

**For discussion
on 19 July 2005**

**Legislative Council
Panel on Commerce and Industry**

**Sixth Ministerial Conference of World Trade Organization
Facilitating Demonstrations, Restricted Access Zone, and Traffic
Management Plan**

Purpose

We need to facilitate lawful demonstrations during the Sixth Ministerial Conference (MC6) of the World Trade Organization (WTO), and ensure that they are carried out peacefully and safely. This note outlines proposed arrangements for the purpose. It also sets out the proposed restricted access zone and traffic management measures during the period.

Background

2. MC6 will be held in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) from 13 to 18 December 2005. The entire HKCEC will be used for this purpose. A Press Centre and an NGO (non-governmental organization) Centre will also be located within the HKCEC. An Accreditation Centre will be set up on the ground floor of the Hong Kong Central Library. We anticipate some 11,000 participants for MC6, including 6,000 delegates, 3,000 press members and 2,000 NGO representatives.

Facilitating Demonstrations

3. Overseas experience in recent years indicates that large-scale international events serve as ready focal points for protesters against such issues as globalization, poverty and war. The information and intelligence that we have received so far point to a very high likelihood of

various protest and demonstration activities taking place in Hong Kong during the MC6 period.

4. Hong Kong values highly the freedoms of expression and assembly. The Administration is committed to facilitating the exercise of these rights. The community is used to peaceful and orderly public protests and demonstrations and rightly expects the protests and demonstrations during the MC6 period to be no less. To this end we propose to adopt the strategy below.

5. Both MCO and the Police have sought to, from an early stage, *establish and maintain dialogue* with non-government organizations who may wish to organize protest activities during the MC6 period. Locally, we have been meeting with organizations that have expressed an interest in MC6. Overseas, MCO met NGOs stationed in Geneva in March and June this year. Such dialogue will continue.

6. We estimate that there may be thousands of demonstrators during the MC6 period. To enable the demonstrations to take place in a way that is safe for the demonstrators, for MC6 participants and for the general public, and in a way which causes the least inconvenience to the general public whilst at the same time ensuring the safe and uninterrupted conduct of MC6, we are identifying a number of possible sites as *designated public activity areas (DPAAs) for public meetings*. We envisage that these DPAAs will mainly be located in Wan Chai and Causeway Bay, having regard to such factors as public order, public safety, impact on traffic, security and conduct of the event. Groups that wish to hold public meetings during the MC6 period may notify the Police in accordance with the law and established procedures. The Police will liaise with the organizers with a view to facilitating the public meetings, taking into account such factors as competing demands for the proposed meeting venue, the estimated number of people attending the meetings and their safety as well as that of the MC6 participants and the general public.

7. We also anticipate that some other groups may wish to hold

public processions during the MC6 period. Again they should notify the Police in accordance with the law and established procedures. The Police will liaise with the organizers with a view to facilitating the public processions, taking into account such factors as other processions that may also take place along the proposed route, the estimated number of people taking part in the processions, their safety and that of the MC6 participants and the general public.

8. Special *traffic measures* have to be put in place during MC6 to facilitate the public meetings and processions. The details of these will have to be worked out nearer the time taking into account the number and scale of such public meetings and processions.

9. While we believe that the overwhelming majority of demonstrators during the MC6 period will be peaceful and law-abiding, some of them may use *disruptive or even violent methods*. As seen in previous WTO Ministerial Conferences and other major events, these methods may range from non-violent passive resistance (e.g., human blockades) to the damage of property or even clashes with law enforcement officers, with a view to causing traffic paralysis and general chaos.

10. The Police will continue their intelligence gathering effort and try to forestall such disruption attempts where possible. The Police will take robust action to contain such non-law abiding behaviour.

Restricted access zone and traffic management

11. The special traffic measures to facilitate public meetings and processions may cause *traffic management problems around the HKCEC*. The problem will be exacerbated by the sheer number of MC6 participants (around 11,000) plus supporting personnel (around 10,000) and their vehicles. In addition, some of the delegates require special protection. All this will exert much pressure on the roads and traffic control around the HKCEC.

12. There is also a *safety angle*. We need to ensure the safety of some 300 ministers attending MC6 and over 20,000 participants of MC6 and supporting personnel. An accreditation and security screening system will be introduced at the HKCEC. To counter security threats it would be necessary to have a reasonable buffer zone around and to maintain the integrity of the conference venue.

