

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)2157/08-09
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/ITB/1

Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 12 January 2009, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon LEE Wing-tat (Deputy Chairman)
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP

Members absent : Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC

Public officers attending : Agenda Item IV

Mrs Rita LAU NG Wai-lan, JP
Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

Mr Duncan PESCOD, JP
Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic
Development (Communications and Technology)

Mr Alan SIU, JP
Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic
Development (Communications and Technology)

Mr Kevin CHOI
Principal Assistant Secretary for Commerce and
Economic Development (Communications and
Technology)A

Mr MA Po-ho
Chief Telecommunications Engineer (Advisory and
Spectrum Management)
Office of the Telecommunications Authority

Agenda Item V

Mr Gregory SO, JP
Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic
Development

Mr Duncan PESCOD, JP
Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic
Development (Communications and Technology)

Mr Jeremy GODFREY
Government Chief Information Officer
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

Mr Tony WONG
Acting Chief Systems Manager (Digital Inclusion)
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

Clerk in attendance : Ms YUE Tin-po
Chief Council Secretary (1)3

Staff in attendance : Ms Annette LAM
Senior Council Secretary (1)3

Ms Debbie SIU
Legislative Assistant (1)6

I. Confirmation of minutes of meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)463/08-09 -- Minutes of meeting held on 21 October 2008)

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2008 were confirmed.

II. Information paper issued since last meeting

2. Members noted that no paper had been issued since the last meeting held on 8 December 2008.

III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper No. CB(1)508/08-09(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)508/08-09(02) -- List of follow-up actions)

3. Members noted that the next regular Panel meeting would be held on 9 February 2009 at 2:30 pm to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration:

- (a) Promote development of the creative industries and the setting up of a dedicated office for creative industries; and
- (b) Progress report on 2008 Digital 21 Strategy.

4. Members noted that some organizations had written in requesting the Panel to hold a public hearing to listen to their views on the review of the Control on Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance. Members agreed that a special meeting be scheduled for 21 January 2009 at 2:30 pm to receive views from those who had not given views to the Panel at its meeting on 20 November 2008. A general notice inviting views and submissions from the public would be posted on the Legislative Council website.

IV. Mobile TV policy framework and auctioning of mobile TV-related spectrum

(Ref: CTB(CR)9/19/14 (08) Pt. 4 -- Administration's paper on framework for development of mobile television services issued by the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (Legislative Council Brief)

LC Paper No. CB(1)508/08-09(03) -- Paper on consultation exercise on the implementation framework of mobile television services in Hong Kong prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (background brief)

LC Paper No. CB(1)585/08-09(01) -- Administration's paper on mobile TV policy framework and auctioning of mobile TV-related spectrum (power-point presentation material)
(tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued via e-mail on 13 January 2009)

Briefing by the Administration

5. With the aid of power-point, the Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology) (DSCED(CT)) briefed members on the implementation framework for development of mobile TV services in Hong Kong. Details on spectrum availability, allocation and assignment, licensing arrangement and technical standards, geographical coverage and the timetable for the auction of the relevant spectrum were set out in the Administration's paper (Ref: CTB(CR)9/19/14 (08) Pt. 4) and the power-point presentation material tabled at the meeting (LC Paper No. CB(1)585/08-09(01)). Members noted that the Administration had conducted two rounds of public consultation in early 2007 and early 2008. The majority of the respondents accepted the proposed implementation framework. Broadcasting and telecommunications operators had indicated interest in introducing broadcast type mobile TV services, and some of them had already tested a number of mobile TV technologies with the assistance of the Office of the Telecommunications Authority (OFTA).

Discussion

6. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about the timetable for the introduction of mobile TV, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (SCED) informed the meeting that subject to the Panel's support, amendments to the subsidiary legislation would be tabled at the Legislative Council shortly. Upon the completion of the negative vetting process on the subsidiary legislation, the Administration aimed to conduct the auction within the first half of 2009 to license local broadcast-type mobile TV services in 2009.

