## 立法會 Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2438/99-00 (These minutes have been seen by the Administration)

Ref: CB2/PL/EA

## LegCo Panel on Environmental Affairs

## Minutes of Meeting held on Friday, 5 May 2000 at 10:45 am in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

**Members** : Hon Christine LOH (Chairman)

**Present** Hon HUI Cheung-ching (Deputy Chairman)

Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP Prof Hon NG Ching-fai Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong Dr Hon LEONG Che-hung, JP

Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, JP

Hon LAU Kong-wah Hon CHOY So-yuk

Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP

Non-Panel Member

Hon NG Leung-sing

Members : Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai JP
Absent Hon Martine LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP

Hon Margaret NG

Hon Ronald ARCULLI, JP Hon CHAN Wing-chan Hon WONG Yung-kan

Hon Mrs Miriam LAU Kin-yee, JP

**Public Officers: Attending** 

For Item II

Mr Kim SALKELD

Deputy Secretary for the Environment and Food

Mrs Philomena LEUNG

Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment and Food

Mr Raymond CHEUNG

Deputy Director of Drainage Services

Mr W Y SHIU

Chief Engineer/Project Management

**Drainage Services Department** 

Mr T YU

Senior Engineer/Project Management 1

**Drainage Services Department** 

Mr K M CHAU

Senior Engineer/Sewerage Projects 4

**Drainage Services Department** 

Mr Edmond K M HO

Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Sewage

Infrastructure Planning)

**Environmental Protection Department** 

Dr Sam C C TSANG

Senior Environmental Protection Officer

**Environmental Protection Department** 

For item III

Mr Kim SALKELD

Deputy Secretary for the Environment and Food

Mrs Philomena LEUNG

Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment

and Food

Dr F Y WONG Assistant Director Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

For item IV

Mr CHAN Wing-sang
Deputy Secretary for Works (Works Policy)

Mr KWONG Hing-ip Chief Assistant Secretary (Technical Services) Works Bureau

Mr H B PHILLIPSON Director of Water Supplies

Mr CHAN Pui-wah Deputy Director of Water Supplies

Mr KU Chi-chung Assistant Director/Supply & Distribution (1) Water Supplies Department

Mr CHAN Kwong-wei Assistant Director/Supply & Distribution (2) Water Supplies Department

Mr CHEUNG Tze-leung Chief Waterworks Chemist Water Supplies Department

Clerk in : Mrs Constance LI
Attendance : Chief Assistant Secretary (2) 2

Staff in : Ms Eva LIU

Attendance Head of Research and Library Services Division

Miss Betty MA

Senior Assistant Secretary (2) 1

## I. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1863/99-00(01) and (02)]

Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for 2 June 2000 -

- (a) fees and charges proposals from the Administration;
- (b) noise pollution; and
- (c) progress of indoor air quality management programme.
- 2. <u>Members</u> also noted that a special meeting had been scheduled for 27 May 2000 to discuss with the international review panel on Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme (SSDS).

# II. Shatin Sewage Treatment works - stage III extension [LC Paper No. CB(2)1863/99-00(03)]

- With the aid of power-point presentation, Chief Engineer/Project 3. Management, Drainage Services Department (CE/DSD) briefed members on the background and justifications of the proposed upgrading of Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works (STSTW) Stage III Extension project to Category A. He explained that STSTW had reached its design capacity and was then handling about 200 000 cubic metres daily sewage flow in Sha Tin and Ma On Shan areas. With the anticipated increase of residential population in these areas in the coming years, the daily demand for sewage treatment was expected to increase to 230 000 cubic metres and 340 000 cubic metres by 2004 and 2011 respectively. The objectives of the project were to introduce interim measures to expand the existing capacity of the sewage treatment plant in the interim years, to carry out long term extension works to increase its future treatment capacity, and to enhance the treatment process with disinfection and advanced activated sludge process with nutrient removal. As a result, the ammonia nitrogen removal capacity would be improved and the E. Coli. level in the effluent would be reduced. The Administration intended to start the construction of the proposed extension works in March 2001 aiming at completion in September 2008. The extension works would be completed and put in use by phases between March 2004 and October 2006.
- 4. <u>CE/DSD</u> further said that the Advisory Council on the Environment had approved the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report on the proposed extension works. The Administration would implement mitigation measures to reduce dust, noise and waste during construction. The Administration would

also carry out odour control and landscaping works, and water quality monitoring works to verify the water quality impact of the project.

