

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(1)1202/09-10  
(These minutes have been seen by  
the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/ITB/1

**Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting**

**Minutes of special meeting  
held on Thursday, 19 November 2009, at 9:00 am  
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP (Chairman)  
Hon LEE Wing-tat (Deputy Chairman)  
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP  
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP  
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS, JP  
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC  
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan  
Hon WONG Yuk-man  
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP
- Public officers attending** : Mr Gregory SO, JP  
Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic  
Development
- Mr Duncan PESCOD, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic  
Development (Communications and Technology)
- Mr Alan SIU, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic  
Development (Communications and Technology)

Mr Aaron LIU  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Commerce and  
Economic Development (Communications and  
Technology)A

Mr Franklin WONG  
Director of Broadcasting  
Radio Television Hong Kong

Mr Gordon LEUNG, JP  
Deputy Director of Broadcasting  
Radio Television Hong Kong

Mr TAI Keen-man  
Assistant Director (Radio)  
Radio Television Hong Kong

Mr CHEUNG Man-sun  
Assistant Director (PATV)  
Radio Television Hong Kong

**Attendance by  
invitation**

: Citizens' Radio

Mr PANG Yee-kwong  
CEO

FM 101 Radio

Mr KWOK Yiu-cheung  
Member

Green Radio

Mr YANG Kuang  
Programme Director

Radio Television Hong Kong Programme Staff Union

Ms Janet MAK Lai-ching  
Chairperson

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts

Professor Kevin THOMPSON  
Director

Hong Kong Journalists Association

Ms MAK Yin-ting  
Chairperson

Hong Kong Association of the Deaf

Mr MAK Hoi-wah  
Chairman

Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of  
Hong Kong

Mr Craig JO  
Deputy Spokesperson (Information Technology &  
Broadcasting)

Hong Kong Unison Limited

Ms Fermi WONG  
Executive Director

Savantas Policy Institute

Miss Germaine LAU Kit-man  
Policy Analyst

SynergyNet

Dr Alex CHAN Wo-shun  
Director

The Society for Truth and Light

Mr CHOI Chi-sum  
General Secretary

民間公營廣播監察小組

Mr WONG Siu-yee, JP  
Convenor

In-Media (Hong Kong)

Mr Freddie CHAN Ho-lun  
Exco member

Unitarian Universalists Hong Kong

Ms Medeleine MOK  
Vice President

Political Commentator and Member of RTHK  
Programme Advisory Panel

Mr Martin OEI

Hong Kong Digital Entertainment Association

Mr Gabriel PANG  
Chairman

Asian Human Rights Commission

Ms Kit CHAN  
Programme Officer

Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor

Mr LAW Yuk-kai  
Director

SaveRTHK Campaign

Mr TSUI Hon-kwong  
Representative

The Civic Party

Mr Stuart LAU  
Policy Champion of Civic Party

Public Opinion Programme, the University of Hong  
Kong

Dr Robert CHUNG  
Director

IT Voice

Mr Joe YAU  
Member

Hong Kong Federation of Women Lawyers

Ms Angela HO Man-kay  
Council Member

The Professional Commons

Professor Stephen CHAN Ching-kiu  
Member

Individual

Mr Paul SIU Che-hung  
Wan Chai District Councillor

Mr YEUNG Wai-sing  
Eastern District Councillor

Mr MAN Chi-wah  
Central and Western District Councillor

Mr Pindar WONG

**Clerk in attendance** : Ms YUE Tin-po  
Chief Council Secretary (1)3

**Staff in attendance** : Mr Bonny LOO  
Assistant Legal Advisor 3

Ms Annette LAM  
Senior Council Secretary (1)3

Ms May LEUNG  
Legislative Assistant (1)6

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Action

**I. Public service broadcasting and the future of Radio Television Hong Kong**

(File Ref: CTB(CR) 9/17/9

-- Legislative Council Brief on public service broadcasting and the future of Radio Television Hong Kong

LC Paper No. CB(1)2726/08-09(01) -- Public consultation paper on the new Radio Television Hong Kong:

Fulfilling its mission as a public service broadcaster

LC Paper No. CB(1)382/09-10(02) -- Paper on public service broadcasting prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief)

Submission from deputations/individuals not attending the meeting

LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(07) (Chinese version only) -- Joint submission from Professor Joseph CHAN, Professor Eric K W MA and Mr CHAN Chi-kit, PhD Student, School of Journalism and Communication, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(08) (Chinese version only) -- Submission from Dr CHEUNG Chor-yung, Senior Teaching Fellow, Department of Public and Social Administration, City University of Hong Kong

LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(09) (Chinese version only) -- Submission from Wave Media Limited

LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(10) (Chinese version only) -- Submission from Dr YANG Mo, Southern District Councillor

LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(11) -- Submission from Hong Kong Composers' Guild

LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(12) (English version only) -- Submission from Television Broadcasts Limited

LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(13) (Chinese version only) -- Submission from Dr Chin Wan, Assistant Professors, Department of Chinese, Lingnan University and Member of RTHK Programme Advisory Panel

LC Paper No. CB(1)382/09-10(01) (Chinese version only) -- Submission from a member of the public

LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(06) (Chinese version only) -- Submission from Lion Rock Institute

- LC Paper No. CB(1)414/09-10(07) -- Submission from Mr Charles Peter MOK  
(Chinese version only)
- LC Paper No. CB(1)414/09-10(08) -- Submission from Metro Broadcast Corporation Limited  
(English version only)
- LC Paper No. CB(1)427/09-10(08) -- Submission from Momentum107)  
(Chinese version only)  
*(tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued via e-mail on 23 November 2009)*

### Presentation by deputations

The Chairman welcomed representatives of the deputations to the meeting. He said that written submissions from deputations received before the meeting had been circulated to members and uploaded onto the Legislative Council (LegCo)'s website for public perusal. He requested the deputations to provide a written submission if they had not already done so, and also to provide supplementary submissions, if any, to the Panel after the meeting. He reminded the deputations that when addressing the Panel at the meeting, they were not covered by the protection and immunity under the Legislative Council (Powers and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap. 382), and their written submissions were not covered by the said Ordinance.