Regulation of mobile TV services

7. Mr WONG Ting-kwong supported the early introduction of mobile TV services in Hong Kong to provide a wider variety of mobile multimedia services to the viewing public. He noted that the content of mobile TV services would not be regulated under the Broadcasting Ordinance (BO). Instead, operators would be required to develop codes of practice for self-regulation. Mr WONG sought

explanation on the Government's rationale for the proposed light-handed regulatory approach. He was also concerned that in the absence of regulatory control on mobile TV programming and content, the public, in particular children and youth, might be exposed to adult programme and programme with undesirable content in public places. Mr CHAN Kam-lam shared a similar concern. Noting the difficulty of regulating transmission of obscene and indecent materials on the Internet, he was concerned that with a high mobile phone penetration in Hong Kong, a light-handed regulatory approach on mobile TV content might pose risk to the young generation.

8. In response, the SCED said that mobile TV services, whereby TV programme services was provided by wireless transmission of audio-visual content for reception by compatible mobile phones or other portable devices, was a nascent and relatively personal service different from conventional free-to-air TV services. As such, the Administration did not propose to regulate mobile TV services same as conventional TV services. Having regard to the principle of freedom of expression and to allow mobile TV operators the flexibility to provide a wide range of programmes targeting the mobile TV market in response to consumer demand, a light-handed regulatory approach was proposed instead. Mobile TV services, its programming and content, would be subject to regulation by general laws such as the COIAO and the Personal Data Privacy Ordinance as well as self-regulatory codes of practice to be developed by the industry. The Administration would monitor closely the situation and a complaint mechanism for handling complaints from the public would be in place to protect public morals and children.

9. Mr WONG Yuk-man considered the light-handed regulatory approach proposed by the Administration a move in the right direction. He supported that mobile TV services should not be subject to the regulation of BO as mobile TV content touching on indecent and obscene material would be regulated by the COIAO. He opined that the Administration should not impose any control and regulation on mobile TV content to allow programme diversity and facilitate a wide variety of programme choices to the public.

10. Referring to the broadcast of free or pay TV programmes in public places such as restaurants or public transport, Mr WONG Ting-kwong enquired whether such broadcast would infringe copyright. In response, SCED advised that the broadcast of conventional free-to-air TV programmes in public places and public transport would not infringe copyright. The broadcast of paid TV programmes, however, would be subject to the terms and conditions of the commercial agreement made between the service providers concerned.

Spectrum assignment

11. Ms Emily LAU opined that the assignment of frequency spectrum through auction would be advantageous to large financial conglomerates and create entry barrier for financially less viable groups. She was concerned that community/minority groups and non-profit making organizations wishing to operate community channels for expression of diverse views would not have the

financial means to meet the high licence fee. Mr WONG Yuk-man also expressed concern that network carriers, being big conglomerates that have the financial means to monopolize the "conveyance" of TV services, would have an advantage over service providers delivering audio/visual contents.

12. In response, SCED said that to ensure fair and efficient allocation of spectrum as a scarce public resource, the Government would adopt a market-based approach in accordance with the Radio Spectrum Policy Framework promulgated by the Government whereby spectrum would be assigned by way of an auction whenever there was likely to be competing demand for the spectrum for non-government services. The level of spectrum utilization fee (SUF) determined by auction would reflect the market value of the spectrum and the business potential perceived by the successful bidder.

13. MS Cyd HO held the view that spectrum assignment should not be based on financial consideration only. She suggested that criteria such as programme content and quality should also be taken into consideration in assigning spectrum. In view of its scarcity, spectrum should be reserved for the development of public service broadcasting (PSB) and community channels to cater for the need of minority groups.

14. In response, SCED assured members that spectrum had been reserved for future development of PSB in Hong Kong. She reiterated that spectrum allocation by way of auction reflecting the market value of the spectrum as a scarce public resource was a fair and open way of spectrum assignment to ensure level playing field for non-government services. As such, it was the established Government policy and practice for spectrum to be allocated by way of auction where there was competing demand for spectrum for non-government services. As programme services for mobile reception was a personalized service and individual consumers had different preferences, it would be difficult to draw up a set of objective criteria as the basis for assessment.

Market competition

15. Mr CHAN Kam-lam welcomed the early introduction of mobile TV services. Noting that charges for audio-visual content on demand currently provided by some mobile telecommunications operators were quite high, he asked whether the Administration would consider releasing more frequency spectrum for auction to bring in more service providers, thereby increasing the variety and quality of services at reasonable charges through market competition.