5. <u>CE/DSD</u> added that the estimated cost of the project was \$2,425 million in money-of-the-day prices. The Administration planned to submit the proposal to the Public Works Subcommittee (PWSC) in May 2000. He hoped members could support the funding proposal.

## <u>Interim measures to increase treatment capacity</u>

- 6. <u>Miss Emily LAU</u> noted from paragraph 3 of the Administration's paper that STSTW had experienced occasional difficulties in meeting the discharge standards. She expressed concern about the adverse impact on the quality of the receiving water body, and asked about the interim measures to address the problem pending completion of the project.
- 7. In response,  $\underline{\text{CE/DSD}}$  showed with visual aids the charts on performance data on the total suspended solids (TSS), total nitrogen (TN) and biochemical oxygen demand (BOD<sub>S</sub>) in the treated effluent discharged from STSTW in the past few years. He pointed out that STSTW was experiencing occasional difficulties in meeting the discharge standards, particularly during the winter months. The excess in TSS and BOD<sub>S</sub> levels recorded in mid-1998 was only due to the damage of the treatment plant which was then under repair. After the repair of the plant by the end of 1998, no excess of BOD<sub>S</sub> had been recorded and the TSS level was also brought back to acceptable limits. These charts were subsequently tabled at the meeting.
- 8. As regards the impact on the receiving water bodies in Victoria Harbour, CE/DSD said that samples collected from Kwun Tong Typhoon Shelter showed that the water quality had not been affected by the occasional excess of TSS and TN levels in the treated effluent discharged from STSTW. Deputy Director of Drainage Services (DD/DSD) added that the TSS and TN loading from the treated effluent discharged from STSTW only represented 2% and 7% respectively of the total loading going into Victoria Harbour. Moreover, the treated effluent discharged from STSTW was of high quality with little pollutants. It therefore had no adverse effect on the water quality of Victoria Harbour.

## Proposed extension works

9. <u>Mr LAU Kong-wah</u> asked why the effluent from STSTW was not discharged into the SSDS Stage 1 tunnels, so that discharged effluent could be treated collectively at the Stonecutters Island.

- 10. <u>DD/DSD</u> replied that it would not be cost-effective to discharge the STW effluent into the SSDS tunnels because a much higher sewage treatment standard was adopted by STSTW. It would defeat the purpose if the treated effluent from STSTW was to be mixed with untreated sewage for treatment again at the Stonecutters Island. The treated effluent from STSTW was discharged into Victoria Harbour because the high quality effluent would have no adverse impact on the water quality of Victoria Harbour as evidenced by the EIA study. <u>Deputy Secretary for the Environment and Food</u> (DS(EF)) added that the standard of treated effluent in STSTW was of a level that was accepted elsewhere for discharge into freshwater bodies that were also used as a source for drinking water.
- 11. While expressing support for expanding the treatment capacity of STSTW, Mr LAW Chi-kwong commented that there was insufficient information in the paper on the expected benefits of the project and impact on sewage charges. He said that the Administration should provide more information on the existing and proposed treatment capacities of STSTW, the forecast increase in daily sewage flow and the estimated time when the proposed extension works would reach its design capacity. Dr LEONG Che-hung expressed similar views.
- 12. <u>DD/DSD</u> said that paragraph 4 of the Administration's paper provided information on the projected demand and capacity of the proposed extension works. He would provide other information as requested by members.
- 13. <u>Miss CHOY So-yuk</u> welcomed the proposal to upgrade the treatment standard of STSTW. Nevertheless, she sought more information on the difference in capital cost between chemically enhanced primary treatment and secondary treatment. <u>DD/DSD</u> said that the capital cost for treating one cubic metre of sewage to meet secondary treatment level was \$11,000 which doubled the cost for chemically enhanced primary treatment.

14. In view of the urgency of the project, the Chairman advised the Administration to provide the requested information in the PWSC paper.

## III. Designation of Tung Ping Chau Marine Park [LC Paper No. CB(2)1863/99-00(04)]

- 15. <u>The Chairman</u> expressed support for the proposal.
- 16. <u>Miss Emily LAU</u> informed members that at a meeting with Legislative Council (LegCo) Members on 4 May 2000, members of Tai Po District Council had expressed worries that the proposed designation of Tung Ping Chau Marine Park would have adverse impact on the economic activities on the island. They

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suggested the Administration to introduce measures to develop the area into a tourist resort.

