

Panel on Commerce and Industry

Extract from minutes of the meeting held on 18 December 2007

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VII. Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's participation in the World Exposition 2010 Shanghai China

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Briefing by the Administration

46. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Permanent Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (PSCMA) briefed members on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government (HKSARG)'s preparation for participating in the World Exposition 2010 Shanghai China (World Expo 2010 Shanghai) and the overall approach in taking forward the project with the aid of a short promotional video provided by the organizer of World Expo 2010 Shanghai (the Organizer). In gist, PSCMA said that in August 2007, HKSARG received a proposal from the Organizer inviting HKSAR's participation in the event. In the past few months, the Government had closely liaised with the Organizer and paid a number of visits to Shanghai to obtain essential information of the Expo. He advised that based on the information gathered so far, HKSARG intended to make full use of the opportunity by participating in two exhibitions, namely the construction of a stand-alone Hong Kong Pavilion (HK Pavilion) within the China Exhibition Area at Zone A and the submission of a bid for participating in the "Urban Best Practices Area" Scheme (UBPA Scheme) at Zone E, as well as other related activities to be held during the Expo such as seminars, "Internet World Expo", "Hong Kong Day/Week", parades and cultural performances. In addition, in response to the Organizer's suggestion for HKSARG to assist in encouraging renowned international brand name enterprises of Hong Kong to participate in the Enterprise Pavilion exhibition in accordance with the relevant scheme, the Administration was gathering the related information and studying how to take forward the initiative.

Discussion

Theme and design of the HK Pavilion

47. Mr CHAN Kam-lam expressed support to HKSAR's participation in the World Expo 2010 Shanghai which he considered an excellent opportunity to exhibit Hong Kong's quality city life. Noting that the Administration proposed the theme of "Hong Kong – A City With Unlimited Potential (「無限城市—香港」)", he said

that while he found the English term acceptable, he considered the Chinese term, in particular the words "無限", too abstract for comprehension. He therefore urged the Administration to consider changing the Chinese term of the theme. Moreover, noting that HKSARG considered World Expo 2010 Shanghai an excellent opportunity for Hong Kong to publicize its quality city life and position itself as a creative capital, he enquired how these pursuits could be achieved. In this connection, he reminded the Administration that efforts should be made to distinguish Hong Kong from its counterparts in the China Exhibition Area at Zone A, as well as to emphasize Hong Kong's role as an important city connecting the Mainland and the rest of the world.

48. In reply, PSCMA and the Deputy Director of Information Services (2) advised that before putting up the current proposal, internal discussions had been made within the Government for choosing a theme of the HK Pavilion among a number of proposed themes. Having duly considered the theme of World Expo 2010 Shanghai, i.e. "Better City, Better Life" and its five sub-themes, namely blending of diverse cultures in the city; economic prosperity in the city; innovation of science and technology in the city; remodeling of urban communities; and rural-urban interaction, the Administration considered the current proposed theme, i.e. "Hong Kong — A City With Unlimited Potential", most appropriate to highlight Hong Kong's unique strength as a quality city with room for further growth. Under this theme, six thematic components would be covered, namely excellent infrastructure and connectivity with the Mainland and the world; well-connected and highly efficient domestic transportation network and services; advanced and seamless information technology and telecommunications infrastructure; free flow of money, goods and information; cultural diversity, harmony and creativity; and sustainable and quality city life. While noting Mr CHAN's views on the Chinese term of the theme, PSCMA stressed that the theme had to be finalized shortly as the deadline for submission of Hong Kong's relevant application proposal to the Organizer was approaching.

49. Mr LUI Ming-wah considered that the World Expo 2010 Shanghai an important event for China, as well as Shanghai and Hong Kong, to showcase their vitality to the world. He was therefore of the view that it would be worthwhile for Hong Kong to spend more on the best design, quality, construction and presentation of its exhibits. He shared Mr CHAN Kam-lam's concern about the Chinese term of the theme of the HK Pavilion and remarked that the concept of "unlimited potential" would be inconceivable to exhibit. In this connection, he suggested that the Administration should consider tapping on the talents of the design industry through an open invitation before formulating Hong Kong's overall strategy towards its participation in the event.

