

**LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs
and Panel on Planning, Lands and Works**

Joint Meeting on 23 February 2004

**Summary of the HKIE's Views on
Impact of Construction Works on Rivers in Hong Kong**

The HKIE is of the view that the Agricultural Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) is the department responsible for conservation in Hong Kong Government, which should be consulted on all conservation issues. The recent incidents at Tung Chung River and in Sha Ko Mei at Sai Kung have reflected the following issues:

- a. awareness of natural conservation in the daily operation of projects and in the minds of the officers in charge needs to be enhanced;
- b. there is a need to tighten control on works in river courses as in the case of Tung Chung River.;
- c. lack of coordination among Government Departments on protection of river courses in Hong Kong; and
- d. different standards are being used by various Departments.

At present, a few government departments are involved in the maintenance of river courses. We consider that Drainage Services Department Technical Circular No. 4/2002, "Drainage Maintenance Works on Environmentally Sensitive Watercourses" should be applied to works on all watercourses by all works Departments. Alternatively, it is suggested that river courses should be ranked in terms of ecological sensitivity so that different work standards can be applied to different water courses.

We understand that under the current situation, Government has little control on the standard of construction works affecting river courses that flow through private land. Appropriate changes to the administrative arrangements, and if necessary, amendments of the relevant legislations, should be considered to close the loop hole to safeguard Hong Kong's river courses, which should be treated as a public property.