### *Citizens' Radio*

2. Mr PANG Yee-kwong of Citizens' Radio (CR) objected to the Chief Executive-in-Council (CE in Council)'s decision for Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) to remain as a Government department while performing the role of a public service broadcaster. He also objected to the setting up of a Board of Advisors (the Advisory Board) to advise the Director of Broadcasting (D of B) on all matters pertaining to editorial policy, programme standards and the quality of RTHK programmes. He held the view that the public consultation recently launched by the Government was a show and a sham as a pre-determined decision had already been made for RTHK to continue to operate as a Government department with a public service broadcaster role. He also queried the Administration's rejection of CR's application for a sound broadcasting licence on the grounds of unavailability of suitable frequency spectrum. He maintained that a bandwidth of 0.2 MHz could carry one radio channel, and accordingly the frequencies in the 87 MHz - 108 MHz could support up to 100 independent channels without interference. He opined that the Administration should open up airwaves to allow community participation in public access broadcasting.

*FM 101 Radio*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)414/09-10(01) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

3. Mr KWOK Yiu-cheung of FM 101 Radio objected to the Government's proposal to maintain RTHK as a Government department cum public service broadcaster, and to increasing the number of civil service posts in RTHK. He said that a public broadcaster, in the fulfillment of its mission "to educate, entertain and inform", should be independent and free from political and financial pressure as well as government influences. He called on the Government to uphold the true value of public service broadcasting (PSB) by opening up airwaves for independent community groups to participate in public access broadcasting so as to encourage a plurality of voices and to promote civic education. He suggested that a fund be set up to provide financial and technical assistance to interested groups in producing their own productions to provide multi-cultural programmes on art and music, stimulate creativity and enrich the multi-cultural life of Hong Kong people.

*Green Radio*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)394/09-10(01) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

4. Referring to the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's definition of PSB, Mr YANG Kuang of Green Radio (GR) objected to the Government's proposal to maintain RTHK as a Government department cum public broadcaster. GR was of the view that RTHK's management and production team should not be staffed by civil servants as their career aspiration in the civil service might lead to self censorship of programme content. He called on the Administration to review the Telecommunications Ordinance (Cap. 106) and the existing mechanism for spectrum allocation and management with a view to opening up airwaves and lowering the threshold for the grant of licences to operate community radio service. He also suggested that the Government should set up a fund to promote and facilitate local original content production and provide support for community groups to participate in broadcasting and programme production

*Radio Television Hong Kong Programme Staff Union*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(01) -- Submission)

5. Ms Janet MAK of RTHK Programme Staff Union (RTHKPSU) disagreed that RTHK should remain as a Government department while undertaking the role of a public service broadcaster. RTHKPSU considered that RTHK should be independent from the Government and be able to operate with editorial independence and perform the watchdog role of monitoring Government policies. She said that such a monitoring role should be made one of the public purposes of PSB. Given that RTHK already had its own Programme Advisory Panel, there was no need to set up a separate CE-appointed Advisory Board which might be used as a political tool to interfere with RTHK's editorial freedom.



*The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts*  
(LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(02) -- Submission (*English version only*))

6. Professor Kevin THOMPSON of the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts said that protracted uncertainty over the future had impeded RTHK's development of serious programme content, research and development, new experimental work, and reaching out to wider audiences. With the removal of uncertainties and appropriate allocation of resources to provide for service enhancement, RTHK would have new opportunities to further expand its services to better serve the community and meet the rising audience expectations in the new digital age.

*Hong Kong Journalists Association*  
(LC Paper No. CB(1)414/09-10(02) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

7. Ms MAK Yin-ting of Hong Kong Journalists Association (HKJA) urged for RTHK's transformation into a genuinely independent public service broadcaster in fulfillment of its mission to "educate, entertain and inform" the public. She advocated that the governance structure of a public service broadcaster should be enshrined in law to uphold organizational and editorial independence, to ensure appropriate resource provision, increase transparency and accountability, and to safeguard pluralism and programme diversity. In keeping with the spirit of PSB and the principle of freedom of expression, the Administration should open up airwaves to provide more platforms to cater for diversity of views as well as specific needs and interests of different groups in the community in response to rising community expectation for direct public participation in broadcasting.

*Hong Kong Association of the Deaf*  
(LC Paper No. CB(1)427/09-10(01) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*)  
(*tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued via e-mail on 23 November 2009*))

8. Mr MAK Hoi-wah of Hong Kong Association of the Deaf said that RTHK, as a public service broadcaster and a non-commercial operation, should shoulder the responsibility for educating, informing, and providing entertainment to the underprivileged such as viewers with impaired hearing. He called on the Administration and RTHK to take into account the needs of the deaf in formulating public broadcasting policies and in mapping out how the new RTHK should operate to fulfill the mission of a public service broadcaster. He suggested that RTHK should provide sign language and subtitles in news broadcasts, educational and informational programmes, live broadcasts of major events, and media briefings by key Government officials, as well as setting up fax and short messages hotlines for the deaf to lodge complaints and make enquiries.

*Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong*  
(LC Paper No. CB(1)427/09-10(02) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*)  
(tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued via e-mail on 23 November 2009)

9. Mr Craig JO of Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) said that DAB welcomed the CE in Council's timely decision on RTHK to put an end to the uncertainty surrounding the future of RTHK, and to give RTHK new impetus to build on its strong reputation and continue to serve the community with enhanced broadcasting services. Given its 80-years' of solid experience as a public service broadcaster, RTHK was considered best placed to assume the role of a public broadcaster. He said that the proposed Charter should clearly set out the governance structure, define the relationship between the Government and the new RTHK, and entrench the importance of editorial independence. Members of the Advisory Board should be drawn from various community sectors to ensure broad representation and diversity of views. RTHK, as a public service broadcaster, should be accountable to the public and be subject to public scrutiny through a set of key performance indicators. He said that the Administration, through public consultation, should draw up the policy and implementation details as soon as practicable to enable RTHK to perform its expanded role and achieve its new mission.