13. To ensure public order, public safety and the smooth conduct of MC6, we have concluded that the *roads leading to the HKCEC will have to be closed to the general public* during the MC6 period, and some public transport routes will have to be diverted away from the area.

14. Paragraphs 11 to 13 all point to the need for a restricted access zone around the HKCEC during MC6. We propose to put this in place by way of a closed area order made under section 36 of the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245). Under that section, the Chief Executive may, where he reasonably believes that it is necessary for the protection of, inter alia, public safety and public order, by order declare any area or place to be a closed area.

15. We propose to make a closed area order as follows –

(a) Duration

The restriction is proposed to be effective from 1800 hours 12 December 2005 (i.e., the day before MC6 opening) to early morning of 19 December 2005 (i.e., a few hours after the official closing time of MC6 of midnight 18 December to allow time for participants to disperse).

(b) Coverage

The zone is proposed to cover the environs, including the access routes, to the HKCEC. On the land side, this includes chiefly the HKCEC and all its connecting roads, some of the roads leading to the three hotels near the HKCEC, the Tamar site and the areas around the Fenwick and Wan Chai Piers. On the sea side, this includes an area of roughly 3 sq km around the

HKCEC Peninsula. Please see the map at **Annex A** for the coverage of the proposed restricted access zone. A more detailed description of the zone is at **Annex B**.

16. The duration of the restriction takes into account the duration of MC6, and only allows for a slight margin for preparations before and after the conference. The boundary of the zone has been drawn up having regard to the need to effect proper traffic management as well as to safeguard public safety and public order, whilst minimizing inconvenience to the public. We may need to further fine-tune the exact boundary before finalizing the order to take into account latest developments. During the effective period of the order, only authorized persons and vehicles will be able to enter the zone. Physical barriers will be placed to delineate the boundaries of the zone with designated entry and exit points to allow ingress and egress of authorized persons and vehicles. The Police and MCO will work out an access control system whereby identification will be made by means of accreditation badges and vehicle labels.

17. During the MC6 period, it will be necessary to have the following further traffic management arrangements –

- (a) suspension of taxi stands, coach parking spaces, loading bays, bus termini and bus stops in the vicinity of the HKCEC, including the Wan Chai Ferry Pier Public Transport Interchange outside the Great Eagle Centre and the one on Expo Drive East (i.e. off Golden Bauhinia Square);
- (b) diversion of about 30 bus routes affected by the road closure to other roads;
- (c) suspension of the ferry piers in the vicinity of the HKCEC, including the Wan Chai Ferry Piers, the ferry pier off Golden Bauhinia Square and the pontoon off the HKCEC along Expo Drive East;

- (d) suspension of certain regular ferry services, including one licensed ferry service running between Wan Chai and Hung Hom, and one franchised ferry service running between Wan Chai and Tsim Sha Tsui; and
- (e) suspension of two sightseeing tours in the harbour.

18. Transport Department will work out the detailed traffic management measures with the public transport operators concerned. Alternative transport arrangements will also be in place where appropriate to minimize impact on the affected passengers. In doing so, we will brief the relevant District Councils and take their views into account as far as possible. We will also disseminate the arrangements decided upon well in advance of MC6 to facilitate and prepare the public for temporary changes in their commuting and traffic plans. Any special arrangements made during the event will also be announced in a timely manner to the public to engender understanding and cooperation by the affected entities and persons.

Way forward

19. Subject to Members' comments, the Administration intends to table the relevant order at the Legislative Council for negative vetting in October 2005. We hope to finalize and publicize the arrangements and acquaint the travelling public with the traffic diversions well in advance of MC6.

