

1. The meeting was resumed at 9:05 a.m. on 4.11.2014.
2. The following Members and the Secretary were present at the resumed meeting:

Mr Thomas T.M. Chow	Chairman
Mr Stanley Y.F. Wong	Vice-chairman
Mr Roger K.H. Luk	
Professor S.C. Wong	
Ms Anita W.T. Ma	
Dr W.K. Yau	
Professor K.C. Chau	
Mr Ivan C.S. Fu	
Mr Sunny L.K. Ho	
Mr Lincoln L.H. Huang	
Mr Dominic K.K. Lam	
Mr F.C. Chan	
Mr Francis T.K. Ip	
Mr David Y.T. Lui	
Mr Frankie W.C. Yeung	
Director of Lands Ms Bernadette H.H. Linn	
Principal Environmental Protection Officer (Metro Assessment) Environmental Protection Department Mr Ken Y.K. Wong	
Chief Traffic Engineer/Hong Kong, Transport Department Mr C.Y. Chan	
Chief Engineer (Works), Home Affairs Department Mr Frankie W.P. Chou	
Director of Planning Mr K.K. Ling	

Presentation and Question Sessions

[Open Meeting]

3. The following representatives of the Planning Department (PlanD), representers and representers' representatives were invited to the meeting at this point:

Ms Maggie M.Y. Chin – District Planning Officer/Fanling, Sheung Shui and Yuen Long East (DPO/FS&YLE), PlanD

Mr Otto K.C. Chan – Senior Town Planner/Fanling, Sheung Shui 1, PlanD

Mr Kelvin C.P. Ng – Senior Town Planner/Fanling, Sheung Shui 2, PlanD

FLN-R7030, KTN-R6580 – Bruce Tse

Mr Bruce Tse – Representer

FLN-R17893, KTN-R17442 – Kim

FLN-R7266, KTN-R6816 – Lee Mei Sze

Mr Wong Fei Pang (東北城規組) – Representers' representative

FLN-R7800, KTN-R7350 – 郭浩佳

FLN-R8690, KTN-R8240 – 譚愛珍

FLN-R7077, KTN-R6627 – Joanna Au

FLN-R7247, KTN-R6797 – 龍秋汝

FLN-R7717, KTN-R7267 – Luk Siu King

FLN-R8771, KTN-R8321 – 龐舜怡

FLN-R18268, KTN-R17817 – Li Hing Wai

Ms Au Hei Man (東北城規組) – Representers' representative

FLN-R7552, KTN-R7102 – Chow Wing Chi

Ms Chow Wing Chi

– Representer

4. The Chairman extended a welcome and explained the procedures of the hearing. He said that the meeting would be conducted in accordance with the “Guidance Notes on Attending the Meeting for Consideration of the Representations and Comments in respect of the Draft Kwu Tung North Outline Zoning Plan No. S/KTN/1 and the Draft Fanling North Outline Zoning Plan No. S/FLN/1” (Guidance Notes) which had been provided to all representers/commenters prior to the meeting. In particular, he highlighted the following main points:

- (a) in view of the large number of representations and comments received and more than 3,400 representers/commenters had indicated that they would either attend in person or send an authorised representative to make oral submission, it was necessary to limit the time for each oral submission;
- (b) each representer/commenter would be allotted a 10-minute speaking time. However, to provide flexibility to representers/ commenters to suit their needs, there were arrangements to allow cumulative speaking time for authorised representatives, swapping of allotted time with other representers/commenters and requesting an extension of time for making the oral submission;
- (c) the oral submission should be confined to the grounds of representation/comment in the written representations/comments already submitted to the Town Planning Board (the Board) during the exhibition period of the respective Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs) or the publication period of the representations; and
- (d) to ensure a smooth and efficient conduct of the meeting, the representer/commenter should not repeat unnecessarily long the same points which had already been presented by others earlier at the same

meeting. Representers/commenters should avoid reading out or repeating statements contained in the written representations/comments already submitted, as the written submissions had already been provided to Members for their consideration.