- 17. Assistant Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation (AD/AFCD) said that the Administration had consulted the Agriculture, Fisheries, Commerce & Industry Committee of Tai Po District Council in March 2000. The Administration had explained at the meeting that existing activities on the island would not be affected as the proposed marine park would not encroach onto any land above the high water mark. The proposal was to develop Tung Ping Chau for conservation, recreation, education and scientific research purposes.
- 18. <u>Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong</u> opined that the ecology in Tung Ping Chau could only be conserved if properly managed. He urged the Administration to take action to tidy up the area as there was a lot of rubbish scattered over the island, especially along the shore.
- 19. <u>AD/AFCD</u> said that in addition to the regular refuse collections in country park area, special clean up exercises were carried out after long holidays. <u>DS(EF)</u> added that the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department worked closely with Marine Department to improve the refuse collection equipment and approaches. He added that public education and support were also important.
- 20. <u>Mrs Sophie LEUNG</u> expressed support for the proposed designation of the marine park. To better conserve the valuable coral ecology in Tung Ping Chau, she suggested the Administration to erect signage on the island to remind tourists to protect the environment. Consideration should also be given to prohibiting trawling within the waters of Tung Ping Chau Marine Park.
- 21. Responding to Prof NG Ching-fai, <u>DS(EF)</u> advised that the designation of Tung Ping Chau Marine Park was subject to the statutory process as prescribed under the Marine Parks Ordinance.

#### IV. Quality of Dongjiang water

[LC Paper Nos. RP 11/99-00, CB(2)1681/99-00(01) and (02), and CB(2)1863/99-00(05)]

22. <u>The Chairman</u> said that at the request of the Panel, the Research and Library Services Division of the LegCo Secretariat had prepared a report on water quality control measures in overseas places.

## Research report on water quality control measures in overseas places

23. At the invitation of the Chairman, <u>Head/Research and Library Services</u> <u>Division of LegCo Secretariat</u> (H(RL)) presented the major findings in the research report [LC Paper No. RP 11/99-00], and provided a comparison of the water quality control measures and water supply agreements among Hong Kong, New York City, Singapore and Sydney -

#### (a) Water source

A common feature of the four places was that water had to be conveyed from external sources outside the city. However, Hong Kong was the only place to use open aqueduct for water transportation, while the other three places transported water by pipelines.

## (b) Water supply agreements

- Hong Kong signed the first water supply agreement with the Guangdong Authority in 1960 at a price of RMB 10 cents per cubic metre. The agreement was revised on four subsequent occasions. The latest water supply agreement was signed in 1989 and the water price after several revisions was currently \$3.085 per cubic metre.
- Singapore paid Malaysian 33 cents for the same volume of water and there was no provision on fee increases.
- As for Sydney, according to the Bulk Water Supply Agreement signed in September 1999, the Sydney Catchment Authority conserved water resources in the catchment area and provided the Sydney Water Corporation with raw water on an agreed charging scheme.
- In the New York City, the relevant authorities on water supply signed the Watershed Memorandum of Agreement in 1997 to conserve and protect the catchment areas.

#### (c) Standards of raw water

None of the four places studied stipulated raw water standards in legislation. However, raw water in Sydney had to comply with specifications as set out in the agreement between the two water supply authorities. Hong Kong made reference to the

Environmental Quality Standard for Surface Water published by the People's Republic of China (PRC), and the Guangdong Authority promised to achieve Class II standard stipulated in GB 3838-83 published in 1983. Although Hong Kong authorities had proposed a penalty clause for non-compliance with Class II standards, the proposal was turned down by Guangdong during liaison meetings.

## (d) <u>Dispute resolution</u>

While the Sydney agreement provided for a dispute or arbitration system, no such mechanism existed in the Hong Kong-Guangdong and Singapore-Malaysia agreements. In the Sydney agreement, a negotiator would be appointed to resolve disputes. If differences could not be settled within 10 days, an independent panel would be set up and its decision would be binding. If the panel could not reach a unanimous decision within 30 days, either party could seek remedy as provided in law.

