

COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

**Digest of the 33rd Meeting
held on 7 August 2015 at 3:00 p.m.
in Conference Room, 33/F, Revenue Tower,
Wan Chai, Hong Kong**

Present :

Prof the Hon Arthur Li		(Chairman)
Prof John Chai		
Dr Ian Chan		
Ms Betty Ho		
Ms Angelina Kwan		
Ir Alkin Kwong		
Mrs Stella Lau		
Mr Lau Kwok-fan		
Prof Leung Wing-mo		
Mrs Sandra Mak		
Mr Daryl Ng		
Mr Cliff Tang		
Dr Thomas Yau		
Mr Wong Kam-sing	<i>Secretary for the Environment</i>	
Mr Chan Chi-ming	<i>Deputy Secretary for Development (Works)2</i>	
Ms Andy Lui	<i>Assistant Director (Special Tasks), Home Affairs Department</i>	
Mr Leung Sai-chi	<i>Assistant Director (Estate Management)1, Housing Department</i>	
Mrs Philomena Leung	<i>Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment (Sustainable Development)</i>	(Secretary)

In attendance :

Environment Bureau

Ms Anissa Wong	<i>Permanent Secretary for the Environment / Director of Environmental Protection</i>
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Mr Vincent Liu	<i>Deputy Secretary for the Environment</i>
Ms Michelle Au	<i>Political Assistant to Secretary for the Environment</i>
Ms Neve Leung	<i>Assistant Secretary (Sustainable Development)1</i>
Mr Desmond Cheng	<i>Assistant Secretary (Sustainable Development)2</i>
Mr Tom Tam	<i>Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Sustainable Development)</i>
Mr Tony Wu	<i>Senior Town Planner (Sustainable Development)</i>
Ms Claudia Cheung	<i>Senior Executive Officer (Sustainable Development)1</i>

For Agenda Item 3

Environmental Protection Department

Mr Howard Chan	<i>Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2)</i>
Ms Sian Li	<i>Assistant Director (Nature Conservation & Infrastructure Planning)(Acting)</i>

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Dr So Ping-man	<i>Deputy Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation</i>
Dr Jackie Yip	<i>Senior Conservation Officer (Technical Services)</i>
Dr Ivan Chan	<i>Senior Fisheries Officer (Fisheries Management)</i>

Absent with apologies :

Dr Bunny Chan
Dr Albert Chau
Mr Kwok Lit-tung
Ms Lilian Law
Prof Bernard Lim
Dr Ng Cho-nam
Prof Nora Tam
Mr Eric Yeung

Opening Remarks

As this was the first meeting of the term, Members were reminded to maintain confidentiality of classified information that would be disclosed to them, as well as to make full disclosure of any potential conflict of interest. Members were also reminded not to quote in public what other Members said at the meeting.

2. The meeting noted that Prof Nora Tam and Ms Lilian Law would take up the chairmanship of the Strategy Sub-committee and the Education and Publicity Sub-committee (“EPSC”) respectively in the new term.

Agenda Item 1 – Matters arising from minutes of the last meeting

3. As recorded in the minutes of the last meeting, the last term of the Council for Sustainable Development (“SDC”) had completed a public engagement (“PE”) exercise on municipal solid waste charging and submitted a report to the Secretary for the Environment (“SEN”) to which SEN provided a response in April 2015. Both the report and the Government’s response had been circulated to Members and posted onto SDC’s website. The past Chairman and all Members in the last term were thanked for their contribution.

Agenda Item 2 – Report on the work of the Education and Publicity Sub-committee

(SDC Paper No. 01/15)

4. Members were briefed on the work progress of the EPSC as set out in SDC Paper No. 01/15. The following was highlighted:

- (a) 11 rounds of applications under the Sustainable Development Fund had been processed so far and 63 projects, involving a total grant of about \$64 million, had been approved. Amongst them, 55 projects had been completed while eight projects were on-going. The next round of applications was expected to be launched in around October 2015;
- (b) 53 schools had enrolled in the current round of the School Award Programme. Assessment for awards would be conducted in early 2016 with a view to holding the prize presentation ceremony before the end of the 2015-16 school year; and

- (c) 52 schools had joined the School Outreach Programme in the 2014-15 school year, involving some 70 drama performances, talks and workshops. Letters had been sent to schools inviting them to participate in the Programme in the 2015-16 school year.

Members noted the contents of the paper.

