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Paper for the special House Committee meeting on 23 March 2010

**Proposal for a Legislative Council delegation to conduct a duty visit
to the Shanghai World Expo**

Purpose

This paper reports on the views expressed by Members at the meeting of the Panel on Commerce and Industry ("the CI Panel") on 16 March 2010 on the proposal for a delegation to be led by the President and comprising Members of the Legislative Council ("LegCo") to visit the World Exposition 2010 Shanghai China ("Shanghai Expo").

Background

2. At the House Committee meeting on 12 March 2010, Members discussed briefly about the proposal of a duty visit to the Shanghai Expo initiated by the President of LegCo. Members noted that the subject of Shanghai Expo had been discussed by the CI Panel since December 2007, in particular in relation to the various financial proposals directly related to the Shanghai Expo and the preparatory work in connection with Hong Kong's participation in the Shanghai Expo. Members also noted that the CI Panel had already scheduled to meet on 16 March 2010 to consider matters relating to the Shanghai Expo including the proposed visit. Members agreed that it was appropriate for the CI Panel to come up with its initial views on the proposed visit and a special meeting of the House Committee be held on 23 March 2010 to consider the Panel's suggestions.

3. All LegCo Members were invited to attend the meeting of the CI Panel on 16 March 2010. A list of Members who attended the meeting is given in the **Appendix**. This paper summarizes the discussion which took place at the meeting and sets out the issues to be raised for the House Committee's consideration.

Matters relating to the Shanghai Expo being monitored by LegCo

4. The Shanghai Expo will be held in Shanghai from 1 May to 31 October 2010 under the theme of "Better City Better Life"¹. Over 240 international organizations have confirmed their participation in the mega event, which is expected to attract more than 70 million visitors. Having been invited by the organizer of the Shanghai Expo to participate in the event, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) intends to make full use of this opportunity to publicize Hong Kong's quality city life and position as a creative capital. It will construct a stand-alone Hong Kong Pavilion ("HK Pavilion"), participate in the "Urban Best Practices Area" ("UBPA") Exhibition, and organize a series of related activities such as Hong Kong week, parades and cultural performances.

5. As far back in December 2007 and subsequently on 15 April 2008, the Administration consulted the CI Panel on HKSAR's participation in the Shanghai Expo and the financial implications. On 9 May 2008, the Finance Committee ("FC") accepted in principle the financial implications of supporting HKSAR's participation in the Shanghai Expo. Upon the recommendation of the Public Works Subcommittee, FC approved on 6 June 2008 the upgrading to Category A of the public works programme item for the design and construction of the HK Pavilion at an estimated cost of \$145.40 million. On 14 July 2008, FC further approved a non-recurrent commitment of \$201 million to meet the expenditure required for operating the HK Pavilion, the design and implementation of Hong Kong's UBPA Exhibition and for organizing various activities and events associated with Hong Kong's participation in the Shanghai Expo.

6. Generally speaking, Members consider the participation in the Shanghai Expo an excellent opportunity to exhibit Hong Kong's quality city life and position itself as a creative capital, and to emphasize Hong Kong's role as an important city connecting the Mainland and the rest of the world. Moreover, the local creative talents, particularly those in the fields of design, architecture, software and performing arts, would have a good opportunity to showcase their talent and creativity to the Mainland and international audiences.

7. In the course of discussion, Members have expressed concern about the Administration's proposal to feature smart card technologies in the UBPA Exhibition, as some of the applications, such as the use of smart cards to facilitate the rollout of elderly health care voucher and to access the electronic health records of patients, are still at the pilot stage and not yet implemented in Hong Kong. The Administration has assured Members that it would continue to pursue the wider applications of smart cards in the areas of health care, environmental protection and education. It would engage the local creative industries to enrich the content of the UBPA Exhibition to showcase Hong Kong's innovative use of smart cards to

¹ The five sub-themes are: 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.

enhance connectivity and improve efficiency and quality of life in this digital age.