*Hong Kong Unison Limited*  
(LC Paper No. CB(1)427/09-10(03) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*)  
(tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued via e-mail on 23 November 2009)

10. Ms Fermi WONG of Hong Kong Unison Limited (Unison) said that Unison regretted the CE in Council's decision to retain RTHK's status as a Government department while undertaking the role of a public service broadcaster. Unison advocated that "monitoring Government", "safeguarding public interest" and "promoting social justice" should be made the public purposes of PSB and the public mission of RTHK. She said that the setting up of an Advisory Board was redundant as it would overlap with the work of the existing Programme Advisory Panel. The proposed Charter should be legislated under the law to safeguard RTHK's editorial independence and to ensure statutory provision for judicial review to seek redress in the event its editorial independence was threatened. She opined that RTHK should be Hong Kong people's station and that it was not necessary for RTHK to relay the television and radio broadcasts of China Central Television (CCTV) and China National Radio (CNR) as the two incumbent domestic free TV programme service licensees and pay TV had already provided such services.

*Savantas Policy Institute*  
(LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(03) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

11. Miss Germaine LAU said that Savantas Policy Institute (SPI) supported the Government's decision to allocate additional financial resources and frequency spectrum for RTHK to enhance its operation and expand its scope of services including the provision of dedicated digital television and radio channels so as to

provide a full range of broadcasting services to the community. RTHK in its role of a public service broadcaster should serve with specific public purposes, viz sustaining citizenship and civil society, fostering social harmony and promoting pluralism, establishing education value and promoting lifelong learning, and stimulating creativity and excellence to enrich the multi-cultural life of Hong Kong people. To enhance transparency and accountability to the community, RTHK should account for the deployment of its financial and human resources. While the new RTHK would run one high-definition television channel on its own, commercial broadcasters should continue to carry PSB programmes until digital television became popular with a high penetration rate. On new programming opportunities, SPI urged RTHK to complement commercial broadcasting in its programme production to cater for the needs of minority interest groups.

*SynergyNet*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(04) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

12. Dr Alex CHAN of SynergyNet stated the following views:

- (a) RTHK, operating as a Government department while undertaking the role of a public service broadcaster, was not a genuinely independent public service broadcaster;
- (b) the proposal for an Advisory Panel should be dropped. Failing that, "press freedom" should be made the mission of PSB, and the Advisory Board should be tasked to "safeguard editorial independence of RTHK and production freedom of its programming staff" with its powers and responsibilities clearly defined;
- (c) the Advisory Board should only provide guidance on programming direction, editorial policy and resource deployment instead of involving itself in RTHK's day-to-day operational and editorial matters;
- (d) of the 15 members of the Advisory Board, one-third should be appointed by the CE, one-third nominated by professional and media groups, and the remaining one-third recommended by the LegCo; and
- (e) the Charter should be reviewed every two years with established channels for RTHK staff and the public to participate in the review.

*The Society for Truth and Light*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)427/09-10(04) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*)  
(*tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued via e-mail on 23 November 2009*))

13. Mr CHOI Chi-sum of the Society for Truth and Light (STL) said that RTHK, as a public service broadcaster, should serve the community and not act as a mouth-piece of the Government. The Administration and the public should

respect programme and editorial independence of RTHK. The Charter should stipulate that Administrative Officer would not be appointed to the management of the RTHK. While RTHK, as a Government department, should dedicate part of its airtime for Government officials to publicize government policies, it should not be tasked to promote Government policies which should be the duties of the Government Information Services (GIS). Membership of the Advisory Board should be increased to 30. Its members, though appointed by the CE, should be nominated by different community sectors and professional groups. A special unit should be set up to handle complaints and public opinion about programme quality and content.

*民間公營廣播監察小組*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)427/09-10(05) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*)  
(*tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued via e-mail on 23 November 2009*)

14. Mr WONG Siu-ye of 民間公營廣播監察小組 stated the following views:

- (a) supported the CE in Council's decision for RTHK to remain as a Government department while performing the role of a public service broadcaster with expanded scope of service, strengthened corporate governance and greater accountability to the public;
- (b) RTHK, as a Government department, should act as part of the Government and be subject to the established internal procedures and control mechanism of the civil service;
- (c) RTHK should be the mouth-piece of the Government and Hong Kong people, facilitating the smooth implementation of Government policies and the expression of public views;
- (d) it was proper and in order for the Advisory Board to advise RTHK on editorial policy and programme standards. Members of the public had other channels to voice their opinion if the advice of the Advisory Board did not meet with public expectations; and
- (e) the reference to "safeguarding editorial freedom of RTHK" in the Charter should be removed or amended.

*In-Media (Hong Kong)*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)414/09-10(03) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

15. Mr Freddie CHAN said that In-Media (Hong Kong) was against retaining RTHK's status as a Government department while performing the role of a public service broadcaster, and was also against the proposal to increase the number of civil service posts in RTHK. He said that such arrangement was an attempt on the part of the Government to "buy" RTHK's staff into giving up the pursuit of ideals

of genuine PSB and editorial freedom, and would turn RTHK into a Government mouth-piece similar to North Korea and CCTV. Mr CHAN urged the Government to set up a fund to promote training in community broadcasting and facilitate cooperation between professionals of the broadcasting sector and community groups in programme production for broadcast in public access channels.

*Unitarian Universalists Hong Kong*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)394/09-10(02) -- Submission (*English version only*))

16. Ms Medeleine MOK of Unitarian Universalists Hong Kong (UUHK) criticized the Government for deciding on the future of RTHK prior to any public consultation. She said that the Government's decision was against Hong Kong people's wish for RTHK to be independent and free from Government political influences, and to become a real public service broadcaster of Hong Kong. She called on the Government to withdraw its decision and extend the consultation period for the public to voice their views. She also stated UUHK's objection to the proposed Advisory Board to be appointed by the CE in Council.

*Mr Martin OEI*

*Political Commentator and Member of RTHK Programme Advisory Panel*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)414/09-10(04) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

17. Referring to the practice in the United Kingdom and the United States, Mr Martin OEI opined that RTHK, as a public service broadcaster, should not be responsible for publicizing Government policy. Production of programme such as the Police Magazine should be taken up by the GIS instead. He objected strongly to the proposal for an Advisory Board, saying that it would be difficult for D of B, in his capacity as a civil servant, to disregard the advice of the Advisory Board and maintain his independence. Mr OEI held the view that PSB should supplement commercial broadcasting and seek to provide what is lacking in commercial broadcasting and cater for specific needs and interests of different groups in the community. RTHK should model on the Special Broadcasting Services Corporation in Australia to serve the ethnic minority and the underprivileged by producing programmes on art, music and culture which commercial broadcasters might not have the economic incentive to invest in. He suggested that RTHK Radio Six (on British Broadcasting Corporation World Services (BBC)) be reassigned from the existing AM frequency to FM Band to enable more members of the public to listen to the English channels.

