

**Confirmed Minutes of the 111th Meeting of
the Advisory Council on the Environment
held on 8 December 2003 at 2:30 p.m.**

Present:

Prof. LAM Kin-che, J.P. (Chairman)
Prof. HO Kin-chung
Mr. Peter Y. C. LEE
Mr. LIN Chaan-ming
Prof. LUNG Ping-yee, David, S.B.S., J.P.
Dr. NG Cho-nam
Mrs. Mei NG, B.B.S
Prof. POON Chi-sun
Mr. Michael J. D. RUSHWORTH
Mr. Markus SHAW
Ms. Iris TAM, J.P.
Prof. WONG Tze-wai
Prof. WONG Yuk-shan, J.P.
Ms. Jessie WONG (Secretary)

Absent with Apologies:

Prof. Peter HILLS
Mr. Otto L. T. POON, B.B.S.

In Attendance:

Mrs. Rita LAU, JP	Permanent Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment and Transport)
Ms. Doris CHEUNG	Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment and Transport)(E)1
Mr. Thomas CHOW	Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment and Transport)(E)2
Mr. Rob LAW, JP	Director of Environmental Protection
Mr. C C LAY	Assistant Director (Conservation) Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department
Mr. Jimmy LEUNG	Assistant Director/Technical Services Planning Department
Mr. Matthew LEUNG	Secretariat Press Officer, Environment, Transport and Works Bureau (ETWB)
Miss Natalia LEUNG	Senior Information Officer Environmental Protection Department (EPD)
Miss Petula POON	Chief Executive Officer (E), ETWB
Mr. Eddie CHENG	Executive Officer (E), ETWB

In Attendance for Agenda Item 4 :

Miss Margaret FONG	Deputy Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment & Transport) T1
Mr. Raymond HO	Principal Assistant Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (Environment & Transport) T7
Mr. Patrick LAI	Senior Engineer (Transport Planning) 2, ETWB
Mr. K B TO	Chief Engineer/Transport Planning, Transport Department

In Attendance for Agenda Item 5 :

Mr. Augustine NG	Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial & Sub-Regional, Planning Department
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In Attendance for Agenda Item 6 :

Mr. YEUNG Kwok-kuen	Assistant Director (Civil)/Project Management, Civil Engineering Department
Mr. C M LAU	District Lands Officer (Island), Lands Department

Action

The Chairman welcomed Prof. Poon Chi-sun who was newly appointed as a Member of the Council.

Agenda Item 1 : Confirmation of Minutes of the 110th Meeting held on 10 November 2003

2. The draft minutes were confirmed without amendment.

Agenda Item 2 : Matters Arising

Para. 26: Information Note on the Preliminary Environmental Review of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge

3. The Chairman informed Members that the information note on the Preliminary Environmental Review of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge was discussed at the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Subcommittee meeting held on 19 November 2003. The issues discussed would be reported under agenda item 3.

Agenda Item 3 : Report on the 81st meeting of the Environmental Impact Assessment Subcommittee *(ACE Paper 34/2003)*

4. Since the Chairman of the EIA Subcommittee was out of town, the Deputy Chairman briefed Members on the discussion of the Subcommittee on 19 November 2003.

5. In response to a Member's concerns about the air quality in Tung Chung, the Deputy Chairman informed the meeting that according to the project proponent, the air quality impact of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge including that on Tung Chung would be studied in detail in the EIA of the project.

6. In reply to a Member's enquiry on the overall planning of Lantau Island, the Chairman said that the issue could be raised under agenda item 5 when the Stage III Public Consultation of the Hong Kong 2030 Study was discussed. The Deputy Chairman supplemented that the project proponent agreed during the EIA Subcommittee meeting that they would liaise closely with the Planning Department regarding the Hong Kong 2030 Study.

7. In response to a Member's enquiry, the Deputy Chairman clarified that assessment would be conducted on the environmental risks of the Northwest Lantau option and the risks of accidents during the construction and operational phases of the project.

8. Members noted the report of the EIA Subcommittee.

Agenda Item 4 : Hong Kong Moving Ahead : A Transport Strategy for the Future

(ACE Paper 35/2003)

9. The Chairman welcomed the presentation team to the meeting. Miss Margaret Fong briefed Members on the progress made in implementing the transport strategy.

