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(ACE Paper 2/96)
for advice

Third Review of the 1989
White Paper on the Environment

Introduction

In June 1995, Members' views were sought on an outline of the Third White Paper Review (paper 26/95 refers). This paper presents a draft of the Review (Annex A) and seeks Members' views before it is faired. **Members are asked to keep the draft confidential pending submission to the Executive Council.**

Outline of the Third Review

2 The Third Review comprises three main parts -

- a) a checklist of progress against targets set out in the 1989 White Paper and the two previous reviews;
- b) a narrative chapter describing progress achieved in more detail; and
- c) a forward-looking chapter addressing the issue of sustainability, and describing proposed Government actions.

There is also a summary/conclusion section highlighting items for action in the next couple of years. The review will also include messages from the Governor and SPEL. These are being drafted. They will not include any substantive new material.

Checklist of Progress against Targets

3 The checklist reports on 132 items. Table 1 below summarises the situation.

Where are we now?

4 The narrative chapter amplifies the checklist, highlighting the background situation, progress made, and problems encountered along the way. An underlying intention of this chapter is to remind readers of the scale of the programmes and actions now being pursued; the practical, social and political issues faced in pursuing them; and the need to press-ahead to complete all current tasks while at the same time looking beyond the present programmes.

Where should we be heading?

5 This section is likely to receive most attention, as it addresses our next major challenge: to incorporate sustainability concepts into decisions which have an impact on the environment. It comprises -

- discussion of the concept of sustainability, giving some locally relevant examples;

Table 1

Targets in White Paper	119
Reported completed in 2nd WPR	76
Reported in 3WPR -	total
	of which
	<i>completed</i> 19
	<i>on target</i> 19
	<i>running late</i> 4
	<i>ongoing</i> 1
Further commitments made in 2WPR (Ch. 12) and reported on in 3WPR	89
	<i>completed</i> 26
	<i>ongoing</i> 50
	<i>late start</i> 11
	<i>other</i> 2

- a description of the background and aims of a proposed consultancy study called SUSDEV21 (Sustainability and Development for the 21st Century) which will develop sustainability indicators and map out a strategic development framework incorporating sustainability concepts and criteria;
- announcement of a review of conservation policy which has begun in the Planning, Environment and Lands Branch;
- a note of the need to give more attention to the environment in our national accounts system;
- discussion on community awareness and environmental education; and
- proposals for life cycle analysis and eco-labelling; and

The drafting process

6 During discussion at the June meeting of ACE, Members broadly endorsed the proposed focus on sustainable development. They were informed of the Administration's intention to consult green groups, Legco Environmental Affairs Panel and business organisations before drafting began. At Annex B is a summary of the main comments received. Many of the points raised in Annex C are addressed by current and planned initiatives described in the Third Review, such as SUSDEV21 (see para 7 below and Annex C); the review of conservation policy; the forthcoming review of the Town Planning Ordinance, the forthcoming Environmental Impact Assessment Bill; and follow-up work on the Waste Reduction Study and other current studies.

SUSDEV21

7 At Annex C is an outline of the proposed study, identifying the tasks, timeline and study process. Details of the study were finalised too late for inclusion in the printed Estimates for 1996/97, but funds have been reserved. Finance Committee approval will be sought in April 1996. We shall meanwhile discuss the proposed study with the relevant Legislative Council panels, and make all necessary preparations, on a non-commitment basis, to enable the consultancy to be let as soon as possible after FC approval is given.

Timetable

8 The original intention was to publish the Third Review before the end of 1995. Mainly because preparations for SUSDEV21 have taken considerable time, this target has slipped slightly. We now hope that a faired draft, taking into account any comments made by Members today, can be submitted to the Executive Council in February 1996 for publication in March/April.

Advice sought

9 Members are invited to comment on the draft of the Third White Paper Review.

Planning, Environment and Lands Branch
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