16. While supporting the introduction of mobile TV services and the removal of cross media ownership restriction, Dr Samson TAM was concerned that both terrestrial and mobile TV services would be monopolized by the two existing free domestic broadcasters in the event that they were successful in securing the spectrum in the auction. He asked what measures the Government would put in place to prevent monopoly and to increase market competition by opening up the market to new industry players.

17. Mr LEE Wing-tat opined that in view of the high capital outlay required for establishing and maintaining a distributing network for transmitting mobile TV services and associated content productions, it was unlikely that a completely new market player would be interested in bidding for the spectrum. He anticipated that only the incumbent broadcasters and service providers would participate in the auction, and expressed concern whether there would be sufficient market competition to safeguard the best interests of the public.

18. In response, SCED advised that one out of the two available frequency multiplexes in UHF Band and two out of the four available frequency multiplexes in Band III would be released for the introduction of broadcast-type mobile TV services while the remaining multiplexes would be reserved for future digital terrestrial television (DTT), DAB services, or other possible electronic communications services when technology further evolved. SCED highlighted that it was the Government's policy objective to bring in more service providers so that consumers would be provided with more choices, in terms of programme content and service charge, through competition. There were separate licensing regimes for regulating "conveyance" and "content" of mobile TV services. Mobile TV services and other permitted telecommunications and value-added ancillary services could be provided either by the successful bidders themselves direct, or by mobile TV service providers who hired the transmission capacity from the successful bidders. Service providers, on the basis of market research, could provide a variety of programmes and services in response to consumer demands, thus widening programme choices for mobile communications users and enhancing development of local media and telecommunications industry as a whole. SCED believed that competition among different service providers would help increase programme diversity, enhance service quality and lower service fee bringing benefits to the consumers and the public. The Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology) (PSCED(CT)) added that to encourage a wider variety of services in the mobile TV service market to be provided by different players, the UHF Band multiplex and the two Band III multiplexes would be offered as two separate packages in the auction and no bidder would be allowed to acquire more than one package from the auction.

19. In response to Mr WONG Ting-kwong's enquiry about the reserve price for the relevant spectrum for auction, SCED advised that on the basis of market assessment and consultancy study, a reserve price would be set and prescribed in the form of a gazette notice nearer the time of the auction.

Annual licence fee

20. Mr Paul TSE noted from paragraph 21 of Administration Paper (File Ref: CTB(CR)9/19/14(08) Pt.4) the great differences in annual licence fee for a new unified carrier licensee (\$6.7 million) and an existing licensee (\$670,000) and sought explanation of the fee differential. He was concerned that incumbent operators would have a competitive edge over new market entrants, and enquired whether the Administration would consider lowering the entry threshold to prevent

monopoly by the existing network operators and broadcasters.

21. In response, SCED and DSCED(CT) explained that a new licensee was required to pay a higher annual licence fee due to the administrative cost incurred for vetting the licence application and the fixed fee and customer connection fee already paid for by the incumbent licensee. SCED added that it was an established Government policy that licence fee be levied on a full-cost recovery principle to cover the administration costs incurred.

Geographical coverage requirement

22. Dr Samson TAM noted that successful bidders would be required to provide coverage for 50% of the population within 18 months from the grant of a unified carrier licence. He sought elaboration on the coverage requirement and the coverage in the mass transit railway.

23. In response, PSCED(CT) explained that the requirement was mainly based on a geographical coverage, covering the central part of the city and the two sides along the harbour in the initial phase. Coverage in tunnels as well as the mass transit railway network would not be mandatory. It was up to the mobile TV service operators to negotiate with the railway company and tunnel operators for coverage based on commercial considerations.

24. Referring to the MTRC's reluctance to install facilities for reception of broadcast programme of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), Ms Emily LAU called on the Administration to urge MTRC to facilitate the reception of RTHK radio broadcast and mobile TV programme in the mass transit railway network as far as practicable. SCED noted the suggestion.

Digital audio broadcasting

25. Ms Emily LAU expressed concern that Hong Kong was lagging behind other advanced economies in the development of digital audio broadcasting (DAB). She opined that despite years of discussion and increasing demand for the opening up of airwaves for community channels, digitalization of radio broadcasting remained stagnant.

