

**Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development
Legislative Council Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
Meeting on 21 October 2008**

Points-to-make on Policy Initiatives

- The paper sets out the major new and ongoing initiatives in respect of communications and technology.
- I would like to highlight some of them.

(1) Creative Economy

- Our Bureau, under the leadership of the Financial Secretary, has been tasked to oversee the policy of developing the creative economy in Hong Kong and formulating an overall strategy.
- To implement the proposal of promoting Hong Kong as a creative capital as stated in the Chief Executive's Policy Address last year, we have decided to take some specific measures. First, we will redeploy the existing functions and resources of the various departments responsible for creative industries under the Bureau and set up a dedicated office for promoting creative industries. The office will be responsible for inter-departmental coordination in the promotion of creative industries. Besides strengthening co-operation with the industry, it will also serve as a one-stop service centre. After we have devised the organization framework and establishment, we will brief the Panel on the implementation schedule and details.
- With regard to film development, we sought the approval of the Legislative Council to inject \$300 million into the Film Development Fund (FDF) and expanded the ambit of the Fund to support the production of small and medium sized movies last July. As at September 2008, 15 applications in connection with film-related projects and 6 applications in respect of financing film production were approved. The amount of financing reached \$34 million. To further promote the use of the FDF, we plan to conduct a review of its operation at the end of 2008.

- We will also seek to rebuild the Southeast Asian market (including Taiwan, Singapore and Malaysia) for Hong Kong films. The Film Development Council would form a delegation comprising industry representatives who are familiar with the buyers, distributors and film producers of the market to pay promotional visits to the three places. In early 2009, forums/seminars would be held to promote Hong Kong films, in particular, the up-and-coming film directors and their productions to the Southeast Asian market.

(2) Technology development

- Talent and advanced facilities for scientific research are available in both local and Mainland universities. By strengthening technological collaboration with the Mainland, we can establish a joint base for R & D projects. The well-developed manufacturing industry and the promising huge market of the Mainland present the best model available for pursuing national indigenous innovation. The recent case of soliciting Dupont in setting up its solar energy R & D centre at Science Park and production facilities in Shenzhen is just one of the prime examples.
- We will also further enhance our internship programme so as to help groom more talent to take part in our R & D work. It is hoped that more outstanding graduates in the science and engineering fields can take part in our R & D projects sponsored by the Innovation and Technology Fund.

(3) Information Technology

2008 Digital 21 Strategy

- The 2008 Digital 21 Strategy was promulgated in December 2007. The vision is to promote Hong Kong as a leading digital city. Our plans of developing and upgrading IT infrastructure projects will be implemented as scheduled.
- To further upgrade and enhance the Government online services, we will roll out pilot initiatives that enable the existing Government portal, GovHK, to provide a more personalised and user-centred service in line

with the needs of the public. District Cyber Centres will be set up in various districts to serve the local communities and prevent the emergence of digital divide as we move ahead in our digital development. We will also seek to enhance information security through a multi-pronged approach and draw up a long term and sustainable plan for the provision of Computer Emergency Response Centre service.

(4) Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance (COIAO)

- We launched the public consultation exercise on the review of the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance on 3 October. Unlike the traditional government-led approach, the consultation exercise will be conducted in two stages. In the first stage, the views and suggestions from the public, industry, media and society as collected in the past will be presented under different themes and the public is welcome to give their opinions accordingly. The views of different parties can then be gauged comprehensively. In the next stage, we will put up our views and proposals on the basis of the feedback gathered for the second round of public consultation.
- I want to stress that, regardless of the consultation outcome, the Government will make every effort to uphold and protect the core values of Hong Kong, and preserve the free flow of information and freedom of expression which are specifically protected by the law.
- Free flow of information and freedom of expression on the internet are also safeguarded. Whether on the printed media or on the internet, our society has the responsibility and need to protect our young people from the harmful effect of indecent and obscene material. A proper control mechanism is therefore needed, but there will not be any compulsory demand for pre-censorship on the content of the material. We will uphold these principles and exchange views with the panel on this issue at the next meeting in November.

(5) Broadcasting

- Lastly, let me make a report on our review of public service broadcasting (PSB). This subject has far-reaching implications on the broadcasting, social and cultural developments in Hong Kong, including

the future of Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK). The issues are complicated and with the new items like community broadcasting and public access channels, we need to comprehensively consider the subject. We will complete the preparation work for consultation, including drafting of the consultation paper, as soon as possible. We will then widely engage the public and RTHK staff in the consultation process when we map out the future PSB policy.

Conclusion

- This is my highlight. Members' views in respect of the various policy areas are much welcome. Thank you.

**Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
Communications and Technology Branch
October 2008**