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Legislative Council

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Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

**Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 9 February 2009, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon LEE Wing-tat (Deputy Chairman)
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP

Members absent : Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

**Public officers
attending** : Agenda Item III

Mrs Rita LAU NG Wai-lan, JP
Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

Mr Duncan PESCOD, JP
Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic
Development (Communications and Technology)

Mr Alan SIU, JP
Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology)

Ms Ida LEE
Principal Assistant Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology)B

Agenda Item IV

Mr Gregory SO, JP
Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development

Mr Duncan PESCOD, JP
Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology)

Mr Jeremy GODFREY
Government Chief Information Officer

Ms Ava CHIU
Deputy Government Chief Information Officer (Policy and Customer Service)

Mr Stephen MAK, JP
Deputy Government Chief Information Officer (Consulting and Operations)

Mr Bassanio SO
Assistant Government Chief Information Officer (E-government Service Delivery)

Clerk in attendance	**:**	Ms YUE Tin-po Chief Council Secretary (1)3
Staff in attendance	**:**	Ms Annette LAM Senior Council Secretary (1)3
		Ms Debbie SIU Legislative Assistant (1)6

I.   Information paper issued since last meeting

        Members noted that no information paper had been issued since the last meeting held on 20 November 2008.

II.   Date of next meeting and items for discussion
        (LC Paper No. CB(1)715/08-09(01) -- List of outstanding items for
                                                           discussion

        LC Paper No. CB(1)715/08-09(02)   -- List of follow-up actions)

2.   Members noted that the next regular panel meeting would be held on 9 March 2009 at 2:30 pm to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration:

        (a)   Annual report on Cyberport; and

        (b)   Further development of GovHK.

        (*Post-meeting note*: At the request of the Administration and with the concurrence of the Chairman, item (b) would be deferred to a future meeting. A new item "Funding to support creative industries" would be included in the agenda for the next meeting.)

3.   Mr LEE Wing-tat enquired about the timetable for the deferred public consultation on public service broadcasting (PSB) and the future of Radio Television of Hong Kong (RTHK) which had been dragged on for a long time causing much anxiety to RTHK staff.   He urged the Administration to expedite the preparation work for the consultation and to widely consult the public and RTHK, hopefully, by April 2009.

4.   In response, the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (SCED) said that the Administration had pledged to conduct a comprehensive consultation and to involve RTHK staff in the consultation process.   As the review of PSB and the related issues of the future of RTHK and community participation in broadcasting were complex issues that had to be handled cautiously and dealt with together, more time was needed to prepare for a comprehensive consultation exercise.   She said that the Administration was mindful of the concern of the public and RTHK staff over the development of PSB in Hong Kong and the future of the RTHK.   Although there was no specific timetable for the consultation exercise, she assured members that preparation was underway and the Administration would make the best effort to finalize the consultation paper within a reasonable timeframe.   The consultation paper, once ready, would be submitted to the Panel for deliberations.   She assured members that RTHK's quality service provided to the public would not be affected.

III. **Promote development of the creative industries and the setting up of a dedicated office for creative industries**

(LC Paper No. CB(1)715/08-09(03) -- Administration's paper on "promote development of the creative industries and the setting up of a dedicated office for creative industries"

LC Paper No. CB(1)764/08-09 -- Power-point presentation material)

Briefing by the Administration

5. With the aid of power-point, the Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology) (DSCED(CT)) briefed members on the preliminary strategy for developing the creative economy in Hong Kong with the vision to build Hong Kong into a regional creative capital and the mission to foster a conducive environment to facilitate creative industries development in Hong Kong. The development strategy which was drawn up based on consultation with representatives from the creative industries and stakeholders covered the following seven strategic areas:

(a) nurturing a pool of creative human capital which would form the backbone of the creative economy;

(b) facilitating start-ups and the development of creative establishments;

(c) generating demand for innovation and creativity and expanding local market size for creative industries;

(d) promoting creative industries on the Mainland and overseas to help explore outside markets;

(e) fostering a creative atmosphere within the community;

(f) developing creative clusters in the territory to generate synergy and facilitate exchanges; and

(g) promoting Hong Kong as Asia's creative capital.