8. Members also noted the Administration's intention to negotiate with the Bureau of Shanghai World Expo Co-ordination for the preservation of the HK Pavilion, including re-provisioning the HK Pavilion, in whole or in part, in Hong Kong, including displaying the exhibits in the premises managed by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department. The CI Panel expected to be consulted on the arrangements for final disposition of the HK Pavilion and the exhibits after conclusion of the Shanghai Expo.

Proposed duty visit to the Shanghai Expo

9. The Members attending the meeting of the CI Panel on 16 March 2010 have expressed support for LegCo Members to conduct a duty visit to the Shanghai Expo. The proposed visit would enable LegCo Members to better understand how HKSAR's participation in the mega event would help promote Hong Kong, given that a total of \$346.4 million has been committed for the purpose. The visit would also provide LegCo Members with the opportunity to learn from the successful experiences of other participating countries on matters relating to urban development, innovative ideas on city development, new approaches to eco-friendly lifestyles and working conditions as well as sustainable development. The visit by LegCo Members would also arouse the interest of the people in Hong Kong to visit the Shanghai Expo.

Timing and duration of the duty visit

10. One of the major issues considered by Members at the CI Panel meeting was the timing of the duty visit. Most Members are of the view that the proposed visit should take place as early as practicable during the first or second week of May 2010, and where possible, Members should be able to attend the opening ceremony of the Shanghai Expo on 1 May 2010. Regarding the suggestion that the proposed visit should be held in October 2010 to tie in with the Hong Kong Week to be held at the Shanghai Expo from 18 to 22 October 2010, Members generally consider it undesirable to conduct the visit at such a late stage, if one of the purposes of the duty visit is to arouse the interest of the people in Hong Kong to visit the Shanghai Expo. It is also not appropriate for the visit to be conducted in the months of June to September 2010, having regard to the busy Council business towards the end of the session and the hot weather in Shanghai during the summer months.

11. Two Members are of the view that all 60 Members should have the opportunity to join the visit, and therefore the visit should not be scheduled before the by-election in May 2010 so as to allow those Members who would fill the five vacant seats to have the chance to participate in the visit.

12. However, most Members consider that the timing of the by-election should not be a factor for consideration in determining the timing of the visit. They recommend that the proposed visit to the Shanghai Expo should take place in early May 2010 and should include attendance at the opening ceremony if possible.

13. On the duration of the duty visit, it is generally agreed among Members that, to avoid clashing with other Council business, the visit could take place during a weekend and last for about three to four days, say from 30 April to 3 May 2010, or from 7 to 10 May 2010.

Itinerary and places to be visited

14. Members have considered the scope of the proposed visit and explored the feasibility of including other programmes which might be of interest to Members. The suggestion of the inclusion of a side trip by taking the China high speed rail from Guangzhou to Wuhan has been studied. While travelling on the high speed rail would enable Members to gain first-hand experience in the economic development in the Mainland, there is reservation about the proposal given the tight timetable of the visit. Members generally prefer taking direct flights to and from Shanghai.

15. On the itinerary, it is generally felt that the proposed duty visit should focus on the Shanghai Expo. The itinerary should include the HK Pavilion, the China Pavilion, the UBPA, and other major highlights featured in the pavilions of other participating countries/places at the Shanghai Expo.

Logistical arrangements

16. The CI Panel notes that based on past experience, even if visits to the Mainland were initiated by the relevant Panels, the visits only materialized upon invitation by the Mainland authorities. It is agreed that subject to the views of the House Committee, the views set out in this paper in relation to the proposed visit should be relayed to the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in HKSAR through the President or the Chairman of the House Committee, who should write formally to the relevant Mainland authorities. Where needed, assistance from the HKSAR Government should be sought for making the logistical arrangements.

Advice sought

17. Members are invited to note the views set out in paragraphs 9 to 16 and consider the proposal for conducting a duty visit to the Shanghai Expo.

**A list of Members who attended
the meeting of the Panel on Commerce and Industry on 16 March 2010
on the proposed duty visit to the Shanghai Expo**

Members of the Panel on Commerce and Industry

Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, SBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon CHIM Pui-chung
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP

Non-Panel Member

Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun