

**Confirmed Minutes of the 251<sup>st</sup> Meeting  
of the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE)  
on 6 December 2021 at 2:30 p.m.**

**Present:**

Mr Stanley WONG, SBS, JP (Chairman)  
Prof Nora TAM, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Ms Carmen CHAN, BBS, JP  
Ms Sylvia CHAN, MH  
Ms Ada FUNG, BBS  
Prof Alexis LAU, JP  
Ms Julia LAU  
Dr Winnie LAW  
Mr Andrew LEE  
Prof Kenneth LEUNG, JP  
Dr MA Kwan-ki  
Dr Jeanne NG  
Ms Christina TANG  
Mr Simon WONG, BBS, JP  
Dr Raymond YAU  
Mr Owin FUNG, JP (Secretary)

**Absent with Apologies:**

Ir Samantha KONG  
Ms LAM Chung-yan  
Prof LAU Chi-pang, BBS, JP  
Dr SUNG Yik-hei  
Dr WONG Kwok-yan, MH  
Prof WONG Sze-chun, BBS, JP

**In Attendance:**

Mr Simon CHAN	Assistant Director (Conservation), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)
Ms Maggie CHIN	Assistant Director of Planning / Technical Services, Planning Department
Ms Fanny HUI	Chief Information Officer, Environmental Protection Department (EPD)
Miss Sally SHEK	Executive Officer (CBD) 1, EPD

Miss Ingrid SUEN Executive Officer (CBD) 2, EPD

**In Attendance for Item 3:**

Ir Kenny WONG Principal Consultant, Hong Kong Productivity Council (HKPC)  
Ms Bella LEUNG Consultant, HKPC  
Prof Jonathan WONG Chairman, Strategy Sub-committee of Council for Sustainable Development  
Mr D C CHEUNG Secretary, Council for Sustainable Development  
Mr Alvin TAI Secretariat representative, Council for Sustainable Development

**In Attendance for Item 4:**

Mr Terence TSANG Assistant Director (Environmental Assessment), EPD

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Action

The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting and informed that apologies of absence had been received from Ir Samantha Kong, Ms Lam Chung-yan, Prof Lau Chi-pang, Dr Sung Yik-hei, Dr Wong Kwok-yan and Prof Wong Sze-chun.

**Item 1 : Confirmation of the draft minutes of the 250<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 8 November 2021 (Closed-door session)**

2. The draft minutes of the last meeting were confirmed without any proposed amendments.

**Item 2 : Matters arising (Closed-door session)**

3. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

**Item 3 : Council for Sustainable Development's Public Engagement on Control of Single-use Plastics (ACE Paper 21/2021)**

4. The Chairman referred Members to *ACE Paper 21/2021* which briefed Members on the public engagement (PE) on Control of Single-use Plastics conducted by the Council for Sustainable Development (SDC).

5. There was no declaration of interest by Members.

*(The presentation team joined the meeting at this juncture.)*

### **Presentation cum Question-and-Answer Session (Open session)**

6. Prof Jonathan Wong gave an opening remark and Ir Kenny Wong briefed Members on the background and coverage of control measures targeting single-use plastics with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation.

#### *Coverage of Regulation*

7. A Member appreciated that this PE would cover the control of single-use tableware sold at retail outlets which was not included in the Public Consultation on Scheme on Regulation of Disposable Plastic Tableware launched earlier this year. Noting that single-use plastics for health and protective purposes were considered as essential and would not be the focus of the PE exercise, the Member suggested that the definition of “essential” and “non-essential” single-use plastic items should be clearly defined to avoid the misuse of single-use plastic items which were not “essential”. The Chairman remarked and Prof Jonathan Wong concurred that the proposed control measures should not be too complicated to avoid causing any confusion or misinterpretation by the public.

8. With reference to some examples relating to single-use plastics, a Member suggested that the Government should give due consideration in defining local product packaging to be regulated when devising control measures. Another Member further added that the Government should step up the efforts in encouraging the relevant sectors to avoid the distribution of disposable single-use items such as umbrella bags and toiletries.

