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for information

Fourth Review of the 1989 White Paper on the Environment

Introduction

In March 1997, Members' views were sought on an outline of the Fourth White Paper Review (paper 18/97 refers). Since then we have drafted the document and updated the progress made against the targets set out in the original 1989 White Paper and all previous reviews. This paper presents the progress report for Members' information (Annexes A and B)

2. During discussion at the March 1997 meeting of ACE, Members broadly endorsed the proposed focus on sustainable development and were informed of the Administration's intention to consult green groups and the LegCo Environmental Affairs Panel before drafting began. Many of the comments raised, summarized in Annex C, are addressed by current and planned initiatives described in the progress report.

Outline of the Fourth Review

3. The Fourth Review builds on the theme of the Third Review with particular emphasis on planning against pollution. Developing sustainable development programmes will continue to be the main focus.

4. The progress report comprises two main parts:

- A checklist of progress against targets set out in the 1989 White Paper and the three previous reviews; and
- A summary of the main measures already planned to be carried out in the next two years.

Checklist of Progress Against Targets

5. The checklist reports progress on 79 items of which 90% were completed since the last review. The table below summarizes the situation.

Progress Against Targets

Targets	No. of Targets	Percentage Completed
Targets set out in the 1989 White Paper:	119	
• Completed and on-going in previous reviews	114	96%
• Completed and on-going up to the 4th Review	117	98%
New initiatives proposed in the 2nd Review:	89	
• Completed and on-going in previous reviews	75	84%
• Completed and on-going up to the 4th Review	85	96%
Further commitments made in the 3rd Review:	28	
• Completed and on-going in the 4th Review	26	93%

Integrated Plans for Environmental Protection and Conservation

6. The main actions for the next two years are presented in the forms of integrated plans which cover the following key issues:

- planning against pollution, including implementing the Environment's Impact Assessment Ordinance;
- prevention and control of air, water and noise pollution, outlining the current progress of various control strategies and forthcoming plans to improve environmental quality;
- waste management strategies focusing on the Waste Reduction Plan;
- progress on conservation of energy, natural environment and biodiversity;
- community awareness and environmental education as well as support to industry;
- implementation of the polluter pays principle and use of economic instruments for environmental protection; and
- update on regional co-operation, including the work done by the Hong Kong-Guangdong Environmental Protection Liaison Group and participation in international fora such as APEC

7. The summary highlights the scale of various environmental 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.

The Way Forward

8. We will put this progress report onto the Internet homepages of this Bureau and the Environmental Protection Department for access by the public.

9. This is the last review of the 1989 White Paper. Apart from providing a basis for the preparation and discussion of our strategic environmental policy options for the next century, it also serves as the precursor to the next White Paper on the Environment - Hong Kong's Agenda 21. The next White Paper will be the blueprint for the preparation of strategies, plans and policies for sustainable development in the 21st Century. The findings and recommendations of the SUSDEV 21 Study will fit into the framework of Hong Kong's Agenda 21.

Advice Sought

10. Members are invited to note the progress report on the 4th White Paper Review.

*Planning, Environment and Lands Bureau
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