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4 November 2003

Clerk to Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Debbie Yau)

Dear Ms Yau

Panel meeting on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Thank you for your letter of 16 October 2003 inviting the Institution to attend the LegCo panel meeting on Information Technology and Broadcasting and to comment on the agenda item IV "Building a digitally inclusive information society and related issues".

We are pleased to submit our views on the subject in relation to areas that are of concern to our members. The HKIE generally supports the Government's Digital 21 Strategy and the initiatives for promoting wider adoption and application of information and communication technology. We have expressed our views in the attachment for your consideration, which we believe, could help make the Government's Digital 21 Strategy more successful.

Thank you for your kind attention.

Yours sincerely

Ir Dr Alex S K Chan
President

Encl.

Attachment

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers

LegCo Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
Meeting on 10 November 2003

Summary of the HKIE's Views on
"Building a digitally inclusive information society and related issues"

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers (HKIE) supports the Government's Digital 21 Strategy and agrees that it has achieved a significant proportion of milestones. To update the Digital 21 Strategy to make it even more successful, the HKIE wishes to submit the following views:

E-government and E-business

Although e-government and e-business have progressed a long way since 1998, their adoption by the general public is still not widespread. One of the hurdles inhibiting their universal adoption is the security issue. Perhaps stronger promotion, better motivation and incentives, and greater facilitation for the use of e-certificate could help. The introduction of smart identity cards with an option of including an e-certificate is a good opportunity for tackling the security issue. The work on the amendments to the Electronic Transaction Ordinance should be speeded up so that Hong Kong's legal framework can keep pace with international e-business practices and technological advancement.

Institutional Review

We hope that the institutional review will strengthen but not diminish the drive, capacity and capability of the HKSAR Government bureaus and departments in executing e-government policies, which is beneficial through the community and promotes the local information technology industry growth and professionalism.

We also hope that any institutional review will provide the backbone to the Government bureaus and departments in executing more e-government projects.

Technological Development

The HKIE supports Government's initiatives to strengthen our ability to adopt and apply information technology for the development of innovative applications and services. Among the many HKIE initiatives are:

> Engaging in a Professional Services Development Assistance Scheme (PSDAS) project—"Developing a Competency-building Programme to Enable Hong Kong Engineers to Join the IC Design and Related Professions". This project helps to train engineers to develop competency in the integrated circuit profession.

> Co-organising an international symposium on "Location-based Systems". The symposium is part of a project to develop innovative applications of wireless technology.

> Organising "Multi Media Design Competition" annually to promote multi-media applications.

Human Resources in a Knowledge Society

The HKIE agrees that Hong Kong must have adequate and quality human resources in information technology to meet the demand of a knowledge economy. It plays two key roles in the human resources aspect: quality assurance and professional training. Quality assurance is done through the vehicle of accreditation of information technology and related courses at both degree and sub-degree levels. Professional training to young graduates is implemented with elaborate schemes of training in recognised companies and institutions. One recent example is that the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation qualifies for Scheme A Training of the Information Engineering Discipline of the HKIE.

Despite the stringency in the economy, Hong Kong should not lose momentum in funding the information technology education and training. The burst of the dotcom bubble has given a negative image to the information technology industry, which results in fewer young people aspiring to enter the industry. Greater promotion and more funding will help to sustain both the quality and quantity of information technology graduates.

Bridging the Digital Divide

Work should continue to be done to bridge the digital divide. One of the HKIE projects is the "IT Bridge" which helps the hearing-impaired in the use of information technology.

Conclusion

The HKIE supports Governments' Digital 21 Strategy and initiatives for promoting wider adoption and application of **Information and Communication Technology**.