

International Business Committee

**Public Consultation on Paper on
The New Radio Television Hong Kong:
Fulfilling its Mission as a Public Service Broadcaster**

Purpose

This paper invite Members' views on how best Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) should operate to achieve its mission as a public service broadcaster, the programming direction it should take, the ways and means to evaluate its performance and enhance its accountability to the community.

Background

2. The subject of public service broadcasting (PSB) and the future of RTHK have been debated in the community for over 20 years. In January 2006, the Chief Executive (CE) appointed an independent Committee on Review of Public Service Broadcasting (the Review Committee) to examine the subject of PSB. The Review Committee submitted its report to the Government in March 2007.

3. On 22 September 2009, having regard to the Review Committee's report and all relevant considerations, the Chief Executive in Council (CE in C) decided that RTHK would be tasked to take up the mission to serve as the public service broadcaster for Hong Kong, with safeguards and appropriate resources provided to allow it to do so effectively. This decision marks the beginning of a new RTHK, with new mission and objectives.

4. Specifically, the CE in C has decided that:

- (a) RTHK should remain as a Government department with key recommendations in the Review Committee's report implemented to allow it to fulfill its role as a public service broadcaster serving with specific public purposes, strengthened corporate governance and greater accountability to the community;

- (b) the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau should consult the public on how the new RTHK should operate in future to achieve its mission as a public service broadcaster, the programming direction it should take, the ways and means to evaluate its performance and enhance its accountability to the community;
- (c) subject to the outcome of the public consultation exercise and the established mechanism governing the allocation of new resources, RTHK should be allocated resources and frequency spectrum to enhance its operations and expand the scope of its services, including the provision of dedicated digital television and radio channels to be used as platforms for more original local productions, overseas co-operation, community participation and national broadcasts;
- (d) subject to necessary approval, RTHK should establish and manage a dedicated fund to support and encourage community and ethnic minority involvement in broadcasting, to meet the rising public expectations in the community; and
- (e) planning for the re-provisioning of the Broadcasting House to Tseung Kwan O should proceed as a priority.

Public consultation

5. On 5 October 2009, we launched a two-month public consultation to gauge the public's views on the following issues -

- (a) public purposes for RTHK to achieve its mission as public service broadcaster in Hong Kong;
- (b) the operation of the Board of Advisors to enhance the corporate governance of RTHK and its accountability to the public;
- (c) the issue of a Charter to set out the relationship between the Government and RTHK and the various matters to be covered by the Charter, including editorial independence of RTHK;
- (d) the performance evaluation of RTHK and the performance objectives/indicators to be adopted;

- (e) the extended mode of service delivery for RTHK in future; and
- (f) the new programming opportunities of RTHK.

A copy of the consultation document entitled “The New Radio Television Hong Kong: Fulfilling its Mission as a Public Service Broadcaster” is attached.

Advice sought

6. Members are invited to note the issues set out in the attached consultation document and provide their comments.

Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
October 2009