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**Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting**

**Meeting on 9 February 2009**

**Updated background brief on Digital 21 Strategy**

**Purpose**

This paper provides an update of the development of the Digital 21 Strategy and summarizes the latest views and concerns expressed by the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting (The Panel).

**Development of the Digital 21 Strategy**

2. The Digital 21 Strategy is a blueprint for the development of information and communication technology (ICT)<sup>1</sup> in Hong Kong. The focus of the Digital 21 Strategy is to advance Hong Kong's achievements, seize new opportunities and harness its advantage so as to strengthen its position as a leading digital city. The ultimate aim is to promote Hong Kong's economic development and to provide better services to citizens.

3. According to the Administration, it made good progress in the past year on the five action areas under the latest Digital 21 Strategy as highlighted below:

Action Area 1: facilitating a digital economy

- (a) investing substantially in IT in all areas;
- (b) fostering cross-boundary cooperation in technology and innovation;  
and

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<sup>1</sup> ICT refers to all technologies and applications that involve information processing and/or exchange over communication networks, including the internet.

- (c) leading focused discussions among different sectors of the community to help Hong Kong move towards an inclusive, knowledge-based society.

Action Area 2: promoting advanced technology and innovation

- (a) preparing a draft implementation framework for introducing mobile television services for second public consultation in 2007-2008;
- (b) facilitating a smooth transition from analogue to digital terrestrial television broadcasting with a view to switching off analogue broadcasting by 2012;
- (c) strengthening Cyberport and Science Park as hubs for innovation and technology;
- (d) promoting applied R&D, technology transfer and commercializing of R&D deliverables through the R&D Centres;
- (e) positioning Hong Kong as a regional test-bed and launching pad of innovative technologies;
- (f) facilitating convergence among telecommunications, broadcasting and IT leading to emergence of new products and services; and
- (g) building international profile of outstanding ICT achievements.

Action Area 3: developing Hong Kong as a hub for technological cooperation and trade

- (a) facilitating the ICT industry to develop competency standards under the Qualifications Framework;
- (b) implementing the Unsolicited Electronic Messages Ordinance;
- (c) liaising with the Mainland on matters relating to innovation and technology;
- (d) strengthening regional cooperation in dealing with incidents relating to Internet service outage and raising public awareness and education on business continuity planning, incident management and response; and
- (e) engaging in regular discussions and exchanges with the ICT industry through the ICT Industry Partnership Forum.

Action Area 4: enabling the next generation of public services

- (a) transforming public service delivery through continuous enhancement of GovHK;
- (b) developing a common platform for dissemination of geospatial information on GovHK;
- (c) setting up the Transport Information System; and
- (d) developing an Electronic Health Record System.

Action Area 5: building an inclusive, knowledge-based society

- (a) installing wireless hotspots at major government premises with high public patronage;
- (b) publishing the third IT in Education Strategy;
- (c) measuring digital inclusiveness on a regular basis to gauge the effectiveness of the initiatives;
- (d) working with the ICT industry to devise suitable programmes to increase ICT take-up among SMEs; and
- (e) launching a pilot scheme to establish cyber centres in selected districts.

**Discussion at the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting**

4. The Panel received regular reports from the Administration on the implementation of the Digital 21 Strategy. Panel members generally supported the development of the Digital 21 Strategy.

5. At the Panel meeting on 10 June 2008, the Administration updated members on the progress on the implementation of initiatives under the 2008 Digital 21 Strategy. To take forward the Strategy, the Administration proposed to develop the Statements of Desired Outcome (SDOs) for each of the five action areas. A copy of the draft SDOs is in the **Appendix**.

6. Members considered the draft SDOs too general and suggested that relevant data/statistics and the outcome/progress achieved for each of the five action areas should be set out side by side for easy comparison. The Administration assured members that following finalization of the SDOs with input from the Panel and the Digital 21 Strategy Advisory Committee as well as the support of the industry and the community, the Administration would seek to

develop more concrete programmes in pursuit of the desired outcomes in each of the action areas. Based on the qualitative descriptions of the desired outcomes, quantifiable measures and benchmarks would be defined and set for future comparison.