*Hong Kong Digital Entertainment Association*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)427/09-10(06) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*)

(*tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued via e-mail on 23 November 2009*)

18. Mr Gabriel PANG of Hong Kong Digital Entertainment Association said that RTHK should help promote local original content animation/multi-media production and achieve the public purpose of stimulating creativity and excellence to enrich the multi-cultural life of Hong Kong people through the production,

commission and acquisition of distinctive and original content. RTHK should increase at least one high definition TV channel for the broadcast of animation/cartoons/multi-media entertainment programmes. Mr PANG also called on the RTHK to further explore the copyright protection for outsourced and original content programmes with a view to increasing programme producers' revenue to help foster the development of local multi-media industry.

*Asian Human Rights Commission*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)427/09-10(07) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*)  
(*tabled at the meeting and subsequently issued via e-mail on 23 November 2009*)

19. Ms Kit CHAN of Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) regretted that the Government had no real intention to set up a genuinely independent public service broadcaster. She stated the following views:

- (a) a public service broadcaster should be an independent body operating at arm's length from the Government and be free from any commercial and political interferences. RTHK, as a public service broadcaster, should be independent from the Government and provide an open forum for the free exchange of views;
- (b) in keeping with the public purpose for PSB in sustaining citizenship and civil society, "safeguarding free flow of information, freedom of press and expression" should be made the public purposes for PSB;
- (c) while AHRC supported the transformation of RTHK into the public service broadcaster of Hong Kong, RTHK should be revamped to strengthen its corporate governance, enhance its independence and increase its accountability to the public;
- (d) AHRC objected to the setting up of the CE-appointed Advisory Board which might be used as a means to interfere with the editorial policy of RTHK; and
- (e) the consultation should be extended to three months.

*Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor*

20. Mr LAW Yuk-kai of the Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor (HKHRM) held the view that a Government department performing the role of a public service broadcaster was not genuine PSB. By insisting on RTHK's Government department cum public service broadcaster status, the Administration was going against the explicit popular wish for an independent public broadcaster, a move that would take away the public's right to freedom of expression and independent PSB.

*SaveRTHK Campaign*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)394/09-10(03) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

21. Mr TSUI Hon-kwong said that SaveRTHK Campaign was strongly against the Government's decision for RTHK to remain as a Government department and objected to the setting up of the Advisory Board which, he said, might become a super-power impairing RTHK's editorial and operational independence. He urged the Government to respect popular wish for RTHK to become independent from the Government and for RTHK's transformation into a genuine public service broadcaster. He held the view that to safeguard RTHK's editorial independence, the Charter should be drawn up following public consultation and enshrined in law. The two-month public consultation period should be extended.

*The Civic Party*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)353/09-10(05) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

22. Mr Stuart LAU of the Civic Party criticized the Government for its black-box decision on RTHK's future. He said that the decision which was taken in the absence of any proper public consultation was against public expectation and the general consensus that a public service broadcaster should be free from government pressure and void of any political and commercial interests. He said that RTHK, as a public service broadcaster, should be responsible for monitoring the Government, and that "reflecting public opinion, safeguarding public interests and promoting social justice" should be made public purposes of PSB. The proposed Advisory Board which overlapped the work of the existing Programme Advisory Panel should be scrapped. The Charter which set out the relationship between the Government and RTHK should stipulate clearly that RTHK would not be subject to any pressure from the Government and quasi-government bodies. RTHK which used public fund should serve as the voices of the people and not as the mouthpiece of the Government.

*Public Opinion Programme, the University of Hong Kong*

23. Dr Robert CHUNG of Public Opinion Programme of the University of Hong Kong stated his personal views as follows:

- (a) RTHK, with its good brand name and having been consistently ranked in public surveys as the most credible electronic media in Hong Kong, should continue to strengthen its leading role in conducting survey of public satisfaction level/audience ratings, and in the production of quality programmes on civic education and social responsibility;
- (b) the existing Programme Advisory Panel was highly transparent in its operation and should be further strengthened;
- (c) RTHK should take a leading role in developing new media and cross media services;

- (d) RTHK's archive should be open to the public to increase its utilization;
- (e) RTHK was best placed to assume the role of developing public access channels to provide more platform for the free exchange of views; and
- (f) on performance evaluation, RTHK should be evaluated in respect of its leadership role, the utilization of its archive, and its performance in promoting civic education and multi-cultural humanities.

*IT Voice*

24. Mr Joe YAU of IT Voice said that the current consultation was a sham as a pre-determined decision had already been made for RTHK to continue to operate as a Government department despite clear popular wish for an independent public service broadcaster and the general world trend in the development of PSB. He strongly urged the Administration to extend the consultation period and to transform RTHK into a genuine public service broadcaster independent from the Government. Given that the existing Programme Advisory Panel was functioning well, he held the view that the proposed Advisory Board was redundant and should be scrapped.

*Hong Kong Federation of Women Lawyers*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)394/09-10(04) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

25. Ms Angela HO of the Hong Kong Federation of Women Lawyers supported the proposal for RTHK to devote part of its airtime and resources within the development of its digital service to provide a platform for community participation in broadcasting. She also welcomed the setting up of a fund to provide financial support for community groups to actively participate in broadcasting and content productions. She said that RTHK should have television channels of its own to enable it to provide a wide diversity of programmes to the community and to enrich the cultural life of Hong Kong people.

*The Professional Commons*

26. Professor Steven CHAN of the Professional Commons (PC) held the view that instead of acting as the Government's mouth-piece, a public service broadcaster should serve the community and cater for the specific needs and interests of different groups in the community. Through the provision of a diversity of programmes, a public service broadcaster should help promote public engagement, facilitating different levels of public participation in community broadcasting including programme production. The governance structure of the public service broadcaster should not be Government-driven. Instead, it should be open to the participation of different stakeholders in setting the direction for the development of PSB.



