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Panel on Commerce and Industry

Meeting on 21 March 2017

**Proposal of conducting an overseas duty visit to Israel
by the Panel on Commerce and Industry**

Purpose

This paper seeks members' views on a proposal to conduct a duty visit to Israel by the Panel on Commerce and Industry ("the Panel") to study the country's experience in promoting the development of innovation and technology ("I&T") industry and re-industrialization.

Background

Proposed duty visit in 2013-2014 session

2. In the 2013-2014 session, Panel members discussed whether to conduct a duty visit to study the experience of other countries in the development and related strategies of I&T. Of the three countries selected for discussion, namely, South Korea, Belgium and Israel, members considered that Israel, though a small country with a population size comparable to that of Hong Kong, had developed into a world-recognized high-tech and innovation hub. Given the similarities between Hong Kong and Israel in terms of population size and the lack of natural resources, members considered that the experience of Israel might provide useful reference for Hong Kong in furthering I&T development, and agreed at its meeting on 18 March 2014 to conduct a duty visit to Israel from 3 to 8 August 2014. The proposed duty visit was approved by the House Committee on 20 June 2014. However, in view of the then escalating tension between Israel and Palestine, the delegation decided on 11 July 2014 not to proceed with the proposed duty visit.

Proposed duty visit in 2016-2017 session

3. The Consul General of Israel in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Macau Special Administrative Region ("Consul General of Israel") has invited the Panel to re-consider conducting a duty visit to Israel.

Objectives of the proposed duty visit

4. To facilitate members' discussion on the proposed visit, the objectives of the proposed duty visit are proposed as follows –

- (a) to study the experience of the Israeli Government and obtain first-hand information on the policies, initiatives and legislations relevant to the promotion of industrial research and development and facilitation of the growth of I&T industry and re-industrialization; and
- (b) to meet and exchange views with the relevant Israeli Government authorities involved in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of policies on I&T, as well as representatives of technology transfer companies affiliated with leading universities and research institutions, venture capital companies, multinational corporations, technology companies, industry association and technological incubators, etc.

Proposed visit dates

5. Having considered the schedules of Council meetings¹ and committee meetings² before the end of this session, the proposed duty visit is tentatively scheduled to be conducted from 22 to 28 July 2017 (subject to confirmation with the receiving organizations) –

¹ The last Council meeting of this session will be held on 12 July 2017.

² Schedules of the last meeting of various committees —

Committees	Date of last meeting
House Committee	7 July 2017
Finance Committee	14 July 2017
Panel on Development	18 July 2017
Panel on Commerce and Industry	18 July 2017
Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services	18 July 2017
Panel on Manpower	18 July 2017
Panel on Transport	21 July 2017
Panel on Home Affairs	24 July 2017
Panel on Economic Development	24 July 2017

22 – 28 July 2017 (seven days inclusive of five nights in Israel and one overnight flight to Hong Kong)

Hong Kong to Tel Aviv

Departure 21:00 22 July 2017 (Saturday)
Arrival 03:55 23 July 2017 (Sunday)

Tel Aviv to Hong Kong

Departure 22:00 27 July 2017 (Thursday)
Arrival 13:50 28 July 2017 (Friday)

Proposed airline: EL AL Israel Airlines
Time difference: Hong Kong is five hours ahead of Israel

Tentative visit programme

6. With reference to the proposed duty visit in the 2013-2014 session, the office of the Consul General of Israel has suggested for members' consideration a tentative list of government authorities, academic institutions and private organizations which the delegation may meet during the duty visit –

- (a) the Ministry of Economy and Ministry of Foreign Affairs;
- (b) Israeli Parliament (Knesset);
- (c) innovation centre of Tel Aviv University;
- (d) research and development department of Hebrew University of Jerusalem;
- (e) venture capitalists such as representatives of JVP (a Venture Capital Fund in Israel);
- (f) industry organizations such as the Israel Export & International Cooperation Institute and the Manufacturers Association of Israel;
- (g) multinational corporations; and
- (h) leading personalities in Israel hi-tech community such as meeting with the author of "Start Up Nation".

Participation

7. Rule 29A(b) of the House Rules states that Members joining a visit of a committee should participate in the entire programme. The committee may invite other Members who are not members of the committee to take part in the visit provided that these Members are also able to participate in the entire programme. In this connection, members are invited to consider if non-Panel Members should be invited to join the proposed duty visit.

8. With reference to the proposed duty visit in the 2013-2014 session, members are invited to consider inviting the Innovation and Technology Bureau to nominate officials from the relevant departments, such as the Innovation and Technology Commission to join the proposed duty visit to facilitate members' understanding of the applicability of Israeli Government's experience in Hong Kong and advise the delegation on issues relating to the development of I&T industry as and when necessary. In line with established practice, the expenses incurred by the government officials for the visit will be borne by the Government.

Budget and funding arrangements

9. As approved by The Legislative Council Commission, each Member is provided with an overseas duty visit account ("ODV") of \$55,000 for the purpose of duty visits outside Hong Kong organized by committees of the Council. The fund in the account is for use by the Member in a four-year term. Any expenditure incurred in one term in excess of the approved allocation has to be paid by the Member personally. If by the end of a term there are unused balances in Members' ODV accounts, the funds available will be used to pay those Members who have expended more than their allocation, in proportion to their excess qualifying expenditure. Members who have not served out their terms will not be entitled to such reimbursements.

Advice sought

10. Members are invited to give views on the proposed duty visit to Israel, and advise –

- (a) Whether the Panel should conduct a duty visit to Israel as proposed from 22 to 28 July 2017³; if yes, whether the visit should be open to non-Panel Members; and
- (b) Whether officials from the relevant departments of the Innovation and Technology Bureau should be invited to join the visit.

11. Subject to members' support to conduct the proposed duty visit with the objectives set out in paragraph 4 and the tentative visit programme in paragraph 6 above, the Secretariat will work out the details and proceed with the arrangements for the proposed duty visit in coordination with the office of the Consul General of

³ Exact dates may vary subject to confirmation with the receiving organizations.

Israel. Members are also invited to note that the endorsement of the House Committee will have to be sought on the proposed duty visit.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
16 March 2017