

MINUTES of the meeting of the Hong Kong Business Coalition on the Environment held on 19 March 2007 at 11:00 am in the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce.

Chairman

James Graham Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce

Guest

Chandran Nair Founder and Chief Executive of Global Institute For Tomorrow

Members

Jack Maisano	American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
Alan Seigrist	American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
Sandy Edge	Australian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
Andrew Thomson	Business Environment Council
Bruce Hicks	Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
Fergus O'Rorke	Canadian Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong
John Wong	The Chinese General Chamber of Commerce
Jens-Erik Olsen	Danish Chamber of Commerce Hong Kong
Paul Zimmerman	Dutch Business Association
Elsa Yeung	Hong Kong Bahrain Business Association
Patrick Chan	Hong Kong Construction Association Ltd
Alex Fong	Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
W K Chan	Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce
Stewart Ballard	US & Foreign Commercial Service, American Consulate General HK
Olevia Yim	US & Foreign Commercial Service, American Consulate General HK

Meeting Secretary

Thinex Shek Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce

1. Public Engagement Exercise on Better Air Quality

The Chairman welcomed Mr Chandran Nair, Convenor of the Support Group on Better Air Quality of the Council for Sustainable Development (CSD) and invited him to brief members on the latest development and the preparation work of the public engagement exercise on air quality.

- 1.1 Mr Chandran Nair told members that the CSD released a report in December 2006 entitled "Clean Air and Blue Skies – The Choice is Ours" to engage the government in the development of clean air solutions and to help provoke a debate on air quality issue in the society. Instead of a scientific or policy oriented paper, the document addressed the reasons and problems of air pollution which could be easily understood by the general public.
- 1.2 The report considered that everyone was part of the problem, including those of the business community such as the electricity, transport and industry sectors.

The 13 broad recommendations included some policy suggestions requiring further discussion with stakeholders to decide on appropriate actions to be taken.

- 1.3 The Council then identified three specific issues for public engagement, which included [1] measures to be taken on the high API days, [2] electronic road pricing and [2] demand side management. The Support Group was to help prepare the public engagement process leading to concrete actions.
- 1.4 Mr Chandran Nair agreed with Mr Jens-Erik Olsen of the Danish Chamber that the public engagement exercise should aim at developing willingness to solve the problem of air pollution, rather than involving in scientific debate. He believed that the general public was fully aware of the issues. It was time to develop solutions.
- 1.5 Mr Alan Seigrist told members that the American Chamber (AmCham) had been very much concerned of the air quality issue in Hong Kong. The AmCham would promote energy conservation among members including services providers, suppliers and contractors. Mr Seigrist also suggested to seek ways to reduce pollution of private vehicles by changing the driving behaviour of the general public.
- 1.6 In response to Dr Andrew Thomson's views on demand side management, Mr Chandran Nair believed that the business community should not just voice their concern or criticism but take action.
- 1.7 Mr Paul Zimmerman of the Dutch Business Association asked whether there would be any programme to engage SMEs, such as those small truckers, in the exercise. Mr Chandran Nair told members that the Support Group included a representative from the transportation sector. Unions of transportation companies would be invited to express views on the feasibility of policy implementation. Dr W K Chan of the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce (HKGCC), who was also a member of the Support Group, added that the CSD usually worked with collaborators such as HKGCC and Business Environment Council in the public engagement exercise, and he thought that CSD could extend the invitation to those trucking organisations as collaborating parties.

The Chairman thanked Mr Chandran Nair for his presentation, who left the meeting this point.

2. Confirmation of Minutes

Minutes of the BCE meeting held on 29 September 2006 were confirmed and signed.

3. Project CLEAN AIR Update

The Chairman invited Dr W K Chan to update members on the latest development of the Project CLEAN AIR.

- 3.1 Dr W K Chan told members that a clean production visit would be organised on 21 March 2007. Led by the Hon Cheng Yiu-tong, Convenor of the Sustainable Development Subgroup of the Greater PRD Business Council (GPRDBC), the 40-member delegation including BCE members and media representatives would visit the Hong Kong-invested Esquel Group in Guangdong to inspect its clean production facilities. The visit was part of the Project CLEAN AIR through which PRD enterprises would be encouraged to emulate the example of factories employing successful clean production facilities
- 3.2 The HKGCC, BCE and GPRDBC together with the Guangdong counterparts would also jointly organise a clean production training workshop in Guangzhou in June.
- 3.3 To reinforce the work of the Project CLEAN AIR, the HKGCC and BCE were initiating a certification scheme to give recognition to Charter-compliant companies in partnership with the Business Environment Council. Selected Charter endorsers would be invited to take part in a pilot scheme offered by professional consultancy services on a full-subsidy basis.
- 3.4 A web-based platform had been established for information sharing among Charter endorsers, and for providers of technical and financial clean air solutions to display their product and services. The ultimate aim was to bring technology solutions to the PRD with the assistance of the HKSAR Government and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council.
- 3.5 Mr Bruce Hicks of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce (CanCham) advised to highlight the economic benefit of clean production in the visit to Guangdong. Mr Paul Zimmerman of the Dutch Business Association recommended to promote environmental best practices in China in particular to pharmaceutical industry. Mr Sandy Edge of the Australian Chamber of Commerce advised to get more involvement from the Chinese side in the promotion.

4. Environmental Initiatives of BCE Members

The Chairman invited BCE members to share information and seek support on their environmental initiatives and programmes.

- 4.1 Mr Fergus O'Rorke told members that the CanCham would present its fourth Hong Kong Sustainable Development Index on 2 April 2007, which was an important mechanism for identifying and quantifying the top priority areas for sustainable development.
- 4.2 Mr Stewart Ballard shared with members a case study of 38% improvement in energy efficiency by a clean production factory in Shenzhen. He believed that it was important to showcase the achievements of businesses, and to promote clean production by bring in latest technologies, through lining up more solution providers and financial resources. He encouraged members of BCE organisations to take part in the P2E2 programme, which had recently received the support from the International Finance Corporation.

- 4.3 Mr Alex Fong believed that the HKSAR Government should also initiate similar projects to promote energy efficiency and emissions reduction, but it would require a change of mindset to have clean production as a form of business opportunities rather than environmental control.
- 4.4 Dr Andrew Thomson told members that the Business Environment Council had identified three specific themes for its EnviroSeries Conference this year, covering sustainable development funding, green building and green manufacturing. It would also launch the Eco Product Awards, of which the HKGCC would be one of the co-organisers. The Council had also opened a new office in Shenzhen to facilitate technology transfer.

5. A.O.B.

There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 12:25 pm.

Confirmed by

Secretary
13 April 2007

Chairman