*Mr Paul SIU Che-hung, Wan Chai District Councillor*

27. Speaking in his personal capacity, Mr Paul SIU Che-hung, Wan Chai District Councillor, called on the Government to broadcast more Putonghua speaking programmes to increase more Putonghua learning opportunities for Hong Kong people. He suggested that RTHK should relay good quality programmes of the CCTV and news broadcast about Ghuanzhou, Pearl River Delta and Taiwan so as to enhance Hong Kong people's understanding of developments in the Mainland and the neighbouring region as part of civic education.

*Mr YEUNG Wai-sing, Eastern District Councillor*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)414/09-10(05) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

28. Mr YEUNG Wai-sing, Eastern District Councillor, said that the CE in Council's decision on RTHK was a timely decision to put an end to the uncertainty surrounding the future of RTHK, and to give RTHK new impetus to build on its strong reputation to provide a comprehensive mix of programme genres, thereby increasing programme choices to the community. He said that the Government should implement the proposals as soon as practicable and that there was no need to further extend the consultation period as the matter had already been dragged for a long time. He cautioned against over-politicizing the proposed Advisory Board. Mr YEUNG said that RTHK had all along enjoyed editorial freedom as evidenced by its criticism of the Government on numerous occasions in the past. As such, there was no cause of worry that the Advisory Board would interfere with RTHK's editorial policy, turning it into a Government mouth-piece.

*Mr MAN Chi-wah, Central and Western District Councillor*

29. Mr MAN Chi-wah, Central and Western District Councillor, said that he personally did not consider it worth using public money to fund 24-hour public access broadcasting. RTHK could dedicate more airtime for programmes that allow individuals and community groups to express and exchange their views, and to provide a platform for community participation in broadcasting. He urged different parties to discard their differences and reach a consensus. He also pointed out that although D of B was to give due weight and consideration to all advice provided by the Advisory Board, he was in no way required to follow all advice of the Advisory Board.

*Mr Pindar WONG*

(LC Paper No. CB(1)414/09-10(06) -- Submission (*Chinese version only*))

30. Mr Pindar WONG was supportive of RTHK remaining as a Government department with a role to coordinate, not control, content programming for public service broadcasting. He said that the Government should open up the monopoly in PSB in the public interest. The new RTHK should provide platform for public participation in community broadcasting and open exchange of views. The public should have access to RTHK's rich archives of programmes and materials

commissioned by the public purse.

Briefing by the Administration

31. The Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (USCED) thanked the deputations for expressing their views. He said that the development of PSB and the future of RTHK were inter-related issues that should be addressed in one go. On 22 September 2009, the CE in Council had announced, among other things, its decision that RTHK should remain as a Government department and be tasked to take up the mission as the public service broadcaster in Hong Kong. The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB) had launched a two-month public consultation exercise to gauge public views on how best RTHK should operate to achieve its mission as a public service broadcaster. The CEDB would consolidate and examine all the views received to decide on how to shape the operations of a new RTHK in future.

Discussion

*Public consultation on the operation of RTHK*

32. Ms Emily LAU criticized the Administration for not keeping its promise to consult the public before deciding on the way forward for the development of PSB and the future of RTHK. She invited the deputations' views on the Government proposal contained in the consultation document. In this connection, Mr Ronny TONG questioned the rationale for the Government's decision to maintain RTHK as a Government Department while performing the role of a public service broadcaster, which was contrary to clear public expectation for an independent public service broadcaster as recommended by the Committee on the Review of Public Service Broadcasting (RC). He sought deputations' views in this respect.

33. Mr LAW Yuk-kai of HKHRM said that the consultation on how RTHK could fulfil its mission as a public service broadcaster should be scrapped. He opined that the new RTHK could in no way effectively perform the function of an independent public service broadcaster and be free from any political and financial interference under the current proposed governance structure and the direction of the proposed Advisory Board. He urged the Administration to review its decision.

34. Mr Martin OEI said that the consultation document should be discarded. A separate consultation based on the recommendations of the report of the RC should be conducted instead. He was of the view that the Administration's proposal would turn the new RTHK into the Government's mouth-piece similar to CCTV in the Mainland.

35. Referring to the Administration's stance that the future of RTHK and the development of PSB should be bundled together, Mr Freddie CHAN of In-Media (Hong Kong) questioned as to why the RC was not tasked to also review the future of RTHK in the first place.

36. Dr Alex CHAN of SynergyNet said that the Administration had no real intention of transforming RTHK into a genuinely independent public service broadcaster. He criticized the Administration for misleading the public into believing that the new RTHK with its enhanced function and expanded scope of service could perform the role of a public service broadcaster.

37. Mr YANG Kuang of GR opined that the Administration should consult the public first instead of making a pre-determined decision for RTHK to continue to operate as a Government department with a public service broadcaster role in the absence of public consultation.

38. Mr TSUI Hon-kwong of SaveRTHK Campaign objected to the "pseudo-PSB" proposed by the Administration. He said that genuine PSB should tolerate opposing and extreme views, including criticisms against the Government. Mr PANG Yee-kwong of CR said that PSB should not be monopolized by RTHK. The Government should bring in competition by allowing different players and community groups to participate in broadcasting. Mr Joe YAU of IT Voice and Professor Stephen CHAN of PC disagreed that RTHK should remain as a Government department. Mr LAW Yuk-kai of HKHRM and Ms Kit CHAN of the AHRC voiced their strong objection to any forms of Government control on RTHK. Ms MAK Yin-ting of the HKJA regretted that there was no public access channels and community radio stations as well as genuine PSB in Hong Kong. She said that instead of participating in RTHK programmes moderated by RTHK programme hosts, community groups should be allocated airtime to broadcast their own programmes. Speaking from the experience of her past 13 years of service in RTHK, she doubted whether RTHK, with its status as a Government department, could effectively achieve its public service mission. She urged the Administration to rescind its proposal and stop the current public consultation on the future operations of RTHK. Ms Medeleine MOK of UUHK shared a similar view. Ms Fermi WONG of Unison urged the Administration to solicit public views on whether RTHK should become independent from the Government.

39. The Chairman invited the Administration to respond to deputations' concern as to why after protracted discussion since the publication of the RC's report, the CE in Council suddenly announced its decision on the way forward in respect of PSB in Hong Kong and the future of RTHK in September 2009 prior to conducting any public consultation.