#### (e) Standards of treated water

For testing and monitoring the quality of treated water, both Hong Kong and Singapore adopted the 1993 World Health Organization Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality as the standard. On the other hand, New York and Sydney adopted their national standards for treated water.

#### (f) Water quality

A comparison of the water quality in the four places studied revealed that the drinking water in Sydney met almost all parameters of its water quality guidelines, and only 0.2% of its samples exceeded the standard for aluminium. Drinking water of the New York City failed to meet the colour level of the national standard. Treated water in Hong Kong and Singapore had too much residual chlorine which would increase the chance of formation of Trihalomethanes (THMs), a kind of carcinogenic substance.

## (g) Measures to ensure water quality

#### (i) Catchment management

Hong Kong had little influence over the management of catchment areas in Guangdong. The Hong Kong authorities were responsible for the distribution systems and water quality at water taps. A similar situation existed in Singapore as the Malaysian Authority was responsible for the catchment management. As regards the New York City, its experience indicated that participation of watershed communities was important and effective in ensuring good water quality. For Sydney, entrusting catchment management to one single organization was the key to ensuring water protection.

#### (ii) Water treatment

As Hong Kong had no control over catchment management which was under a different administrative structure, Hong Kong placed much emphasis on water treatment. However, water treatment might produce harmful by-products. In Hong Kong, treated water had a higher concentration level of THMs. A similar problem was found in Singapore. The raw water of New York City and Sydney however required less treatment. Sydney could choose to skip part of the conventional treatment process while raw water of New York City was only disinfected and not filtered.

#### (iii) Alternative water sources

In Hong Kong, a consultancy study had been carried out on alternative water source since September 1999 and the study was scheduled to be completed by June 2000. Singapore had started to study sewage recycling and procuring water supply from Indonesia, in addition to the provision of a new desalination plant.

#### (h) Water cost

 Hong Kong purchased external water sources at a price which was nine times that of Singapore. The actual cost of Dongjiang water was even much higher if the water treatment cost was added to the price for water.

- The treatment and transportation costs in Hong Kong and Singapore were more than HK\$2 per cubic metre.
- The overall water cost in Sydney was 40% lower than that of Hong Kong.
- In New York City, if the New York Watershed Agricultural Programme was adopted as an alternative to water treatment, the cost for filtration would be HK\$0.15 per cubic metre.

## (i) Reference for Hong Kong

Sydney

The raw water standard stipulated in the agreement between Sydney Catchment Authority and Sydney Water Corporation was unique among all cases studied. It set out in clear terms each party's duty and the legal remedy for non-compliance.

New York City

The experience of New York City clearly demonstrated the importance of careful catchment management, with communal participation and environmental protection awareness among the public. In addition, maintaining the high quality of raw water in New York City could reduce water treatment and the harmful effects on health.

Singapore

Singapore had made much efforts to explore alternative water sources. Its target was to achieve a self-sufficiency rate of 50% in future.

- 24. <u>H(RL)</u> also provided supplementary information in respect of the legislation and water protection measures in Shanghai Municipality [LC Paper No. CB(2)1880/99-00(01)]. She said that the drinking water of Shanghai came from Huangpu River and its catchment areas spread across Shanghai Municipality, Jiangsu Province and Zhejiang Province. Since 1985, Shanghai had remained responsible for co-ordinating matters relating to catchment management.
- 25. Mrs Sophie LEUNG sought further information on the population and development in those areas along the raw water transfer channel in the four places studied.  $\underline{H(RL)}$  responded that Singapore had similar population and

development characteristics along the catchment areas as Hong Kong, but Singapore had a much shorter water intake distance. The catchment areas in Malaysia were also sparsely populated. As for New York City, the economic activities along the catchment areas were mainly farming and food processing industries. Mrs Sophie LEUNG commented that it would be easier for New York to preserve the water quality because most farmland in the catchment areas was long-established. She also observed that the water quality of Sydney deteriorated after privatisation of the water authority, which had led to the Government resuming control of the water supply.