5. The Chairman said that each presentation, except with time extension allowed, should be within 10 minutes and there was a timer device to alert the representers and the representers' representatives 2 minutes before the allotted time was to expire and when the allotted time limit was up.

6. The Chairman said that the proceedings of the hearing would be broadcast online and the video recording of the presentation made by the representative of PlanD on the first day of the Group 4 hearing (i.e. 13.10.2014) had been uploaded to the Board's website for the meeting and would not be repeated at the meeting. He would first invite the representers/authorized representatives to make their oral submissions, following the reference number of each representer who had registered with the Board's Secretariat on that day. After all the registered attendees had completed their oral submissions, there would be a question and answer session which Members could direct questions to any attendee(s) of the meeting. Lunch break would be from about 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. and there would be one short break each in the morning and afternoon sessions, as needed.

7. The Chairman then invited the representers and their representatives to elaborate on their representations.

FLN-R7030, KTN-R6580 – Bruce Tse

8. Mr Bruce Tse made the following main points:

- (a) he objected to the North East New Territories (NENT) development on technical reason especially on transport grounds. PlanD's conclusion in TPB Paper No. 9745 that the New Development Areas (NDAs) were technically feasible in terms of transport aspect based on the Traffic Impact Assessment (TIA) was disappointing. The NENT

development would in fact lead to serious traffic problems taking into account the new population from the NDAs, Queen's Hill and natural growth of the existing population in the Northern District. Both the existing and future residents would suffer;

- (b) the residents living in the northern part of the New Territories relied heavily on the East Rail Line (ERL). The ERL was already saturated based on the international standards of 4-5 persons per square metre. The standard adopted by the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC) was far lower than the international standard in coming up with the conclusion that ERL still had carrying capacity. Due to the limitation of the Admiralty Station, the number of train compartments of the ERL would be reduced from 12 to 9 when Shatin to Central Link (SCL) was in operation. The carrying capacity of ERL would therefore be reduced by 25%;
- (c) MTRC claimed that with the introduction of new signal system, the arrival interval of trains could be reduced from an average of 2 minutes 45 seconds to 2 minutes. The SCL could divert 20% of the passengers going through the interchange station at Kowloon Tong. Besides, the Northern Link (NOL) would also serve the same diversion function. However, all these improvements should have been offset by the reduction in the number of train compartments in ERL;
- (d) with the aid of a photo showing the Kowloon Tong Station platform at about 6 p.m. on a working day, he said that the train arrival interval was already as short as 1 to 2 minutes instead of 2 minutes 45 seconds claimed by MTRC. At peak hours, trains were tailing back to get into the station. It was suspected that the 2 minutes 45 seconds had included the time taken by passengers to get on/off the train. If that was the case, how could the latter, which was out of MTRC's control, could be shortened. It was therefore practically impossible to increase the carrying capacity through new signal system;

- (e) in the "Railway Development Strategy 2014", the Government announced the implementation of the NOL, with the objective to divert the railway passengers through the West Rail Line (WRL). The most direct mode of transport of travelling to Tsuen Wan from Northern NT was by bus instead of ERL. The NOL could at most divert the passengers who used to travel by buses;
- (f) WRL was already operating at 99% of its design capacity. Even after the increase in the number of train compartments from 7 to 8 for the WRL, it could still not be able to accommodate the existing and additional passengers brought about by the new Hung Shui Kiu (HSK) Station which was targeted to serve 210,000 residents at HSK NDA and the Tuen Mun South Extension. At present, passengers could hardly squeeze into the train compartments at Yuen Long Station during rush hours, not to mention the interchange at Kam Sheung Road Station of NOL downstream. Since Sheung Shui and Fanling were the second and third stations of the ERL, passengers would continue to rely on the East Rail rather than travelling to the interchange station at Kam Sheung Road which was a downstream station of the WRL. The NOL and WRL could hardly perform the diversion function; and
- (g) the Government claimed that road traffic would be diverted after the completion of Fanling Bypass. However, that in fact was to channel all the road traffic from Sha Tau Kok Road and Fanling Highway to the Tolo Highway and ultimately led to more congestion at the Lion Rock, Tate's Cairn and Eagle's Nest Tunnels further downstream.