40. In response, USCED said that PSB and the future of RTHK had been the subject of debate in Hong Kong for many years. He re-capitulated that the RC, when formulating its recommendations, had extensively consulted the public and various stakeholders in 2006 and 2007, and the matter had been widely discussed by the community, the Panel, and various stakeholders. In particular, the RC's view that RTHK should not be transformed into a new public service broadcaster had triggered a heated debate in the community. He said that the CE in Council's decision was a well-balanced one addressing the concerns of various stakeholders. Given the considerable public support for RTHK to maintain its status quo and to assume the role of a public service broadcaster, and in the light of the urge by

RTHK staff for a clear decision on the way forward, it was considered appropriate to give certainty to the future development of RTHK and to bring the long-running debate to an end for the benefit of the RTHK and the staff concerned. He highlighted that the focus of the two-month consultation was to seek public views on the implementation measures on enhancing the role and functions of the new RTHK as a public service broadcaster. The Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology) (PSCED(CT)) said that the Administration would fully consider all the views received during the consultation process in shaping the future operation of the RTHK.

41. On the development of PSB in Hong Kong, USCED said that the RC's report had provided a blue-print for the development of PSB in Hong Kong. The Administration agreed with the RC's report that "universality", "diversity" "independence" and "distinctiveness" were the internationally recognized core principles and defining features of PSB and should be upheld.

42. Mr Freddie CHAN of In-Media (Hong Kong) said that none of the public service broadcasters in overseas jurisdictions, except North Korea, was a Government department. He said that the Government's decision for RTHK to remain as a Government department was against the explicit wish of the RTHK Programme Staff Union for independence.

43. Ms Janet MAK of RTHKPSU said that RTHK staff objected to the Government's proposal to maintain RTHK as a Government department. She said that the Administration, under the pretext of giving RTHK staff certainty on the future development of RTHK, had distorted the picture of genuine PSB. She reiterated that a genuine public service broadcaster should serve the community, be accountable to the public, and be free from any Government pressure as well as political and commercial interference. She observed that editorial independence and the monitoring of Government policies were not amongst the proposed public purposes for PSB, nor were they adopted as a performance indicator as basis for evaluation. In view of the wide implications of PSB, she advocated that the Administration should rescind its proposal and conduct a more comprehensive review and wide public consultation before deciding on the way forward. In response, PSCED(CT) said that while some RTHK staff might prefer independence from the Government, different staff groups (such as civil servants, non-civil service contract staff and directorate staff) however might have different interests and hold different views.

44. Ms Emily LAU and Mr Ronny TONG observed that the majority view was against the CE in Council's decision to retain RTHK's status as a Government department while performing the role of a public service broadcaster. Ms Emily LAU said that such decision which was made in the absence of wide consultation was not in the public interest and should be declared null and void. She urged the Administration to revise its current proposal and provide a timetable on a new round of consultation, or alternatively to move a motion for the matter to be discussed by the Panel and the LegCo.

45. Mr LAU Kong-wah and Mr CHAN Kam-lam however, were of the view that the Government's decision would give certainty to the further development of RTHK and help boost staff morale. They called on the stakeholders to put aside their political and ideological disputes and be gainfully engaged in resolving the differences in a forward looking and practical manner. They opined that while performing the role of monitoring Government policies, RTHK should uphold the principles of impartiality and objectivity in its editorial policies. RTHK, as the only Government funded public service broadcaster, should fulfil its social responsibility to ensure a fair exchange of views in its public affairs programmes. Noting that RTHK had been fraught with internal administrative and management problems in the past, they supported the current consultation to solicit public views on how best to strengthen the corporate governance of the new RTHK and enhance its public accountability.

#### Corporate governance and editorial independence

46. Ms Cyd HO noted that none of the public service broadcasters in any of the advanced economies was a government department funded by the government. She expressed doubt whether RTHK, as a Government department dependent on Government's funding and manpower resources, and subject to the direction of the CE-appointed Advisory Board, would have the true freedom and autonomy to competently achieve its mission of an independent public service broadcaster. She enquired about the measures in place to safeguard against Government interference with RTHK's editorial independence.

47. USCED and PSCED(CT) replied that in addition to the Memorandum of Understanding signed between RTHK and the Broadcasting Authority (BA) in respect of compliance with the generic codes of practice on programme standard issued by BA, and the RTHK Producers' Guidelines drawn up jointly with the RTHK programme staff, the existing Framework Agreement between the CEDB and RTHK would be elevated to a Charter to be signed between the Chief Secretary and the D of B. The proposed Charter would set out clearly the institutional relationship between CEDB and RTHK and the relationship between BA and RTHK and provided guarantee for the editorial independence of RTHK. The relevant documentation would be made available for public information and be accessible via the Government's website.

48. Ms Cyd HO remained unconvinced. She opined that the proposed Charter, which had no legal status, was no different from the existing Agreement. As the Charter was not legally enforceable, there was no statutory provision for judicial review to seek redress in the event that the editorial independence of RTHK was threatened. She questioned the Government's motive in setting up the Advisory Board and feared that the Advisory Board would be used to exert political and financial pressure on RTHK, thereby undermining its editorial independence. Ms HO said that to guard against abuse and to avoid undue Government interference through the CE-appointed Advisory Board in closed meetings, the proceedings of the meetings of the Advisory Board should be open to the public. She invited deputations' views on how best to safeguard against interference with

editorial independence.

49. Mr CHOI Chi-sum of the STL said that the Government's decision to retain RTHK's status quo as a Government department was far from satisfactory. He called for focused discussions on ways to help ensure that the proposed Charter would safeguard RTHK's editorial independence and that the Advisory Board would not unduly interfere with RTHK's operation.

50. Dr Alex CHAN said that SynergyNet was against setting up the Advisory Board. However, in the event that the Board was established against popular wish, it should only advise RTHK on governance matters and should not be directly involved in day-to-day management nor have the power to interfere in operational and editorial policy matters.

51. Mr LAU Kong-wah cautioned against over-politicizing the formation of the Advisory Board. He said that there was no cause for worry as paragraph 3.6 of the consultation document had stated that the Advisory Board was advisory in nature only and had no executive power. He said that while the Advisory Board, to a certain extent, would monitor the work of RTHK, the Advisory Board itself would be subject to public scrutiny. He observed that the setting up of advisory boards was a standard practice for Government departments and was not targeting RTHK.