7. Members noted that the Administration had increased spending on IT in recent years due to improved fiscal position following years of economic recession. However, ICT adoption in Government departments/bureaux remained slow and passive. As ICT development was not the core business of departments/bureaux, measures to encourage the heads of departments/bureaux to actively implement ICT initiatives to improve efficiency in service delivery and reduce operating costs would be a major challenge of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO). Members appreciated that the enhancement of ICT development required the active participation of the entire community, including the ICT industry, the general public and Government departments/bureaux. Nevertheless, members urged that the OGCIO should play an enabling and facilitating role, by proposing and developing ICT applications and e-business solutions, to encourage wider use of ICT initiatives among Government departments/bureaux.

8. The Panel had grave concern about the low PC and Internet penetration rate (59.8%) in respect of small enterprises and urged the Administration to look into the causes of poor penetration rate for small business establishments in Hong Kong. The Administration undertook to further examine the barriers to ICT adoption and make continued efforts to promote the wider use of ICT among SMEs.

9. The Panel also expressed grave concern about the low level of digital integration among the six disadvantaged groups (i.e. the elderly, persons with disabilities and/or chronic illness, female homemakers, single parents, new arrivals and children of low-income families) and called for additional measures to enhance ICT adoption of such groups. According to the Administration, a task force had been set up to formulate strategies and develop initiatives for enhancing digital inclusion for the disadvantaged groups identified.

### **Latest position**

10. The Administration will brief the Panel on the latest progress on the implementation of initiatives under the 2008 Digital 21 Strategy.

**Relevant papers**

Information paper provided by the Administration for the Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 10 June 2008

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/itb/papers/itb0610cb1-1755-3-e.pdf>

Minutes of Information Technology and Broadcasting Panel meeting on 10 June 2008

<http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/itb/minutes/itb080610.pdf>

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### **The Initial Draft Statements of Desired Outcomes of the Five Action Areas under 2008 Digital 21 Strategy**

#### **Facilitating a Digital Economy:**

Hong Kong has the standards, infrastructure, legal framework and talent that are needed to facilitate a digital economy, and to enable Hong Kong's core industries to sustain their competitive position. Individuals and businesses are aware of the opportunities brought by a digital economy and have confidence in their ability and skills to take full advantage of the opportunities.

#### **Promoting advanced technology and innovation:**

Hong Kong is a leading Asia Pacific location for research and innovation – both in technology and in developing creative business models. Hong Kong attracts talent and investment locally, regionally and globally and maximize the benefits of collaboration with mainland research and development efforts. Open competition gives market participants the incentive to invest in advanced information and communications technology (ICT) to meet market needs.

#### **Developing Hong Kong as a Hub for Technological Cooperation and Trade:**

Business establishments located in Hong Kong play a significant role in the local, global and Mainland markets for ICT and digital content services. Innovative ICT-enabled business models are used to compete globally in many other areas. Collaboration with international and Mainland entities is a major factor in successfully serving a variety of export markets as well as Mainland and local customers.

#### **Enabling the Next Generation of Public Services:**

The Government provides people with the services they need, in an efficient, convenient manner, which is as pleasurable and straightforward as dealing with the most customer-friendly organizations in the commercial and voluntary sectors<sup>1</sup>. Government policy priorities such as healthcare reform are enabled by appropriate and world-leading use of ICT. The internal efficiency of Government approaches that of the most efficient commercial organizations. Transparency and public engagement are enhanced through leveraging ICT.

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<sup>1</sup> This draft statement draws on the Policy Address commitment about "people-based" public services planning.

**Building an Inclusive, Knowledge-based Society:**

Residents, businesses, and voluntary organizations in Hong Kong are all able to create, access, utilize and share information and knowledge, so that they can achieve their full potential in promoting their sustainable development and improving their quality of life<sup>2</sup>. There is a culture of healthy and ethical use of ICT, promoted and protected by knowledgeable users and by the justice system.

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<sup>2</sup> This draft statement draws on the Common Vision of an Information Society adopted by the United Nations.