culture and natural environment of Hong Kong.

Some Members and people in society are concerned about whether the establishment of a state-level geological park will cause damage to it. This kind of concern is warranted and we should give weight to it, however, we cannot refrain from providing protection or even from making an application just because of such concern. In fact, the aim of making an application is precisely to provide a kind of protection. I have great appreciation for the protection given by the Government or the AFCDD to country parks in the past and they have made no small feat of it. We need only take a walk in our country parks on weekdays or holidays to appreciate this. In fact, we like going to the country parks quite a lot.

The characteristics of a geological park are very important. Just now, Mr SIN Chung-kai said that in fact, he did not support making an application because the geology in the area around Hong Kong far from makes the grade when compared with other countries and in terms of area, Hong Kong is too small. In my view, we need not be overly humble. If he has read the report prepared by the DAB — the President gets one every month and I wonder if Mr SIN Chung-kai has read any of them. He did. In it, it quoted the comments of a researcher of the Nanjing Institute of Geology and Palaeontology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and this is very important. He said, "The

Cretaceous rhyolitic volcanic rocks scattered across the eastern part of Sai Kung in Hong Kong from the Ninepin Group to the eastern dam of the High Island Reservoir has a pattern of highly-developed hexagonal columns. It looks as though they were crafted by some divine beings and they are absolutely spectacular. This geological spectacle rarely found in other parts of the world merits an application to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for listing as a World Natural Heritage Site." He has a lot of experience, having visited many places in China. Basically, the geology in this area of Hong Kong is unique and rare in itself, therefore, I think we should strive to achieve something. Although the application may not be successful, we have to do our best in lobbying, just as in the way we campaign for democracy and we should not be self-deprecating. Therefore, President, I think the Government should give weight to this proposal. Of course, we know that we have to go through some procedures and Hong Kong does not have the final say. It is also necessary for the State to take corresponding action. However, if Hong Kong does not activate the process, and if the SAR Government does not do so, even if many experts come here to take a look, all will still be in vain. Many experts have come here already. In particular, after some members of the expert team of the United Nations had come here to have a look, they left behind some favourable comments. In view of this, I think it is worthwhile to make an application.

Separately, I think that the sentiments and values of Hong Kong people and the things that they appreciate and enjoy have seen some changes. President, we can look at our Wetland Park. There is a need to protect the Wetland Park. After our wetland was turned into a park, it can be protected and used for eco-tourism. Moreover, it is being run with great success and the number of people visiting the Wetland Park has perhaps even exceeded that of the Disneyland. Why do Hong Kong people like the Wetland Park more than the Disneyland? This change was most apparent after the SARS outbreak in 2003. Therefore, I think it is necessary to have a good grasp of public sentiment and it is also necessary for the Government to see this point. There are many beautiful places in Hong Kong indeed. If we can protect them and develop guided eco-tourism at the same time, I believe this will be quite valuable to the education of our next generation.

President, let me stretch this farther. I think there is a lack of education relating to humanity, life and nature for our next generation and this is an inadequacy. If a person has taken part in star-gazing activities, he will

understand the vastness and profound history of the entire Universe and when he sees those curious rocks the formation of which took billions of years, he will realize the insignificance of human beings. These two aspects are absolutely relevant to one another. I think that in the past, we have probably made a distinction between the education of man and nature education, however, it is now necessary to promote education that integrates the education of man with nature education in Hong Kong. This will probably only play a minor role, but we must not take this minor role lightly as man and nature are inseparable. Therefore, I hope very much that the Secretary can appreciate this and take forward this proposal. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any other Member wish to speak?

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming, you may now speak on the amendments. You have up to five minutes to speak.

MR CHEUNG HOK-MING (in Cantonese): Madam President, two Honourable colleagues have moved amendments to my motion today. By coincidence, their amendments both serve to make my original motion more specific or to supplement it, therefore, I do not oppose the amendments in any way.

Here, I wish to thank Members.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr Albert CHAN has requested to speak. Since our motion debate has not yet ended and in accordance with the Rules of Procedure, I do not have the power to disallow him to speak, therefore, I now call on Mr Albert CHAN to speak.

MR ALBERT CHAN (in Cantonese): President, concerning the importance of the natural ecological environment in Hong Kong, the public's understanding of the geographical and environmental information about Hong Kong and their

support for this, generally speaking, when compared with other regions, I believe there is still a lot of room for improvement in terms of their awareness, particularly in government support policy-wise.