10. A Member pointed out that the need for cross- boundary links was closely related to port development in Hong Kong. In view of the rapid development of ports in the Pearl River Delta and goods in the Mainland would no longer need to pass through Hong Kong, ports in Hong Kong might not be able to maintain their competitiveness. He therefore queried the basis for the proposed cross-boundary links and asked whether the Government had done any study on future port development in Hong Kong. In response, Miss Margaret Fong explained that cross- boundary links served both passengers and goods vehicles and that the existing links for goods vehicles had reached saturation point. Having regard to the rapid growth in passenger traffic and the Government's initiative to develop Hong Kong as a logistic hub of the region, the Bureau considered that there was an

urgent need to strengthen cross-boundary links. Another Member pointed out that the competitiveness of ports in Hong Kong was diminishing due to high handling cost and the limitations of the traffic network. He suggested building more ports and more cross-boundary links and reducing the handling costs at container ports.

11. In response to the Chairman's enquiry on the port development strategy and how the transport strategy would align with it, Miss Margaret Fong said that as far as she was aware, the Economic Development and Labour Bureau had conducted a study entitled "Study on Hong Kong Port – Master Plan 2020" and a port development strategy was being developed. The Transport Sub-branch would liaise closely with relevant bureaux to ensure that the transport network planning would tie in with the port development strategy.

12. In response to a Member's question on backup facilities for the increased freight traffic, Miss Margaret Fong explained that it had become a standard planning practice for the Government to provide proper backup facilities for the development of new container terminals. She noted the Chairman's suggestion that freight traffic should be rail-based as far as practicable so that the demand for container backup facilities such as container storage sites in the New Territories would decrease.

13. A Member said that marine transport could help ease traffic congestion and queried why it was not included in the Transport Strategy. In response, Miss Margaret Fong explained that in order to provide an efficient and reliable transport network for all, the Strategy had identified railways, an environmentally friendly mass carrier, as the backbone of our transport system. Other minor transport modes such as ferries played a supplementary role.

14. In reply to a Member's question on idling engines, Mr. Thomas Chow pointed out that only a few places overseas had enacted legislation to prohibit idling engines. For those that had done so, law enforcement was difficult. There were also practical difficulties in applying the law in Hong Kong, especially during hot weather, as drivers would like to keep the air conditioning on. If drivers were required to shut down their engines while waiting, they might choose to circulate on the road thereby resulting in traffic congestion and more vehicle emissions. Also, some vehicles such as concrete mixers had to keep their engines running for operational needs even when waiting. It was therefore considered that an educational and promotional approach should be adopted to encourage drivers to switch off idling engines.

15. In reply to a Member's enquiry about road repair works, Miss

Margaret Fong assured Members that the Government was determined to streamline the procedures involved and that the Highways Department was devoting a lot of efforts to coordinate road-opening works with a view to minimizing them. Also, a new legislation was passed recently to impose a fee on road opening works. A time limit would be set for each project and additional fees would be charged if the works could not be completed in time.

16. As regards a Member's enquiry on alternative fuel, Mr. Thomas Chow said that the Bureau had been keeping a close watch on clean fuel and vehicles that could be introduced into Hong Kong. An example was the ultra-low sulphur diesel and Hong Kong was quick in adopting it. While the Government was open to new technologies, some of them were still being developed and were not matured enough for introduction into Hong Kong.

17. In response to a Member's question about health impact assessment of transport projects, Mr. Thomas Chow explained that an EIA would be required for designated road projects under the EIA Ordinance and it was necessary for them to meet the Air Quality Objectives (AQOs). The Member commented that AQOs were only the minimum standards and there should be health impact studies on people living along transport networks. Another Member shared the above Member's views on AQOs. He informed the meeting that studies conducted in the United Kingdom showed that some health problems were associated with proximity to roads. The Chairman hoped that the Administration would review the AQOs when more scientific evidence on the relationship between air pollution and respiratory diseases was available. A Member pointed out that outside Europe, vehicle emission regulations in Hong Kong were the most stringent in the world. He also said that it was possible to computerize traffic lights so as to keep the traffic moving and thus reduce vehicle emissions.

18. A Member recalled that in the Third Comprehensive Transport Study, an air pollution modeling exercise had been conducted to predict the air quality after implementing the projects suggested in the study. The modeling exercise identified areas where the AQOs would be exceeded substantially. He asked whether such exercise would be conducted regularly. In response, Miss Margaret Fong informed the meeting that the modeling exercise predicted that the AQOs would generally be complied with if the growth rate of the total number of vehicles was around 3% per year. That prediction proved to be correct. Mr. Thomas Chow supplemented that according to the joint study with Guangdong Province on regional air quality, vehicle emissions in Hong Kong would decline in future due to the improvements in fuel standards and the introduction of more environmentally friendly engines. The emission level would continue to

decline in the long run with more older vehicles replaced by new ones.

19. A Member pointed out that when more roads in the rural areas were opened to vehicles, heavy vehicles could gain access to sites of ecological value and resulted in illegal dumping at those sites. He suggested restricting the access of heavy vehicles to those areas. In response, Miss Margaret Fong said that under the existing Road Traffic Ordinance, heavy vehicles were not allowed to use certain roads for safety reasons or if the roads were within the frontier closed areas. They would consider the Member's points to see whether the envisaged problems could be dealt with through existing legislative controls. The Member proposed and Miss Fong agreed to consider any proposals which green groups might have on the issue.

Transport
Sub-branch

20. A Member pointed out that years ago the Government had considered the introduction of Electronic Road Pricing (ERP) scheme to control the traffic volume in congested areas but the idea had been dropped. Having regard to the success of a similar scheme in London, he asked whether the Government would re-consider the ERP in future. He also enquired about the growth rate of private vehicles in Hong Kong in recent years and the number of vehicles using congested districts. In response, Miss Margaret Fong said that the vehicle growth rates were pretty low in recent years hovering around the 3-4% range. She undertook to provide detailed figures to Members after the meeting. As for vehicles using congested districts, Miss Fong said that the Transport Department conducted traffic census annually to measure the traffic volume on congested roads. Except for a few congested roads in Central where vehicles moved at 7 km/hr only, the traffic speed on urban roads was about 25 km/hr during peak hours which was considered smooth-flowing by international standards. As for the ERP scheme, since the traffic conditions in Hong Kong were generally acceptable, there was no urgent need for the scheme. Nonetheless, the scheme would be considered as one of the possible options to address the congestion problem in Central. She pointed out, however, that traffic management measures alone could not solve the problem, construction of the Central-Wanchai Bypass would provide the much needed capacity to divert the through traffic from the central business district.

Transport
Sub-branch

21. Mrs. Rita Lau pointed out that the support of the public was essential if the ERP scheme was to be introduced. According to a study conducted recently, the community was not keen to have such a scheme in the near future. A Member said that he did not support the introduction of the ERP scheme, as it would not be conducive to economic development. Traffic congestion in Central could be resolved by building the Central-Wanchai Bypass. Another Member informed the meeting that the ERP scheme was also successful in Singapore. Yet, in order to relieve

traffic congestion in Central, a bypass would still be needed to divert traffic away from Central even if an ERP system was in place. In response to a Member's query, Miss Margaret Fong confirmed that the ERP study had already assumed that the Central and Wanchai Bypass would be in place for the Central District, and therefore there was no need for the ERP system. The Chairman considered that the ERP scheme should remain an option for further consideration.

22. A Member said that the toll of the Western Harbour Crossing should be lowered so as to increase its patronage and relieve the congestion of the Cross Harbour Tunnel. In response, Miss Margaret Fong explained that if the toll of the Western Harbour Crossing were lowered, more vehicles would go to the western part of Hong Kong Island aggravating the traffic congestion in Central. Following Miss Fong's point, another Member said that the toll of the Western Harbour Crossing should be lowered after the construction of the Central-Wanchai Bypass, as traffic congestion in Central would have been resolved by then.

23. A Member pointed out that transport planning and land development should be considered jointly. The new town concept had to a certain extent resulted in air pollution, as people living there had to travel to work in urban areas. Miss Margaret Fong agreed that transport planning and land development were inter-related and planning for both should proceed hand-in-hand. When carrying out planning studies on proposed landuse developments, the transport impact of the proposed developments and the adequacy of the committed and planned transport infrastructure in meeting the additional transport demand arising from such developments would be examined together with other planning issues.

24. After declaring himself a resident of Chung Hom Kok, a Member asked whether any rail links to the south side of Hong Kong Island such as Deep Water Bay and Stanley were under planning, as at present access to that area relied on one road only. In response, Miss Margaret Fong said that MTRCL was considering the possibility of merging the West Hon Kong Island Line and South Hong Kong Island Line. The current MTRCL proposed scheme did not include Deep Water Bay and Stanley probably because the population there did not justify a rail link. In addition, there were sufficient bus and minibus routes serving the area. Nonetheless, the Member's views would be reflected to MTRCL for consideration.