6. The Secretary for Commerce and Development (SCED) sought members' support for the setting up of a dedicated office, to be named Create Hong Kong (CreateHK), under the Communications and Technology Branch (CTB) of the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB), and the creation of a new Head of CreateHK at Directorate 3 (D3) level, to be offset by the deletion of an existing Assistant Government Chief Information Officer (AGCIO)(D2) post in the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO). The new office

would coordinate the efforts of different Government bureaux and departments and work closely with the industries to drive the development of creative industries in Hong Kong.

Discussion

Vision and mission of CreateHK

7.   Mr Ronny TONG considered the development strategy outlined in the Administration's paper too generalized and failed to provide a specific direction for future development.   He enquired which creative industry sectors would be targeted as priority areas for development.

8.   In response, SCED said that the vision, mission and the general scope of work of the CreateHK had been set out in the Administration's paper.   Based on consultation with the creative industries representatives, a preliminary development strategy covering seven strategic areas was drawn up for CreateHK to drive the development of creative industries in Hong Kong.   She further said that the term "creative industries" had different scope and definition among different countries in the world.   Hong Kong had an edge in a number of creative industry domains, including motion picture, television, design, architecture, animation and comics, advertising and digital entertainment, etc.   These creative industries with more than 170,000 practitioners and over 30,000 establishments were important economic drivers of Hong Kong.   They helped to increase the innovation capacity of the economy as a whole and could be a powerhouse for economic growth.   If nurtured effectively, the potential of creative economy was substantial.

9.   Referring to the vision of promoting Hong Kong as Asia's creative hub and building Hong Kong into a regional creative capital, Dr Samson TAM asked whether the Government was confident that Hong Kong could become a creative capital of the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region having regard to the keen competition from Guangzhou and Shenzhen.   In reply, SCED said that the major policy objective for development in the PRD region was to enhance regional integration through close cooperation and mutual support.   SCED believed that Hong Kong with its pool of talents and sound legal framework had a leading competitive edge for expansion beyond the PRD region into the international arena.

10.   Citing the success of creative economy in Australia and also Mainland Government's efforts in promoting creative industries in Suzhou and Foshan, Mrs Regina IP enquired about the Government's long-term plan in promoting development of culture and design, protection of intellectual property and the application of new technologies to build Hong Kong into a regional creative capital. Mr Ronny TONG and Mr WONG Ting-kwong also sought information on the timetable and road map for the development of creative industries in Hong Kong.

11.   In reply, SCED said that the setting up of CreateHK was only the first step towards better coordination within the Government to drive creative industries development and to more effectively respond to industries' demands and better

serve the trade through a one-stop shop service and the integration of resources. She stressed that the Government should not be relied on solely to drive the development of creative industries in Hong Kong. Close collaboration between the Government and stakeholders in the creative industries was important to accelerate the development of the creative economy and to foster a creative atmosphere and a conducive environment to facilitate the development of creative industries. She said that the Government had in the past few months met with representatives from the creative industries and stakeholders to gauge their views on development strategies and how best to drive the development of creative industries and build Hong Kong into a creative capital in the region. The preliminary development strategy as well as the mission and scope of work of CreateHK was drawn up following consultation with stakeholders in various creative industry sectors. The new office would continue to consult the trades and formulate long-term strategy and detailed implementation plans in collaboration with industries representatives and stakeholders.

12.   Mr WONG Ting-kwong said that the setting up of CreateHK was a timely move to drive the development of creative industries. He hoped that the office, through coordination of Government policy and integration of resources could work closely with the trade to boost the development of creative industries. He sought elaboration on the Government's plan on stepping up communication with the trade and on marketing and promotion to generate sustainable and expandable demand for local creativity in Mainland and overseas markets.