Agenda Item 3 – Public Engagement on Promotion of Sustainable Use of Biological Resources
(SDC Paper No. 02/15)

5. Members were briefed on SDC Paper No. 02/15 and the PE process. The following was highlighted:

- (a) One of the major elements of sustainable development was sustainable use of resources, including biological resources. However, over-exploitation of biological resources was threatening biodiversity at both regional and global levels. Although Hong Kong was a small city, it consumed a proportionally large amount of biological resources. Using seafood as an example, Hong Kong was the second largest per capita consumer of fish and fishery products in Asia and the seventh largest in the world. Hong Kong was also a major hub for shark fin trading. While Hong Kong's consumption pattern had posed global pressure on biodiversity, public awareness over sustainable consumption was generally low. In the light of this, the Government considered that there was an urgent need for concerted action by the society to address the problem, and that SDC's PE process could help build public consensus in formulating strategies to promote sustainable consumption. Against this background, the Government would therefore like to invite SDC to take on "promotion of sustainable use of biological resources" as the topic for its next PE exercise;
- (b) Members' attention was drawn to paragraph 7 of the paper about the proposed objectives of the PE exercise, which covered enhancing public awareness on sustainable consumption, fostering changes in consumer behaviour, encouraging supply from sustainable sources, promoting cooperation among different sectors to encourage sustainable consumption, and formulating recommendations on strategies and measures to promote behaviour change. Possible deliverables of the PE exercise might include a community wide

promotion strategy on sustainable use of biological resources, development of voluntary eco-labelling schemes, and charter or commitment by relevant trades for supply and consumption of biological resources from sustainable sources;

- (c) After SDC agreed on the PE topic, a Support Group (“SG”) comprising key stakeholders from relevant sectors as well as interested SDC Members would be formed. The SG would arrange meetings with stakeholders to ascertain, through a bottom-up approach, the issues that should be included in the Invitation for Response (“IR”) document. A Programme Director would be appointed to assist with the conduct of the PE. Taking into account SG Members’ views and advice, a draft IR document would be prepared and would be submitted to SDC for endorsement before release. A public involvement stage of around three to four months would then follow during which public views would be collected through various PE events, such as forums, briefings, etc.. The public views collected would be collated and analysed by an Independent Analysis and Reporting Agency. In the light of the views collected, the SG would then prepare a draft report with recommendations to the Government. The draft report would be submitted to SDC for discussion and agreement before finalised for submission to the Government; and
- (d) The entire PE exercise was expected to take around 18 months.

6. Members had the following enquiries and views on the choice of topic for the coming PE exercise:

- (a) Said that sustainability covered a broad spectrum of issues such as those related to water, transport and logistics, and many of these fell under the purview of more than one policy bureau; enquired if SDC, as a high level advisory body comprising senior officials of different policy bureaux, should instead look at broader cross-bureau issues;
- (b) Noted that the Government was formulating the Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (“BSAP”), and asked about the progress in respect of the public consultation under BSAP and how the proposed PE would interface with BSAP;
- (c) Noted that the working groups under the BSAP Steering Committee had in-depth and detailed deliberation which explained why the

process took a longer-than-expected time. Considered that such deliberation would contribute towards the action plan to be formulated in due course; and

- (d) Asked about the process leading to the decision to put up the present proposal.

7. The Administration's responses were as follows:

- (a) Working groups comprising different experts were established under the BSAP Steering Committee to assist in the formulation of BSAP. After extensive study and discussion, the Steering Committee had put forward recommendations to the Government. Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD") was following up on the recommendations and working on a document for public consultation. Different organisations, groups and stakeholders would be engaged during the public consultation on BSAP;
- (b) After receiving the preliminary recommendations from the BSAP Steering Committee, AFCD had contacted various groups and organisations to get their initial views. During the process, it had become apparent that the public had limited knowledge about biodiversity. If public consultation on BSAP was to be held at this stage, it might be difficult to induce in-depth and meaningful discussion. AFCD therefore recommended strengthening promotion and education on the concept of biodiversity before launching the public consultation on BSAP so that the community could be better prepared for the engagement;
- (c) Regarding the process leading to the decision to put up the present proposal, it was pointed out that one of the focus groups under the BSAP Steering Committee suggested addressing the issue of sustainable use of biodiversity;
- (d) As the concept of biodiversity might not be readily comprehensible to the general public, it was desirable to first start off with a PE on sustainable consumption of biological resources which could then form a solid basis for further discussion on BSAP. To this end, the scope of the PE exercise must be focused, clear and specific. The present proposal only served as a framework; the specific content and focus would be subject to the deliberation of SG;