Transport
Sub-branch

25. A Member pointed out that bicycles were ideal for the park-and-ride transport mode as they were environmentally friendly and affordable. In response, Miss Margaret Fong said that parking facilities for bicycles were provided near railway stations in the New Territories where

there were cycle tracks leading to major residential areas. The Government had also revised the Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines to incorporate that requirement. However, it would be dangerous to ride on bicycles on busy urban roads. Another Member agreed that the park-and-ride concept would help reduce road traffic. He therefore suggested strengthening the feeder bus system, particularly the minibus feeder routes.

26. In response to a Member's question about the vehicle smoke test, Mr. Thomas Chow said that both the steady mode and the stop-start mode would be adopted for the chassis dynamometer smoke test. The Chairman suggested that the Council should visit a vehicle smoke test centre to enhance Members' understanding on the subject.

ETWB &
Secretariat

27. The Chairman thanked the presentation team. He pointed out the need for strategic environmental assessment for major transport planning studies. He suggested and Miss Fong agreed that the Administration should brief the Council or the EIA Subcommittee when results of such assessment were available.

Transport
Sub-branch

Agenda Item 5 : Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy Stage
Three Public Consultation – Planning Choices for our Future
(ACE Paper 36/2003)

28. The Chairman welcomed Mr. Augustine Ng to the meeting. Mr. Ng briefed Members on the contents of the consultation booklet.

Overall approach

29. In reply to a Member's question, Mr. Augustine Ng confirmed that the Hong Kong 2030 Study (the Study) had taken into account relevant studies and the master plans of the cities in the Pearl River Delta in postulating a future scenario for cross-boundary activities for assessment in the Study. Further details about the Study and a number of technical papers were available in the website at <http://www.info.gov.hk/hk2030>. Another Member said that the Study should point out the development directions that could improve the economic competitiveness of Hong Kong. In reply, Mr. Augustine Ng said that the Study had adopted the broad directions for development as recommended in the report of the Commission on Strategic Development and taken into account the postulated land needs of major economic sectors covered in that report.

30. In reply to a Member's question on development options such as urban renewal that were not included in the Study, Mr. Augustine Ng

agreed that there were many possible development options. For better comprehension by the general public, they had grouped the options into two broad development patterns, namely decentralization and consolidation. However, the components of the two broad development patterns were not mutually exclusive and they had no intention to limit public discussion on the various choices.

31. In response to a Member's question on population assumed in the Study, Mr. Augustine Ng said that according to the population forecast of the Census and Statistics Department, Hong Kong population could go up to around 8.7 million in 2030. The population forecast had taken into account historical trends and existing and committed policies. As they had taken a more visionary approach in the Study, it was considered reasonable to assume that the future could somehow be unlike past and current trends. In view of the Chief Executive's vision that Hong Kong should become Asia's World City, to support a typical economy of a world city they had assumed a larger size of talented and professional people who might come to work in Hong Kong, a slightly higher fertility rate as those people were normally in the prime age group and a slightly larger size of the mobile population in view of the intensifying socio-economic interaction between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

32. The Chairman pointed out that the Study provided the opportunity to resolve long standing problems such as open storage areas in the New Territories and the aging of certain urban areas.

33. In response to a Member's question on the estimated carrying capacity of the population of Hong Kong, Mr. Augustine Ng said that the population limit was affected by many factors and it was neither practicable nor meaningful to define such a limit. The well being of a city depended on how well its population growth was managed rather than the size of the population. Another Member agreed with the above Member and considered that there must be a limit on the size of population that the environment could support. He pointed out that the Mainland had its own problem of aging population and it might not be feasible to rely on the Mainland to supply Hong Kong with young population. A Member agreed that it was difficult to estimate the carrying capacity of population. However, there had to be a level of air quality and water quality, etc. below which it would not be acceptable to the public. That limit would place a cap on the maximum population of the territory, and he hoped that a study could be conducted in that respect. Mr. Augustine Ng said that measuring the population limit in terms of environmental factors was very difficult because it would depend on many factors such as the willingness of the community to adopt more environmental protection measures.