13.   SCED advised that the Administration had all along liaised closely with the trade to better understand the industries' needs and expectations, and would continue its efforts in this direction. As different industries had different needs, the office of CreateHK would establish an effective mechanism to engage industry representatives more actively to have a better focus on industries' needs and develop initiatives which best suit them. On marketing and promotion, SCED said that various efforts had been made to promote local creative industries in the Mainland and overseas. For example, a number of initiatives under the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement had been launched to facilitate the expansion of Hong Kong film industry into the Mainland market. To promote Hong Kong films in South East Asia, a delegation to Taiwan had been organized and there was also plan to visit Malaysia. On fashion and design, work was in progress to partner with relevant organization in France to organize the Business of Design Week this year.

14.   Mrs Regina IP was of the view that culture was part and parcel of innovation and creativity and that creative industries should not be limited to a few domains only such as films, design and digital entertainment. As the term "creative industries" had different scope and definition among different countries in the world, the Government should not simply adopt the UK's definition as cited in the Administration's paper. She said that the new office should conduct public consultation to set the position of culture and that a bureau on cultural creativity should eventually be set up to assume overall responsibility.

15.   Ms Cyd HO opined that the office, with the mission of nurturing local talents and fostering a creative atmosphere, should work closely with the Education Bureau (EDB), the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) and the Hong Kong Arts Development Council to promote cultural development.   While she appreciated that cultural development might not fall within the office's current scope of work, the Administration should, however, have a timeframe in mind to consider the way forward for expanding its scope of work in this direction.   In this connection, Ms HO suggested that the legislation should be reviewed to grant tax concessions to owners of copyright works for sharing their innovation and original works.   SCED noted members' views and suggestions.

Coordination with other Government departments and bureaux

16.   Mr Ronny TONG enquired whether CreateHK would be a statutory body and expressed concern whether the work of the new office would overlap with that of other relevant departments and agencies under the CEDB.   Mr LEE Wing-tat asked whether the work of CreateHK would overlap with other departments/bodies, such as LCSD which was responsible for sports, music and cultural activities and the West Kowloon Cultural District Authority (WKCDA) which was responsible for the development of the West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD), museums and performance venues.

17.   Mr WONG Yung-kan noted that a number of new set-ups such as the Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC), the OGCIO and the Hong Kong Design Centre (HKDC) had been established over the past few years with a view to promoting innovation, technology and design.   With the proposed establishment of CreateHK, Mr WONG asked whether the Government had any long-term plan to realign resources systematically from various Government set-ups and centralize all related work under one umbrella.   He was concerned that the current piecemeal approach with different set-ups/departments responsible for different aspects would end up achieving nothing.

18.   SCED advised that the new office would not overlap with the work of other departments or agencies.   The dedicated new office was not a statutory body, and would operate independently under CTB of CEDB with the Head reporting directly to the Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology).   She said that while creative industries might have a cultural element, such as infiltration of local culture into performances and designs, CreateHK was not intended to take over policy responsibility of cultural development currently under the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB).

19.   SCED stressed that the purpose of setting up a dedicated office for creative industries was to better coordinate Government policy and efforts currently scattered under different bureaux and departments, and to deploy more flexibly existing resources available to support the creative industries.   She said that creative industries cut across different sectors including film, television, music, design, architecture, digital entertainment, comics and advertising, etc.   The Government had been rendering support to different sectors of the creative

industries through various Government bureaux and departments, including CEDB, HAB, OGCIO, Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA), ITC and the Trade and Industry Department (TID).   Various schemes and funds were set up to support projects that were conducive to the development and promotion of the creative industries.   At present, these schemes and funds were managed by different units within the Government, e.g. the Film Development Fund under TELA, the Design Smart Initiative under ITC, the funding support for the operation of HKDC and the Innovation and Technology Fund under ITC, the Incubation-cum-training Programme under the Cyberport, etc.   To enhance synergy and ensure better coordination and cost-effective deployment of various funding resources, the various existing funds and schemes would be centralized under the management of CreateHK to enable the dedicated office to have a better focus on industries' needs, and develop initiatives which best suit their needs.

20.   The Chairman expressed concern about the new office's coordination and collaboration with related departments and bureaux.   He said that the new office should coordinate with EDB and the Labour and Welfare Bureau to nurture local creative industries talents.   In response, SCED said that through coordination and collaboration with EDB, visual arts and digital entertainment conducive to the nurturing of local creative talents had been included in the secondary school curriculum.   She assured members that continued efforts would be made to collaborate with HAB, WKCDA and ITC in integrating culture and creativity, making use of the show grounds and venues of WKCD for local talents to showcase their creativity and performance as well as promoting a culture of innovation and creativity among businesses and within the community.

