

**Confirmed Minutes of the 243rd Meeting
of the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE)
held on 7 December 2020 at 2:30 pm**

Present:

Mr Stanley WONG, SBS, JP (Chairman)

Prof Nora TAM, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)

Ms Carmen CHAN, BBS, JP

Ms Sylvia CHAN, MH

Ir Dr Cary CHAN, JP

Ir Samantha KONG

Mr Adam KOO

Ms LAM Chung-yan

Ms Julia LAU

Dr Michael LAU

Dr Winnie LAW

Prof Albert LEE

Mr Andrew LEE

Prof Kenneth LEUNG, JP

Ir Prof Irene LO, JP

Ir MA Lee-tak, SBS

Dr SUNG Yik-hei

Ms Christina TANG

Mr Simon WONG, JP

Prof WONG Sze-chun, BBS, JP

Ir Dr Conrad WONG, BBS, JP

Mr Owin FUNG, JP (Secretary)

Absent with Apologies:

Prof LAU Chi-pang, BBS, JP

In Attendance:

Ms Maisie CHENG, JP

Permanent Secretary for the Environment / Director of
Environmental Protection

Ms Fanny HUI

Chief Information Officer, Environmental Protection
Department (EPD)

Mr Simon CHAN

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

Ms Maggie CHIN	Assistant Director of Planning / Technical Services (Acting), Planning Department (PlanD)
Ms Becky LAM	Chief Executive Officer (CBD), EPD
Miss Sally SHEK	Executive Officer (CBD) 1, EPD
Miss Ingrid SUEN	Executive Officer (CBD) 2, EPD

In Attendance for Item 1:

Mr WONG Kam-sing, GBS, JP	Secretary for the Environment (SEN)
Ms Elaine LI	Press Secretary to Secretary for the Environment

In Attendance for Item 5

Dr Sunny CHEUNG	Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Metro Assessment), EPD
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Action

The Chairman welcomed Members to the ACE meeting held on Zoom, taking into account the latest situation of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), and informed that apologies of absence had been received from Prof Lau Chi-pang.

Item 1 : Briefing by the Secretary for the Environment on 2020 Policy Address – Policy Initiatives of Environment Bureau: Environmental Protection
(ACE Paper 11/2020)

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

2. The Chairman welcomed Mr Wong Kam-sing, Secretary for the Environment to the meeting.

3. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Mr Wong Kam-sing briefed Members on the key environmental initiatives in the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address.

Climate Change and energy efficiency

4. A Member expressed appreciation that the Government set out a target to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050 and enquired about the implementation plan

of the Government to achieve the target.

5. Mr Wong Kam-sing responded that ENB targeted to update the Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan in the middle of next year to set out the strategies and measures to reduce carbon emissions, taking into account the recommendations put forward by the Council for Sustainable Development. In addition, a high-level Steering Committee on Climate Change chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration would steer and co-ordinate among relevant bureaux and departments (B/Ds) actions to combat climate change and reduce carbon emissions. He further advised that according to the Paris Agreement, Hong Kong should review the climate change efforts every five years and would report progress to the Central People's Government.

6. A Member was delighted to see the Government's plan to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050 in the 2020 Policy Address. He suggested that the Government should set specific carbon reduction targets for individual sectors to work towards the goal. Concrete targets of carbon reduction in buildings would be one of the examples. Mr Wong Kam-sing said that the Government would take it into consideration Ir Dr Wong's suggestion when drawing up the coming Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan.

7. A Member also expressed appreciation for the comprehensive and ambitious environmental initiatives in the 2020 Policy Address. While he acknowledged that it would take time to implement the various environmental initiatives, he remarked that Members would continue to support these environmental initiatives. Mr Wong Kam-sing thanked the Member for his support to government's work on environment, in particular for his earlier agreement to be appointed as the Chairman of the Environmental Campaign Committee to promote public awareness of environmental issues.

8. In response to a Member's enquiry, Mr Wong Kam-sing explained that as per the Green Energy Target announced in 2019, the Government aimed to improve the overall energy performance of government buildings and infrastructure by a further 6% in the coming five years through various energy saving measures and the use of renewable energy.

9. A Member enquired about the Government's plan on using nuclear energy or renewable energy to achieve carbon neutrality. Mr Wong Kam-sing advised

that the Government would keep an open mind in formulating a detailed implementation plan and roadmap to achieve carbon neutrality in the coming year. He added that the Government would liaise with the power companies and relevant parties in formulating the implementation plan based on the recommendations of the Council for Sustainable Development to achieve carbon neutrality.

