

**Confirmed Minutes of the 136th Meeting of
the Advisory Council on the Environment
held on 16 October 2006 at 2:30 pm**

Present:

Prof LAM Kin-che, S.B.S., J.P. (Chairman)

Mr James GRAHAM

Prof Howard HUANG

Prof Paul LAM

Ms Goretti LAU

Mr Peter Y C LEE

Dr NG Cho-nam, B.B.S.

Prof POON Chi-sun

Mr Markus SHAW

Ms Iris TAM, J.P.

Mr TSANG Kam-lam

Prof WONG Tze-wai

Prof WONG Yuk-shan, B.B.S., J.P.

Mr Esmond LEE, J.P. (Secretary)

Absent with Apologies:

Prof HO Kin-chung, B.B.S.

Mrs Mei NG, B.B.S.

In Attendance:

Ms Anissa WONG, J.P.

Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport
and Works (Environment)

Mr C C LAY

Assistant Director (Conservation), Agriculture,
Fisheries and Conservation Department

Mr P Y TAM

Assistant Director/Technical Services, Planning
Department

Ms Monica KO

Principal Information Officer, Environmental
Protection Officer (EPD)

Ms Josephine CHEUNG

Chief Executive Officer (CBD), EPD

Miss Sarah NG

Executive Officer (CBD), EPD

In Attendance for Agenda Item 4:

Ms Manda CHAN

Principal Assistant Secretary for Security, Security
Bureau

Mr Raymond W M WONG

Assistant Director/Territorial & Sub-Regional,
Planning Department

Mr David NG

Senior Town Planner/Sub-Regional, Planning
Department

In Attendance for Agenda Item 5:

Mr Esmond LEE, J.P.

Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (4),
EPD

Mr David WONG

Principal Environmental Protection Officer
(Cross-Boundary & International), EPD

In Attendance for Agenda Item 6:

Mr TANG Kin-fai

Assistant Director (Waste Management Policy), EPD

Mr TE Chi-wang

Senior Administrative Officer (Waste Management
Policy Division), EPD

Miss Florence CHAN

Senior Administrative Officer (Conservation
Division), EPD

Action

The Chairman welcomed Ms Anissa Wong, Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment), who attended the meeting for the first time.

Agenda Item 1 : Confirmation of the Draft Minutes of the 135th Meeting held on 17 July 2006

2. The draft minutes were confirmed without amendment.

Agenda Item 2 : Confirmation of the Draft Notes of the Public Forum on Review of Air Quality Objectives held on 18 September 2006

3. The draft notes were confirmed without amendment.

Agenda Item 3 : Matters Arising from the Minutes of the 135th Meeting held on 17 July 2006

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

Agenda Item 4 : Study on Land Use Planning for the Closed Area
(ACE Paper 20/2006)

5. Ms Manda Chan briefed Members on the background of the review of the Closed Area. Mr Raymond Wong briefed Members on the background, objectives, major tasks and study methodology of the Planning Study and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). He highlighted that the overall objective of the Planning Study was to formulate a planning framework to guide the conservation and development of the Study Area, based on the principle of sustainable development. A SEA would be conducted in parallel with and as an integral part of the Planning Study. The SEA Study aimed to provide strategic environmental information and suggestions to facilitate the formulation of an environmentally acceptable planning framework for the Study Area.

6. A Member said that the World Wide Fund for Nature (Hong Kong) would like to circulate a position paper on the proposal to Members after the meeting. He said that he was very concerned and depressed about the proposal. For all the talk about sustainable development and conservation, the proposal was driven by development and demonstrated how the Administration was wedded to an outdated development model which equated infrastructure development with economic development. He wondered how many people in the community really believed that the essential character of this area would be preserved, and not ended up looking like the rest of the north-west New Territories, with its many problems. Up to now, the protection afforded by the Closed Area had preserved a corridor of beautiful rural and wilderness areas. As urban and industrial sprawl spread over the Pearl River Delta, Hong Kong's rural areas would become more and more unique and valuable. Hong Kong had a service-based economy and we were moving up the value chain. Our future strength would be based on attracting to Hong Kong the best intellectual talent in the world, and part of our attraction would be the quality of life we could offer to those people who could take their skills anywhere they wanted. As urban sprawl spread in the Delta, Hong Kong would increasingly be distinguished as a green and pleasant land in which to live – but only if we preserved our rural areas. For the first time in our post-war history, our population was stable. We simply didn't have the planning pressures that we faced when our population was rapidly growing. There was not the same hunger for land as there used to be. This meant that we had, for the first time, the luxury of planning carefully and for