[Actual speaking time : 11 minutes]

FLN-R17893, KTN-R17442 – Kim

FLN-R7266, KTN-R6816 – Lee Mei Sze

9. Mr Wong Fei Pang requested the Board to withdraw the NDA plans and made the following main points:

- (a) according to Government's responses in the consultation digest of the NENT NDAs development, Hong Kong's population would only increase from 7.1 to 8.4 millions by 2047. As observed from Hong Kong's current situation, the population growth had slowed down and would unlikely reach 8.4 millions as projected by the Government. That was unlike the period of high population growth when Shatin and Tin Shui Wai New Towns were developed. It was not worth displacing some 10,000 local people to build the NDAs as the damage to the farmland and environment was irreversible. Making use of farmland for development was unsustainable especially in midst of global warming;
- (b) as observed in the existing New Towns, the provisions in daily needs were monopolized by big conglomerates, leaving limited choices for the residents. Local job opportunities were very limited for some 170,000 additional population. Even if the NDAs could provide 37,000 employment opportunities, it was expected that over 60% of the population would still need to travel to other districts for work. The business and technology park in Kwun Tong North (KTN) was only half the size of Science Park at Pak Shek Kok. However, the latter could only provide 10,000 employment opportunities even after Science Park Phase 3 was completed. He doubted if the business and technology park in KTN could truly provide 37,000 employment opportunities;
- (c) there was high concentration of natural arsenic of 24-43 mg per kg in the soil of KTN NDA. Three locations were found to have an exceptionally high concentration of the substance. However, the risk assessment of the Government still concluded that the concentration of arsenic was at an acceptable level. It only proposed certain

management and treatment of the arsenic-containing soil, including the submission of a detailed management report before development. Arsenic was a highly poisonous carcinogenic substance and arsenic poisoning is lethal. If they were exposed, the arsenic could contaminate the underground water or might be even airborne under sunshine. The arsenic-containing soil could endanger the construction workers. The conclusion that the associated risk was low and there were sufficient remedial measures should be reviewed;

[Mr F.C. Chan returned to join the meeting at this point.]

- (d) the farmland and people living thereon were a form of precious visual or cultural heritage that was not planned for and could not be reproduced. As a film maker himself, he was of the view that farmland that was formed for development could not be reversed and the agricultural land and lives thereon could no longer be filmed after development;
- (e) it was recommended under the NDAs development that the affected farmers would be relocated to Kwu Tung South where farmlands were reserved for rehabilitation. However, there was indication in the Small House applications recently submitted to the Board that the farmlands were formed to make way for development before submission of planning applications. As far as the past record showed, the Board would approve Small House developments even on farmland. Whether such formed land could be reverted for agricultural use was questionable; and
- (f) with the aid of a short movie clip entitled 'Pondering on the Road Side' (路邊思考), he illustrated that there were still farmers residing in the area who had established long-term relationship with the land. Those developments did not exist as a result of planning actions. Each piece of farmland with its unique nutrient make-up could not be



relocated. Residents relocated to the new Choi Yuen Tsuen as a result of the Express Rail Link were still deprived of the rights of using the road access and had yet to restart farming. Such situation should not be repeated in the NDAs. Members should seriously consider withdrawing the NDAs plans.

[Actual speaking time : 20 minutes]

FLN-R7800, KTN-R7350 – 郭浩佳

FLN-R8690, KTN-R8240 – 譚愛珍

FLN-R7077, KTN-R6627 – Joanna Au

FLN-R7247, KTN-R6797 – 龍秋汝

FLN-R7717, KTN-R7267 – Luk Siu King

FLN-R8771, KTN-R8321 – 鄺舜怡

FLN-R18268, KTN-R17817 – Li Hing Wai

10. Ms Au Hei Man made the following main points:

- (a) she introduced herself as a resident of Ma Shi Po Village. She would show a few movie clips to allow Members to have a better understanding of the daily lives of villagers in Ma Shi Po. The movie clips were produced by a group called ‘Land Visual Production’ (土地影像制作) who started filming villagers’ daily lives about 4 to 5 years ago. As Members could see from the movie clips, farmers were still farming on their lands which were established through the efforts of a few generations, but at the same time, some farmlands had been fenced off by developers who started to acquire land there since 1996;
- (b) with the aid of a movie clip entitled ‘Interview with a Villager of Ma Shi Po Village Named Ah Fan’ (訪問馬屎埔村村民阿繁), she illustrated that Ah Fan was an indigenous resident and an illustrator.