The geography of Hong Kong is quite special. The focus of the discussion today is the eastern part of Hong Kong. In terms of geology and flora, including insects, butterflies and birds, Hong Kong is in fact a natural treasure trove. It will not occur to ordinary members of the Hong Kong public that the Pearl of the Orient, apart from its special characteristics in the economic or political domains, is also a place bestowed with very precious natural resources. President, for many years, when I got in touch with the Government or when I had meetings with the Government on a number of occasions, I also observed that Lantau Island is a natural treasure trove.

Concerning the geology of the eastern part of Hong Kong Island, many Members have already made many valuable suggestions. The Honourable colleagues from the DAB have even compiled a report spelling out the significance in this regard. I believe that it is in fact possible for the Government to connect this issue of the natural treasures in the geographical environment with a lot of tourism-related matters.

I remember that many years ago, I made a pleasure trip to the Yellow Stone National Park and the Banff National Park and Jasper National Park in Canada. On giving wide publicity to their special geographical, historical and geological characteristics and significance, the governments there have made a great deal of promotional efforts and also provided a lot of information. When people visit those places, they can spend a long time appreciating or studying the history of the development of these parks, thus combining the impartation of knowledge with tourism.

In fact, this point has great and special significance to the development of local economic activities in Hong Kong, and it can help promote local community economic activities. I have also pointed out a number of times in this legislature that during their holidays, Hong Kong people will have nowhere worth going to and all they know is to go across the boundary to seek pleasure there — there are many ways of seeking pleasure and it does not necessarily refer to the vice industry. If the Hong Kong Government can combine the development of local natural resources with tourism, it will be possible for Hong Kong people to take part in more diverse leisure activities. In particular, if parents accompany their children on such visits, the enjoyment will double.

In those days, when I was serving as a member of the former Regional Council, I also proposed that when the former Regional Council developed or built parks, it should integrate them with special natural resources as far as possible. Take Tai Po as an example. In those days, I also proposed the construction of a butterfly park there, so that the public could look at something special when they visit the park.

Similarly, in the parks of new towns the Hong Kong Government can nominate some areas as parks of Hong Kong. This has been done in many overseas places. Be it in the United States or Canada, there are some so-called national parks. For example, the Yellow Stone National Park in the United States is one of the national parks and the Jasper National Park and Banff National Park in Canada are also national parks.

I believe that the Hong Kong Government can for example, Tung Ping Chau is a beautiful spot and the Government can designate several important areas as Hong Kong's we will not call it a national park, however, no matter if we call it the city park or Hong Kong park, its status will be raised and the public's understanding of the special characteristics of its geology or geography will be enhanced. This will also be serving to promote it, but it is a must to put in place a lot of complementary measures, including adequate facilities. For example, if we develop Tung Ping Chau, a museum and a management centre will have to be built on it.

I remember that a decade or two ago, I went to Tung Ping Chau and collected a few pieces of rock on leaving. It was in fact wrong to do so and in retrospection, I think it was wrong thing and I do not know where those rocks are now. In respect of protecting the natural environment, this kind of awareness is very important, is it not?

Therefore, it is very important for the Government to take the lead. I hope that through the debate today, the public's awareness can thus be raised. At the same time, the Government should also play a bigger role. I hope that in the near future, the Government will build designated special parks in various parts of the New Territories or Hong Kong, so as to raise their status and give Hong Kong people good places to spend their leisure, as well as preserving the highly valuable natural treasures of Hong Kong for the public's enjoyment. Thank you, President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Does any other Member wish to speak?

(No Member indicated a wish to speak)

SECRETARY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT (in Cantonese): Madam President, Honourable Members, first of all, I would like to thank Members again for speaking on this topic. Perhaps it is because the debate on this topic has been arranged for a Thursday morning that we are all in a very good mood.

Evident in Members' commendations, praises and recognition given to the numerous natural landforms in Hong Kong in chorus, which have been beautifully depicted with hearty expressions, together with their childhood experiences and special moments in life, I believe many of them are friends of our country parks. Our efforts in conserving the natural environment (including the rock landforms) have won high acclaim and commendation internationally. In my last visit to Tokyo, I also used Hong Kong's landforms and natural environment to start my speech at a luncheon meeting and there were very positive responses from the Japanese audience. At the meeting, someone holding a book published by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) on Sai Kung islands, which has been translated into Japanese, even came to talk to me. I believe Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming's motion and the amendments of Ms Audrey EU and Mr LI Kwok-ying have precisely demonstrated the concern of Hong Kong people for our natural environment (including the rock landforms).