the longer term. In our urban planning and in our economic planning, we should be playing to our strengths – we were not bound by the same rules anymore. By an accident of history, this corridor had been preserved as a pristine rural area. We had inherited a jewel. We should be polishing it, not tarnishing it. Another Member said that it was important to assess the driving force and genuine need for developing the Closed Area since there were still undeveloped areas in the northern New Territories.

(Post-meeting note: A position paper of the World Wide Fund for Nature (Hong Kong) on the proposal was circulated to Members after the meeting.)

7. Mr Raymond Wong said that it was solely on security grounds that the Closed Area coverage was reviewed. Releasing the area from Closed Area restrictions did not mean developing the area and the Government did not have any predetermined views on the land use of the area. As most of the area to be released was not subject to planning control, it was necessary to put it under statutory planning control like other parts of the territory. The Government recognized the significance of the ecological value of the area and this was the reason why environmental concern groups had been engaged well before the study started.

8. A Member said that he was pleased to note that the Government did not have any predetermined views on developing the area and the study would be conducted to find out more about the area. He would like to reiterate the other Member's comments that the piece of land located at the boundary was very precious and unique in terms of its ecological value, not only to Hong Kong but also to Shenzhen. The Administration should learn from the bitter experience of Shenzhen in overusing land for development. About twenty years ago, he had joined hands in appealing against the clearing of a mangrove area in Futian of Shenzhen for real estate development and the area was finally preserved after a long period of struggling. After the lapse of time, the Shenzhen Municipal Government considered that this was a right decision. Thus, the Administration should be very cautious in planning and preserving the ecological system of the Closed Area.

9. Mr Raymond Wong agreed that the area was a unique place, both in terms of location and environment. He pointed out that the consultation sessions over the past few weeks demonstrated how divided the public views on the issue were. While there were strong requests for conservation on the

one hand, there were also strong demands for development on the other. It would be a very difficult task which would have to be handled carefully and tactfully.

10. A Member said that the overall objective of the Planning Study was to formulate a planning framework based on the principle of sustainable development. In achieving sustainable development, the area should be preserved and conserved as much as possible. He considered that the study conducted by the Government should focus on how to conserve rather than how to develop the area. Mr Raymond Wong explained that in view of the high ecological value of the area, the Administration had included a SEA as an integral part of the Planning Study to ensure that the environmental impacts of the opening up would be thoroughly examined and the importance of conservation would be emphasized.

11. A Member agreed that the Closed Area should be opened up on security grounds in view of the increasingly close relationship between Hong Kong and the Mainland. Nevertheless, the Closed Area had served as a green belt between the densely developed areas in the two territories. It would be too early at this stage to consider the land use of the area as there were still other undeveloped areas in the New Territories. The areas to be released from the Closed Area should be preserved and their land use should be considered at a later stage for more long-term purposes. Mr Raymond Wong said that the Government was working towards the direction of reducing the coverage of the Closed Area on security grounds. With the release of a substantial area of land, most of which was not under statutory planning control, a planning framework had to be formulated for better planning control.

12. A Member asked why cultural heritage and archaeological resources were included as one of the elements in Task 1 (baseline review and identification of key issues) but not in Task 5 (preliminary assessments on Draft Concept Plan) of Stage 1 of the Planning Study. Mr Raymond Wong explained that Task 1 involved collection and analysis of the baseline conditions of the Study Area which would include cultural heritage and archaeological resources. However, detailed cultural heritage impact assessment had to be conducted after the formulation of the Draft Concept Plan. The assessment would be conducted under the SEA and Stage 2 of the Planning Study which would involve in-depth archaeological field evaluation

such as excavation and digging of test pits.

13. A Member asked how the Planning Study could interface with the air ventilation assessment study which was being conducted by the Planning Department. Mr Raymond Wong said that the principles established under the air ventilation assessment study, when available, would be employed in the Planning Study of the Closed Area. As in other planning studies, there would be interface between relevant studies in the sharing of information and principles.