## Quality of water purchased from Dongjiang

- 26. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong said that people in Hong Kong had expressed much concern about purchasing low quality water at a high price. He considered that the problem was the lack of choice and that the Water Authority in Hong Kong should explore alternative water sources in Guangdong to introduce competition for water supply. He believed that competition would lead to the provision of cheaper and cleaner water and greater flexibility in adjusting the volume of water to be supplied in accordance with actual demand. He therefore urged the Administration to critically examine the water supply issue from a long term perspective.
- 27. <u>Director of Water Supplies</u> (DWS) said that the raw water supplied to Hong Kong at the Dongjiang abstraction point was not inferior to the GB3838-83 Class II standard. The Dongjiang water was treatable, although not perfect. He said that the Water Authority also hoped to introduce choices and competition in water supply, but there were practical difficulties having regard to the huge investment required for infrastructure to transport water from alternative external sources. However, Hong Kong had not ruled out the possibility of exploring alternative water sources and would provide a report to the Panel on the findings when available.

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- 28. Mr Fred LI commented that the 1983 standard was still adopted in the water supply agreement signed in 1989 despite the promulgation of a more stringent national standard for surface water in the Mainland in 1988. As the Director of Audit had pointed out in a recent report that the Dongjiang water did not comply with the 1983 standard, he asked whether this was still the case.
- 29. <u>DWS</u> responded that the Water Authority of Hong Kong had pressed for improvements in water quality whenever it met with the Guangdong Authority. As far as he was aware, the Guangdong Authority had put in much efforts and investment to protect the water, such as constructing bio-nitrification plant in Shenzhen. Since the commissioning of the plant in 1999, improvements had been observed in the quality of Dongjiang water. The Guangdong Authority also pledged to strive to elevate the water quality to the 1988 Type II standard upon

completion of the closed aqueduct in 2003. <u>DWS</u> assured members that the water supplied from Dongjiang would be treated to meet the safety standard.

- 30. The Chairman asked whether Hong Kong's high water treatment standard had led to reliance on the part of the Guangdong Authority on Hong Kong side to treat the Dongjiang water. She noted that while water quality standard was stipulated in the water supply agreement, there was no penalty clause for noncompliance. She therefore asked the Administration to negotiate for a penalty clause with reference to the Shanghai Municipal Regulations on the Protection of Huangpu River Upstream Water Resources. She urged the Administration to take a more proactive approach to ensure the quality of water supplied to Hong Kong.
- 31. <u>DWS</u> said that the Administration was well aware of the public concern about the quality of Dongjiang water, and the Administration would endeavour to ensure that the water supplied would be up to the required standard. <u>Deputy Secretary for Works (Works Policy)</u> (DS(W)) added that the quality of Dongjiang water at source i.e. at Tai Yuan Pumping Station was in general in compliance with the 1983 standard.

## Measures to ensure water quality

- 32. Mr Fred LI commented that although the water quality at source in Dongjiang was in compliance with the 1983 standard, there was pollution along the raw water transfer channel. He considered that the Water Authority in Hong Kong should introduce penalty for non-compliance with the 1983 or 1988 national standards in the water supply agreement.
- 33. <u>DS(W)</u> said that water supply agreement was signed in 1989, and supply quantity might have to be re-negotiated in 2008. During the current term of the agreement, both sides could discuss any problems encountered. He emphasized that the Guangdong Authority was implementing environmental protection measures to improve the water quality of Dongjiang water. With the concerted efforts of both sides and the completion of the closed aqueduct in 2002-03, there should be much improvements in the quality of Dongjiang water.
- 34. Mr Andrew CHENG remarked that Hong Kong was placed in a disadvantageous position in the water supply agreement and that the Administration appeared rather passive in improving the situation. He was also disappointed that the Administration's paper did not respond to the recommendations made by the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of the Legislative Council. He urged the Administration to demonstrate its determination to strive for the supply of clean water from the Guangdong Authority under an agreement on equal footing. He considered that the verbal

assurance from the Guangdong Authority was insufficient, and that there should be concrete timetable for meeting the water quality standard.

- 35. <u>DWS</u> clarified that the Administration's paper was to respond to the LegCo research findings. The Administration welcomed the PAC's recommendations and was seriously following up the recommendations. The Water Authority of Hong Kong would continue making vigorous efforts to strive for better terms in the agreement providing penalty clauses, flexibility for adjusting the supply quantity, as well as a dispute resolution mechanism and an independent monitoring body on water quality.
- 36. <u>DS(W)</u> stressed that the Administration welcomed the recommendations made by PAC and would follow up positively and constructively. He disagreed with the comment that the Administration was passive about improving water quality. He said that a cross border working group would be set up shortly to coordinate environmental protection issues including the quality of Dongjiang water.
- 37. Mr HUI Cheung-ching remarked that there were indications that the quality of Dongjiang water had improved recently. Dr TANG Siu-tong also observed that Guangdong had made a lot of investment to improve its sewerage treatment. DWS responded that the Dongjiang water quality had significantly improved recently especially in the ammonia level. He agreed that Guangdong did make substantial investment on the sewerage treatment plants and sewers in order to improve the quality of Dongjiang water.