10. In response to a Member's question on the implementation plan and timeline to achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, Mr Wong Kam-sing advised that details of the roadmap to strive to achieve carbon neutrality before 2050 would be set out in the coming Hong Kong's Climate Change Action Plan. Mr Owin Fung added that the Government had launched the electric vehicles (EV)-charging at Home Subsidy Scheme in October 2020, which was one of the various measures to promote the use of EVs. In the coming year, the Government would launch Hong Kong's first roadmap on the popularisation of EVs with the target set to cease the sale of conventional fuel-propelled private cars, which would make contribution to achieving carbon neutrality.

Waste reduction and recycling

11. A Member commended ENB on the comprehensive environmental initiatives under the 2020 Policy Address. As regards the Green@Community project, she observed during her recent visits to the Tin Hau recycling store that the number of visitors was on the low side and suggested that the Government should strengthen publicity and promotions. Mr Wong Kam-sing pointed out that the number of visitors to the recycling stores might be affected by the measures on social distancing advocated by the government under the COVID-19 epidemic. That said, he shared that publicity and promotional efforts should be stepped up in order to support the opening of more recycling stores in the coming year. He further pointed out that there had been quite strong public interest and support to the recycling stores as thousands of applications for the GREEN\$ smart card had been received.

12. In response to the enquiry of two Members on the handling of increased waste plastics such as disposable tableware due to the COVID-19 epidemic, Mr Wong Kam-sing advised that the Government had liaised with the catering industry and online retailers on measures to reduce waste generation. He stressed that the participation of the catering sector and the public to reduce waste was crucial. He added that the Government would strengthen the promotion of recycling including

the collection of waste plastics at the Green@Community recycling stores.

13. A Member shared her recent experience of visiting the Sai Ying Pun recycling store and expressed appreciation for the Government's effort on promoting recycling at district level. Mr Wong Kam-sing thanked the Member for her support and said that the Government would sustain its efforts to promote recycling to the general public via the recycling stores in different districts.

14. A Member remarked that the Government should promote a healthy and green lifestyle under the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to the Member's further suggestion that the administration should utilise the Green@Community recycling stores as a promotional channel to publicise the above message, Mr Wong Kam-sing welcomed her suggestion and said that consideration would be given when expanding the stores' functions.

15. As regards the upcoming tender invitation for developing a modern pulping facility in the EcoPark, a Member was concerned about whether the Government would award the contract to an operator equipped with the necessary knowledge, resources and technologies to transform waste paper effectively and smoothly. Mr Wong Kam-sing pointed out that the recycling industry had encountered enormous challenge due to a downturn of the external recycling market and the latest waste paper pulping technology was more land-efficient, with energy and cost saving in operation. He added that the Government would liaise with the recycling industry to develop a modern pulping facility in the EcoPark with a view to transforming waste into resources more effectively.

16. In response to a Member's question on whether the Government would require the Housing Society or Housing Authority to implement waste sorting and separation at source for their housing projects, Mr Wong Kam-sing said that ENB had worked closely with the Housing Authority and Housing Society on various waste reduction measures and would continue to do so.

17. A Member shared with the meeting that as far as he knew, there was a non-governmental organisation (NGO) which provided recycling services in industrial buildings with the funding support from the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF), but in limited scope. He suggested that the Government should consider extending the scope of the successful pilot projects for wider application in Hong Kong. Mr Wong Kam-sing said that the pilot projects

were providing useful experience for us to prepare for the anticipated surge in demand for recycling once the municipal solid waste (MSW) charging was implemented.

18. A Member enquired about the Government's plan on the handling of food waste and waste separation. While acknowledging that it was a challenge to handle food waste, Mr Wong Kam-sing said that the existing O·PARK1 and the O·PARK2 under construction would help turn food waste into energy/resources in Hong Kong. He added that the Government would continue to explore the utilisation of sewage treatment facilities for food waste recovery. He further pointed out that the implementation of MSW charging would provide a strong incentive for the public to practise waste separation and recycling at source.

MSW charging

19. In response to a Member's enquiry about the possibility of the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018 to be passed in the coming year, Mr Wong Kam-sing said that ENB/EPD would work with the Legislative Council closely with a view to facilitating an early passage of the Bill.