July 2005

Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau

Security Bureau

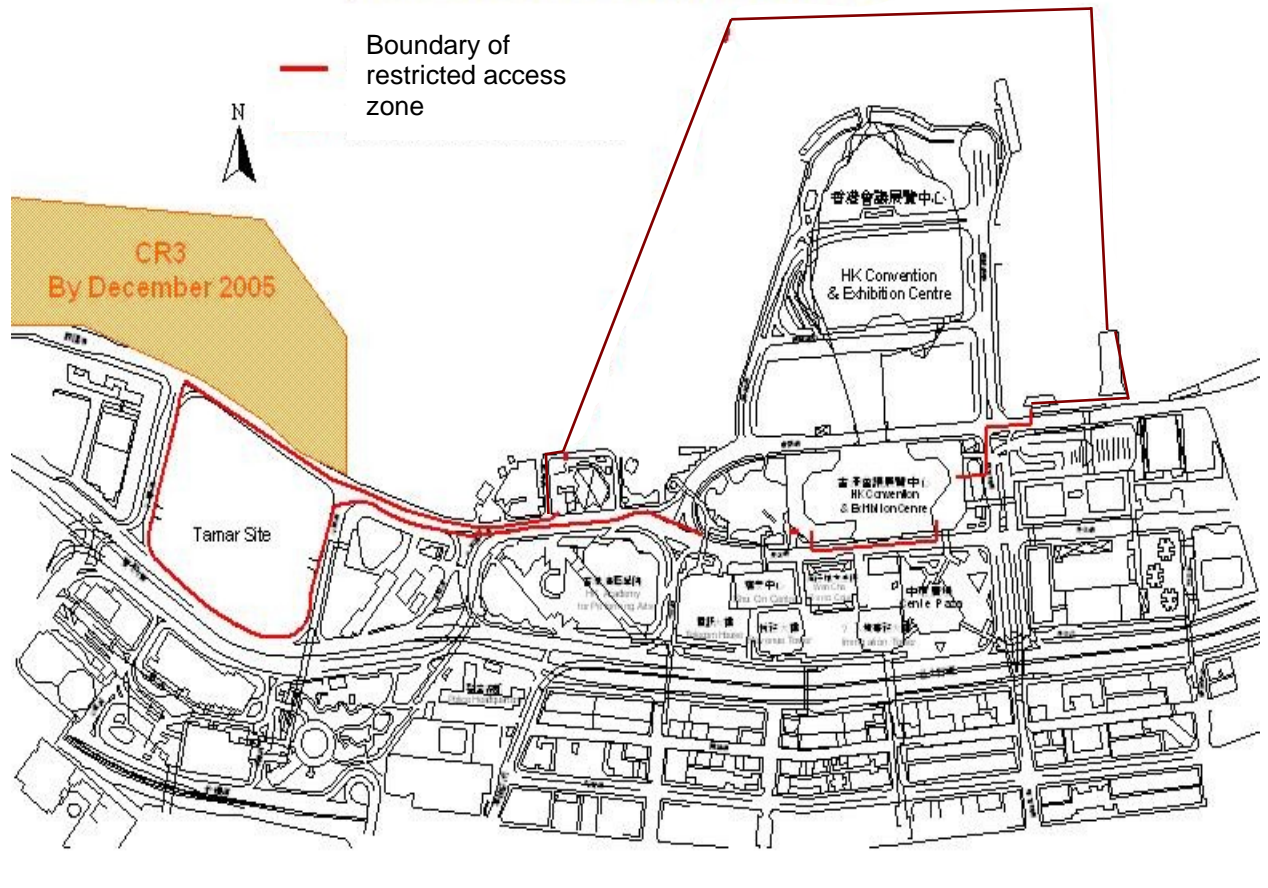
Environment, Transport and Works Bureau

Trade and Industry Department

Hong Kong Police Force

Transport Department

Restricted Access Zone



Annex B

Restricted Access Zone : Coverage

(a) Land side

- Entire HKCEC (Phases 1 and 2), and all connecting roads north of Convention Avenue including Expo Drive, Expo Drive Central and Expo Drive East
- Convention Avenue from its junction with Fenwick Pier Street to the pier between Expo Drive East and Wanchai Ferry Pier
- Nearside lane of northbound Flemming Road outside Renaissance Harbour View Hotel
- Eastbound Harbour Road outside HKCEC Phase 1 including the ramps leading up and down its main entrance
- Ramp leading up to Grand Hyatt Hotel
- Fenwick Pier Street from its junction with Convention Avenue to Lung King Street
- Westbound Fenwick Pier Street from its junction with Lung King Street to Tim Wa Avenue
- Entire Tamar Site (for vehicle screening) and its surrounding pavement

(b) Sea side

- coordinates : Point 1 – Lat 22° 16.961’N, Long 114° 10.541’E
(WGS 84 datum) Point 2 – Lat 22° 17.180’N, Long 114° 10.541’E
Point 3 – Lat 22° 17.180’N, Long 114° 10.260’E
Point 4 – Lat 22° 16.890’N, Long 114° 10.141’E