For discussion on
25 March 2004

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Legislative Council Panel on
Information Technology and Broadcasting

2004 Digital 21 Strategy

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Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the updated Digital 21 Strategy promulgated by the Government on 4 March 2004.

Background

2.   We first set out in 1998 our Digital 21 IT Strategy, which is the blueprint for driving IT development in Hong Kong.   The focus was to enhance and promote Hong Kong's information infrastructure and services.   Recognising that our strategy and programmes had to keep pace with the ever-changing technological landscape, we committed then to regularly review and revise the Strategy, and update our goals and targets.   We duly did so in 2001 and promulgated a revised Strategy with the aim of making Hong Kong a leading e-business community and digital city in the globally connected world.

3.   We have subsequently reviewed the implementation of the 2001 Strategy and issued a draft updated Strategy for public consultation from October to December 2003.   A total of 87 submissions have been received.   Having carefully considered the comments and suggestions received, we have finalised and published the 2004 Digital 21 Strategy on 4 March 2004.

2004 Digital 21 Strategy

4.   Since the launch of the Digital 21 Strategy in 1998, we have made great strides in putting in place the right environment, infrastructure, skills and culture to encourage the development and adoption of IT by the entire community.   The challenge now is to sustain the momentum created in the last five years and continue to harness the benefits of IT for business, the community and Hong Kong's position in the world.   We see this endeavour in the following eight main areas of actions and the 2004 Digital 21 Strategy maps out actions in these eight areas to take Hong Kong forward in this information economy:

> Government leadership
> Sustainable e-government programme
> Infrastructure and business environment
> Institutional review
> Technological development
> Vibrant IT industry
> Human resources in a knowledge economy
> Bridging the digital divide

5.   We will develop the details of the proposals in the Strategy in the next 12 months.   These include, among others, the merger of the Information Technology Services Department with the Communications and Technology Branch of the Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau, the creation of a Chief Information Officer function within the Government, the case for a unified regulatory body for the telecommunications and broadcasting sectors, the next stage of the e-government programme, and programmes to support the IT industry. We will consult the public and the stakeholders where appropriate and when we are ready.

6.   The Strategy will be used as a working document.   We will measure our progress at the end of each year and propose specific targets, actions and plans for the next year.   This will be done in a transparent way involving the contribution and participation of the stakeholders.

7.   We will continue to work closely with the stakeholders in implementing the measures set out in the 2004 Digital 21 Strategy, so as to realise the full potential of IT to accelerate Hong Kong's transition to a knowledge-based economy, and to provide the impetus to economic growth and prosperity.

Communications and Technology Branch
Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau
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