

**Confirmed Minutes of the 260<sup>th</sup> Meeting  
of the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE)  
on 4 September 2023 at 2:30 p.m.**

**Present:**

Prof John CHAI, BBS, JP (Chairman)  
Prof Kenneth LEUNG, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Dr Sylvia CHAN, MH  
Ms Ada FUNG, BBS  
Ms Linda HO  
Dr Theresa KWONG  
Prof Alexis LAU, JP  
Prof Dennis LEUNG  
Mr Simon NG  
Mr Daryl NG, SBS, JP  
Prof Dan TSANG  
Prof WONG Kam-bo  
Dr Raymond YAU  
Mr Alan LO, JP (Secretary)

**Absent with Apologies:**

Ms Carmen CHAN, BBS, JP  
Mr Eric HO  
Mr Alex KWAN  
Mr Albert SU, MH, JP  
Ms Christina TANG  
Dr WONG Kwok-yan, MH  
Dr William YU

**In Attendance:**

Dr Samuel CHUI, JP	Director of Environmental Protection, Environmental Protection Department (EPD)
Mr Simon CHAN	Assistant Director (Conservation), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)
Ms Maggie CHIN	Assistant Director of Planning / Technical Services, Planning Department (PlanD)
Miss Lorraine YAN	Principal Information Officer, Environment and Ecology Bureau (EEB)
Ms Karen CHEK	Chief Executive Officer (CBD), EEB
Miss Sally SHEK	Executive Officer (CBD) 1, EEB
Miss Avynn WONG	Executive Officer (CBD) 2, EEB

**In Attendance for Item 3:**

Mr Desmond WU	Principal Assistant Secretary for Environment and Ecology (Nature Conservation), EEB
Dr Flora MOK	Senior Conservation Officer (Biodiversity), AFCD
Dr Terence NG	Conservation Officer (Biodiversity) 1, AFCD

**In Attendance for Item 4:**

Dr Kenneth LEUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Environment and Ecology (Air Policy), EEB
Dr Sunny CHEUNG	Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Air Policy), EEB
Dr Cathy LEE	Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Air Policy) 1, EEB
Dr Jackie NG	Senior Environmental Protection Officer (Air Science and Modelling) 4, EPD

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Action

The Chairman welcomed all to the meeting and informed Members that apologies of absence had been received from Ms Carmen Chan, Mr Eric Ho, Mr Alex Kwan, Mr Albert Su, Ms Christina Tang, Dr Wong Kwok-yan and Dr William Yu.

**Item 1 : Confirmation of the draft minutes of the 259th meeting held on 10 July 2023 (Closed-door session)**

2. The draft minutes of the last meeting were confirmed without any proposed amendments.

**Item 2 : Matters arising (Closed-door session)**

3. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

**Item 3 : Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan Implementation (ACE Papers 15/2023 and 16/2023)**

4. The Chairman invited Members to refer to *ACE Paper 15/2023* which briefed Members on the overall implementation and major achievements of the Hong Kong Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (BSAP) 2016-21. A background note on the subject (*ACE Paper 16/2023*) had been circulated to Members before the meeting.

5. There was no declaration of interest by Members.

*(The presentation team joined the meeting at this juncture.)*

**Presentation cum Question-and-Answer Session (Open session)**

6. Mr Simon Chan gave an opening remark and Dr Flora Mok briefed Members with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation on the implementation of the BSAP 2016-21, recent developments in global biodiversity conservation as well as the way forward.

*Implementation*

7. Members commended the efforts of the Government in implementing the first BSAP. In response to a Member's enquiry about the work between 2021 and 2023, Mr Simon Chan responded that the ongoing and long-term actions set out under the current BSAP had continued to make progress during the past two years.

8. Three Members held the view that the Government should expedite action and promulgate the next BSAP early. While noting that promulgation of the next BSAP was targeted in 2025 pending the release of the national BSAP, one of the above Members suggested that EEB/AFCD might start doing the preparation work such as aligning the ongoing measures with those of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF). Mr Simon Chan responded that EEB and AFCD had already kick-started the preparation work and would strive to promulgate the next BSAP as soon as it was ready, subject to the updated version of the national BSAP to be promulgated.

9. A Member enquired about Hong Kong's local conditions and capabilities and their impact on the formulation of the next BSAP. Mr Simon Chan responded that the spirit of the GBF was for the participating parties to contribute to the global targets as a whole with reference to their own characteristics. For example, while targets related to the participation or welfare of indigenous people might not be relevant to Hong Kong, Hong Kong would formulate the next BSAP with a view to contributing to the global targets on other aspects as far as practicable.

