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24 September 2015

Clerk to LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
(Attn.: Ms Angel SHEK)  
(By e-mail and fax: 3529 2837)

Dear Ms Shek,

**LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs**  
**Concerns on the Impact of Invasive Alien Plants in Hong Kong**

Thank you for the letter dated 2 September 2015 from the Panel on the captioned matter.


Our response to the question raised by the Hon CHAN Han-pan on the impact of invasive alien plants in Hong Kong is as follows.

Hong Kong currently has over 3,000 plant species covering different kinds of trees, shrubs, climbers, ferns, etc, among which about one-third are alien species, including some commonly seen fruit trees and ornamental plants. The growing conditions required by these plants vary. Some are more resilient and considered as invasive alien species since they may compete with the native plants, causing adverse effect on local biological diversity.

In Hong Kong, a few known invasive alien plant species mainly grow on derelict fields and disturbed woodland fringes. *Mikania micrantha* (*Mikania*) is a more notable example. The exotic mangrove *Sonneratia* grown on intertidal mudflat may also affect native species in the same habitat due to its rapid growth. The Government has been monitoring and removing these invasive alien species regularly according to their characteristics. On the other hand, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) conducts regular biological diversity surveys across the territory to record the distribution of the species. Such baseline information is useful for monitoring the impact of alien species on local biological diversity.

In recent years, there has been growing concern about the impact of *Mikania* on the local ecology. *Mikania*, originated from South and Central America, is a climbing plant which climbs over other plants to reach for more sunlight. Plants covered by *Mikania* will be hindered in their growth as they cannot receive enough sunlight for photosynthesis. *Mikania* is usually found in low-lying areas where sunlight and moisture are abundant, such as derelict fields, rural villages, roadsides and woodland fringes. To control the proliferation of *Mikania*, the relevant government departments play their respective roles in carrying out regular inspections and maintenance work for the plants growing on the slopes under their management and within their facilities, including checking for the presence of *Mikania*. For instance, the AFCD will inspect country parks, special areas and sites of special scientific interest regularly, while the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Highways Department and Water Supplies Department will inspect parks, highways and waterworks facilities respectively. The departments concerned will arrange for the clearing of *Mikania* promptly once it is found.

Yours sincerely,



(Ms Vivian CHAN)

for Director of Environmental Protection