14. A Member said that a major justification for reducing the coverage of the Closed Area was the sharp decrease in the number of illegal immigrants arrested over the past few years. However, it would be important to study the impact of reducing the Closed Area coverage on smuggling and related criminal activities which was a concern of the business community. Ms Manda Chan said that the security authorities were also very concerned about the problem of smuggling. The law enforcement experience showed that smuggling activities concentrated in the areas of border crossings. The boundary crossing points, including the land boundary control points at Man Kam To, Lok Ma Chau, Lo Wu and Sha Tau Kok and Sha Tau Kok town where Chung Ying Street was located would all be retained within the Closed Area. With the security measures and enforcement actions in place, the security authorities were confident that smuggling and related criminal activities would be combated effectively.

15. A Member considered that the SEA should not be restricted by the boundary of the Closed Area as the opening up would also affect areas upstream and downstream of the Shenzhen River and thus the catchment concept should be adopted. Moreover, the SEA should examine the impact of the new secondary boundary fence on the habitants in the nearby area, in particular on the habitants along the Shenzhen River. He highlighted that restriction on road access was the best way to protect the natural landscape by minimizing human disruption. Land zoning would not be adequate as shown by the illegal dumping and storage problems in the northern New Territories. Thus, the road networks would play an important role. The SEA should examine the impact of opening up the road network. He suggested that restrictions should be imposed on road access to future secondary roads over the landscape as heavy traffic and easy access would have a serious impact on the natural environment.

16. The Chairman shared the Member's views and considered that the study should not focus on zoning and land use only as locations of the boundary crossings and the major road network as well as the timing of the phased development would have a great impact on the environment and ecology.

17. Mr Raymond Wong explained that while there would be a boundary of the Study Area to guide the study, it did not mean that the impacts beyond the Study Area boundary would be excluded. In the study brief for the consultants, it was specifically stated that supporting transport and infrastructure works and facilities falling outside the Study Area should also be studied in an integrated manner. As for the secondary boundary fence, a separate Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) study under the EIA Ordinance was being prepared by the Architectural Services Department. He agreed that road restrictions were a key factor in preventing proliferation of unauthorized developments and thus had preserved the Closed Area in its present state. It was stipulated in the study brief that the consultants had to examine the need for maintaining the road restriction system. Even though the area would be opened up on security grounds, it was necessary to examine whether there would be other reasons, such as planning, environmental or traffic reasons to recommend road restrictions.

18. A Member asked whether the Government had any experience in conducting planning studies of a similar nature and scale. Mr Raymond Wong said that while similar studies had not been conducted within the Closed Area, studies of similar nature had been conducted in the past. For example, the "Study of the Ecological Value of Fish Ponds in Deep Bay Area" was a large-scale study involving ecologically sensitive areas with conflicting views on development and conservation.

19. A Member asked whether there was any available information about the Closed Area as the actual time devoted to conducting the study was not too long. He cautioned that the complexity and time involved, in particular relating to issues on ecology and carrying capacity, should not be underestimated. A lot of controversies might be involved as it was difficult to quantify the information. Mr Raymond Wong shared such concerns and said that they would engage consultants, experts and relevant parties throughout the study process.

20. Upon a Member's enquiry about ownership of the land to be released from the Closed Area, Mr Raymond Wong said that about 70% of the area was government land while about 30% was under private ownership, most of which was situated in the middle part of the Closed Area. A large piece of privately owned land in Hoo Hok Wai was still within the revised Closed Area as it was located to the north of the existing boundary patrol road. In reply to the Chairman's enquiry, Mr Wong said that the Lok Ma Chau Loop would be covered by another study being conducted by the Shenzhen authority. A liaison group had been set up between the two governments to monitor the development and ensure interface with relevant studies.

21. A Member supported the other Members' views and considered that planning and development did not necessarily mean urbanization. There was no need for another congested urban development beside Shenzhen. Conservation of the green natural environment should be the prime objective of the study. Another Member also shared the other Members' views and considered that maintaining the status quo should be an important option.