26. In response, SCED highlighted that the Government's broadcasting policy objectives were to facilitate the deployment of the latest digital technology and the introduction of innovative broadcasting services to enhance programming choice of the public. She recapped that frequency spectrum in Band III had been reserved for the development of DAB since 2000. Any parties interested in providing DAB services were free to apply to the OFTA for conducting technical trials. However, market response had not been positive and no operators had indicated interests in providing DAB services during the previous rounds of consultation. Referring to the pro-mobile TV approach whereby no more than 50% of the transmission capacity could be used for other ancillary services such as DAB and

datacasting etc, SCED highlighted that it was the Government's intention to take the opportunity of developing mobile TV services to also facilitate the roll out of DAB.

27. Dr Samson TAM enquired about the licensing arrangement for the provision of DAB services alongside mobile TV services and the fee for renting the transmission capacity of the frequency spectrum. In response, the Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology) DSCED(CT) advised that DAB services, provided alongside mobile TV services either by the mobile TV operators themselves or by others who hired the transmission capacity, would continue to be subject to the existing sound broadcasting licensing regime as contained in Part IIIA of the Telecommunications Ordinance (TO). A mobile TV operator who wish to provide DAB services as well would have to apply for a sound broadcasting licence to be approved by the Chief Executive in Council. The DAB service would be regulated under the TO, BO and the relevant radio codes of practice, as in the case of existing sound broadcasting services. The Government would not control and regulate the rental of the transmission capacity which was a matter of commercial negotiation between the parties concerned.

Establishment of a unified regulatory body

28. Ms Emily LAU expressed disappointment at the lack of progress in the proposed merging of the Telecommunications Authority and the Broadcasting Authority into a unified regulatory body and the related review of the TO and BO. SCED replied that the Administration appreciated the need for a unified regulator to oversee both the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors to make effective and timely responses in the light of media and technology convergence. The Administration was committed to conduct a comprehensive review of the relevant ordinances and regulations to meet the challenges brought about by technological convergence. Work was underway to work out the specific details of the legislative exercise of setting up the unified regulator.

Other concerns

29. Mrs Regina IP asked what measures the Government would put in place to encourage network operators to continue upgrading the hardware network infrastructure and facilities. She also enquired whether the Administration would consider broadcast China Central Television (CCTV)'s programmes on culture and history. SCED replied that while it was the commercial decision of individual network operator to decide whether to make network investment to keep up with technological development, telecommunications services licensee was subject to performance bonds and required to achieve a prescribed coverage as a licence condition. The Administration would monitor the situation closely to ensure fulfillment of the licence obligation. On the broadcast of CCTV programmes, SCED informed members that such service was currently provided by ATV free to the public.

Summing up

30. In concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that members supported in principle the implementation framework for the introduction of mobile TV services in Hong Kong and the auction of the relevant spectrum to enable the provision of a wider variety of multimedia services to the public.

V. District cyber centres

(LC Paper No. CB(1)508/08-09(04) -- Administration's paper on progress report on the pilot scheme on District Cyber Centres

LC Paper No. CB(1)508/08-09(05) -- Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming's question on "GovWiFi" Programme at the Council meeting on 20 February 2008 and the Administration's reply

LC Paper No. CB(1)585/08-09(02) -- Administration's paper on pilot scheme on district cyber centres (power-point presentation material))
(*tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued via e-mail on 13 January 2009*)

Presentation by the Administration

31. With the aid of power-point, the Acting Chief Systems Manager (Digital Inclusion) Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (Atg CSM(DI)) briefed members on the background, objective, the latest development and future expansion plan of the pilot scheme on District Cyber Centres (DCC). Scheduled for service launch in February 2009, the DCC pilot scheme aimed at enhancing digital inclusion of needy groups in the community. Details of the pilot scheme were set out in LC Paper Nos. CB(1)508/08-09(04) and CB(1)585/08-09(02).

Discussion

The District Cyber Centre Pilot Scheme

32. Ms Emily LAU enquired about the reasons for selecting the Alliance (three organizations including the Cyberport Management Company Limited, Hong Kong Council of Social Service, and the Internet Professional Association) to form a partnership with the Government in the implementation and management of the DCC pilot scheme.

