

Summary of reports from the Discussion session

Participants were divided into five discussion groups. Most participants agreed that there were rich resources in the cultural and ecological tourism of the Southern District during the discussion. They formulated and presented action plans under these themes with the aim of promoting the concept of sustainable development and putting it to practice.

The proposals put forward by four of the groups all focused on preserving and capitalizing Aberdeen's local unique characteristics. As Aberdeen was once a fishermen's community, participants suggested to make good use of the local resources and capital to organise a variety of activities to introduce Aberdeen's unique history and local culture to more members of the public. Meanwhile, Aberdeen's unique local characteristics can be highlighted so that they can be preserved and leave a legacy.

To put the SD concept into practice, the participants' proposals had all embraced social, environmental and economical elements. The social approach included the suggestion to set up an exhibition gallery and to organise fishermen to introduce Aberdeen's history, fishing boats, fishing equipment and everyday living items used by the fishermen ...etc to the visitors. Cruises and workshops could also be organised by fishermen to help the public understand their life and to learn the traditional ways to prepare delicacies such as shrimp paste, fish ball etc. From the environmental aspect, the public could understand and learn to treasure the valuable marine resources and the importance of protecting the marine ecosystem through sharing from the fishermen as well as their own first-hand experience. On the economic front, the participants suggested to re-introduce the typhoon shelter food bazaar, the fish market and to set up specialty handicraft stalls so as to make Aberdeen a tourist attraction of rich local flavour. This could encourage both locals and tourists to visit and consume in Aberdeen which could, in turn, help boost its local economy.

The other group chose to discuss issues arose from redevelopment in the Eastern District of the Hong Kong Island in recent years. They also discussed on ways to ensure that future redevelopment projects could proceed towards a sustainable development direction. It was pointed out that new developments, especially those along the waterfront, were both tall and dense thus creating a wall effect and blocking all the views, air passages and light penetration of the older areas. Moreover, all buildings looked

identical, resulting in a dull and uninteresting community without any character. Participants were of the view that the Eastern District actually consisted of quite a number of heritage sites with high historical value and a variety of social resources. Group members urged the government to make it mandatory for developers to provide community facilities and open space without allowing any increase in the density and height of its development in land sales (including the sale of the Oil Street and North Point Estate sites). Developers should also contribute to local heritage and cultural preservation, such as providing permanent performing venue for Canton Opera and making good use of historical relics and monuments, as this is the way towards establishing a sustainable community.