Producer Responsibility Scheme on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

20. In view of the rapid technological advancement, a Member enquired about the handling of electronic wastes. Mr Wong Kam-sing pointed out that the Producer Responsibility Scheme on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) (WPRS) required that regulated WEEE must be directed to licensed recycling facilities for proper treatment and recycling, with a view to turning waste into resources and thus offering a long-term solution to electronic waste. Currently, around 70 - 80% of WEEE was recovered in Hong Kong, which was encouraging. The Government would keep in view of relevant technological development on this front. In addition, he shared with the meeting that the operation of the WEEE·PARK, a waste-to-resources facility developed by the Government to underpin the WPRS, in Tuen Mun was smooth and satisfactory.

Nature and countryside conservation

21. In response to a Member's concern about the waste and associated

environmental pollution at country parks during the COVID-19 epidemic, Mr Wong Kam-sing said that the Government would collaborate with NGOs in promoting “Take Your Litter Home” practice at popular country parks and/or hiking areas to enhance public’s awareness in properly disposing of the litter they generated and protecting the environment.

22. A Member commended ENB for setting various action plans in the 2020 Policy Address. She suggested strengthening efforts of nature conservation to protect marine environment and preserve biodiversity of countryside. Mr Wong Kam-sing said that various measures had been taken in the recent years to enhance nature conservation, including the setting up of the Countryside Conservation Office and the Countryside Conservation Funding Scheme to protect and revitalize the natural ecology of the remote countryside. He advised that the Government would spare no efforts to strengthen education and publicity to promote conservation of the countryside.

23. The Chairman observed that social media was highly successful in attracting the public to visit the countryside. However, there was generally a lack of educational messages on environmental protection on the social media. In view of the significant influence of the social media, the Chairman suggested that the Government should leverage on the them to raise public awareness of nature conservation. Mr Wong Kam-sing concurred that the Government would continue to strengthen the education and publicity via various tools including the very important social media.

24. A Member enquired about the implementation of Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) 2016-2021 and the plan for BSAP for the next five years. Another Member suggested that the Government should engage relevant stakeholders in order to formulate the next BSAP. Mr Wong Kam-sing said that the Government would draw reference from the upcoming international BSAP when reviewing and formulating the updated BSAP for the next five years.

25. A Member suggested that the Government should carry out afforestation with a view to improving biodiversity and absorbing carbon emissions for eco-restoration purposes. He further suggested that consideration should be given to integrate recreation, ecotourism and agriculture into the countryside through the promotion of agroforestry. Mr Wong Kam-sing stressed that the Government was open-minded and willing to explore any measures that could improve biodiversity

and reduce carbon emissions.

Green Recovery and Green Employment

26. A Member said that he was pleased to find some new initiatives on green recovery and green employment in the 2020 Policy Address. He opined that the success of green recovery and green employment would hinge on seamless collaboration among different B/Ds.

27. In response to a Member, Mr Wong Kam-sing said that it was anticipated that the various new environmental projects on decarbonisation, waste reduction, and air pollutant reduction would create over 4 000 jobs in sectors including scientific research, architecture and engineering, recycling and transport. He added that the Steering Committee on Climate Change chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration would also co-ordinate efforts among various B/Ds to achieve the long-term and sustainable development of green industry. He further pointed out that it had been set out in the 2020 Policy Address that the Government would strive to create job opportunities for the green industry.

Inter-departmental collaboration

28. A Member raised concern as to whether concerted and sufficient efforts were received from different B/Ds to promote awareness on environmental protection and all were at the same pace to drive environmental protection. She suggested that different B/Ds should align the practices on environmental protection such as practicing waste reduction at source and avoiding the use of paper cups in meetings. While acknowledging the importance of inter-departmental collaboration on environmental protection, Mr Wong Kam-sing stressed that it was equally important to cultivate a green culture in the community and he solicited the support of Members in this regard.

29. A Member expressed that she was looking forward to the upcoming Hong Kong's Climate Action Plan and new initiatives set out in the 2020 Policy Address. She echoed the view of another Member on the importance of collaboration across different sectors in environmental protection. In particular, she suggested that the government should strengthen the environmental initiatives through green finance. She noted that in some places, the interest rate of the loan for a green building would be lower than that of a conventional building, which would provide more

incentive for people to choose green building and for the developers to opt for green building developments. In response to the Member, Mr Wong Kam-sing said that green finance was one of the key areas put forward by the Council for Sustainable Development in advocating low-carbon lifestyles and economic transformation. He advised that ENB would collaborate with the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau and various business sectors to develop green finance with a view to boosting investment conducive to reducing carbon emissions.

Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

30. A Member expressed appreciation that the Government was making efforts to take forward the ecological civilisation construction of the Greater Bay Area (GBA). Noting that currently some funds such as the ECF only supported projects to be carried out in local market, he suggested that organisations should be encouraged to carry out conservation research and projects in the GBA if these funds could be extended to cover GBA as well. In addition, he recommended that the Government should provide necessary support to the local scientists to facilitate their research and work in the GBA. Another Member echoed the views of the Member that it would be beneficial if the Green Tech Fund (GTF) could cover green projects in the GBA.

31. Mr Wong Kam-sing said that the new GTF, which would be open for application in December 2020, would support research and development (R&D) projects that could help achieve decarbonisation and environmental protection in Hong Kong. As Hong Kong might contribute to environmental protection in the GBA by sharing R&D outcomes, research proposals that would bring environmental benefits to Hong Kong and nearby regions, including other cities in the GBA, would be welcomed.

Environment Related Funds

32. In response to a Member's enquiry on whether the Government had taken measures to ensure that the scopes of various environment related funds did not overlap, Ms Maisie Cheng advised that before the launch of a new environment related fund, ENB would examine and review the existing environment related funds to make sure that the funds would only complement each other but not serve the same or similar purposes. Clear guidelines on the detailed scopes of each fund

were also set out to avoid confusion.

33. In response to the Chairman's enquiry, Ms Maisie Cheng advised the meeting that the annual funding of ECF, which was the highest amongst the various environment related funds, was about \$100 million.

34. A Member thanked ENB for taking forward initiatives in sustainable environment in the 2020 Policy Address. He enquired as to whether the GTF would support pilot projects in retro-commissioning of buildings. Mr Wong Kam-sing said that decarbonisation and energy saving was one of the priority areas under the GTF and thus applications on retro-commissioning projects were welcome.

35. A Member opined that the GTF should also support start-up business from the youth. The Chairman further elaborated that notwithstanding the start-up entrepreneurs might not necessarily be successful in their projects due to the lack of experiences and resources, it would be beneficial for the society to encourage and support the youth in exploration and development in the long run. Mr Wong Kam-sing said that the assessment committee of the GTF would take into consideration of the views of the Council and strike a balance between supporting the projects proposed by the youth and ensuring prudent use of public monies in worthy projects. Ms Maisie Cheng added that the GTF welcomed any start-up entrepreneurs, local companies or non-profit making organisations to submit their applications on projects which would help Hong Kong decarbonize and enhance environmental protection.

Lantau Tomorrow Vision

36. In reply to a Member's enquiry on the ENB's stance on the Lantau Tomorrow Vision, Mr Wong Kam-sing said that ENB/EPD played an integral role in assessing the environmental impacts of the Government's major development projects. He pointed out that Hong Kong had been producing a considerable amount of inert construction wastes, part of which had to be transported to the Mainland due to the lack of local outlets. Mr Wong said that the Lantau Tomorrow Vision could utilise the inert construction wastes generated in Hong Kong for local reclamation. He also highlighted that one of the visions of the Lantau Tomorrow Vision mentioned in 2020 Policy Address was to develop a near carbon-neutral community, which aligned with the Hong Kong's target to strive to

achieve carbon neutrality before 2050.

Public education and publicity

37. A Member was delighted that progress was made in various environmental initiatives in the recent years. In view of the popularity of online platforms especially during the COVID-19 epidemic, the Member suggested that the government should strengthen its efforts in promoting environmental protection through such channels. Mr Wong Kam-sing agreed that the government would step up its publicity efforts online as it was a more convenient and popular approach and could reach a larger number of target audience. Ms Maisie Cheng pointed out that conventional promotional channels such as Announcements in the Public Interest (API) on television were relatively costly and air-time allocated for each B/D was very limited in particular during the COVID-19 epidemic. In this connection, EPD had been adopting other promotional channels including various online platforms.

38. A Member said that it was of paramount importance to educate the younger generation on environmental protection and suggested that the government should devote more resources and efforts in education in carbon neutrality in the long run. Mr Wong Kam-sing agreed and said that the government had introduced various measures/programmes to step up environmental education such as the Green Schools 2.0 which included programmes on Energy Smart and Green Prefect etc in primary and secondary schools.

Conclusion

39. The Chairman concluded that Members were supportive of the environmental initiatives in the 2020 Policy Address. He remarked that public participation and support was vital to the implementation of different environmental initiatives and the eventual achievement of carbon neutrality. He thanked Mr Wong Kam-sing for his detailed elaboration to address the questions raised by Members in the meeting.