33. In response, the Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) advised that over 160 professional bodies in the field of information and communications technology (ICT), industry associations, community organizations as well as private sector companies had been invited to submit expressions of interest with

proposals for participating in the pilot scheme. A total of 24 proposals were subsequently received, most of which indicating an interest to operate individual district cyber centres. Of these 24, the three organizations which had shown their merits and distinct advantages were encouraged to form an Alliance. The joint proposal from the Alliance was identified as providing the greatest benefit and strengths in coordinating and driving the sustainable development of the DCC movement in the wider community for disadvantaged groups. The Alliance had lined up over 40 partners, including private sector sponsors, business community, professional and industry organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community and education organizations, and a number of district-based computer centres serving different needy communities. It sought to enhance the capacity of district-based cyber centres, both existing and new ones, by forming an allied network amongst the centres. Through strengthening the branding, coordination, and support network with the affiliated centres, the Alliance would seek to secure sponsorship and donation (in cash and in kind including software licences and broadband connections) from major IT companies, professional bodies and Internet service providers (ISPs) for the affiliated centres and coordinate the delivery of technical support and assistance to these centres. Helpdesk and on-site technical support as well as assistance for hardware purchase and upgrade would be provided to help the affiliated centres solve daily ICT operational and maintenance issues. Professional volunteers would be pooled together to develop practical course materials and to deliver customized training to the affiliated centres' staff, trainers and the needy groups served by individual centres.

34. Mr WONG Ting-kwong expressed support for the pilot scheme. He suggested running a mobile cyber centre, similar to the operation of the mobile library, to bring computer and ICT facilities to every district.

35. The Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (USCED) responded that in addition to the 10 DCCs equipped with a total of 250 computers and related-ICT facilities, a Laptop Library with 250 laptop computers would be set up for needy users to borrow via the cyber centres network of the Alliance. Under a further 12-month development plan, the pilot operation would be expanded to support 25 affiliated centres with 625 computer equipment and ICT facilities, bringing to a total of 1 000 laptop computers in the laptop Library available for shared use among the affiliated centres. Computers and the related ICT facilities would be made available in every district serving different needy communities at various locations. GCIO supplemented that the Laptop Library had planned for a bus to provide mobile service which would commence operation upon securing commercial sponsorship.

36. Ms Cyd HO said that it would be a long-term process to narrow the digital divide and eliminate cross-generation poverty. As such, Government commitment and continued funding support were important for the success and sustained development of the digital inclusion initiatives. Noting that the Government would provide a sponsorship of \$4.7 million for the initial pilot phase of the DCC scheme and \$23.8 million for the second phase, she asked whether the Government would commit to a clear policy objective to support the pilot scheme and provide

recurrent provision in the estimates for the long-term development of the scheme.

37. In response, USCED and GCIO said that many organizations, both private corporations or social service bodies and NGOs, were currently running various digital inclusion programmes to bridge the digital divide in Hong Kong. However, there was no overall coordination of their operation. The Government, in partnership with community organizations and private sector sponsors, sought to enhance digital inclusion through the DCC pilot scheme. Under the tripartite partnership arrangements of the DCC pilot scheme, the Office of the Government Chief Information Office (OGCIO) had provided a sponsorship of \$4.7 million to support the proposal while the Alliance had also secured a similar amount of commercial sponsorship, both in cash and in kind, including professional support, hardware, software and service donation, to facilitate the implementation and rollout of the pilot operation. An additional funding of about \$23.8 million was estimated for a 12-month expansion plan. Besides Government support, the Alliance would continue to engage more centres to join the network, explore more value added services to affiliated centres, and extend the partnership with private sector to secure more commercial sponsorship. The Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology) assured members that the Government was committed to tackling the digital divide in Hong Kong. Funding for the pilot DCC scheme was currently provided under the OGCIO's departmental vote. He highlighted that the Government support to the future development of the pilot scheme would be contingent upon the experience and outcome of the initial pilot, availability of funds, and the sponsorship/donation secured from the private sector.