Madam President, just as I said earlier on, a vast area in the eastern part of the New Territories, including the country parks, marine parks or Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) mentioned by me just now, is now protected by the existing legislation. These places may not be called geological parks, but as long as they fall within the designated area of any country parks, marine parks or special areas, their development for the purposes of nature conservation, education, scientific studies, docent walks, recreation and tourism would be recognized and protected. Therefore, what the Government is doing in these places is actually geared towards the same goal as Members' have proposed. We will continue to protect our precious natural resources through the appropriate mechanisms currently in place, under which enhanced promotion, publicity and education efforts will surely be carried out.

I also wish to take this opportunity to talk about the protection of the places mentioned by Honourable Members just now under the existing mechanism. To put it simply, at present, any new development relating to the rock landforms in a protected area, including country parks, marine parks or special areas, must be approved by the authorities concerned and compatible with the original conservation target. Lest approval will not be granted.

Furthermore, a number of ordinances are presently capable of protecting our geological or geomorphic resources. Among them, section 7(1) of the Land (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance stipulates that unless a removal permit is issued by the authorities, no person shall extract or remove earth, turf or stone from unleased land. Any person who violates this section shall be liable to a fine of \$5,000 and imprisonment for six months. Section 4(19) of the Summary Offences Ordinance also stipulates that, "Any person who without lawful authority or excuse, in or near any public place defaces any rock (or on rock surfaces) or any roadcutting by carving or otherwise marking thereon any letter, character, figure or device, shall be liable to a fine of \$500 or to imprisonment for three months." Furthermore, section 8(1)(b) of the Country Parks and Special Areas Regulations stipulates that "No person shall within a country park or special area, except in accordance with a permit in writing granted by the Authority, dig, cultivate or disturb the soil. Any person who contravenes this section shall be liable to a fine of \$2,000 and to imprisonment for three months."

Therefore, the damaging misbehaviour found in country parks, marine parks and special protected areas is actually governed by different ordinances, which cover the protection of rocks mentioned by Mr WONG Kwok-hing and the protection of corals mentioned by Mr SIN Chung-kai. Even the removal of anything by Honourable Members inadvertently from these areas is, in fact, an offence. At present, relevant laws are in place, and I would like to take this opportunity to remind members of the public of them. Therefore, insofar as the governing legislation is concerned, even if no geological park has been designated in a country park, we need not worry that any damage done to these places is not subject to regulation.

Certainly, insofar as publicity is concerned, proactive promotion and education efforts have been made by the AFCD in respect of the existing conservation areas. For example, visitor centres have been set up in different country parks. Not only descriptions of the natural ecology are displayed in the centres, information about Hong Kong's geological landforms is also provided.

The visitor centre of the Clearwater Bay Country Park, for example, uses Sai Kung islands as the main theme, introducing the unique rock landforms of Sai Kung's outlying islands. While specimens of major rocks and minerals in Hong Kong are displayed in the rocks and mineral garden, an outdoor display area of the Lions Nature Education Centre in Tsiu Hang, Sai Kung, specimens of a wide variety of minerals are also displayed in the visitor centre of the Tai Mo Shan Country Park, introducing the unique rocks and minerals in Hong Kong.

The AFCD has released a number of publications in recent years, including the Hong Kong publication which I said earlier on that a Japanese friend had shown me. Among the more famous landform books is the one just mentioned by Ms Audrey EU on Hong Kong's landforms, as well as the *101 Geographical Landmarks*, *Illustrative Hong Kong Geography*, *Sai Kung Islands* and *Hong Kong Rock Stories*. In these books, there are plenty of vivid and lively descriptions of the scenic spots and rocks which many Members have earlier mentioned. On the other hand, active promotions have been launched by the Government to make these places visit hotspots with a view to enhancing their appeal to members of the public and tourists. Furthermore, a number of seminars, talks and workshops have been organized by the AFCD to provide the public with nature-based information and activity details. And with the co-operation of the Tourism Commission, training courses have also been organized to help the incumbent employees of the tourism industry to work as docents of eco-tours.