10. A Member suggested with the support of two other Members that the Government should quantify the achievements and positive outcomes on biodiversity enhancement under the BSAP to facilitate evaluation and to tell a good story to the society. The Member further suggested that the Government should set out the ultimate goals upon the implementation of the BSAP. Another Member added that the publicity efforts to promote the positive outcomes should be enhanced.

11. Considering that some action items in the BSAP were ongoing, a Member opined and echoed by two other Members that the current report indicating an 84% completion of the specific actions might give an incorrect impression that the Government was not able to fulfil the targets in the plan. EEB/AFCD was suggested to review how best to more accurately reflect the actual implementation progress of the initiatives.

EEB/  
AFCD

12. A Member suggested that the Government should allocate sufficient funding for the next BSAP and consider establishing an endowment fund for the better management of the Wetland Conservation Parks to be developed. Mr Simon Chan thanked the Member for his suggestion and said that while a number of funding schemes were available for supporting the conduct of various conservation projects assisting in promotion of biodiversity, the feasibility of establishing further fund could be explored when opportunity arose.

13. Given that the Government had already been working on the promotion and enhancement of biodiversity in Hong Kong for over a decade, the Chairman aspired that more aggressive targets should be set in the next BSAP with reference to the GBF. The Chairman added that the Government should give due considerations to mainstreaming biodiversity elements into pillars of Hong Kong's competitiveness, such as cultural and tourism development, as part of its strategies to garner greater incentives for progressing biodiversity conservation in Hong Kong.

#### *Conservation Measures*

14. With reference to the recent whale case, two Members asked whether the Government had plan to strengthen conservation of marine species in the next BSAP. Mr Simon Chan advised that there were species action plans under the BSAP for the protection of species of conservation concern such as Chinese Pangolin. He added that AFCD would continue to review the need to draw up species action plans for other species in the next BSAP.

15. To step up efforts in marine conservation, a Member suggested with the support of another Member that the Tolo Channel and Port Shelter should be designated as fisheries protection areas, Pak Nai and Shui Hau as marine protected areas, whereas the three Wetland Conservation Parks in the Northern Metropolis should be established to increase the ratio of protected area in Hong Kong.

16. Given that the targets set out under the GBF were global targets to be achieved by all participating parties as a whole, Mr Simon Chan shared that it was not an obligation for Hong Kong to fully achieve all the targets. The above notwithstanding, he highlighted that the Government had been increasing the ratio of marine protected areas, for example, the proposed North Lantau Marine Park would soon be established.

17. With reference to the national target on nearshore water quality, a Member suggested that there should be cross-departmental efforts for EPD, the Water Services Department, Drainage Services Department and Civil Engineering and Development Department to maximise the use of the Dry Weather Flow Interceptors with a view to minimising surface runoff and water pollution during both the dry and wet seasons in the next BSAP. The Member added that the Government should strive to upgrade the sewage treatment facilities to the highest level of treatment, i.e. tertiary treatment, as far as practicable in the next BSAP. To help reduce water

pollution, Mr Simon Chan remarked that EPD had been working on the provision of sewerage for the unsewered villages.

18. A Member viewed that the Government should step up efforts in restoring the ecosystem at a larger scale with the use of nature-based solutions such as reforestation, mangrove plantation, coral restoration as well as oyster reef installation. Another Member offered some other suggestions including the use of local waste materials such as food waste, construction waste, compost, animal feces and biochar to restore eroded land habitats and enhance biodiversity. One of the above Members added that the Government should devote more resources to the prevention of hill fires as they would cause damages to our natural habitats. For example, the Government could use artificial intelligence and geographic information system to detect hill fires. Public education should also be strengthened to raise the awareness of hill fire prevention.

19. Mr Simon Chan shared that the Government had already been carrying out ecosystem restoration work using nature-based solutions by building eco-shorelines and revitalising water bodies. He said that the Government would further explore more nature-based solutions to enhance our ecosystems. Mr Chan added that AFCD had been using robotics to detect hill fires in country parks and would continue to explore solutions for minimising adverse impacts caused by hill fires to country parks.

20. Two Members expressed concern on the impact of global warming and climate change on species and biodiversity while another Member highlighted the importance of driving sustainable consumption and food waste reduction in the next BSAP. Pointing out that some mega-scale development projects such as Northern Metropolis and Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands were in full swing, the Chairman opined that the Government should put in place detailed plans to incorporate BSAP into these new projects. The Member added that the Government should also strengthen waste pollution control and clean up the environment of the brownfields with appropriate development and remediation strategies in these projects. Mr Simon Chan thanked Members for their suggestions which would be taken into consideration as appropriate.