38. Dr Samson TAM suggested that performance indicators should be set up to assess the success or otherwise of the DCC pilot scheme as well as to measure digital inclusiveness and the progress that each district had made towards digital inclusion. Atg CSM(DI) advised that the University of Hong Kong had been commissioned to conduct a survey to measure digital inclusiveness of six disadvantaged groups (including children of low-income families, single parents, the elderly, women, new migrants and people with disability) by way of a Comprehensive Digital Inclusion Index. Apart from the annual statistics on the penetration rate of personal computer and Internet, discussions were underway with the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) to explore the feasibility of providing information on digital inclusiveness on a regular basis. While welcoming such initiatives, Dr TAM urged the Administration to step up liaison with the 18 districts and compile district-based data on digital inclusiveness.

39. On the location and distribution of the DCCs, the Chairman and Ms Emily LAU opined that these centres should be set up in low-income districts where the digital divide was most serious, such as Tin Shui Wai, Tai Po, Sheung Shui and Tseung Kwan O, so that the benefits to be brought about by the scheme would be more targeted.

40. GCIO and Atg CSM(DI) agreed that the DCC pilot scheme should be targeted at needy groups in the community and therefore should preferably be

located at less affluent districts. They advised that a number of centres run by various NGOs in different districts had confirmed participation in the first phase of the pilot scheme. Most of the centres were in relatively low-income districts including Chai Wan, Wan Chai, Wong Tai Sin, Kwun Tong, Ngau Tau Kok, and Tai Po. As the Alliance continued to expand its network, it was anticipated that more cyber centres in different districts would join the scheme to serve different needy groups in various districts.

Internet access by students/children of low-income families

41. Ms Emily LAU and Mr WONG Ting-kwong expressed concern that according to the C&SD, about 20 000 students did not have computers and Internet access at home. Noting that Internet charges were not included in the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA), they asked what initiatives the Government would put in place to help narrow the digital divide and facilitate children of low-income families to access computers and online services at home. Mr WONG Ting-kwong called on the Government to expand the computer recycling programme to provide DCCs with recycled computers.

42. GCIO advised that apart from the computer recycling programme to provide needy students with access to computers, and the free Internet broadband access plan for children of low-income families, the DCCs would provide computer facilities, Internet connectivity, and technical support to help narrow the digital divide, enabling young people from poor families and other needy members of the community to access and use ICT and online services and helping them integrate into information society. Laptop computers with wireless Internet access cards could be loaned from the Laptop Library for use at home. Discussions were underway with a number of mobile operators to sponsor free wireless Internet access for users of the loaned laptops at home.

Job creation in the ICT sector

43. Dr Samson TAM said that the ICT sector had been hard hit by staff lay-offs which rendered many ICT professionals jobless. While engaging the retrenched ICT professionals in ICT-related voluntary work, he hoped that the Government would take initiatives to create more IT jobs, such as by riding on the DCC pilot scheme to create part-time training posts.

44. USCED and GCIO advised that a number of measures had been taken to create ICT jobs within the Government and in the private sector. Apart from gearing up the approval and implementation of Government ICT projects that would generate IT jobs, efforts were being made to help the laid-off ICT professionals remain engaged in the field. The Administration had been working with industry bodies to assist ICT professionals to access opportunities for training, employment, self-employment, and ICT-related voluntary work. As regards the DCC pilot scheme, Atg CSM(DI) informed members that the Alliance planned to employ about 15 to 16 full-time salaried staff, mainly responsible for managing the scheme and coordination and developing ICT professional training and

development programmes for affiliated centres' staff, volunteers and users.

Summing up

Admin 45. The Chairman requested the Administration to take note of views and concerns expressed by members. At members' request, the Administration undertook to provide the following information after the meeting:

- (a) detailed information on the number of jobs created/to be created, the job nature and duration, etc under different phases of the pilot scheme;
- (b) the distribution/location of district cyber centres under different phases of the pilot scheme;
- (c) estimated number of students in Hong Kong who had no access to computer and Internet services; and
- (d) the Labour and Welfare Bureau to give consideration to including Internet charges in CSSA for eligible low-income families with school-age household members.

(Post-meeting note: The information provided by the Administration had been issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)897/08-09(01) on 24 February 2009.)

VI. Any other business

46. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:30 pm.