34. Noting that many industrial buildings were left vacant, a Member asked whether the usage restrictions of those buildings could be removed so as to increase the utilization rate. He also considered that the existing handling charge of container terminals was too high and asked whether it could be lowered. Mr. Augustine Ng explained that the Government had noticed the problem of vacant industrial buildings since 1987 and had made use of planning tools to address the problem such as widening the users permissible in industrial buildings and re-zoning industrial land at suitable locations for to other uses. It would require many resources if the Government was to adopt a more active role in solving the problem. More information on that issue was available in a technical paper uploaded on the website. As regards the handling charge at container terminals, Mr. Ng said that he was not in a position to comment since it was a matter outside his ambit.

35. A Member noted that the projected economic figures were very optimistic. With the estimated high-level economic activities, the impact on the environment should be studied carefully to ensure the sustainable development of Hong Kong. Given the optimistic economic projections, she enquired the reason for the high unemployment rate adopted. In response, Mr. Augustine Ng said that the assumptions had taken into account various factors and some figures such as those on tourist arrivals were lower than those predicted by the relevant organizations. The Study adopted those assumptions to test how planning could be done and what the likely impact would be on various aspects. For example, a strategic environmental assessment on the development options was being conducted to assess whether the environmental impacts could be mitigated to acceptable levels. The Chairman hoped that the economic projections would be reviewed and adjusted at regular intervals. Another Member suggested that apart from living spaces, environmental factors such as the greening ratio should be included as a means to measure the quality of life.

Development options

36. Noting that a “trade expo” was proposed in Lok Ma Chau Loop, a Member said that such facilities were usually provided in the city centre where there was better transport support. Given the remoteness of Lok Ma Chau Loop, he believed that a more environmentally friendly development would be more appropriate. The Chairman added that the land contamination problem at the site had to be tackled before any development proposal should be considered for that area.

37. A Member queried the cost-effectiveness of the proposed “University Town” and cautioned that such a project would involve a large amount of resources.

38. Noting that Northwest Lantau was one of the options for future port development, a Member pointed out that the idea was not consistent with the original concept of developing Lantau into a heritage and nature conservation area. In reply, Mr. Augustine Ng said that Northwest Lantau was one of the several options, and the environmental impacts would be carefully assessed and addressed before any option would be adopted. Another Member supported port development in Northwest Lantau, as it was near the landing point of the proposed Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge.

39. A Member said that since Hong Kong's economy was based on trade, commerce and service industry, the centralized option would be more efficient and environmentally friendly. Another Member pointed out that by 2030, more than a quarter of the population would be over 65 and they could move out of the commercial areas.

40. A Member said that in order to prevent another outbreak of SARS, the planning strategy should include better planning design to avoid high-density developments.

41. The Chairman thanked Mr. Augustine Ng for briefing Members on the 2030 Study and hoped the Planning Department would consider Members' suggestions. Mr. Augustine Ng reminded Members that there were a number of technical papers on the Study that would facilitate further consideration of the planning options. The Chairman suggested that the EIA Subcommittee should meet to discuss the technical papers.

EIA
Subcommittee

Agenda Item 6 : Any Other Business

Unauthorized Works at Tung Chung Stream *(ACE Paper 37/2003)*

42. The Chairman welcomed the presentation team to the meeting and referred Members to ACE Paper 37/2003 which was tabled.

43. A Member asked whether the damage could be rectified and what the Government would do to ensure that the reinstatement works would be done in a timely manner. In response, Mr. Yeung Kwok-kuen informed the meeting that the unauthorized works involved digging up of some boulders from the stream, filling of part of the stream and building of some temporary dams. In his views, those physical features of the stream could be restored. Another Member pointed out that although the stream might look the same after reinstatement, the damage to ecology was irreversible, as some species that depended on the habitats there might have died and would be extinct. An ecological monitoring lasting for at least one year should be

conducted after the completion of the reinstatement works.

44. Mr. C C Lay informed the meeting said that Tung Chung Stream was 3km in length and the damaged section was about 300m in the lower stretch of the stream. According to records, there were 13 fish species found along the stream and one of them, namely *Acrossocheilus beijiangensis* was a rare species. The damage was significant and it might take several years to restore the ecological functions of the stream. Rehabilitation work had to be done as soon as possible.