Ah Fan used his paintings to record a few farmer households in Ma Shi Po;

[Ms Bernadette H.H. Linn returned to join the meeting at this point.]

- (c) she introduced that the Ng Tung River had used to cause flooding problem to Ma Shi Po areas, but after the water receded, farmers could still cultivate on their lands. Although the problem was subsequently solved after river training works, the Government announced the development of the NDAs which resulted in the developers' resuming the land and driving up the rent and thereby displacing the farmers. The farmers would rather prefer the time when the Ng Tung River was causing flooding because they could still have their own places to live. Farmers in Ma Shi Po Village comprised both middle aged and younger people;
- (d) a movie clip entitled 'Interview with a Farmer Named Ah Ho' (訪問農夫阿豪) was shown. Ah Ho attended a farming course in Ma Po Po Community Farm and subsequently quitted his job to practise sustainable farming on a full time basis there. He collected the kitchen waste nearby and composted them for farming purpose. Ah Ho considered that farming was complementary to urban life in that it provided green area and helped recycle the kitchen or urban wastes. He wanted to preserve this piece of farmland. Ms Au added that the cost of losing the rural areas could not be afforded by Hong Kong and our future generations; and

[Professor S.C. Wong returned to join the meeting at this point.]

- (e) another movie clip entitled 'People on Farmland' (田上的人) was shown which was about an elderly female farmer named Shum Por (沈婆) who had been farming in the area since 1960/70s. Ms Au

added that some aged farmers like Shum Por chose to return to their farmland even after relocation as they could not adapt to the urban environment.

[Actual speaking time : 58 minutes]

FLN-R7552, KTN-R7102 – Chow Wing Chi

11. Ms Chow Wing Chi introduced herself as working for a social organization which served the low-income households and assisted them to apply for public rental housing (PRH). She made the representation because the Government used to publicize the NDAs as a source of land supply for developing PRH, but such purpose was doubtful. She made the following main points:

- (a) PRH located in remote districts that were far away from work places was not welcomed by most of the grassroots tenants. The thought of displacing the farmers or villagers to make way for the PRH development for their need had never come into their mind. They would choose to stay in the urban areas for better job opportunities and availability of school places rather than moving into the remote NENT NDAs. Some of the applicants for PRH were already on the waiting list for more than three years;

[Mr Lincoln L.H. Huang returned to join the meeting at this point.]

- (b) many of the waiting list applicants were the Mainland wives of Hong Kong residents or came from villages. Most of them could not adapt to the urban living environment. The elderly people who would be rehoused in PRH as a result of the NDAs development were expected to face the same problem. The anxiety of the affected elderly people was shared by the waiting list applicants;

[Mr Frankie W.C. Yeung returned to join the meeting at this point.]

- (c) private residential sites resumed by the Urban Renewal Authority or those to be put up for land sale in the urban areas could be converted for public housing use. Residential units, for example in Sham Shui Po, that had been acquired by private developers but left vacant could be resumed by Government for PRH development;
- (d) the Mainland wives were fond of the Ma Shi Po Village environment as most of them came from the rural areas and possessed rich knowledge in agriculture. They would not mind moving into the NDAs if they were allocated a piece of land for farming; and
- (e) no further loss of agricultural land could be afforded, in view of the need for enhancing food safety in Hong Kong and combating global food supply crises.

[Actual speaking time : 11 minutes]

[Mr David Y.T. Lui left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

12. As the representers/authorised representatives' presentation had been completed, the Chairman invited questions from Members.

13. The Vice-chairman observed that there were a number of traffic figures and personal experiences given in the first representation made by Mr Bruce Tse, especially on the operation of the ERL and the failure of NOL and SCL in diverting ERL's passengers. He asked if there were figures on how the traffic needs of the 173,000 and 37,700 additional population from the NDAs and Queen's Hill could be accommodated.