9. A Member was concerned that the proposed regulation would undermine the competitiveness of locally packaged products due to the increase in costs for using alternative packaging. Prof Jonathan Wong said that the proposed regulation of imported single-use plastics should be carefully drawn up and one of the key reference points was the latest development of control measures on single-use plastic in other economies. He shared that some economies had explored the use of single-use plastic alternatives, which would minimise the use of single-use plastics of imported products in the long run. The Chairman considered that most of the

imported products were in fact locally packaged and they should be covered under the proposed regulation. Ir Kenny Wong agreed that the proposed control measures could be implemented in phases with the control of locally packaged products as a start to avoid setback in the supply of daily necessities in local market.

10. Pointing out that only a small percentage of the waste plastics disposed of in the landfill would be regulated through the proposed control of single-use plastics, three Members were concerned about the progress for regulating other types of waste plastics and the cost involved in mitigating the overall waste problem. Prof Jonathan Wong explained that the major types of plastics which could be easily categorised and controlled were covered in the proposed regulations. He added that other complementary measures such as education and publicity would be essential to develop a plastic-free society.

#### *Target for Waste Reduction*

11. With reference to the target set by the European Union on the annual consumption level of plastic bags per person, a Member suggested and echoed by another Member that target should be devised for the reduction of single-use plastics in the PE exercise. Prof Jonathan Wong thanked Members for their suggestions and advised that should more data on the use of single-use plastics be collected in the exercise, a target for the reduction of single-use plastics might be devised.

#### *Plastic Shopping Bag Charging Scheme*

12. A Member was of the view that the existing charging level for each plastic shopping bag might not be sufficient to discourage consumers from buying and using plastic shopping bags. With reference to the success of the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign, the Chairman opined that the provision of rebate might be more effective in motivating consumers on waste reduction at source and suggested EPD to study the effectiveness of rebate mechanism in parallel.

13. To avoid the use of flat-top bags to contain non-foodstuff or foodstuff that had no hygiene concerns, a Member supported that the flat-top bags should also be subject to the control of single-use plastics. Ir Kenny Wong responded that using flat-top bags to contain products that were currently not under exemption without paying Plastic Shopping Bag (PSB) charge was in fact illegal under PSB Charging Scheme. Ir Wong added that the public was invited to give their views on reviewing

the exemption for plastic shopping bags (including flat-top bags) in this PE exercise.

*Publicity and Education*

14. A Member remarked that public education to enhance the awareness of waste reduction at source was of paramount importance. Another Member suggested that SDC should engage tertiary institutions and Vocational Training Council to step up education and measures on waste reduction measures within the campuses. The Chairman highlighted the importance to strengthen environmental education, in particular through the mainstreaming of schools' curriculum. Mr D C Cheung advised that interactive school activities were arranged in the public interaction phase in this PE exercise and positive feedbacks were received. He assured that SDC would spare no efforts in public education to promote waste reduction.

15. A Member suggested that the Government should highlight the potential danger of excessive use of single-use plastics on human health, such as the ingestion of microplastics in seafood. Prof Jonathan Wong thanked the Member for her suggestion and would take it into consideration in publicity campaigns in the future.

16. A Member shared her experiences of green shopping habits during childhood and suggested with the support of another Member that the Government should promote green shopping habit and green lifestyle, in particular through the GREEN@COMMUNITY platform. A Member further suggested that EPD should step up the publicity efforts for the GREEN@COMMUNITY to increase public awareness. Prof Jonathan Wong responded that the SDC would continue the efforts in publicity and public education for promoting a green living culture. Mr D C Cheung pointed out that consumers created a market for single-use plastics. Wide range of promotion and publicity initiatives in this PE exercise would gradually instill a green living culture amongst our consumers.

17. Three Members commented that focus of the questions asked in the PE document should be placed in the reduction of the use of single-use plastics in addition to the proposed control measures. Prof Jonathan Wong considered that the Government would spare no efforts in measures other than publicity and education to promote waste reduction.