- (e) Sustainable consumption was an integral part and important element of sustainable development. Biological resources involved more than just food and the species quoted in the paper were just some more commonly known examples meant to arouse awareness and stimulate discussion. If SDC agreed to take on the topic, the SG to be formed could deliberate on the precise scope and focus of the PE exercise having regard to the principles of promoting sustainable development and views of stakeholders. The target of the exercise was not so much to enhance the public's knowledge about sustainable consumption of specific species quoted in the paper, but to arouse public awareness of and behaviour change towards more sustainable consumption of biological resources. While the concept of sustainable consumption might be generally accepted by the community, there remained a gap on putting this into practice. The Government hoped that SDC's PE process could help engage stakeholders of different background to reach consensus on ways to promote this; and
 - (f) In the past few terms, SDC had successfully completed territory-wide PEs on a number of cross-sectoral subjects, including that on sustainable built environment, climate change and energy saving in buildings, and municipal solid waste charging. In all these exercises, the bottom-up approach had proved effective in arousing community discussion, reaching consensus, and putting forward recommendations to the Government. The Government greatly appreciated the efforts of SDC and had accepted the majority of the recommendations. In proposing an appropriate PE topic, the Government was mindful that the topic should most benefit the sustainable development of the society, and that the relevant bureaux/ departments would have the resources to provide the necessary support having regard to their priorities. Members were welcomed to suggest topics for future PE exercises.
8. Members had the following comments on the scope and approach to the coming PE exercise:
- (a) Said that sustainable consumption was very much a matter of lifestyle and that the community needed to inculcate a green way of living;
 - (b) Said that various green groups and non-governmental organisations in Hong Kong had already been carrying out different initiatives to promote sustainable consumption. SDC should target to induce a change in the public's attitude and consumption culture;

- (c) Said that if the PE exercise was a step in the process to educate the public on pursuit of a sustainable lifestyle, this should perhaps be made clear;
- (d) Opined that food was only one kind of biological resources and suggested that if SDC was to take on this topic, the exercise should not be confined to food;
- (e) Noted that while a green group had published a sustainable seafood guide, it was not easy for a layman to follow the guide in practice as it was not easy to identify which were the sustainable sources of seafood, say in the wet market. In this regard, while the proposed PE topic was supported, more specific targets should be set to facilitate the community in practising sustainable consumption of biological resources, such as on development of an eco-labelling scheme in Hong Kong;
- (f) Suggested that as the PE process proceeded, the rationale for promoting sustainable use of biological resources should be brought out and that in addition to use, the supply and production side might also be worth exploring;
- (g) Said that by adopting a bottom-up approach, the PE model was in line with the Government's commitment to encourage greater public involvement in policy formulation;
- (h) Shared the view that the topic could serve as a catalyst to prompting discussion on other ways to pursue a sustainable lifestyle;
- (i) Suggested that, as a marketing strategy, the concept of sustainable consumption could be promoted and positioned as a chic lifestyle with a view to evoking public enthusiasm. A survey on consumers' knowledge and attitude towards sustainable consumption could also be explored;
- (j) Opined that education and promotion to consumers, suppliers and other stakeholders would be essential;
- (k) Suggested that in order to proactively engage the community, new initiatives such as environmental ambassadors in or awards for housing estates and enterprises, or environmental menus could be considered. The Government could also consider imposing higher

tax for non-sustainable food sources with a view to discouraging consumption of such resources;

- (l) Suggested producing an Announcement in the Public Interests to supplement the work; and
- (m) Considered that concrete targets could help to guide the PE process and facilitate public discussion. Quantifiable targets such as the number of participants participating in SDC's educational programme or the number of restaurants or eateries joining the promotion programme, etc. be set and that tangible deliverables be identified.

9. The Administration's responses were as follows:

- (a) The SG to be formed could advise on how to crystallise the concept and concretise the discussion. The ultimate aim of the PE exercise was not to discourage the consumption of biological resources, but to promote consumption in a sustainable manner, which was in line with the spirit enshrined in the Convention on Biological Diversity; and
- (b) As Hong Kong was a consumerist economy, a change in consumption attitude and behaviour would go a long way towards advancing the sustainable development of Hong Kong.

10. After discussion, the meeting agreed that SDC should conduct a PE on "promotion of sustainable use of biological resources" as proposed in SDC Paper No. 02/2015. The Secretariat was asked to proceed with the necessary work.

Agenda Item 4 – Any other business

11. A Member noted that the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign and SDC's new PE exercise shared some common goals and that he would render full support to the PE exercise.

Agenda Item 5 – Date of the next meeting

12. The Secretary would confirm the date of the next meeting nearer the time.

**Secretariat
Council for Sustainable Development**