Today, given that so many Members — more than one sixth of them — can conversantly highlight the special characteristics of Hong Kong's landforms and rocks, including their location, appearance and formation process, as well as the relevant history, people and geography, I believe our promotion efforts must have achieved certain effects. Nonetheless, continuous efforts will surely be made.

For education and scientific popularization, it has been a long-standing practice of the AFCD to conduct ecological baseline studies of certain protected areas and then upload the relevant information onto the Internet for use by members of the public and schools. In addition, a teaching kit on natural ecology has also been produced by the Education Department to enrich the knowledge of teachers and students of our local ecology and geology. I also

agree with what Prof Patrick LAU said earlier, that further efforts can be made to co-ordinate with such institutions as universities, so as to enable them to carry out studies and take samples in the course of doing academic researches and geographical inspections without infringing the rules of protecting our natural environment.

We understand that government effort alone is not enough to achieve effective nature conservation, the AFCDD is also duty-bound to step up its efforts in enforcement, promotion and publicity, and will be grateful to continue to work hand-in-hand with non-governmental organizations so as to further improve the conservation and management efforts made in respect of the geology of the designated areas within the existing country parks. It is hoped that at least the following major initiatives can be launched in 2008:

- (a) On resource management, the AFCDD planned to update some of the so-called interpretative signs or signboards in the coming year and provide them in different languages, so as to give visitors better information on nature and nature conservation. Furthermore, the AFCDD will also work with the geological experts to provide additional messages on the geology and conservation of landforms, which Members have mentioned earlier, at appropriate spots within the country parks.
- (b) On promotion and publicity, the AFCDD will release more publications on nature conservation in the coming year, including many on rocks and landforms. These publications will not only help promote the message of caring for the natural environment, but also introduce to the public some special places that are highly recommended by Members just now.
- (c) On education on the environment, the AFCDD will work with the Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong (AGHK) and introduce the Code for Rock and Landform Appreciation, which will be uploaded onto the website or distributed to the public free of charge in the future. The Code will set out the rules to be observed when appreciating rocks and landforms and the necessary safety measures. This will not only enhance promotion, but also provide members of the public with the necessary guidelines to follow.

The Government is determined to do a good job of nature conservation. At present, while 23 country parks and 17 special areas are designated for protection under the Country Parks Ordinance, four marine parks and one marine protection zone are designated under the Marine Parks Ordinance for protection of the marine ecology. Generally speaking, just as many Members have said, about 43% of our land territory-wide has been designated as protected areas. This proportion and the ecological and geological characteristics displayed by these areas actually compare favourably with many other places in the world.

Furthermore, in this year's policy address, the Chief Executive announced that the statutory procedures to designate the 24th country park which will be situated on Northern Lantau would be initiated. We hope that this extension will create more room and opportunities on top of our original efforts.

Madam President, Members have made a number of concrete suggestions during today's debate, including the enhancement of scenic spots in certain areas in the eastern part of the New Territories for easy public access. In fact, I have recently met with the proponent of the Hong Kong Geological Park and members of the AGHK to acquire a good grasp of their proposals. Just as I said earlier on, the great majority of places that are of geological value have been included in the protected areas, whereas geological resources are protected by the existing legislation. For this reason, any request to designate certain area of a country park as a geological park will necessitate the enactment of new legislation, whereby consideration will have to be made with regard to the actual need or possible duplication. And yet, as the numerous proposals put forward by Members just now all aim at utilizing the available resources, I believe my Bureau would be happy to follow them up.

With regard to a Member's proposal to apply for listing of certain landform in the eastern part of the New Territories as a national or world geological park, the Government is open-minded and will consult the relevant experts and academics before deciding whether or not the application for listing the unique landform in the eastern part of the New Territories should be made. Regarding another Member's proposal that the Central Government should be requested to apply for listing the site concerned as a World Natural Heritage Site, as Members may be aware, the site under application must satisfy some extremely stringent requirements and the World Heritage Committee requires that only one nomination can be made by each country every year. As a result, competition is very intense both within a country and among different countries.

In this connection, we will keep a close watch on the development of the selection and application of world heritage, and then consider if the application requirements for listing as a world heritage are satisfied.

Madam President, the long Christmas holiday is coming. While people will flock to leave Hong Kong and travel abroad, today's motion has actually suggested plenty of new scenic spots. I believe regardless of the application for listing the site concerned as a global park, our discussion can serve both as a recommendation for weekend travel and a reminder of how these places should be conserved.

