

(Translation)

Legislative Council Panel on Development

**Motion on
"Receiving public views on 'Land Sharing Pilot Scheme'"
passed at the special meeting on 21 January 2020**

The Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Development passed the motion moved by Hon CHU Hoi-dick and amended by Hon LAU Kwok-fan at the special meeting on 21 January 2020:

"To strike a genuine balance between the needs for development and for conservation, this Panel requests the Government to, in parallel with the implementation of the Land Sharing Pilot Scheme, expeditiously conduct a proper study on "Agricultural Priority Areas" to protect quality agricultural land so that land resources can be planned and used more effectively."

The Administration's response to the motion is as follows:

2. Currently, the total area of agricultural land in Hong Kong is around 4 300 hectares, of which about 700 hectares are under active farming. As agricultural land abounds in quantity and is scattered in location, and that various sites have different development potential, efforts to develop agricultural land while facilitating agriculture are not in conflict with each other.

3. As stated in our reply of 20 January 2020 to the Panel on Development of the Legislative Council, we believe that a certain amount of agricultural land will not be eligible for application under the proposed framework of Land Sharing Pilot Scheme (LSPS). As for the remaining land, the vetting mechanism to be set up under LSPS, as well as the existing applicable statutory procedures, can serve as the gate-keeper for proposal on developing agricultural

land for housing purposes. There are also proper controls on the planning and use of agricultural land. We will continue to ensure that the use of agricultural land will comply with relevant regulations and meet different development needs.

4. To support the development of local agriculture, the Government is conducting a consultancy study on Agricultural Priority Areas (APAs) to identify relatively large areas of quality agricultural land and explore suitable policies and measures to encourage landowners to put fallow agricultural land back into long-term agricultural use. The consultant is currently reviewing existing farmland (including both government and privately owned farmland) in Hong Kong and studying overseas experience, and will then make recommendations. Given that a considerable size of agricultural land is involved, it is estimated that the study will take several years to complete.

5. As stated above, efforts in developing agricultural land and facilitating agriculture are not conflicting with each other. Therefore, we will endeavor to implement LSPS to unleash the development potential of individual agricultural sites, while taking forward the APA studies with a view to identifying and preserving quality farmland to facilitate the sustainable development of local agriculture.

Development Bureau
March 2020