52. USCED and PSCED(CT) assured members and deputations that RTHK would continue to enjoy editorial independence and freedom of press and be accountable to the public and the LegCo. They highlighted that the Administration was committed to uphold editorial independence which was the most important core value of PSB, and safeguard freedom of press and speech which were basic human rights guaranteed by the law. The Advisory Board to be appointed by the CE which would include persons with experience in various sectors (such as media, journalism, education, arts and culture, technology, legal, accounting and finance, persons with senior management experience and expertise, as well as persons with experience in serving the interests of minorities and/or the underprivileged) would only have an advisory role in respect of editorial issues, while the D of B and his team would remain ultimately responsible for the editorial decision of RTHK. D of B highlighted that RTHK had consistently been ranked in public surveys as the most credible electronic media in Hong Kong. Regardless of its future mode of operation, RTHK staff would continue to uphold the much treasured principles of editorial independence and freedom of press.

53. Mr WONG Ting-kwong enquired about the membership, composition, the mechanism as well as the criteria for appointing members to RTHK's existing Programme Advisory Panel. In response, D of B and the Assistant Director (Radio)/RTHK informed the meeting that the Advisory Panel which made up of some 120 members drawn from district councils and various sectors (such as arts and culture, education, health and welfare services, media and journalism, information and technology) had been in operation for more than 10 years. Appointments to the Advisory Panel were made based on the nominations from

district councils and representative organizations of relevant sectors in response to invitations from the RTHK. In addition to the annual meetings of the Advisory Panel, small focus groups formed in response to specific needs also held regular meetings on specific themes and topics. For transparency, the Advisory Panel's membership and the proceedings of meetings were open to the public on RTHK's website.

Funding arrangements

54. Mr CHAN Kam-lam opined that a public service broadcaster should not be 100% funded by the Government, and should, to a certain extent, be self-financing. Ms Cyd HO agreed with Mr CHAN and said that RTHK should not rely solely upon Government funding. She said that regardless of whether RTHK would remain as a Government department or be transformed to an independent public service broadcaster, it should be allowed to raise funds (20% to 30%) from sources other than Government appropriation to allow greater flexibility and autonomy in developing new programme areas and offering more programme choices to the community. Such a move was also conducive to increasing its public accountability. She suggested that consideration be given for RTHK to charge a token fees for access to its archives, and for the Government to prescribe under legislation a certain percentage of the Government income on rates to finance RTHK's operation.

55. In response, D of B said that apart from Government funding, RTHK had an annual income of around \$4 million from the sale and distribution of RTHK programme overseas, and received a total sponsorship in the region of \$30 to \$40 million per annum from charitable organizations and government bodies. RTHK would seek to generate income through increased collaboration and co-production with international broadcasters and content providers.

56. Ms Janet MAK of RTHKPSU said that from the perspective of RTHK programme staff, the current sponsorship rules had, on some occasions, imposed restrictions on new programme initiatives. She supported that RTHK should have the flexibility to raise its own fund to finance the production of new programmes, thereby enhancing its accountability to the public through the provision of a wide diversity of programmes.

57. Mr Pindar WONG opined that the public should have free access to RTHK's 80-years rich archive materials which was funded by public money. In response, PSCED(CT) agreed that the RTHK archive materials, which was a valuable public resource, should be open to the public. He said that the digitization of RTHK archives would provide greater public access to its resourceful archives. In addition to the existing provisions for RTHK to retain part of its income, the Administration would look into potential opportunities for RTHK to generate its income such as the sale of its programmes. All the relevant issues, such as how to allow public access to the archives as well as means to tap the potential commercial value of the materials, would have to be carefully examined.

Community broadcasting

58. Mr Ronny TONG said that frequency spectrum for broadcasting was a scarce public asset. It should not be utilized only by the Government and the profit-oriented market. Part of the airwaves should be used for the benefits of the community. He called on the Administration to open up airwaves to meet the rising public expectation for more direct participation in community broadcasting, and to provide platforms for different sectors of the community and non-governmental organizations to express diverse views.

59. In response, USCED and PSCED(CT) said that technological advances, the success in the digitization of terrestrial television in Hong Kong, and the new interest of the industry in the introduction of digital audio broadcasting provided an opportunity to allocate additional spectrum and financial resources to RTHK to develop as an all-round public service broadcaster to serve the community. In line with the Government's general mission to foster freedom of expression and encourage a plurality of voices in the community, RTHK would be tasked to devote part of its airtime and resources within the development of its digital services to provide a platform for community participation in broadcasting. These included dedicating more airtime for programmes that allowed individuals and community groups to express and exchange their views; allowing community groups to produce their own programmes for broadcast on RTHK's channels (with different levels of support to be provided by RTHK); and commissioning projects from community groups to produce their own programmes on specific themes or topics. Community or public access broadcasting services required substantial resources in terms of capital and recurrent expenditure as well as human resources which often posed difficulties to smaller community groups. A Community Broadcasting Involvement Fund (the Fund) would therefore be set up under RTHK to provide financial assistance and technical support for community groups to participate in broadcasting and programme content production.

60. D of B said that RTHK had been providing publicly-funded broadcasting through a range of programming services to cater for the entire population, addressing both majority and minority needs and interests. With the additional spectrum and resources for digital broadcasting, RTHK would seek to provide a comprehensive mix of programme genres to complement what was lacking in commercial broadcasting and cater for specific needs and interests of different groups in the community.

61. In response to Mr LAU Kong-wah's enquiry about the operation details of the Fund, USCED said that the main purpose of the Fund was to provide financial and technical assistance to community organizations to facilitate and encourage production of television and radio programmes for broadcast on RTHK's channels. Operation details had yet to be worked out.



62. Mr LEE Wing-tat said that the Government, despite its repeated claims to support freedom of speech and expression of diverse views, had no real intention to enhance the development of PSB in Hong Kong and promote direct participation in community broadcasting. He said that the Administration's main objective was to make use of the review to restrict diversity of views and to curtail RTHK's editorial independence. He said that Hong Kong had very few radio stations and lagged behind many advanced and developing economies in respect of community participation in broadcasting. He expressed concern that the Administration's proposal to prescribe licensing criteria such as "fit and proper person" and on "financial soundness" under the law would preclude community/minority groups from obtaining a licence to provide sound broadcasting services. He urged the Administration to open up airwaves for social/ethnic/religious groups to operate their own community-based radio stations covering a particular locality or region. He observed that some RTHK channels had co-run the same programme and had not fully utilized the assigned spectrum. He queried as to why the surplus airtime was not released for community broadcasting. As such, Mr LEE called on the Administration to consider allowing different groups to co-share or jointly operate one channel so as to provide more platforms for different sectors of the community and pressure groups to express different views and provide a wide diversity of programmes.