45. In response to a Member's question, Mr. Yeung Kwok-kuen said that the Tung Chung Rural Committee would be held responsible for paying for the cost of the restoration works. As regards enforcement action, Mr. C M Lau said that prosecution could be taken and the offender would be liable on conviction to a fine of \$5,000 and six months' imprisonment. In the meantime, the Tung Chung Rural Committee was required to submit a reinstatement plan and the departments concerned would assess whether it would meet the requirements set out in paragraph 11 of ACE Paper 37/2003. In parallel, the Government would formulate a reinstatement plan as a fallback. If the party concerned failed to carry out the reinstatement works, the Government would carry out the works and claim the costs from the offender.

46. In reply to the Chairman's enquiry, Mr. C M Lau said that they would circulate the reinstatement plan submitted by the Tung Chung Rural Committee to the relevant departments for consideration. The Chairman urged that the Government should start its own reinstatement works once the offender failed to submit a workable plan. A Member said that all parties that were responsible for the damage should be asked to pay for the cost of the reinstatement works. Another Member pointed out that the reinstatement works were a highly specialist job and that it would be unrealistic to expect the offender to come up with a workable plan. He said that EPD and AFCD representatives should be present at the coming meeting with the Tung Chung Rural Committee scheduled for 10 December. A Member suggested that a task force comprising the relevant departments should be formed to oversee the reinstatement of the damaged section of the stream.

47. In response to a Member's question on whether caution statements were taken for prosecution, Mr. C M Lau said that they had given the Tung Chung Rural Committee verbal and written warnings and had posted notices along the stream indicating illegal occupation on government land.

48. A Member pointed out that the matter had to be dealt with seriously to give the message to the public that such offences would not be tolerated and would be punished severely. He was disappointed that the local Lands Office failed to detect the illegal works earlier, which were said to have started in June, and that the Government did not take immediate follow-up actions during the initial period. Another Member hoped that the Government would examine how to prevent further occurrence of that kind of illegal works. In response to a Member's enquiry on whether the EIA Ordinance had been contravened, Mr. Rob Law said that the project was not a designated project and hence it was not subject to control under the EIA Ordinance.

49. A Member said that the use of machinery in restoring the stream might cause further damage and hence the reinstatement works should be done manually. Efforts should focus on preserving the fish species and restoring the environment rather than taking prosecution actions. Another Member said that an ecological assessment on the stream should be done before commencement of any reinstatement works.

50. A Member suggested and the Chairman agreed that Members should visit the stream to have a better understanding of the situation. In response to the Member's request, Mr. C M Lau agreed to provide plans on the stream to the Secretariat for distribution to Members.

Lands
Department

(Post-meeting note: The visit was conducted on 10 December 2003 and the plans were distributed to Members on the same day. Revised plans were issued on 24 December 2003.)

51. Mr. C M Lau said that the excavation works seemed to be mainly on the temporary road rather than on the stream. As the road fell partly on government land, they had passed the case to the Department of Justice for necessary prosecution actions. He also said that after the issue of warnings, the unauthorized works had ceased.

52. The Chairman concluded that the damaged section of the Tung Chung Stream had to be reinstated as soon as possible. A task force should be set up by the relevant government departments to oversee the reinstatement works. If the reinstatement plan submitted by the party responsible was not acceptable, the task force should come up with its own plan, proceed with the works and claim the cost from the party concerned. Prosecution actions should also be taken in parallel.

Progress of the Harbour Area Treatment Scheme (HATS)

53. In response to a Member's enquiry about the progress of

HATS, Ms. Doris Cheung informed Members that the trial on compact sewage treatment technology trials had been completed and the major findings were uploaded onto the Internet for public information. The Biological Aerated Filter technologies were able to meet the prescribed effluent standards under local conditions. The results from the trials had provided useful input for the environmental and engineering feasibility studies (EEFS) for the International Review Panel's HATS options. The EEFS would be completed soon and the Council would be briefed on the findings around the first quarter of 2004. As the remaining stages of HATS would involve a substantial amount of public investment, a community-wide consensus would be needed on how the investment should be made, what pace should be adopted as well as how the investment should be funded by the government and the community as a whole. The Administration would consult the public fully on the way forward before deciding on how to take forward the remaining stages of HATS and the Council would play an important role in the consultation exercise.

Proposed Council meeting schedule for 2004

54. Members endorsed the proposed Council meeting schedule for 2004.

Agenda Item 7 : Date of Next Meeting

55. The next meeting would be held on 12 January 2004.

**ACE Secretariat
December 2003**