21.   Mr Ronny TONG remarked that creative industries would not thrive simply with the injection of money and resources.   He said that a creative atmosphere and conducive environment as well as sustained market demand were essential for the survival and growth of creative industries.   While he supported the overall policy direction of developing creative industries in Hong Kong, he would need more detailed information on the set up of the new office and how members' concern about possible overlapping with the work of related bureaux, departments and agencies would be addressed.

22.   In response to Mr WONG Ting-kwong's enquiry about the timetable for the setting up of CreateHK, SCED said that subject to members' views, CEDB would seek the Establishment Sub-committee (ESC)'s endorsement on the staffing proposals in April 2009 and the Finance Committee (FC)'s approval in May 2009.

Title of the new office

23.   Referring to the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in the United Kingdom (UK), Mr LEE Wing-tat expressed regret that matters relating to sport and culture were not within the purview of CreateHK.   He suggested that the title of the office should be renamed to suitably reflect its scope of work to avoid false expectation of the public.   Concurring with Mr LEE, Ms Cyd HO said that the inflated title "CreateHK" was misleading and would give rise to expectation that

the office would also oversee policies on cultural development. She suggested that it would be more appropriate to name the office as "Office promoting films and design".

24.   In response, SCED said that the title "CreateHK" was intended to bring forth the function and the mission of the office in driving the development of creative industries in Hong Kong. She further advised that in the UK, matters relating to design, computer games and digital entertainment were grouped separately under the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform.

Head of CreateHK

25.   Mrs Regina IP welcomed the setting up of CreateHK to drive the development of creative industries in Hong Kong. However, she queried whether the ranking of the Head of CreateHK at D3 level was high enough to effectively formulate policies and strategies for developing creative economy in Hong Kong. In this connection, she cited the establishment of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport headed by a minister in the UK as an example. She also questioned whether the new office with primarily an executive role could effectively spearhead the blueprint for the development of creative industries in Hong Kong by simply grouping together the work currently under different bureaux and departments.

26.   Noting that the Head of CreateHK was pitched at a rank lower than heads of OGCIO, ITC, and Deputy Secretary (Communications & Technology) reporting directly to the Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications & Technology) (PSCED(CT)), Dr Samson TAM and Mr LEE Wing-tat were concerned whether the Head of CreateHK would have sufficient authority to effectively oversee and coordinate Government policy and efforts relating to creative industries among various departments and bureaux.

27.   In response, SCED said that a D3 post was a high ranking post within the Government structure. She stressed that coordination and implementation of Government policies did not depend on ranks only as there was overall policy coordination and established communication channels within bureaux and departments. Moreover, the Head of CreateHK would report directly to PSCED(CT) at D8 level who was also responsible for liaising and coordinating with other bureaux and departments.

Open recruitment

28.   Ms Cyd HO welcomed the Administration's proposal to fill the post of the Head of CreateHK through open recruitment. She considered that the Head of CreatHK should be creative and flexible with relevant operational experience and connection with the creative industries sectors as he/she would need to work closely with and understand the needs of the industries, and must also be familiar with public administration and government operation. The Chairman and Mr WONG Yung-kan shared a similar view and supported conducting open

recruitment for the post, in order to tap the resources and talent of the private sector. They opined that an Administrative Officer in the Government, though had a high level of analytical and organizational capability, might not have a creative and flexible mindset to be the head of CreateHK. Mrs Regina IP considered that a civil servant with a general mindset of rule compliance would not be suitable for the job, and she advised against filling the post with a civil servant. She anticipated that the pay package of the post should be able to attract high calibre candidates from the private sector. SCED noted members' views and said that the Administration would propose to the ESC filling the post through open recruitment. Mr LEE Wing-tat opined that even though the Head of CreateHK came from the private sector, it would still be difficult for him to function effectively within a structure where all other staff were civil servants.