14. In response, Ms Maggie M.Y. Chin, DPO/FS&YLE, made the following main points:

- (a) for Kwu Tung North NDA, about 80% of the future population would

be residing within the catchment area of the proposed NOL Kwu Tung Station. The Fanling Highway - Kwu Tung Section would be widened. The NOL together with the strategic road improvement would be able to serve the 100,000 population in KTN NDA;

- (b) two new public transport interchanges in FLN NDA would provide connection between the eastern and western parts of the FLN NDA and the existing Fanling and Sheung Shui Stations. The possibility of further extension of the NOL to the FLN NDA would be explored. In addition, the Government would strengthen the road connection of the NDAs with the outside districts, including the construction of Fanling Bypass and widening of Fanling Highway. The transport interchanges and new highway would be able to serve the 70,000 additional population in FLN NDA;
- (c) the TIA conducted for the NDAs development in 2008 had comprehensively assessed the external and internal traffic demands arising from the new population. It concluded that the development was technically feasible after implementation of the above new railway station, highway and traffic improvement works; and
- (d) the ERL was currently taking up a high share of cross-boundary passengers. The Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link would take up part of these passengers and the SCL would divert part of the passengers travelling between Tai Wai and Kowloon Tong Stations.

15. In response to the query of Mr Wong Fei Pang on the job estimate made during his oral submission, Ms Chin explained that the two NDAs were targeted to provide 37,700 employment opportunities. About 17,000 of the employment opportunities would be provided in the business and technology park, while the rest would be provided in the shops, services, school and GIC uses ancillary to the residential development or serving the local residents. The new employment opportunities accounted for 22% of the

population in the NDAs.

16. The Vice-chairman asked if detailed figures could be extracted from the TIA, for example, the estimated number of residents that would rely on outside transport services after discounting those to be employed locally, the share of such passengers between different modes of transport at peak hours, and the proportion of such new passengers to the existing passengers using ERL at rush hours, etc. Ms Chin explained that the population would move in the NDAs by phases from 2023 to 2031. She said that detailed figures could be extracted from the relevant technical assessments.

17. A Member asked about the positioning of the NDAs from the view point of Government and Ms Au Hei Man as the person responsible for Mapopo Community Farm. The Member shared the feeling of Ms Au that her farm in Ma Shi Po was established over three generations and appreciated the green and healthy life style promoted by the Community Farm operated a few years ago. The Member enquired if Ms Au was willing to expand and transform the community farm, which was with a limited scale, into a modern farm, if a larger site could be identified in the “AGR” zone retained in the NDAs development. Kitchen wastes from the NDA would then be collected systematically and passed to the farm for recycling. As seen from the movie clips, the farmers would need to possess the skills to rehabilitate fallow agricultural land somewhere else. Training courses and new farming technology could be introduced, and visits to the heritage trail nearby could be organised. The community farm could comprise such elements as agriculture, environmental protection and education. In addition, the Member asked how many farmers were farming in Mapopo Community Farm and Ma Shi Po respectively.

18. In response to the Member’s question, Ms Au Hei Man made the following main points :

- (a) the NDAs development should be positioned to respect the existing agricultural community under which the farmers should be allowed to continue their farming activities;
- (b) agriculture policy should be formulated and local agriculture should

be promoted. The current assistance to local farmers and support for local agriculture was insufficient;

