# 立法會
# *Legislative Council*

Ref : CB1/PL/ITB/1

**Legislative Council
Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting**

**Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 20 October 2000, at 11:30 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

**Members present** : Hon SIN Chung-kai (Chairman)
Hon Howard YOUNG, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP
Hon David CHU Yu-lin
Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung

**Member attending** : Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS

**Members absent** : Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP
Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

**Public officers
attending** : Mrs Carrie YAU, JP
Secretary for Information Technology and
Broadcasting

Ms Eva CHENG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Information Technology and
Broadcasting (1)

Mr Alan SIU
Deputy Secretary for Information Technology and
    Broadcasting (2)

Miss Annie TAM
Deputy Secretary for Information Technology and
    Broadcasting (3)

Mr Eddy CHAN
Commissioner for Television and Entertainment
    Licensing

Mr A S K WONG, JP
Director-General of Telecommunications

Mr K H LAU, JP
Director of Information Technology Services

Mr P H CHU, JP
Director of Broadcasting

Mr P C LUK, JP
Postmaster General

Mr Alan AU
Assistant Secretary for Information Technology and
    Broadcasting

**Clerk in attendance** : Miss Polly YEUNG
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)3

**Staff in attendance** : Ms Pauline NG
Assistant Secretary General 1

Ms Sarah YUEN
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)4

**I    Briefing by the Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting on the Chief Executive's Policy Address 2000**
(Information package on the Chief Executive's Policy Address 2000 circulated before the meeting by general dispatch, and a set of power-point presentation material on the policy objectives of the Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau (ITBB) tabled at the meeting and circulated thereafter vide LC Paper No. CB(1)81/00-01)

With the aid of power-point presentation, the Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (SITB) briefed members on ITBB's policy objectives.    The Chairman then invited questions from Members.

Information technology (IT)

*IT penetration in the community*

2.    Mr CHAN Kwok-keung enquired about targets on raising computer literacy in the community, particularly among persons of more senior age, to support the development of a knowledge-based economy.    In reply, SITB pointed out that since computers had become more user-friendly and accessible nowadays, the major hurdle in promoting the use of IT in Hong Kong might in fact be psychological, such as the reluctance to try new things.    Government efforts to promote the wider use of IT would therefore aim at overcoming such psychological barrier. On whether the Government would provide free hardware or software to organizations running IT familiarization courses for the community, SITB confirmed that skills development programmes were a part of the "IT Hong Kong" campaign in which both ITBB and District Offices were actively involved.

3.    As for promoting the use of IT by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), SITB advised that as one of its many services in enhancing awareness and understanding of IT and its applications, the Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC) was operating an enquiry hotline for SMEs interested in adopting electronic commerce.    In addition, the Administration was working closely with HKPC on specific plans to promote the use of IT in different business sectors in the coming year.

*Information security*

4.    In reply to Mr Howard YOUNG's enquiry about the proposed Computer Emergency Response Centre (CERC) to be established in Hong Kong, SITB advised that according to the Administration's plan, the local CERC would provide a focal point for computer security incidents reporting and for providing support to the industry and the community.    The Director of Information Technology Services (DITS) supplemented that overseas CERCs were mainly non-government organizations set up by the IT industry and the

academia and the nature of the local one would be similar. In this regard, two applications had already been lodged with the Innovation and Technology Fund (ITF) for setting up the local CERC to provide virus alert service, promote awareness of information security in the community, disseminate anti-virus information, and provide a help platform offering advisory service. He undertook to inform members on the outcome of the funding applications and the timetable for setting up the local CERC in due course.

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5. On future funding for the local CERC and whether the Government would bear part of its operating cost, <u>DITS</u> advised that while the set-up cost of CERC would be funded by ITF, its operation would, as most of its overseas counterparts, be supported by income from fees charged for providing value-added services such as consultancy service. <u>Mr Howard YOUNG</u> urged the Administration to ensure that the local CERC would not be aborted after a few years because of the lack of funds to upgrade its facilities. In response, <u>DITS</u> explained that the international organization of CERCs would be able to provide updated information on ways to deal with security incidents by giving advice to its members on the latest technological developments. As for the hardware, one of the main tasks for the local CERC was to maintain a web-site for disseminating security-related technical information. As the hardware required was not of a complicated nature, its upgrading would not be too costly and the expense could be met by the income from fees charged for its services.

6. In response to Dr Philip WONG on the administrative and legislative measures against virus attacks and computer crimes, <u>SITB</u> assured members of close liaison with overseas countries and a monitoring system. <u>DITS</u> elaborated that through ties with anti-virus software developers and service providers, the Information Technology Services Department (ITSD) could keep abreast with the latest development in this area to guard against attacks. Such information and trial or evaluation copies of preventive and detection tools against viruses were provided on the ITSD web-site for free downloading by the public. HKPC had also set up a web-site to disseminate such information and would release press releases alerting the public of potential new virus attacks as necessary. Where legislative measures were concerned, <u>members</u> noted the Security Bureau had set up in late March 2000 a working group to review whether existing legislation could address changing needs, in particular those arising from the Internet environment with a view to proposing by the end of 2000 recommendations to more effectively combat computer crimes.

