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Chairman, Honourable Members,

Greetings from London!

Thank you for allowing my representative to read this presentation to you on my behalf.

The recent decision of the Court of Final Appeal recognised the tremendous importance of the harbour to Hong Kong. The harbourfront is no less important because the harbour is wasted unless it can be enjoyed.

The Government has promised that there will be no more reclamation. This is therefore the harbourfront of Hong Kong for all times. Accordingly every care should be taken to ensure that Hong Kong will have a harbourfront that we can all be proud of and enjoy. We now have a historical opportunity to create a harbourfront which will be environmentally friendly and will improve the quality of life of Hong Kong people and future generations. This is the only opportunity to get it right.

For such an important matter, I ask all of you as representatives of Hong Kong people to approach it not as a political issue but with honour, conscience and a sense of duty and responsibility. This historic decision should not be based on personal prestige, self-interest or party politics. Hong Kong people including your own children and grand children are depending on your wisdom and integrity.

I invite you to consider three fundamental issues:-

Firstly, who should enjoy this unique and valuable piece of land?

Secondly, has the Government demonstrated an urgent and overwhelming need sufficient to override the public interest?

Thirdly, will the public benefit or suffer from the Government's proposal?

Consider the first issue:- who should enjoy this unique and valuable piece of land? Should it be enjoyed by the public as we are proposing? Should it be enjoyed by real estate developers as the Government was proposing only five years ago? Or should it be enjoyed by Government officials as the Government is now proposing?

The answer is obvious: this is a piece of public land reclaimed from the harbour using public funds and which by law belongs to Hong Kong people. Logically the starting point must be that it should be for enjoyment of the public. This must be your decision unless the Government can persuade you that there is a greater public need which overrides this public interest. This is a heavy burden for the Government to discharge because the Government is seeking to monopolise an important public asset for its own enjoyment.

On the second issue: whether the Government has demonstrated an urgent and overwhelming need? The documents the Government has produced up to now do not show any urgent or overriding need. The Government cannot answer why millions of square feet of new offices are needed when the civil service is shrinking: from over 190,000 to the present 160,000.

The Government has also failed to show why the new Government offices must be on the Tamar Site. Surely, additional government offices, if really needed, can be built anywhere, for example, on Kai Tak and the Central Government Offices need not be moved.

The Government has also failed to justify the size of the proposed new building and why more than 3,000 Government staff should move to Tamar. The existing Government buildings are relatively new compared to other cities, so why couldn't they continue to be used with some up-dating and renovation?

The only argument the Government has been able to advance is: employment for 2,500 people. This is almost an insult to your intelligence. Of course spending \$5 billion of public money can generate employment, but it does not mean that is the right way to spend it. Construction costs for public housing is about \$1,000 per sq.foot. With \$5 billion, five million sq.ft. of public housing can be provided. Therefore, the \$5 billion can build 10,000 units of public housing and thereby create 10,000 jobs for the construction industry and at the same time provide badly needed affordable housing for the public.

On the third issue: will the public benefit or suffer from the Government's proposal? The Government has not shown any benefit that the proposal will bring to the Hong Kong public. Instead, the public will suffer from the following adverse impacts on the environment.

The additional traffic generated by the Tamar project necessitates a new 6-lane highway called P2 which will sterilize the harbourfront and make it inaccessible. The additional traffic will also aggravate traffic congestion and air and noise pollution.

The proposed 40-storey building will block harbour view and mountain view and will complete a wall of high buildings all along the Central Harbourfront. Hong Kong people will lose the open space badly needed in Central and the opportunity for a green Central Harbourfront. Furthermore, the new Government offices will be people unfriendly as it will be dead after office hours just like the Immigration and Inland Revenue Towers in Wanchai.

The Government has just conceded that it will conduct a review of the planning of the Central Harbourfront to consider the impact of the proposed developments on the environment. There is no reason why the Tamar project should not be included in this review. After all, it is one harbourfront and the Tamar project will have the same adverse impacts and the Government has not demonstrated any urgency.

You are elected to represent the rights of Hong Kong people and to protect their interests. Before you surrender this invaluable public asset to the Government for the enjoyment of Government officials and also spend \$5 billion of public funds, you must be sure that you are making the right decision based upon your conscience rather than political considerations. Hong Kong people are relying on you.

I wish to share with you a vision of a vibrant harbour and a people-friendly and green harbourfront which Hong Kong people can enjoy for generations to come. This can only be achieved by putting the interests of the people first and above all other interests, including Government interests, developers' interests and private interests. This is what I am asking you to do to-day.

All of the cities in the world lucky enough to have a waterfront treasure their waterfronts and give first priority to their enjoyment by the people. For the first and only time in Hong Kong's history, there is the opportunity to do the same for our Victoria Harbour. Do not waste it. Do not let Hong Kong people down. Your decision will affect and will be remembered by all the future generations to come.

Thank you.

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