Manpower and funding resources for development of creative industries

29.   Dr Samson TAM said that the amount of dedicated resources set aside for supporting the development of creative industries reflected Government's commitment to promote the creative industries. He asked what manpower resources and funding would be provided for the development of creative industries in Hong Kong. The Chairman said that while he supported the setting up of a dedicated office to spearhead the development of creative industries in Hong Kong, he considered the amount of $10 million set aside for developing creative industries insignificant, when compared to the $20 billion funding for the West Kowloon Cultural District development and a $2.5 billion provision for LCSD.

30.   On manpower requirements, SCED said that having regard to the established policy of maximizing cost effectiveness within the existing resources, the setting up of CreateHK would not incur additional manpower resources. There would be no net increase in headcount for directorate post, as the creation of the Head of CreateHK post would be offset by the deletion of an existing AGCIO (D2) post in OGCIO. The some 40 staff of the office would also be redeployed from various departments and agencies under CEDB including OGCIO, TELA, TID, and ITC. Future manpower requirements would be reviewed in the light of future operational need. The new office would centrally administer various funds and schemes currently administered by various units within the Government to provide financial support to projects and programmes in support of the creative industries. SCED assured members that the Government would set aside sufficient resources for the development of creative industries as appropriate. The existing schemes and funds would be reviewed and if warranted, consideration would be given to setting up a dedicated fund for creative industries.

Street performance

31.   Referring to the popularity of street performance in cities such as London and Paris, Mr LEE Wing-tat expressed disappointment that promoting street performance was difficult in Hong Kong and departments concerned did not respond positively to these performance proposals. SCED advised that street performance in a densely populated city like Hong Kong might give rise to

enforcement concerns. She highlighted that promoting street performance would require discussion and consensus of the community, and the relevant district councils and local residents would need to be consulted. The Chairman and Ms Cyd HO suggested that the Government should consider lifting the ban on street performance pending the introduction of a licensing system for street performers. SCED noted the suggestion.

Summing up

32. The Chairman concluded that the Panel supported in principle the proposal to set up a dedicated office under CTB of CEDB to drive the development of creative industries in Hong Kong, and to create a new Head of CreateHK post at D3 level to be offset by the deletion of an AGCIO (D2 post) in the OGCIO.

IV. Progress report on 2008 Digital 21 Strategy

(LC Paper No. CB(1)715/08-09(04) -- Administration's paper on progress report on the Digital 21 Strategy

LC Paper No. CB(1)715/08-09(05) -- Paper on Digital 21 Strategy prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (updated background brief))

Presentation by the Administration

33. The Under Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (USCED) referred members to the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)715/08-09(04)) which set out the finalized Statements of Desired Outcomes (SDOs) for the five actions areas under the Digital 21 Strategy that formed the blueprint for the development of information and communication technology (ICT) in Hong Kong. USCED sought members' views on the proposal to develop Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure progress towards the SDOs.

Discussion

Assisting IT professionals

34. Referring to the recent media reports about staff lay-offs by the PCCW, Dr Samson TAM anticipated that the ICT sector would be hard hit by the upcoming waves of staff lay-offs. He sought information on the concrete measures the Government would put in place to assist local IT professionals, and also the large scale ICT projects to be rolled out to help create jobs in the ICT sector amidst the economic downturn.

35. The Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) replied that there would be an increase in IT manpower within the Government in the 2009-2010 financial year. Subject to the approval and progress of Government ICT projects, about 200 more ICT contract staff would be employed by the Government. Two

major projects, including the Multi-media Information System for the Hong Kong Public Libraries of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Replacement of the Computerized Social Security System of the Social Welfare Department, had been approved by the Finance Committee and other projects such as the electronic health records (eHR) were in the pipeline. Efforts had also been made to speed up the process for approving ICT projects of various Government bureaux and departments to facilitate the creation of jobs. For example, a streamlined approach for procurement had been adopted which could substantially reduce the time for preparing tender documents, and enable rapid award of contracts for approved projects. Through outsourcing, the IT projects would also create jobs in the overall IT sector outside the Government.

