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Comments on
the **Framework Agreement on Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation - Environmental protection and ecology conservation**

Co-operation Mechanism

1. In the Annex which contains an extract of Chapter 6: Quality Living area of the Framework Agreement, the very first sentence stresses “To improve the ecological enhancement and environmental protection co-operation mechanism...”, Environmental Bureau however does not appear to have given a lot of thought on the co-operation mechanism. It is of vital importance that the mechanism can be established to ensure all improvement efforts can be sustained. The mechanism should be able to identify the right people to be engaged to formulate and implement the action plans as well as to ensure adequate funds for the action plans are available.
2. Apart from Government representatives, the co-operation mechanism should engage academics, professional NGOs, and other community NGOs so that expertise from the community can be fully utilized and acceptance of the community can be ensured.
3. As the main task of the Framework Agreement is to protect the environment and conserve ecology in the region, it is crucial to perform base-line and continuous monitoring studies on these aspects. Academics in both Hong Kong and Guangdong should be engaged to carry out these fundamental studies. To this end, it is necessary to establish specialized study groups to steer and ensure the quality of these studies.
4. Data and data quality are paramount important for policy formulation. As such, the data should be open for public scrutiny and there should be a stringent data quality assurance system in place. The specialized study groups should be charged with these responsibilities among others.

Concerted Actions to Prevent and Tackle Air Pollution

5. Paragraph states “Both sides are committed to achieving the emission reduction targets by 2010 and will undertake a joint study on the post-2010 arrangements

for emission reduction in the PRD region.” This study is of utmost importance to ensure no discontinuity of the joint effort in combating air pollution in the region. As it is now mid-2010, both the Hong Kong and Guangdong Governments should mobilize all available resources to complete this task. This study should include a thorough review of the implementation of the current agreement. It is necessary to report whether air pollution reduction targets have been met. Based on the review, the new Agreement should set new targets, strategy and action plans in the light of the nation’s commitment at the UN climate change conference Copenhagen 2009 to achieve these targets.

6. Paragraph 6 stipulates “both sides will also strengthen the cooperation in researches into the relationship between ambient air quality and the formation of photochemical smog and hazy weather; and enhance the Pearl River Delta Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network.” The cooperation in research should be consistently pushed forward by many specialized study groups formed not only by Government officials but experts from academics and professional NGOs. The research cooperation should not be limited to the relationship stated above but also include the causal effects as well as control strategy of air pollution/ quality. Harmonization of air quality standards and requirement should also be looked into.

Promoting Wider Use of Electric Vehicles

7. Paragraph 8 proposes “....we will work hand in hand with Guangdong to promote the wider use of EVs...” Using of EVs is now becoming a world trend because EVs do not emit at the point of use and thus leading to better air quality and reduced heat island effect in central business areas. One priority area for EV application is in the trans-boundary traffic. When Government considers allowing more vehicles to use the new boundary crossings, including the HK-Zhuhai-Macau link, condition of using EVs can be specified for newly registered vehicles.