40. Mr Wong Kam-sing took the opportunity to express his gratitude for the invaluable advice and contribution offered by the seven retiring Members to the Council in the past years. He appealed to Members for their continued support to the implementation of different environmental initiatives.

(Mr Wong Kam-sing left the meeting at this juncture.)

Item 2 : Confirmation of the draft minutes of the 242nd meeting held on 5 October 2020 (Closed-door session)

41. The draft minutes were confirmed without amendments.

Item 3 : Matters arising (Closed-door session)

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

Item 4 : Report of the 147th Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee Meeting held on 16 November 2020 (Closed-door session)
(ACE Paper 12/2020)

43. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Chairperson of the Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee (EIASC), reported that *ACE Paper 12/2020* had summarised the discussion and recommendations of the EIASC meeting held on 16 November 2020 in respect of the EIA reports on “Pier Improvement at Lai Chi Wo” and “Pier Improvement at Tung Ping Chau”.

44. Having regard to the findings of the EIA reports and the information provided by the project proponent at the meeting, the Chairperson of the EIASC said that the EIASC recommended the full Council to endorse the EIA report on “Pier Improvement at Lai Chi Wo” with one condition and two recommendations specified, and to endorse the EIA report on “Pier Improvement at Tung Ping Chau” with one condition and four recommendations specified. With no further comments from Members, the Chairman concluded that the meeting agreed to recommend the Director of Environmental Protection (DEP) to endorse the EIA reports with the conditions and recommendations as set out in paragraph 9 of the *ACE Paper 12/2020*.

(Dr Sunny Cheung joined the meeting at this juncture.)

Item 5 : Any other business (Closed-door session)

EIA Reports not selected by EIASC for submission to ACE

45. The Chairperson of the EIASC reported that since the last Council meeting, EIASC received the Executive Summary of the EIA reports on “Development at San Hing Road and Hong Po Road, Tuen Mun” and “A Rooftop Helipad at New Acute Hospital at Kai Tak Development Area” which the Subcommittee had not selected for discussion. The Executive Summary of the EIA reports had been circulated to EIASC Members upon commencement of the public inspection period, with the relevant hyperlinks copied to non-EIASC Members for information. Individual Members were advised to provide their comments, if any, on the EIA reports directly to the DEP within the respective public inspection periods. Given that the EIA reports had not been selected by EIASC for presentation and discussion, the Chairperson concluded that EPD would take that ACE had no comments on the EIA reports under section 8(3)(b) of the EIAO.

Review of the EIA Guidance Notes

46. A Member urged EPD to report the preliminary results of the review of the Guidance Notes for ecological assessment and suggested with the support of another Member that views from the outgoing Members should be gathered as well.

47. A Member pointed out that the concerned matter was first raised by EIASC Members in 2016, she suggested EPD to present the latest progress and the preliminary review findings to Members at the EIASC meeting scheduled for 14 December 2020 or arrange a briefing to gauge the views of the outgoing Members first. The Chairman concurred with the Member’s proposal that EPD should present a general framework and the preliminary findings to Members before the end of this term (i.e. end December 2020).

48. In response to Members’ and the Chairman’s request for a meeting or briefing on the subject, Dr Sunny Cheung advised the meeting that EPD had been working on the review and identifying practicable measures to improve and enhance the quality of ecological impact assessment. However, due to the interruption brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, EPD needed more time to communicate with overseas counterparts to verify the details of the review but would explore the possibility of arranging a briefing to update Members on the preliminary information and findings.

(Post-meeting notes: A briefing on the review of the EIA Guidance Notes on Ecological Impact Assessment was held on Monday, 14 December 2020.)

Item 6 : Date of next meeting (Closed-door session)

49. The Chairman advised Members that an induction session would likely be arranged for new ACE members in January 2021 and the first ACE meeting of the new term was scheduled for 1 February 2021. Members would be advised on the agenda in due course.

(Post-meeting notes: The induction session for the new members was held on 14 January 2021 and the first ACE meeting of the new term was scheduled for 8 March 2021.)

50. As this was the last meeting of the current term, the Chairman also took the opportunity to thank Members, in particular the seven retiring Members including Ir Dr Cary Chan, Dr Michael Lau, Prof Albert Lee, Ir Prof Irene Lo, Ir Ma Lee-tak, Ir Dr Conrad Wong and Mr Adam Koo for their valuable contributions to the Council in the past years. He closed the meeting by wishing all Members a Merry Christmas and a Prosperous and Green 2021.

ACE Secretariat

March 2021