36.   As regards the private sector, GCIO said that the Administration was actively working with industry bodies to explore ways to help ICT professionals who lost their jobs to remain in the industry. The Administration also worked with the Hong Kong Computer Society to facilitate a clearing-house acting as a one-stop shop where unemployed ICT professionals could be matched to suitable jobs, training and ICT-related voluntary work. The Administration also provided support for self-employment. In addition, promotional and business matching activities would be organized to facilitate local ICT SMEs to showcase their services and products and to make propositions to potential customers. Moreover, a sector specific IT training programme for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) would be launched in early 2009 to help enhance ICT adoption by SMEs and to increase their IT capabilities. Case studies of successful use of ICT by SME companies would be presented to encourage the use of ICT in business operation. The Government would inject $6 million to fund the programme which would create some 50 temporary IT training and advisory jobs.

37.   Mrs Regina IP suggested that non-government public bodies such as the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the Hong Kong Tourism Board should be encouraged to increase the use of IT as a strategic tool for business and build on technological infrastructure so as to provide more business opportunities for local ICT SME companies in providing IT software programming and consulting services.

38.   Referring to the eHR programme which involved the Food and Health Bureau, the Health Department, the Hospital Authority and SMEs in the medical and pharmaceutical sectors, GCIO said that through policy bureaux, public bodies under their purview were encouraged to apply IT to enhance efficiency in their service delivery. Apart from the annual statistics on penetration rate of personal computer and Internet provided by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) also initiated a study on the use of IT by SME companies to identify sector-specific barriers to IT adoption, so as to formulate appropriate intervention strategies to effectively promote the use of IT by those sectors to enhance their operational efficiency, competitiveness and sustainable business development.

Promoting the use of digital certificates

39.   Noting that digital certificates were not commonly used in Hong Kong, Mr WONG Ting-kwong enquired about the reasons for the low usage.   He also sought information on the pilot scheme for the mutual recognition of digital signature certificates between Guangdong and Hong Kong.   In response, GCIO said that the use of digital certificate(s) for both public and private sector transactions had not been widespread in the past as most users found it not user-friendly.   However, following the outsourcing of the operation of e-Certificate by the Hong Kong Post, there had been significant improvements in the ease of use of digital certificates. To promote the adoption of digital certificates, efforts had been made to develop more applications in respect of on-line transactions and services in the Government as well as the private sector.   Discussion was underway with the banking sector to promote the use of digital certificates for banking transactions that had been taken up by some banks.   On mutual recognition of digital signature certificates, the Deputy Government Chief Information Officer (Consulting and Operations) (DGCIO(C&O)) advised that under Supplement V to the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), the HKSAR Government, in collaboration with the Department of Information Industry of the Guangdong Province and the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, was developing a framework for a pilot scheme in mutual recognition of digital signature certificates between Guangdong and Hong Kong.   The implementation of the pilot scheme would greatly facilitate cross-border electronic transaction services and promote the development of electronic commerce between the two places.   The Administration expected that the pilot scheme would boost the overall use of digital certificates.

Digital inclusion and assistance for students

40.   Mr Ronny TONG sought elaboration on the computer recycling programme and the free Internet broadband access plan for children of low income families and enquired about the eligibility criteria for the two schemes.   In response, GCIO said that the two programmes were separate schemes to provide needy primary and secondary school students with access to computers and free Internet access services.   According to the statistics from the survey conducted by the C&SD, about 95% of primary and secondary school students aged 10 and above had access to Internet service at home while about 97% had access to computers at home, i.e. about 20 000 (3%) students did not have computer and Internet access at home. Under the computer recycling programme launched since early February 2009, the Environmental Protection Department would provide recycled computers to needy students while the Education Bureau (EDB) would arrange for one-year of free Internet access service for successful applicants.   After the initial year of free service, the designated Internet service provider (ISP) would continue to offer a favourable Internet access service plan for the beneficiaries.   Separately, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service had partnered with a local ISP to provide a two-year free Internet broadband access service to 1 000 students of low-income families.   The scheme would be further expanded if the take-up was good. Recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance and students in receipt of

School Financial Assistance would be eligible for assistance under the two programmes.