63. In response, D of B said that the co-running of programmes was mainly during the time slot between 2:00 am to 6:00 am. With the provision of additional resources and manpower, RTHK would continue to step up its programme production.

64. Mr PANG Yee-kwong of CR queried the Administration's rejection of the Ocean Technology Limited's application to establish and maintain a sound broadcasting service on the grounds of financial soundness and the unavailability of suitable spectrum. He said that a bandwidth of 0.2 MHz could carry one radio channel, and the FM frequencies in the 87 MHz - 108 MHz could support up to 100 independent channels without interference. Indeed, the past experience of CR showed that the community group had the financial and technical capacity to operate a radio channel. Mr Martin OEI said that the existing FM frequency spectrum assigned for broadcasting had not been efficiently deployed and fully utilized as the Hong Kong Government failed to negotiate with the Mainland Government for more FM frequency.

65. PSCED(CT) replied that within the currently available analogue frequency spectrum, Hong Kong currently had seven territory-wide FM channels and seven territory-wide AM channels. All of them had been allocated and were currently being taken up by RTHK and three commercial sound broadcasting licensees for the provision of territory-wide services. Given that frequency spectrum for broadcasting was a scarce public asset, a licensing regime was necessary to regulate the allocation and use of frequency spectrum to avoid interference. Moreover, the allocation of frequency spectrum had to be made in accordance with the international standards set by the International Telecommunications Union and the agreement made with neighbouring countries such as Macao, Indonesia, the

Philippines and China, through the established coordination mechanism.

New programming

66. Mr Ronny TONG referred to the Administration's proposal to relay television and radio broadcasts of CCTV and CNR. He opined that as these programmes were already broadcast by a number of TV stations, more airtime should instead be made available for the broadcast of programmes of community and minority groups. Ms Medeleine MOK of UHK and Mr Martin OEI agreed with Mr TONG that the surplus channel capacity should be released for community use. Mr OEI suggested that one FM frequency be used to broadcast BBC programme as in the case of Singapore to help improve Hong Kong people's English and broaden their international horizons. Mr CHAN Kam-lam disagreed that CCTV programmes should not be relayed.

67. PSCED(CT) said that partnership with national broadcasters (such as CCTV and CNR) as well as international broadcasters and content producers (such as the BBC, National Geographical Channel of the USA) was proposed mainly to enrich the cultural life of Hong Kong people, and to enhance the public understanding of the nation and developments in the international arena.

68. Mr LAU Kong-wah supported some deputations' suggestions to provide sign language and subtitles in news broadcasts for the enjoyment of people with special needs, to increase Putonghua programmes and cultural programmes, and to dedicate more airtime for Government officials to explain Government policies. He invited D of B to elaborate on RTHK's future plan on increasing cultural programmes on art and music. Mr CHOI Chi-sum of the STL opined that while part of the RTHK airtime could be dedicated for Government officials to explain and promote Government policies, RTHK should not be tasked to produce programmes to help promote Government policies. Mr Martin OEI shared a similar view. He said that RTHK should not be responsible for publicizing Government policies. Production of programmes such as Police Magazine and TV and radio Announcements of Public Interests should be taken up by the GIS instead.

69. In response, D of B said that RTHK was committed to innovation, quality and universality of service through the provision of a wide diversity of programmes to the community including multi-cultural programmes, programmes that covered different religions and programmes that catered for the special needs of audience with disabilities. In addition to the existing daily cultural programmes covering Chinese drama, arts, dancing and music of different cultures, about 200 to 300 community events and activities including cultural programmes were conducted annually to help enrich the multi-cultural life of Hong Kong people. With increased provision and additional airtime, RTHK would seek to increase the provision of a comprehensive mix of programme genres. Mr Ronny TONG said that RTHK's strong brand name was hard earned by its effectiveness as a watchdog of Government policies, not on the basis of providing cultural programmes on art and music.

70. Ms Cyd HO supported RTHK using part of its airtime to disseminate useful public information such as news, current affairs and weather reports. She suggested that consideration should be given to dedicating one channel solely for the Government to publicize and promote its policies while releasing more airtime for community broadcasting. Mr Ronny TONG held a similar view and said that RTHK should not be tasked to promote government policies.

#### Development of new media services

71. The Chairman invited the deputations to give views on the future development of new media services and on ways to enhance public participation in new media services. In response, Mr Pindar WONG expressed concern that RTHK, if continued on its existing path, would risk losing relevance to the "iPod-Generation" who wanted to have greater participation in and control of the content of the new media. He opined that RTHK as a public service broadcaster should "coordinate", not "control" content programming. He suggested that consideration should be given to commissioning programmes produced by independent producers/production houses, and acquiring programmes from outside sources in addition to in-house productions.

72. USCED responded that the Administration recognized the importance of new media services. In fact, paragraph 5.7 of the consultation document had set out the objectives to be pursued and the key performance indicators for the development of new media services. D of B said that given the trend of convergence and the changing interests of the young generation, RTHK would continue to step up its effort to explore and develop new media services with a view to increasing the audience reach and market share as well as addressing the needs of the young generation through a personalized service.

73. Mrs Regina IP said that it was a known fact that RTHK was more resourceful in terms of finance and manpower as compared with commercial broadcasters. She enquired about the average production cost by programme genres, and urged the RTHK management to give further thoughts to developing performance indicators to measure the cost-effectiveness of programme production. D of B advised that regular reviews were conducted to quantify the cost effectiveness of programme production. The Controlling Officer's Report of various types of programmes with performance indicators was made available for public on the RTHK website.

#### Summing up

74. The Chairman requested the Administration to take note of the views expressed by members and the deputations and report the findings of the consultation to the Panel as soon as practicable. Ms Emily LAU requested and members agreed that the Secretariat should prepare a summary of views expressed by the deputations attending the meeting. Members also agreed that a special meeting be held to discuss the outcome of the consultation as soon as it was

available.

**II. Any other business**

75. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:40 pm.

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