22. A Member said that it was the past experience that whenever the Government indicated an intention to plan, it usually resulted in an action to develop. What should be done in this particular study plan was to include the consideration and option of inaction. Mr Raymond Wong said that to action for non-action would be one of the scenarios included in the study.

23. The Chairman summarized Members' comments as follows –

- (a) the Council unanimously agreed that the Closed Area was a very unique and pristine area in terms of its undisturbed rural character and ecological importance;
- (b) the Council noted that the review was only a proposal to reduce the coverage of the Closed Area but not a plan to develop the area. The Council was mindful that any planning proposal would lead to action of development and highlighted that no development should follow the pathway of congested developments such as those in the local urban area or Shenzhen. The Planning Study should truly embark on the pathway of sustainable development in improving the quality of life and enjoyment of the nature;

- (c) the Council supported the Administration's intention to conduct a study, in particular a SEA, to provide important environmental and ecological information for the formulation of an environmentally acceptable planning framework as well as to examine in detail the potential strategic environmental impacts of reducing the coverage of the Closed Area;
- (d) the Council urged the Administration, in conducting the Planning Study, to consider carefully what would be the best strategy for Hong Kong and whether there would be an urge to develop the area, given that there were still undeveloped areas in other parts of the territory;
- (e) in respect of the study approach, the Council suggested that –
 - (i) on top of land use, the Planning Study should examine related infrastructure, such as boundary crossings, road networks and timing of phased development, as these would be key determinants of what would follow;
 - (ii) it would be important to collect sufficient data and information on the ecological value of the area as sound plans would have to be based on comprehensive knowledge of the area;
 - (iii) it would be necessary to consider and include the option of no development; and
- (f) the Council looked forward to receiving information on the initial findings of the Planning Study and SEA throughout the study process in order to have early interaction and offer further views, especially at the end of Stage 1 of the study.

24. A Member suggested that a visit be arranged to the Closed Area in order to better understand more about the area for giving further comments on the studies. Mr Raymond Wong agreed to facilitate the arrangement of the visit.

Secretariat

Agenda Item 5 : Progress of Measures Taken by Hong Kong and Guangdong to Improve Air Quality

(ACE Paper 21/2006)

25. Mr Esmond Lee briefed Members on the background of the consensus reached with the Guangdong Provincial Government on the 2010 emission reduction targets and the progress of measures taken in the past few years as well as measures to be taken by the two governments in meeting the targets.

26. A Member said that the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) had made a major achievement in pursuing various measures with Guangdong to improve the regional air quality, which was not an easy task. He pointed out that the problem of power shortage in Guangdong was very serious in the past few years. To meet the needs of power supply, people used stand-by power generators with poor quality fuel causing emissions of pollutants. There were no restrictions on the quality of fuel used for such kind of generators.

27. Mr Esmond Lee said that based on information available, the problem of power shortage should be able to improve in the coming years. We recognized the problem of emissions from stand-by power generators and thus had commissioned the Hong Kong Productivity Council to study the problem and recommend technical solutions which could be promoted to manufacturers in the Pearl River Delta (PRD).

28. A Member considered that the measures taken by Guangdong seemed to mirror those of the Hong Kong Government. However, Hong Kong was a service economy with not many manufacturing industries while Guangdong relied heavily on manufacturing operations which were major sources of emissions. It was surprising to note from the information of the Guangdong Environmental Protection Bureau (GDEPB) that about 85% of the factories complied with the emission standards but the air quality in the region remained poor. This reflected that there was a need to talk to the Guangdong authorities to tighten up or upgrade the emission standards in Guangdong.

29. Mr Esmond Lee said that the Administration recognized the issue of emissions from factories in the PRD. EPD would start a pilot demonstration project in the 4th quarter by selecting some Hong Kong-owned

factories in the PRD to conduct some environmental assessments and test out measures for cleaner production and energy efficient practices. The success stories would be promoted to other factories. The department was working closely with bodies such as the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce (HKGCC) and Federation of Hong Kong Industries on the pilot project. Full support had been gained from the Guangdong Economic and Trade Commission which was responsible for cleaner production and energy efficiency.