41.   Mr LEE Wing-tat enquired about Government initiatives to narrow the digital divide. He was particularly concerned that school children of needy families should have the opportunities to access to computers and online services at home, at school as well as community centres and libraries. As he was aware, most of the computers provided in community centres were broken down and could not be used.

42.   In response, GCIO and DGCIO(C&O) advised that the Digital Inclusion Task Force (Task Force), set up in July 2008 to advise the Government on the formulation of digital inclusion strategies and initiatives to improve access to ICT facilities, Internet connections, ICT skills and training for needy groups, had recommended that priority be given to three needy groups, namely low-income families with children, the elderly and people with disabilities. Apart from the computer recycling programme to provide needy students with access to computers and the free Internet broadband access plan for low income families with children, a pilot scheme of District Cyber Centres (DCC) would also be launched in late February 2009. Through providing computing facilities, Internet connectivity and technical support, the DCCs would help narrow the digital divide by enabling young people from poor families and other needy members of the community to access and use ICT and online services and helping them integrate into the information society. The initial pilot scheme which supported up to 10 affiliated centres would be expanded to include 25 centres in the second phase. Affiliated centres joining the DCC Alliance would be provided with on-site technical support, training programmes on computer usage and applications and also benefit from the maintenance and replacement schemes. Furthermore, the EDB had granted recurrent subsidy to all primary and secondary schools to encourage them to open computer rooms and facilities for needy students after school. Free computers and Internet facilities were also available to students at youth centres, community centres and public libraries across the territory. On digital inclusion for the elderly, GCIO said that a number of initiatives had been launched by non-Government organizations, relevant Government departments and the Labour and Welfare Bureau to help the elderly stay connected with their families and friends and to provide them with a variety of online information on resources and services for the elderly.

43.   Mr LEE Wing-tat enquired about the estimated number of students in Hong Kong who had no access to computer and Internet services at home, and called on the Administration to draw up quantifiable indicators to measure digital inclusion for the disadvantaged groups. In response, GCIO informed that apart from the latest figures as of December 2007 and 2008 set out in Annex B to the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(1)715/08-09(04)), a study was currently being conducted to measure the latest digital inclusiveness of the six disadvantaged groups identified by the Task Force by way of a Comprehensive Digital Inclusion Index. The study was expected to be completed by early 2009. At members' request, the Administration undertook to provide information on the number of

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secondary and primary school children who had no access to computers and Internet services at home.

> (*Post-meeting note*: The information provided by the Administration had been issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(1)897/08-09(01) on 24 February 2009.)

Key performance indicators

44.   Ms Cyd HO considered the SDOs for the five action areas too general and flimsy, and enquired about the criteria to be used in developing key performance indicators (KPIs) for the SDOs. She criticized that the targets set were not ambitious enough and suggested that more concrete quantifiable targets should be set such as laying down the timeframe for achieving territory-wide wireless access and specifying the proportion of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to be contributed by the IT sector.

45.   In response, GCIO agreed that concrete targets and measures directly relevant to the qualitative SDOs should be developed to measure whether the objectives had been achieved and the rate of progress towards it.   He stressed that the KPIs had to be carefully designed to make them directly relevant to the SDOs so that the right targets could be set to guide the allocation of resources.   For examples, the success in facilitating Hong Kong to develop as a hub for technological cooperation and trade might be indicated by measuring the share of Mainland IT services, imports and exports accounted for by Hong Kong business establishments, and/or by the share of global IT services trade mediated through Hong Kong.   The success in delivering the next generation of public service might be indicated by comparing customer satisfaction with the delivery of public services with customer satisfaction with the delivery of services by the best commercial and voluntary organizations.   GCIO said that relevant stakeholders, including ICT-related bodies would be invited to provide input in the KPI design. The Administration would start measuring the KPIs later this year.   Targets would then be set after the KPIs were validated.

V.   Any other business

Update on Film Development Fund

46.   In response to Mrs Regina IP's enquiry about the progress of the Film Development Fund, the Chairman advised that the item had been scheduled for discussion at the regular Panel meeting to be held in April 2009.

47.   There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:30 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
7 July 2009