50. In reply, PSCMA re-iterated that the theme of the HK Pavilion would need to complement the main themes of the World Expo 2010 Shanghai. He assured members that the most effective exhibition modes, such as multi-media and interactive elements, would be adopted to bring out the theme and key messages. Other related activities would be organized to complement the exhibitions and to

highlight individual thematic components. On public participation, he advised that to tap the best creative ideas of local professionals, the Administration planned to launch in January to March 2008 a concept design competition for the HK Pavilion, which would be open to all Hong Kong professionals with the required qualifications in the relevant areas of architecture, planning and design, etc. The Hong Kong Institute of Architects would be invited to act as the sponsoring organization for the concept design competition. The winning design of the competition would be novated to a design and build contractor for detailed design and construction at a later stage. He added that other ways to promote public participation, such as photo/video competitions, were also being considered and consideration might be given to uploading the winning entries onto the Internet or exhibiting them at the event, if appropriate.

51. Mr LUI Ming-wah remained concerned that it could be impractical to exhibit the concept of "unlimited potential". While stressing that Hong Kong should strive to distinguish itself from other cities, such as Singapore, he considered the HK Pavilion project a marketing task and therefore it would be desirable to involve marketing professionals in the project.

52. Acknowledging Mr LUI's suggestion, PSCMA advised that the Administration had conducted and would continue to conduct focus group discussions with representatives of relevant stakeholders, including the commerce and industry sector, creative industry, tourism and the relevant professional bodies in Hong Kong to solicit their views on the World Expo 2010 Shanghai. The first of such sessions had been held with representatives from the major chambers of commerce, HKTDC and HKTBB, etc. before drawing up the current proposal. He remarked that the Administration would strive to demonstrate HKSAR's best practices to the world in the World Expo 2010 Shanghai.

Financial implications

53. The Chairman expressed support for Hong Kong's participation in the World Expo 2010 Shanghai as he considered the event a precious opportunity for Hong Kong to showcase its strength as a quality city to the world. Noting that the preliminary estimated capital cost for the design and construction of the HK Pavilion was \$62.7 million (in September 2007 prices), he questioned whether inflation, which was noticeable in the Mainland in recent years, had been taken into account. He also sought information on the cost implications for participating in the UBPA Scheme at Zone E.

54. PSCMA advised that the said amount for the design and construction of the HK Pavilion was only a very preliminary estimation. Apart from this amount, additional expenditure would also be incurred for the software components, various exhibition activities, and the running of the HK Pavilion at Zone A. As regards the UBPA Scheme at Zone E, he advised that the competition was likely to be keen as only 45 lots would be provided, but so far, over 130 proposals had been received. He said that at the moment, the Administration had deployed internal resources to prepare for Hong Kong's application of the UBPA Scheme. The detailed financial

implications of Hong Kong's participation in the World Expo 2010 Shanghai at both Zones A and E would be worked out in due course, taking into account various relevant factors including inflation, for submission to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) and FC for approval in April/May 2008.

55. In summing up, the Chairman said that members were, in principle, supportive of the Administration's proposal for Hong Kong to participate in the World Expo 2010 Shanghai. He echoed members' suggestion that design and marketing expertise, both locally and from overseas, should be actively involved so that Hong Kong could make use of this precious opportunity to demonstrate its strength as a world quality city. While noting that the design and construction works of the HK Pavilion from the phase of concept design would take about 22 months to complete, and the exhibits installation, testing and commissioning works would take another five months, he reminded the Administration to submit its financial proposal to PWSC and FC in a timely manner. Mr LUI Ming-wah requested that the progress of each phase of HK's participation in the World Expo 2010 Shanghai be reported to the Panel in due course.

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