*Timeframe*

18. In view that the public was generally receptive to environmental protection, a Member suggested and echoed by two Members that the Government should accord priority and take the lead in establishing the acceptable standards or labelling system for alternatives such as biodegradable products for single-use plastics and inform the public accordingly.

*Stakeholders*

19. A Member suggested and echoed by two Members that the relevant trades, such as the logistics companies and e-commerce sectors as well as food wholesaler and supermarkets, should be encouraged to reuse the packaging materials through trade charter in view that packaging for logistics, online shopping and food wholesale was excessive. Mr D C Cheung remarked that the Government would keep in view of the latest development in the relevant trades in formulating relevant policies and Prof Jonathan Wong added that the views of the relevant stakeholders would be taken into account in proposing the relevant control measures.

*International References*

20. In response to a Member's enquiry on the control measures implemented by other economies on single-use plastics, Mr D C Cheung shared that the packaging of mail and express mail in the Mainland should comply with a list of green standards with effect from March 2021. Prof Jonathan Wong added that some international references had been taken into account in the PE document and members of the public could acquire more detailed information from their dedicated website.

*[Post-meeting notes: The aforementioned requirement on packaging of mail and express mail in the Mainland, namely “郵件快件包裝管理辦法 (中華人民共和國交通運輸部令2021年第1號)”, took effect from 12 March 2021. It can be found in the website at [http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2021-02/25/content\\_5588767.htm](http://www.gov.cn/zhengce/zhengceku/2021-02/25/content_5588767.htm)]*

*Baseline Statistics*

21. To formulate and evaluate appropriate control measures, a Member considered that more detailed statistics on the waste plastics disposed of in the

landfill such as data on the source of the plastic shopping bags by retailers and whether they were subject to charge should be provided. Mr Alvin Tai responded that around one-third of the waste plastics disposed of at landfills were plastic bags. According to the published “Monitoring of Solid Waste in Hong Kong - Waste Statistics for 2019”, there was no information on where the plastic shopping bags came from and whether they were subject to charge.

22. A Member suggested that the demographic data of the respondents might be useful in devising appropriate incentives measures to motivate them to practise waste reduction at source. Prof Jonathan Wong responded that demographic data of the respondents would be collected to analyse the findings under the PE exercise.

#### *Telephone Survey*

23. In response to a Member's enquiry on the questions and findings of the telephone survey conducted in this PE exercise, Ir Kenny Wong responded that the telephone survey had successfully interviewed about 1,000 respondents with generic questions to gauge their views on single-use plastics and willingness to contribute in reducing single-use plastics without briefing them background information of single-use plastics in advance as in PE exercise. The result of the telephone survey was under evaluation. Ir Wong added that the findings in the telephone survey would be cross-referenced with views collected in the PE exercise, in formulating the recommendations in the final report to be submitted to the Government.

#### *Conclusion*

24. The Chairman thanked the presentation team for their presentation and detailed explanations, and summarised the views made by Members and concluded that Members were in general supportive of the control of single-use plastics.

### **Internal Discussion Session (Closed-door session)**

#### *Research Methodology*

25. A Member was of the view that the telephone survey conducted in this PE exercise should not be considered as a baseline survey as there might be differences between the set of questions deployed in the telephone survey and the PE exercise. She reminded and echoed by another Member that the data collected in the telephone

survey and the PE exercise should be evaluated and analysed separately.

### *Cost Effectiveness*

26. A Member suggested that the Government should analyse and evaluate the cost effectiveness of the financial resources invested in different waste reduction measures. Prof Jonathan Wong explained that as the regulatory measures might generate other intangible benefits, direct comparison of the financial resources spent on the regulation of single-use plastics and the corresponding reduction in waste might not be appropriate. The Chairman agreed that it might not be easy to quantify the intangible benefits such as the education value of the control measures. Ir Kenny Wong supplemented that the Government would consider devising a holistic plan to control the overall waste plastics upon receiving the recommendations of the SDC, which will be based on this PE on Control of Single-use Plastics, and the two earlier completed public consultations on Producer Responsibility Scheme on Plastic Beverage Containers and Regulation of Disposable Plastic Tableware respectively.