### *Publicity and Education*

21. Pointing out that there was insufficient public awareness and understanding of the need to conserve biodiversity, a Member considered that the Government should strengthen publicity and public education. Another Member suggested the incorporation of ecological conservation in the school curriculum from kindergarten to tertiary education. Another Member indicated that teaching/learning materials with messages on the positive outcomes brought by the current BSAP could be produced to help the general public understand the good work of EEB/AFCD while promoting biodiversity at the same time.

22. Mr Simon Chan said that the concept of biodiversity had already been incorporated into the primary and secondary school curricula. He elaborated that AFCD had been hosting vast amount of biodiversity information on the Hong Kong Biodiversity Information Hub (HKBIH) website and other social media platforms such as the “Mr. B Nature Classroom” Facebook page. AFCD would continue to strengthen efforts in publicity and education to raise public awareness of biodiversity.

23. A Member further suggested and echoed by another Member that the Government should establish designated biodiversity or natural history museums for the promotion of nature conservation while showcasing the diverse species of Hong Kong. One of the two Members added that the Hong Kong Biodiversity Museum of The University of Hong Kong was looking for venues to expand their facility, and that Tai Mo Shan Youth Hostel would be a good place for establishing a biodiversity museum given the rich fauna and flora in the surrounding area. Another Member added that various types of natural history museums should be established to showcase the various natural treasures such as wetlands of Hong Kong. Mr Simon Chan mentioned that AFCD would continue to seek opportunities to collaborate with different organisations on establishment of biodiversity museums, and he thanked one of the above Members for his recommendation on the venue in Tai Mo Shan.

AFCD

#### *Community Involvement*

24. A Member suggested and another Member echoed that the Government should devote more resources in the next BSAP to engage and motivate the participation of the business sector. Sharing his company’s collaboration with the Ocean Park on the Coral REEFStorage Centre, another Member remarked that many corporations were eager to make contributions to the environment. Highlighting the business opportunities brought by green finance and climate change resilience actions, Mr Simon Chan responded that the Government would strengthen the engagement with the business sector in the next BSAP. Another Member added that the Government should promote the good work of the business sector on environmental, social, and corporate governance to inspire the wider participation from the public.

25. Pointing out the limited inclusion of biodiversity elements in the current BEAM Plus New Buildings Manual, a Member suggested and Mr Simon Chan agreed that AFCD would liaise with the Hong Kong Green Building Council to further incorporate biodiversity considerations into the relevant sections of the manual in the upcoming update exercise. The Member added that the forthcoming framework to be released by the Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures would further motivate the business sector to contribute to nature conservation.

AFCD

*Conclusion*

26. The Chairman concluded the discussion and invited the Government representatives to take on board the suggestions of Members.

*(Mr Desmond Wu, Dr Flora Mok and Dr Terence Ng left the meeting at the end of the Question-and-Answer Session of Item 3.)*

**Internal Discussion Session (Closed-door)**

27. While commending the design of AFCD's HKBIH website, a Member considered that the public might not fully appreciate the Government's efforts in enhancing biodiversity through the website. She suggested that AFCD should strengthen publicity to raise public awareness of their hard work and to motivate the public's participation. Another Member echoed that many organisations such as tertiary institutions and the younger generation were willing to make contributions for the environment. He suggested that the Government should provide incentives to solicit their support and provide opportunities for more people and organisations to join hands in this area.

28. Sharing the benefits of urban farming to the mental health of people, a Member suggested that the Government should consider including a requirement on the provision of sufficient outdoor spaces, such as on the rooftop of Government, Institution or Community buildings, for the purpose of urban farming in the relevant tenders for the upcoming development projects such as Northern Metropolis and Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands. The Chairman and another Member again highlighted the importance of giving weight to biodiversity conservation in these projects.

29. On a Member's suggestion for regular updates, Mr Simon Chan advised that AFCD would report the overall implementation of the BSAP to the ACE annually, and consult the Nature Conservation Subcommittee (NCSC) on any specific projects as and when appropriate. The Chairman appreciated the constructive suggestions of Members. He added that the ACE would be glad to offer opinions on the subject and invited the NCSC to keep track of development in the subject, such as to gather more in-depth suggestions on specific projects or plans to implement the new BSAP.

*(Two Members left the meeting at the end of Item 3.)*

**Item 4 : Review of Air Quality Objectives (AQOs) (ACE Papers 17/2023 and 18/2023)**

30. The Chairman invited Members to refer to *ACE Paper 17/2023* which reported the findings on the review of the AQOs and sought Members' views on the recommendations and the way forward. A background note on the subject (*ACE Paper 18/2023*) had been circulated to Members before the meeting.

31. Two Members declared that they were both Members of the AQOs Review Working Group under EEB and one of the two Members was also a Member of the Air Science and Health Task Force. Noting that the roles of the two bodies were to consider and give advice on the AQOs Review, the Chairman opined that the two Members could stay to participate in the discussion, and there was no other view from members.