*Dissemination of indecent material on the Internet*

7. <u>Mr Henry WU</u> was concerned about measures to protect young people from obscene and indecent material disseminated on the Internet. In response, <u>SITB</u> pointed out that filter software for blocking such material was readily available on the market. The Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA) had also launched a series of public education activities to

enhance parents' awareness of the problem and how it could be tackled by filter software, including a hot line service. In addition, where the source of such material could be identified, appropriate enforcement action had been taken out. As to whether filter software was available on Government web-sites for free downloading, the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing confirmed that apart from providing such information on TELA's web site, a consensus had also been reached with Internet service providers to post information on filter software on their web sites.

8.    Mr Henry WU pointed out that young people might access indecent material on the Internet through workstations in libraries or community centres, and proposed the installation of filter software in these workstations to block indecent web sites. Dr Philip WONG shared his concern about the seriousness of the problem and referred to a recent case of a student who committed suicide after being suspected of viewing indecent material on the Internet. In response, SITB assured members that filter software had already been installed in workstations at libraries/community centres and the crux of the problem might be with workstations in places like cyber cafes in the private sector. The Administration might need to raise the matter with operators of the catering trade. She however opined that education/social workers should provide suitable guidance to young people who might be curious about sex.

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She undertook to relay the concern of members to relevant departments.

*Others*

9.    Mr Kenneth TING welcomed the establishment of a dedicated electronic link between the Governments of Hong Kong and the Guangdong Province, and enquired if the latter could make use of this electronic link to provide information on its latest Customs procedures so that the business sector of Hong Kong could be made aware of changes or new practices in a timely

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manner. In reply, SITB agreed to relay the suggestion to the Guangdong side and report to members any specific developments. She also pointed out that many Chinese laws had in fact been uploaded onto the Internet for public access. The Deputy Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (2) further advised that although the link was initially set up to facilitate information exchange between officials of the two Governments only, its use had recently been extended to public bodies such as HKPC, the Hong Kong Tourist Association and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. In this regard, Mr TING commented that the link should also be made accessible to the four major Chambers of Commerce so that they could be kept posted of the enforcement standards which might vary among the customs authorities of different Guangdong cities.

Telecommunications

10.    Mr David CHU enquired about ways to ensure mobile service coverage inside lifts.   In reply, the Director-General of Telecommunications confirmed that it was technically feasible to provide such coverage but the cost would be considerably high because of the need to install transmission and reception facilities on the roof-top of the buildings concerned.   In the present competitive telecommunications market, it would be the commercial decision of individual operators on whether they would like to further roll out their network coverage for such purposes.

11.    The Chairman referred to the Administration's plan to invite in 2001 licence applications for operation of local wireline-based Fixed Telecommunication Network Services (FTNS) from 1 January 2003, and asked whether in recognition of the long lead time required for new network roll-out, the new entrants would be allowed to conduct road opening works to lay cables before 1 January 2003 to ensure timely operation.   In reply, the Deputy Secretary for Information Technology and Broadcasting (1) (DS/ITB1) confirmed that to facilitate the launch of service on 1 January 2003, preparation work such as application for road opening works could proceed beforehand but the Administration was of the view that actual road opening works could not commence before 2003.

Broadcasting and film services

12.    On the standards to be adopted and the timetable for licensing and operation of digital audio broadcasting and digital terrestrial television (DTT) services, SITB assured members that public consultation would be conducted. DS/ITB1 supplemented that the Administration's plan was to formulate policy proposals on DTT, including the standard to be adopted, for consultation by end 2000 so that the licensing framework could be finalized in time for invitation of licence application in late 2001.

13.    Referring to the case of Third Generation (3G) mobile services where there were plans to include spectrum auction in the selection of operators, the Chairman asked whether a similar approach would be adopted for licensing DTT service. In response, DS/ITB1 advised that while the broadcasting industry could be consulted on the licensing framework, digital broadcasting involved not just technologies but also contents and as such, there might be difficulty in adopting the auctioning approach in which the bid price was a major consideration.   SITB further explained that the inclusion of the spectrum auction element in the selection of 3G operators was necessary because of 3G being a new type of service with little relevant overseas experience on product type and market response for reference.   The future operating environment for 3G mobile services was fraught with many uncertainties and would therefore require higher efficiency and transparency in its operator selection process. However, in the case of DTT where there was

abundant overseas experience for reference, there might not be a need to adopt a similar approach.   She also pointed out that the licensing approach for 3G services would not necessarily set a precedent for future licensing of other telecommunications or broadcasting services.


**II      Any other business**

14.      The Chairman reminded members of the following Panel meetings scheduled for the month of November 2000 -

> (a)      Special meeting on 2 November 2000 at 2:30 p.m. to meet with the Administration and deputations to consider the draft Codes of Practice and Guidelines issued by the Broadcasting Authority;
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> (b)      Regular meeting on 13 November 2000 at 2:30 pm to meet with the Administration and deputations to consider the second-round consultation paper on licensing of 3G mobile services; and
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> (c)      Special meeting on 17 November 2000 at 10:45 am to receive a briefing by the Administration on four legislative and funding proposals.

15.      The meeting ended at 12:20 pm.



Legislative Council Secretariat
30 October 2000