- (c) agricultural land was not lacking in Hong Kong. Preservation of the agricultural land was not only for leisure purpose or protection of the few farming households in Ma Shi Po but for the benefit of all Hong Kong people. If all the 3,800 ha of agricultural land in Hong Kong could be used for cultivation, it could increase Hong Kong's self-sufficiency ratio in food supply from 1.8 to 20-30%;
- (d) owing to the lack of agricultural policy, farmers who were relocated elsewhere to continue farming to make way for the NDAs development would be displaced again once there was development need on the relocation site. One of the farmers was known to have been evicted for three times. If the community farm would be expanded as suggested by the Member, the prerequisite was a steady supply of agricultural land. Hong Kong could not afford to lose more farmland;
- (e) majority of the agricultural lands in Fu Tei Au and Kwu Tung South were being cultivated or had been acquired by developers, rendering agricultural rehabilitation there impractical. The farms in Ma Shi Po were established through the efforts over three generations and the farmers were familiar with the sale networks and community. Those connections could not be easily re-established in just a few years; and
- (f) the farmland of Mapopo Community Farm was operated by four households with each household sharing a few dau chung (斗種, each equivalent to 675m<sup>2</sup>) of farmland. It was estimated that some 100 farmer households were cultivating in Ma Shi Po, though some elderly farmer households were cultivating for self-consumption. The total areas under active cultivation were estimated to be about 30 ha.

19. In response to the Member's question on the NDAs' positioning, Ms Chin said that the two NDAs had a total area of 612 ha of which about 300 ha of land were developable area. The FLN NDA was an extension of the existing Fanling/ Sheung Shui New Town such that the NDA could capitalize on the existing infrastructure and rail connection. The need for agricultural land was recognised in planning of the NDAs. A total of 95 ha of farmland would be retained, of which 37 ha would be conserved as the Long Valley Nature Park (LVNP) given its ecological significance to migrating birds, and farming could be continued on these farmlands. Areas to the south and north of the LVNP were zoned "Agriculture" ("AGR") and another 12 ha of "AGR" land would be preserved in Fu Tei Au. Besides, agricultural uses were always permitted in "Green Belt" ("GB") zone. The "AGR", "GB", LVNP and "Recreation" zones amounted to about 300 ha. Regarding housing development, about one-third of the developable area (90 ha) would be planned for housing development and public housing would account for 60% of the housing production. Although there would be a slower population growth compared with the past few decades, there was still a strong demand for housing given the continuing decrease in household size as illustrated from the past trend of 3.1 persons per household (pph) in 2001 to 2.9 pph in 2011. The public-private housing ratio was in line with the Long Term Housing Strategy and the 2014 Policy Address that the Government had decided to adopt 470,000 units as the total supply target for the next 10 years. The remaining portion of the developable area would be used for various supporting facilities such as hospital, school, other "G/IC" uses, and the business and technology park. The NDAs developments aimed at serving different needs in terms of land use planning.

20. In respect of the transport issue, a Member asked about the railway capacity after taking into account the needs of the 173,000 additional population. Another Member said that clear figures on the passenger load at key railway stations like Sha Tin after reduction in the number of train compartments might need to be provided. In case the ERL was saturated, information on the measures or additional transport facilities that would be adopted might also need to be provided. In addition, the peak hour traffic flow at tunnels including the Lion Rock and the Tate's Cairn should be presented to illustrate if the existing and planned transport network could accommodate the NDAs development, and if not, what would be the improvement measures to deal with the situation. The



Chairman said that PlanD would consider inviting concerned departments to the Board meeting to clearly explain the figures for Members' information. Members could also study the details in the TIA which was available.

21. A Member said that as revealed from some photos taken some five decades ago, most parts of the rural New Territories were covered by farmland. Self-employed farmers continued to quit farming over the years and sold the land to the developers. The remaining elderly farmers as shown in the movie clips were mostly sole proprietors. Noting that agriculture as a form of primary production had reduced its share in the economic structure and the land was released for alternative economic production, the Member said that the natural change in land use, irrespective of whether there was an agricultural policy, might need to be recognised. The Member further said that Mai Po had once been used for active cultivation, which subsequently attracted migratory birds after the farmlands and fish ponds were no longer engaged in production. Conservation had replaced agriculture as in the case of Mai Po and it might not be appropriate to convert Mai Po back into active cultivation just for preserving agricultural land. The current planning in the NDAs seemed to have allowed the coexistence of various forms of land uses including agriculture and such planning could serve the best interest of Hong Kong people at present. The Member asked Ms Au Hei Man's view on the economic reality.

22. In response, Ms Au Hei Man said that since the Government had announced the NDA plans, many farmlands in Ma Shi Po were left vacant after being sold to the developers and farmers had no other choice but to leave. There was no agricultural land for cultivation even if new comers would like to engage in agricultural production.