30. A Member said that one of the initiatives taken by the business community to tackle air pollution was the Clean Air Charter which was a voluntary programme to promote cleaner production in the region. The driving force was the coalition of the willing. Nevertheless, if there was not a universal approach on enforcement of non-compliance in both Hong Kong and Guangdong, it would be very difficult to carry forward the voluntary programmes. It was necessary to separate health arguments from economic arguments. The governments could help by offering assistance in the relocation of polluting factories and by providing a level playing field for the business to thrive. Mr Esmond Lee said that the Administration appreciated very much the efforts made by the business community. To maintain the momentum of the Clean Air Charter, they were liaising closely with the HKGCC on the direction of the next phase. In respect of relocation of polluting industries, he understood that our Guangdong Economic and Trade Office had tried to help the affected industries.

31. A Member was pleased with the EPD's efforts in pushing ahead and putting in place a number of control measures which were in line with the environmental policies of the State Government in the Mainland. He noted that the Guangdong authorities were very aggressive in implementing control measures in these few months, such as relocating polluting industries from PRD to the northern side. Mr Esmond Lee said that the Hong Kong Government had been liaising very closely with the GDEPB on various environmental matters. They respected the views and experience of the Hong Kong side which were considered more applicable to the Mainland when compared with the experience of overseas countries. As to the relocation of polluting industries, he understood that it was a result of changes in the economic structure in PRD and there was no intention to target Hong Kong investors.

32. A Member said that while Guangdong was moving towards the direction of using more liquefied natural gas (LNG) in generating electricity, there were restrictions on the supply of LNG. With the large coal reserve in the Mainland, coal should not be disregarded as an important source of fuel for Hong Kong and southern part of the Mainland. Continued efforts should be made to explore and improve coal-burning technologies in power generation. Mr Esmond Lee said that the use of coal for power generation would not be ruled out given possible technological advancement in the future.

33. A Member said that there was no mention in the 2006-07 Policy Address about emissions from shipping fuel. The amount of sulphur content of heavy fuel oil used by ships was as high as 4%. He considered that there should be some mechanisms in place to control the emissions in and around the Hong Kong waters since Hong Kong was an international port. Mr Esmond Lee said that the Government recognized this issue. Hong Kong was mainly guided by the International Maritime Organization (IMO) in terms of the standards used. This said, the Government was prepared to consider proposals of taking steps ahead of the IMO.

34. A Member said that if the measures mentioned in the paper were all the measures taken to improve air quality in the region, he would be extremely disappointed. The measures could not do much to improve the problem and a number of areas were not covered. The participants of the public forum on the review of air quality objectives held by the Council had touched on a number of control measures, such as control of shipping emissions, energy policy, traffic management and policy. He considered that electronic road pricing should be considered in detail and concerted efforts should be made to micro-manage certain high risk areas.

35. Mr Esmond Lee said that the paper was an information paper highlighting what had been done and what would be done to achieve the 2010 emission reduction targets. The Administration was implementing and considering other control measures. In the 2006-07 Policy Address, the Chief Executive did recognize voices in the community calling for more stringent traffic management measures, such as electronic road pricing or congestion charges, to control traffic flow in busy business districts. The Government had not shied away from the responsibilities. The Chief Executive highlighted that for these measures to come into effect, it would be necessary to secure community support and engage the public in extensive discussions.

36. A Member said that air quality was the top environmental issue today and there were strong calls from the community for the Government to do more. Thus, the Government could be entrusted with the confidence to take more proactive steps in tackling the problem without the need to go back to the community constantly.

37. The Chairman asked whether there would be measures to tackle the problem of substantially more polluting fuel used by cross border traffic. This issue was also the concern of a Member, who had expressed her views in the paper circulated to all Members before the meeting. Mr Esmond Lee said that the Euro IV standards in Hong Kong required the sulphur content in motor diesel fuel to be not more than 0.005%. The National III motor vehicle emission standards introduced in Guangzhou in September was on a par with Euro III standards requiring sulphur content to be not more than 0.035%. With the introduction of the National III standards in Guangzhou and PRD cities, the gap between the emission standards of vehicles in the two areas was narrowing. There was a suggestion of setting up petrol filling stations at control points to let cross-boundary vehicles be filled up with fuel in Euro IV standards before entering the Hong Kong territory. The Government was prepared to consider the idea but there would be practical difficulties such as the means to control distribution of such fuel particularly if the fuel were tax-free.