*(The presentation team joined the meeting at this juncture.)*

### **Presentation cum Question-and-Answer Session (Open session)**

32. With the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, Dr Kenneth Leung briefed Members on the proposal to tighten five of the existing parameters and to add three new parameters in the AQOs in the current review.

#### *Scope of Regulation*

33. Members expressed support to EEB's proposal to tighten the AQOs in general. A Member suggested and another Member echoed that EEB should review the list of seven pollutants to be regulated under the AQOs and consider including the volatile organic compounds (VOCs) which was carcinogenic. While the air pollutant emission reduction measures would cause reduction in nitrogen oxides emission which in turn increased ozone pollution, one of the two Members indicated that the Government should not reduce the measures as it would be beneficial to the overall health of people. Holding the view that the Government should give due weight to the overall health risk in formulating air policies, apart from monitoring the level of air pollutants, the Member proposed with the support of the other Member that EEB should adopt health risk-based approach, instead of concentration-based approach, for determination of the next AQOs, as well as a composite index to provide such health-related information. Dr Kenneth Leung thanked the two Members for their suggestions which would be taken into consideration in the next AQOs Review.

34. In response to a Member's enquiry on the possibility to meet the interim target level 4 for fine suspended particulates of the World Health Organization, Dr Kenneth Leung explained that it would be difficult to meet the target in the short to medium term as Hong Kong was greatly affected by the regional air pollution from the Greater Bay Area.

35. In response to the Chairman's enquiry on the calculation of the health outcomes, Dr Kenneth Leung explained that EEB had taken a more prudent approach to highlight only the maximum health outcomes amongst the various air pollutants instead of combining them together to avoid over-counting the health effects.



*Indoor Air Quality*

36. Apart from outdoor air quality, a Member also expressed concern on the indoor air quality (IAQ) and suggested that EEB should provide tips and information packs for the public to tackle formaldehyde and improve IAQ. The Chairman enquired and Dr Kenneth Leung replied that it would be difficult to regulate IAQ as it involved numerous private owners. Moreover, IAQ was currently not subject to legislative control in Hong Kong. Dr Leung supplemented that as far as he understood, no countries or places had regulated IAQ by legislative means.

37. Addressing a Member's suggestion to include fine suspended particulates in the IAQ Scheme, Dr Kenneth Leung responded that EEB would invite relevant experts to give advice on the parameters of the IAQ Scheme in the next review exercise. EEB

*Publicity and Public Education*

38. Two Members were pleased that EEB had illustrated clearly the relationship between air quality and public health in the current consultation exercise. Another Member suggested that EEB should promote and educate the public on the health risks of pollutants, within or outside the scope of AQOs, so as to keep them alert of the matter and to solicit their support in improving air quality. One of the above Members added that EEB should highlight and quantify the improvement in air quality such as in number of days with blue skies annually and the improvement in level of VOCs etc. Another Member indicated that EEB should continue to explain the subject to the public in an easy-to-understand manner. Another Member suggested that EEB should factor in the reduced mortality brought about by the improvement in air quality in the calculation of health benefits. Noting that it might be difficult to put the benefit of saving a life in monetary term, the Member said that it would impress the public by adding the number of lives saved annually due to the improvement of air quality in the promotion campaigns.

39. Dr Kenneth Leung thanked Members for their suggestion and responded that EEB would continue its efforts in public education with a view to inducing further contribution to the improvement in air quality.

*Conclusion*

40. The Chairman concluded that Members were supportive of the Government's proposal to tighten the requirements in the AQOs and invited the Government representatives to consider the suggestions of Members.

*(A Member and the presentation team left at the end of Item 4.)*

**Item 5 : Any other business (Closed-door session)**

*Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Report not selected by EIA Subcommittee (EIASC) for submission to ACE*

41. The EIASC Chairman reported that since the last ACE Meeting, the EIASC received the Executive Summary of the EIA report on “Drainage Improvement Works in Mui Wo” which was not selected for discussion. The Executive Summary of the EIA report had been circulated to EIASC Members upon the commencement of the public inspection period, with the relevant hyperlinks copied to non-EIASC Members for information. Members were advised to provide their comments, if any, on the EIA report directly to the Director of Environmental Protection within the respective public inspection period. Given that the EIA report had not been selected by EIASC for presentation and discussion, the EIASC Chairman informed Members that EPD would take that the ACE had no comments on the EIA report under section 8(3)(b) of the EIA Ordinance (EIAO).

42. There was no other business for discussion at the meeting.

**Item 6 : Date of next meeting (Closed-door session)**

43. Members would be advised on the agenda in due course.

44. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:10 p.m.

**ACE Secretariat  
November 2023**