#### Alternative water sources

- 38. Mr LAU Kong-wah said that the Administration was too optimistic about the effectiveness of the closed aqueduct in improving the quality of Dongjiang water, as the water pollution problems along Wei Zhou were yet to be solved. To solve the problem of water quality from a long term perspective, he hoped the Administration could find alternative water sources. However, he considered that the proposal to study the feasibility of desalination was a backward approach as the method was proven infeasible previously. He suggested the Administration to make reference to the experience in New York City and Singapore in exploring viable alternatives and water protection measures. He added that extending the water intake point beyond Ho Yuen might be a viable option.
- 39. Responding to the Chairman, <u>DS(W)</u> said that the Administration had commissioned at the end of 1999 a consultancy study on alternative water resources for the future of Hong Kong. It was a comprehensive study with a wide scope to examine all possible alternative water sources in the long term. The

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Administration was open-minded on the issue and would not rule out any possibilities at the moment.

- 40. <u>DS(W)</u> added that desalination was only one of the options to be considered by the consultancy study. He said that with the advancement in technology, desalination methods were cheaper than before. As regards the quality of Dongjiang water, <u>DS(W)</u> stressed that at present the raw water at Tai Yuan Pumping Station did comply with the water standard. Moreover, the Guangdong Authority had adopted a wide range of environmental protection measures to protect Dongjiang water. He said that while the Administration could pursue in future the suggestion of extending the intake point to Ho Yuan which was not necessary at present, it would still be more appropriate to implement environmental protection measures to abate pollution problems.
- 41. Mr LAU Kong-wah appreciated that the consultancy study would not preclude other possible water sources. He urged the Administration to give early consideration to the alternatives available.

Information on water quality

42. <u>Miss Emily LAU</u> commented that it would not be possible for Members to follow up the matter as the Administration did not provide complete information. Given the wide public concern about the quality of Dongjiang water, she urged the Administration to provide information on the quality of raw water and the sewerage treatment facilities in the catchment areas and along the water transfer system. She also suggested the consultant to study the standards of the raw water and treated water and publish the findings. <u>DWS</u> agreed that the findings of the consultancy would be made available to members.

43. Responding to the Chairman, <u>DWS</u> said that the Advisory Committee on the Quality of Water Supplies which was set up recently had agreed to publicize water quality results, both raw water and treated water. These should be available on the Internet in summer 2000. The Administration had also sought the agreement of the Guangdong Authority to make available the quality of raw water from Dongjiang at Tai Yuan intake point.

## Way forward

- 44. As Panel members had expressed serious concern that the Administration should step up efforts to improve the quality of water supplied to Hong Kong, the Chairman sought members' views as to whether the Chief Executive should be invited to discuss with the Panel.
- 45. Mr LAU Kong-wah supported the proposal of escalating the discussion to a higher level as the Water Authority of Hong Kong appeared to have little

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influence over the water purchased from Guangdong. He considered that discussion at the political level would be more effective in negotiating the water quality standard and flexibility provisions for adjusting the supply quantities, etc.

- 46. The Chairman opined that the consultant engaged by the Administration could only advise on the technical issues. She shared Mr LAU's view that discussion of Dongjiang water should be at the political level, and that reference could be made to the administrative arrangements on protecting the water sources in Shanghai Municipality. She also expressed disappointment that the Administration had failed to secure Guangdong side's agreement to incorporate quality assurance terms when negotiating the Loan Agreement with Guangdong Authority in 1998.
- 47. At the suggestion of Ms Emily LAU, <u>members</u> agreed that the Chairman of the House Committee should be requested to invite the Chief Executive to discuss water quality control measures with Members as soon as possible.

(*Post-meeting note*: Arrangements were being made to include water quality control measures in the Chief Executive's Question and Answer Session to be held in June 2000.)

## V. Any other business

48. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:00 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat 10 June 2000