38. A Member said that control of vehicular emissions should not focus on the buyers of vehicles but pressure should be put on the source of fuel supply. There should be international restrictions on the refining industries on the production of poor quality fuel.

39. A Member said that big buyers in the United States and Europe had in the past driven great changes in policies governing the Mainland manufacturing industries, such as working hour, child labour, health and safety. He wondered whether similar pressure could be exerted in the area of emissions, such as the requirement of International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14000 certificate from the manufacturing industries in the Mainland. Mr Esmond Lee said that the Government had raised this suggestion with foreign chambers of commerce as consumer power would be influential under the market forces. The idea could be raised with them as appropriate in the future.

40. A Member said that big international buyers had been making requests on environmental practices in their sourcing activities. However, there was a lack of universal support because different businesses were affected in different ways. By seeking and complying with mandatory environmental requirements from the consumers on the production process, the manufacturing industries in Hong Kong and the Mainland would be put in a less competitive position in the world market. He considered that the certification system such as ISO 14000 could not address the issue of fuel choice for there were no mandatory requirements on the source of power supply.

41. A Member said that the information released by the PRD Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network was in the form of indices. He asked whether data on the actual pollution concentration could be released. Mr Esmond Lee said that the agreement reached with the GDEPB was to release the regional air quality index calculated based on data collected. We could explore with the GDEPB the possibility of disclosing more information in the future.

42. A Member asked whether there would be any prediction based on the monitoring results of the PRD Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network as the first half-yearly report would be announced in late October. He considered that while the two governments had taken a number of measures to improve the problem, the use of privately owned power generators and substantial increase in the number of vehicles in Guangdong might offset the efforts made.

43. Mr Esmond Lee said that the first half-yearly monitoring report would not be able to map out a trend as the period covered was relatively short. With a longer time period, a year-by-year comparison could be made for more meaningful analysis and prediction. The increase in the number of vehicles was also a matter of concern by the Guangdong authorities. They were determined and aggressive in putting in place a number of measures in tackling the problem, such as developing mass transit systems, controlling in-use vehicles by labelling schemes and restricting vehicles on busy corridors.

44. The Chairman summarized Members' comments as follows –

- (a) the Council appreciated the efforts made by the two governments

in implementing measures to improve the air quality which were necessary and important to tackle regional air pollution;

- (b) the Council noted that the measures laid down in the paper were only part of the package to deal with the complex issue of air pollution. To tackle the issue of air quality, an overall strategy and comprehensive plans with joint efforts of the two governments would be required;
- (c) the Council suggested that the Government should partner with the private sector in encouraging the business, commercial and industrial players as well as related organizations to promote environmental awareness and provide technical advice through networking in order to promote cleaner production and energy efficiency in PRD; and
- (d) the Council suggested that consideration should be given on how to make use of the leverage for international buyers and consumers to exert influence on the manufacturing industries in PRD to ensure compliance with emission standards and achieve energy efficiency.

Agenda Item 6 : Funding for a Public Education Programme under the “Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)”

(ACE Paper 22/2006)

45. The Chairman said that after the overseas visit to the Netherlands and Germany in March, members of the delegation strongly recommended that dedicated resources be secured for a comprehensive community education programme to complement the initiatives under the Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014) (Policy Framework). He was pleased that the Administration responded positively and came up with the proposal.

46. Mr Tang Kin-fai briefed Members on the proposal of allocating \$10 million from the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) to implement a public education (PE) programme under the Policy Framework. He highlighted that unlike education projects currently funded by ECF which

were primarily district-based and of a relatively smaller scale, the proposed PE programme would closely tie in with the policy initiatives under the Policy Framework and would be long-term and community-wide in nature with a view to enhancing public awareness on waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling. It was hoped that activities under the PE programme could generate a comprehensive, concerted and sustained publicity effort to support the implementation of the proposed policy initiatives under the Policy Framework. Subject to the views of the Council, the Administration would submit the proposal for the ECF Committee's consideration.

