

COUNCIL FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Paper No. 01/03

Terms of Reference of the Council and Establishment of Sub-committees

Purpose

This paper invites Members' views on the appropriate Terms of Reference for the Council for Sustainable Development, and puts forward proposals as to the establishment of sub-committees to tackle specific aspects of the Council's work.

Proposal

Terms of Reference

2. In his 1999 Policy Address, the Chief Executive (CE) announced that the functions of the Council for Sustainable Development would be –

“to provide expert advice to the Government and keep the public regularly informed about its work, so that we can build a better understanding of the concept of sustainable development. It will also encourage the community to put the concept of sustainable development into practice”.

3. The CE also proposed that a \$100 million grant be made “to support community initiatives on sustainable development, especially on education programmes, for citizens and students to develop a strong awareness of sustainability”.

4. Internationally, there are currently Councils for Sustainable Development in some 80 countries. The status and role of these Councils vary from region to region, but some common roles of these councils are –

- (a) To facilitate participation and cooperation of civil and economic society and governments for sustainable development;
- (b) To integrate economic, social and environmental perspectives;
- (c) To look at the local implications of global agreements such as Agenda 21 and other international conventions related to sustainable development; and
- (d) To provide a systematic and informed participation of civil society in UN deliberations.¹

5. In line with the vision of the CE as set out in the 1999 Policy Address, and taking account of the roles played by Sustainable Development Councils overseas, we **propose** the following terms of reference for the Council for Sustainable Development for members' consideration –

- (a) To advise the Government on the priority areas that it should address in promoting sustainable development;
- (b) To advise on the preparation of a sustainable development strategy for Hong Kong that will integrate economic, social and environmental perspectives;
- (c) To facilitate community participation in the promotion of sustainable development in Hong Kong through the award of grants from the Sustainable Development Fund²; and
- (d) To promote public awareness and understanding of the principles of sustainable development in partnership with stakeholders.

¹ Source: OECD (2002) "Sustainable Development Strategies: A Resource Book", Earthscan: London

² Subject to approval by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council to the relevant funding

Establishment of Sub-committees

6. In order to allow the Council to focus on the broader issues involved in promoting sustainable development, we **propose** that Members consider establishing the following sub-committees, under the chairmanship of individual Council Members, to coordinate specific individual tasks –

- **Strategy Sub-committee** – to oversee the process of formulating a sustainable development strategy for Hong Kong. The Sub-committee would organise and participate in, as necessary, workshops or other forums with stakeholders with a view to developing proposals for the full Council's consideration; and
- **Education and Publicity Sub-committee** – to oversee initiatives aimed at promoting public awareness of sustainable development, including the assessment of applications for grants from the Sustainable Development Fund.

7. To provide for a wide range of views and greater stakeholder involvement in the work of the Council, we **propose** that Members consider co-opting to these sub-committees people from outside the Council membership. With Members' agreement, we shall discuss with the Chairmen of the relevant sub-committees the inclusion of additional members.

Further Action

8. Subject to Members' views, we shall publicise the proposed Terms of Reference for the Council. We shall arrange for Sub-committee meetings to take place in advance of the next full Council meeting.

Council Secretariat
March 2003