23. The same Member continued to say that the new owners could decide how best to use their land and it was the foundation of property rights treasured by Hong Kong people. There were agricultural land reserves in the NDAs and it would be hard to justify why some specific farms could not be relocated. Ms Au Hei Man responded that preserving agricultural land was in the public interest in terms of supplying food for local consumption. Money obtained from land sale could not feed people. All the agricultural land owned by the developers should be resumed for agricultural purpose.

24. A Member asked for Ms Au Hei Man's opinion on the minimum self-sufficiency ratio in food supply that could ensure Hong Kong's food safety, and the amount of farmland, the number of farmers and the time required to achieve such self-sufficiency ratio. As observed in the developed countries, there might not be sufficient incentive to attract people, especially the younger generation, to engage in agriculture on a full-time basis. It was also expected that the economic return or income for young people engaging in agriculture could not be compared with other types of employment in the urban areas. Such phenomenon was also observed even in the industrial sector or traditional handcraft business.

25. In response, Ms Au Hei Man said that Hong Kong's current local cultivation, making use of about 294 ha of farmland, only accounted for 1.8% of the demand for agricultural products. If all the 3,800 ha of agricultural land were used for cultivation, it could increase Hong Kong's self-sufficiency ratio from 1.8 to over 20%. Although such level could not be compared with the self-sufficiency ratio in the 1960s, it would be far better than the current 1.8%. The damage to the agricultural sector in the past three decades would require a similar length of time for re-establishment. The Government should resume all agricultural land from the developers and lease it back to farmers. Agricultural land also served multiple functions including protection to the environment. In order to attract new farmers, there should be a steady supply of agricultural land and suitable training.

26. A Member referred to the aerial photo on Plan FLN-4 of Paper No. 9748 and asked whether Ma Shi Po could be retained in the FLN NDA development. The Member also sought clarification on the number of residents that would be accommodated in that part of FLN NDA overlapping with Ma Shi Po and what its existing population was. Ms Chin replied that the Ma Shi Po area was planned to be the town centre of the FLN NDA to capitalise on its proximity to the existing New Town and railway station. The town centre would accommodate a population of 47,000 out of the total population of 70,000 for the whole FLN NDA. The areas of agricultural land under active cultivation in Ma Shi Po, Wu Nga Lok Yeung, and Tin Ping Shan areas were 10 ha, 3 ha and 4 ha respectively. As for FLN NDA, there were currently 400 households, which was equivalent to a population of 1,250.

27. A Member said that the farmers selling out their farmland over the past few generations were out of their own decisions. It was a deliberate and common action at that time and using the word ‘damage’ might not truly reflect the situation. The Member shared the concept of the Mapopo Community Farm and Ms Au Hei Man’s promotion of the need for agriculture in Hong Kong was well appreciated. However, Ms Au’s insistence of staying at Ma Shi Po and refusal to relocate to a larger farm land was a Catch-22 situation for both the Government and herself. Ms Au replied that a better word to describe the process might be ‘sacrifice’ instead of ‘damage’ in view of the high housing demand at that time. The Government should reconsider whether to continue the current type of development approach now that the importance of agriculture was recognized. Mr Wong Fei Pang added that although it was described as a personal choice in sacrificing agricultural land for other economic uses, it was not a pure personal choice as the lack of the Government’s assistance had rendered farmers marginalized. There should be an agricultural policy to attract people to become farmers instead of relying on the market force. Regarding the proposal of relocation, Mr Wong said that the NDAs development and the policy should be changed to accommodate farmland. Each farmland had its unique nutrient composition and ecology and could not be relocated.

28. The Chairman said that Members could make reference to the technical studies uploaded to the NDAs website for more details about the development proposals. Besides, the Secretariat would make arrangement to invite concerned departments to attend the Board meeting to answer Members’ questions on transport aspects in future sessions if raised.

29. As Members had no further questions to raise, the Chairman thanked the PlanD’s representatives, representers and representers’ representatives for attending the meeting. They left the meeting at this point.

30. The meeting was adjourned at 12:05 p.m.