47. Chairman of the Waste Management Subcommittee (WSC) reported that a brainstorming session had been held by the Subcommittee in June with green groups and relevant stakeholders on the proposed public education plans for the Policy Framework. The discussion was very fruitful. A paper on the funding proposal had been circulated to WSC Members and their views had been incorporated into the ACE paper. Members of the Subcommittee were very supportive of the proposal.

48. A Member considered that the proposal was a big step forward to enhance public awareness on waste reduction initiatives. He noted that funding requests for some community waste recovery projects from ECF were about \$500,000 each. He wondered whether the funding limit of \$500,000 for individual projects under the PE programme would be sufficient. Mr Tang Kin-fai explained that many of the environmental education and community action projects funded by ECF were of a relatively small scale involving funding of about \$10,000. While community waste recovery projects involved a larger amount of funds, they mainly focused on waste sorting and recovery activities whereas the focus of the proposed PE programme would be on enhancing public awareness. Project proponents could also seek sponsorships from or join hands with the private sector in organizing the projects. The funding limit of \$500,000 for each project was considered sufficient and the Administration would review the funding limit when necessary.

49. A Member supported the proposal in principle. He stressed that it would be necessary to ensure that the projects funded should be carried out in a coordinated rather than piece-meal manner. Innovative projects should be encouraged. To achieve a long-term and sustained effect, careful thought should be given to the selection of target groups, such as fundamental

education targeting students and housewives. Suitable evaluation methods would be essential to assessing the effectiveness of the activities.

50. A Member was very supportive of the proposal. He considered that the starting point of environmental protection was education. The key was the change of mindset and reinforcement of values on environmental protection. The PE activities were only means to achieve this objective. Applicants should be requested to put more efforts in changing the mindset of target groups and avoid expenses on unnecessary items, such as colourful costumes, extensive publicity and large volume of printing materials.

51. In reply to the Chairman's question, Mr Tang Kin-fai said that during the brainstorming session with the green groups, there was a lengthy discussion on the proposed target groups of the PE programme. It was suggested that on top of the general public, the activities should focus on clear target groups including community leaders and District Councillors. The Administration would give more thoughts to how to engage different target groups in the implementation of the PE programme. He assured Members that EPD, in consultation with the Council or the WSC as appropriate, would ensure that the activities would be rolled out in a coordinated manner by focusing the resources and efforts on selected topics. For example, to tie in with the introduction of the Producer Responsibility Scheme (PRS) early next year, consideration would be given to inviting applications for projects which would interact with each other under the same theme.

52. A Member considered that the level of environmental awareness for this generation of children was much higher than that of their parents. For the PE programme to achieve meaningful results, the stakeholders should be engaged and encouraged to put forth innovative ideas on how to change the mindset and wasteful habits under a particular theme or area. For example, industrialists, retailers and consumers should be engaged in projects under the theme of PRS. Ideas should not just come from the Government. It would be necessary to ensure that the funding be deployed to suitable areas and target groups with the engagement of appropriate sectors of the community.

53. A Member said that the target groups of the PE programme could broadly include children and adults. For children, it would be more cost effective to focus the efforts on schools. For adults, publication of case reports and interesting stories in newspapers and magazines would generate

good publicity effect at a relatively low cost.

54. The Chairman summarized Members' comments as follows –

- (a) the Council was very supportive of the funding proposal and was grateful that the Administration responded positively to the Council's suggestion of allocating dedicated resources for carrying out a PE programme which would closely tie in with the policy initiatives under the Policy Framework;
- (b) the objective of the PE programme should aim at changing people's mindset, attitude and lifestyle in waste avoidance, reduction, reuse and recycling;
- (c) on top of the general public, the PE programme should have clear target groups including community leaders, District Councillors, industrialists, retailers and consumers;
- (d) unlike traditional district-based activities, the community-based public education activities funded should be well coordinated and orchestrated to generate a comprehensive and concerted publicity effect to support the implementation of the policy initiatives under the Policy Framework with suitable evaluation means;
- (e) the Council or the WSC would be pleased to receive information on the progress of the funding proposal and offer views on the details of the PE programme.

Agenda Item 7 : Any Other Business

55. The agenda was being compiled. Members would be informed in due course.

Agenda Item 8 : Date of Next Meeting

56. The next meeting was scheduled for 13 November 2006.

ACE Secretariat
October 2006