

**For information
on 13 July 2009**

**Legislative Council Panel
on Information Technology and Broadcasting**

**Review of Public Service Broadcasting
and Relevant Matters**

Purpose

This paper sets out the latest position of the Administration's review on public service broadcasting (PSB) and relevant matters.

Background

2. Broadcasting is an important means to convey information, support education and provide entertainment to the public. PSB has an important role to complement the activities of commercial broadcasting services; specifically to provide minority and special interest broadcasting that might otherwise not be adequately covered by commercial services.

3. In Hong Kong, PSB has over the years provided in part by Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK), a Government department serving as the only publicly funded broadcaster, and in part by commercial sound and TV broadcasters in accordance with their licensing requirements (e.g. to provide news, current affairs programmes, programmes for children and the elderly, arts and cultural programmes, etc). With new channels of communication emerging, the advancement of technology and convergence of traditional and the new digital media, there are many more ways for the public to access the broadcasting that they want, including PSB.

4. In response to these developments and to address rising community expectations, in 2006 the Chief Executive appointed an independent Committee, comprising seven non-official professionals from the broadcasting and related industries and chaired by Mr Raymond Wong, to study in depth and comprehensively the future development of PSB in Hong Kong. The Committee submitted its report to the Administration in 2007. The report, which was welcomed by Government,

contained a number of recommendations on the possible future institutional, financial and programming arrangements for PSB in Hong Kong. Members of the ITB Panel also produced a study report and submitted it to the Legislative Council and the Administration for consideration.

Recent Developments

5. The Committee's report has drawn diverse views from various sectors of the community and Members of the Legislative Council. The future of RTHK has been one of the more controversial issues arising from the report. Other issues that have attracted particular community interest are: community broadcasting services, public access broadcasting, and the question of the allocation and distribution of frequency spectrum. All these issues have far-reaching implications for the broadcasting, social and cultural landscape of Hong Kong, and will impact upon the future of RTHK.

6. The Administration undertook to study the Committee's report thoroughly and to extensively consult the public, including the Legislative Council, the staff of RTHK and all stakeholders, before reaching a decision on the future of PSB in Hong Kong. The study, which is still underway, has been rather more complex than at first anticipated as a number of issues not covered in the Committee's report have emerged through the exercise so far. It is still our intention to consult the public on a way ahead but we are not yet in a position to do so.

Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
July 2009