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20 November 2003

Clerk to Panel on Planning, Lands and Works
Legislative Council Secretariat
3rd Floor, Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road, Central
Hong Kong
(Attn: Ms Rosalind Ma)

Dear Ms Ma

THE HKIE's Submission on Central Reclamation Phase III and Wanchai Development Phase II

Thank you for inviting us to attend the LegCo joint panel meeting to discuss the policy matters of the CRIII and WDII.

As a professional engineering institution, we are pleased to submit our views on the subject in relation to areas that are of concern to our members. Whilst the HKIE acknowledges the need for the reclamation to facilitate the project of Central and Wanchai Bypass and that it would be a solution to the deteriorating traffic congestion problem in Central and Wanchai areas, we consider essential to keep the reclamation area minimal and a balanced consideration should be given to the benefit of the community.

We hope that our views in the attachment on the details of the development of CRIII and WDII can help contribute to further deliberations on the policy matters of the reclamation projects.

Thank you for your kind attention in this connection.

Yours sincerely

Ir Dr Alex S K Chan
President

Encl.

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

Meeting on 27 November 2003

Summary of the HKIE's Views on Central Reclamation Phase III and Wanchai Development Phase II

In response to the recent publicity over the Central and Wanchai reclamation projects along the Victoria Harbour, the HKIE organised a Forum on 10 October 2003 to provide a platform for members to exchange views and to deliberate on the subject. The HKIE has made a summary of observations based on the deliberations from the Forum for your consideration:

1. Based on the succinct account of the development of and information on the reclamation projects presented and noting the due process of discussion and consultation as well as the professional work conducted over the years, members at the Forum are generally in support of the reclamation projects along the Victoria Harbour.
2. Members are also of the view that these reclamation projects could help make possible a metropolitan plan in Central and Wanchai with better infrastructure and facilities to be brought about along the shorelines which is believed to be a great improvement to the amenity of the seafront area and beneficial also to the community in the enjoyment of the harbour view and to the development of Hong Kong tourism. Moreover, the reclamation projects would help improve the serious traffic congestion problem in Central and Wanchai areas.
3. Members proposed that the Institution is to give due consideration of taking a more positive role in explaining to the public the reclamation projects with factual information and analysis from the perspectives of professional engineers. In this connection, it is suggested that an aerial photo with factual hectares of reclamation areas along the Victoria Harbour before and after the completion of the reclamation projects would be an effective tool in presenting a holistic approach of the projects to the general public.
4. Concerns was expressed regarding the implications of the recent High Court Judgment on the interpretation of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance (PHO) on future reclamation projects, for example the Southeast Kowloon Development. The Court's interpretation of the PHO may prevent efforts to improve the much-polluted channel along the Kai Tak runway.

The HKIE acknowledges the need for the reclamation to facilitate the project of Central and Wanchai Bypass; the proposed Bypass would be a solution to the deteriorating traffic congestion problem in the Central and Wanchai areas. Recognising the need for the bypass, the HKIE also considers essential to keep the reclamation area minimal and that a balanced consideration should be given to the benefit of the community.

The HKIE recognises the importance of consultation and mechanism for public objection and appeal to reclamation proposals of the harbour by the Government. We also note that the adverse implications on Government's contracting and construction progress in case of disputes. We propose that the Government should consider mechanism to enhance the integration of the Protection of the Harbour Ordinance into the current consultation procedures under the provision of the Town Planning Ordinance to ensure that the Government could continue to implement committed projects.