### *Publicity and Education*

27. A Member suggested that the Government should motivate the public to practise waste reduction at source. The Chairman suggested with the support of two Members that the Government should inform the public that there were costs involved for environmental protection and waste management with a view to preparing them for the waste reduction initiatives in the future. In view of the imminent implementation of the municipal solid waste charging, a Member further suggested and echoed by two Members that the Government should inform the public that waste reduction at source would help saving more money. Another Member suggested with the support of the Chairman that ENB should liaise with the Education Bureau on mainstreaming environmental education in schools, which would be more effective than publicity and educational campaigns from different PE exercises.

### *Innovative Technologies*

28. With reference to new technologies for recycling waste plastics, a Member suggested that the Government should explore innovative technologies to recycle waste plastics with a view to minimising waste disposal at the landfill and promoting circular economy.



*Conclusion*

29. The Chairman concluded the discussion and invited the presentation team to consider taking on board the views and suggestions made by Members during the discussion.

*(The presentation team left the meeting and Mr Terence Tsang joined the meeting at this juncture.)*

**Item 4 : Any other business (Closed-door session)**

*(i) Issues relating to the Artificial Islands Study Briefs*

30. In view of the comments given by Members on the project profiles in relation to the Artificial Islands Study Briefs, the Chairman considered that the subject matter should be raised for discussion under AOB of this meeting so that Members' views would be considered by EPD in preparing the study briefs.

31. On the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Terence Tsang briefed Members that three applications for EIA Study Briefs on (i) Reclamation for Kau Yi Chau (KYC) Artificial Islands, (ii) KYC Artificial Islands Development and (iii) Hong Kong Island – Northeast Lantau Link were received from the project proponent, i.e. Civil Engineering and Development Department, on 11 November 2021. During the public inspection period from 12 to 25 November 2021, around 100 comments had been received for each of the project profile. EPD would duly consider all comments received in drawing up the study briefs.

32. In accordance with the EIAO, EPD might request the project proponent to give further information concerning the project profile within 14 days upon receiving the application if considered necessary. Upon reviewing the submissions, EPD considered that the required contents as set out in Annex 1 of the Technical Memorandum (TM) had been adequately covered in the project profiles. As such, EPD did not ask for further information and would issue the EIA study briefs to the project proponent within 45 days upon receiving the applications.

33. In view of the complexity and scale of the project, a Member suggested with the support of the Chairman and two Members that the project proponent might space out the three applications to provide ample time for EPD to scrutinise the project

profiles. Mr Terence Tsang considered that there were pros and cons for submitting the three applications separately or in one batch. He said that it might be conducive to assess the cumulative impacts of the three projects and draw up a holistic plan by processing the three applications simultaneously.

34. The Chairman and two Members were of the view that the application on the reclamation for KYC Artificial Islands should be handled first. The Chairman considered that it might be beneficial for EPD to process the three applications separately and prepare each study brief with full consideration.

35. A Member suggested the project proponent to draw reference from those EIA studies on reclamation conducted earlier. The Chairman considered that the spacing out of the three project profiles might provide a reasonable breathing time for assessing the environmental impacts for the project.

36. Mr Terence Tsang explained that the entire project consisted of the proposed reclamation, developments and road links and thus the EIA studies should examine the environmental impacts arising from the entire project. A Member remarked that even the two concerned applications for study briefs would be deferred, the project proponent should take into account the cumulative impact when conducting the EIA on reclamation.

37. A Member further said that it was suggested at the last ACE meeting for the project proponent to conduct and report to ACE on the initial ecological findings in relations to the reclamation with a view to confirming the scope and location of reclamation. Given that reclamation proposal would form the basis for any development and transportation plans on the proposed artificial islands, the Member opined and another Member concurred that it would be undesirable to proceed with the planning of the development and road link of the artificial islands without gathering the relevant ecological data and the reclamation details.

38. A Member considered that EPD should issue study briefs to the project proponent when comprehensive information such as reclamation proposal was available. The Chairman remarked and echoed by two Members that the quality of EIA should not be undermined no matter the three applications were considered separately or in one batch.