Madam President, I so submit. I would like to thank Honourable Members for the suggestions made in the light of this topic and the valuable advices on our conservation efforts. Thank you, Madam President.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now propose the question to you and that is: That the amendment, moved by Mr LI Kwok-ying to Ms Audrey EU's amendment, be passed. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I consider that a division is required as I am not clear about Members' voting preferences. The division bell will ring for three minutes, after which the division will begin.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Will Members please proceed to vote.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Will Members please check their votes. If there are no queries, voting shall now stop and the result will be displayed.

Functional Constituencies:

Dr Raymond HO, Mr Bernard CHAN, Mrs Sophie LEUNG, Mr WONG Yung-kan, Mr Howard YOUNG, Ms Miriam LAU, Mr Tommy CHEUNG, Mr Vincent FANG, Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Dr Joseph LEE, Mr Jeffrey LAM, Mr Andrew LEUNG, Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr WONG Ting-kwong voted for the amendment.

Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, Mr SIN Chung-kai, Dr Philip WONG and Dr KWOK Ka-ki abstained.

Geographical Constituencies:

Mr James TIEN, Mrs Selina CHOW, Mr LAU Kong-wah, Mr Albert CHAN, Ms Audrey EU, Mr LI Kwok-ying, Mr Alan LEONG, Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming, Mr Ronny TONG and Mrs Anson CHAN voted for the amendment.

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, Mr Martin LEE, Mr James TO, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Dr YEUNG Sum and Ms Emily LAU abstained.

THE PRESIDENT, Mrs Rita FAN, did not cast any vote.

THE PRESIDENT announced that among the Members returned by functional constituencies, 18 were present, 14 were in favour of the amendment and four abstained; while among the Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, 17 were present, 10 were in favour of the amendment and six abstained. Since the question was agreed by a majority of each of the two groups of Members present, she therefore declared that the amendment was carried.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That Ms Audrey EU's amendment, as amended by Mr LI Kwok-ying, to Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming's motion, be passed. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority respectively of each of the two groups of Members, that is, those returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, who are present. I declare the amendment passed.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming, you have 1 minute 47 seconds to speak in reply.

MR CHEUNG HOK-MING (in Cantonese): Just as the Secretary said in reply just now, after a long and controversial debate lasting 11 hours yesterday, all of us are very happy as we can talk about nature today. In fact, one can say that not that many Honourable colleagues have spoken today and the great majority of them were revelling in the embrace of Mother Nature. Similarly, the Secretary was also revelling in his own speech. We were revelling in nature but the Secretary was revelling in the fact that there are already several pieces of legislation protecting our natural ecology.

Secretary, we fully agree that the SAR Government has done a great deal in protecting the marine parks and country parks and the public can also see this. In proposing the original motion today, I hope that the Government can take a step further by protecting some rare geological landscapes in the New Territories and even throughout Hong Kong by including them in a geological park. However, it is a pity that in his two speeches, the Secretary was only revelling in the existing legislation and did not respond to our requests directly today. He only made the comment that an open attitude would be adopted. Secretary, what I understand by adopting an open attitude is to take on board the views of the Hong Kong public and heed public opinions. I hope the Government, as the representative of Hong Kong people, can listen to the requests made by various Honourable colleagues and the views of the public, consider them carefully and endeavour to make petitions to the authorities concerned, so that Hong Kong can become a state-level park. Thank you.

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I now put the question to you and that is: That the motion moved by Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming, as amended by Ms Audrey EU and Mr LI Kwok-ying, be passed. Will those in favour please raise their hands?

(Members raised their hands)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): Those against please raise their hands.

(No hands raised)

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): I think the question is agreed by a majority respectively of each of the two groups of Members, that is, those returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, who are present. I declare the motion as amended passed.

NEXT MEETING

PRESIDENT (in Cantonese): This is the last Legislative Council meeting in 2007. Although the next Legislative Council meeting will be held only next year and I am also aware that all Honourable colleagues have a lot of work to do, I hope that Members can go and have tea in a Hong Kong style cafe or take a walk in a country park to look at the beautiful rocks during the Christmas and New Year holidays. Most importantly, I hope Members can have a happy holiday to lighten their moods.

I now adjourn the Council until 11.00 am on Wednesday, 9 January 2008.

Adjourned accordingly at eighteen minutes to Eleven o'clock in the morning.