39. Mr Terence Tsang explained that objective guidelines were set out under the TM for EPD to process any application for study briefs and EPD was required by the Ordinance to issue a study brief when the requirement had been fulfilled. According to Annex 1 of the TM, the location and scale of the project should be provided in the project profiles. In this case, the project proponent had stated the scale of the reclamation which was around 1,000 hectares and provided an approximate location of reclamation in the project profiles. He said that one of the purposes of conducting the EIA study was to enable project proponent to obtain relevant environmental data for ascertaining amongst others, the exact location and layout of the reclamation. In this connection, there was no provision under the EIAO for EPD not to issue a study brief as the information contained in the project profile was sufficient and without defects.

40. Even if the project proponent might have fulfilled the basic requirement set out in the TM, the Chairman and a Member considered that public concern should be addressed in handling this mega project.

41. Mr Terence Tsang advised that EPD would convey Members' views to the project proponent to explore the possibility for deferring the two concerned applications for study briefs. However, he added that the final decision on whether to defer the two concerned applications would rest with the project proponent.

42. The Chairman and a Member urged EPD to make the best endeavour to persuade the project proponent to defer the two applications at this juncture. Mr Owin Fung explained that EPD would convey the suggestions of Members to the project proponent for their consideration. Mr Fung stressed that EPD would follow the established guidelines set out in the EIAO and the TM in processing the EIA projects.

43. A Member suggested with the support of the Chairman that an informal meeting should be conducted before the statutory deadline for issuing the study briefs so that Members' views would be taken into consideration by EPD.

Secretariat

*(Post-meeting notes: An informal meeting had been arranged on 20 December 2021 at 10:00 a.m. to discuss the matter.)*

44. A Member further suggested that informal meetings should be conducted throughout the project with a view to ensuring the quality of work and gauging the

views of Members timely. Mr Terence Tsang recalled that the project proponent agreed at the last ACE meeting to brief Members on the progress of the project at regular intervals.

*Hong Kong 2030+*

45. As suggested by Members at the last ACE meeting, the Chairman enquired about the publication of the reports of the Sustainability Assessment (SA) for Hong Kong 2030+ and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) for Hong Kong 2030+. Ms Maggie Chin explained that the SA and SEA were broad-brush assessments conducted on the basis of certain assumptions and the information available at the prevailing time. They only served as supporting working documents. The final recommendations of the Hong Kong 2030+ have further taken into account a host of other factors and reflected the latest developments, such as the opportunities brought forth by the National 14<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan and developments in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, the recommended key action directions in the Northern Metropolitan Development Strategy. Hence, the concerned technical studies and assessments did not completely reflect the final recommendations of the Hong Kong 2030+. In the light of this, the SA and SEA reports were considered not suitable for release for public information.

46. Three Members suggested that the concerned reports might be provided on a confidential cover to facilitate discussion and consideration of the project profiles in relation to the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands EIA Study Briefs among ACE Members. Ms Maggie Chin agreed to convey Members' suggestion to relevant subject teams in Planning Department after the meeting.

*(ii) Management of Wild Pigs*

47. In view of the recent incidents relating to wild pigs, a Member suggested to arrange a Nature Conservation Subcommittee meeting to discuss issues related to the management of wild pigs.

*(Post-meeting notes: The Secretariat would liaise with EPD and AFCD on the arrangement of the Nature Conservation Subcommittee meeting in due course.)* Secretariat

48. There was no other business for discussion at the meeting.

**Item 5 : Date of next meeting (Closed-door session)**

49. The next ACE meeting was scheduled for 3 January 2022 (Monday). Members would be advised on the agenda in due course.

*(Post-meeting notes: As there was no proposed item for discussion at the ACE meeting, the meetings scheduled for January and February had been cancelled. The next ACE meeting was scheduled for 7 March 2022.)*

50. The Chairman took the opportunity to extend an early season's greeting to Members for a Merry Christmas and a Healthy and Green New Year in 2022.

**ACE Secretariat  
January 2022**