

1. The meeting was resumed at 9:05 a.m. on 28.10.2014.
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

Ms Bonnie J.Y. Chan

Mr Ivan C.S. Fu

Mr Sunny L.K. Ho

Mr Lincoln L.H. Huang

Mr F.C. Chan

Mr Francis T.K. Ip

Mr Frankie W.C. Yeung

Mr Peter K.T. Yuen

Director of Land
Ms Bernadette H.H. Linn

Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (1)
Mr C.W. Tse

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) and representers and their 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-R3648, KTN-R3198 – Yip Mee Yung

Ms Yip Mee Yung - Representer

FLN-R3757, KTN-R3307 – Pang Ho Tong

Mr Pang Ho Tong - Representer

FLN-R3860, KTN-R3410 – Joanne Choi

Ms Joanne Choi - Representer

FLN-R3579, KTN-R3129 – Wan Kam Lan

FLN-R3582, KTN-R3132 – Lai Wen Yin

FLN-R3584, KTN-R3134 – Lai Chi Wah

FLN-R3585, KTN-R3135 – Lai Chi Man

FLN-R3589, KTN-R3139 – Lau Wai Kuen

FLN-R3633, KTN-R3183 – Chung So Chun, Kasan

Mr Lau Hoi Lung (東北城規組) - Representers' representative

FLN-R3591, KTN-R3141 – Shek Chi Hing

FLN-R3746, KTN-R3296 – Cheng Kam Lin

FLN-R3750, KTN-R3300 – Chan Man Chung

Ms Angel Chan (東北城規組) - Representers' representative

FLN-R3751, KTN-R3301 – Pang Si Nga

Ms Angel Pang (東北城規組) - Representer's representative

FLN-R3825, KTN-R3375 – Puk Yin Lai

FLN-R4085, KTN-R3635 – Eva Ho

Ms Yu Ying Kuen (東北城規組) - Representers' representative

FLN-R3827, KTN-R3377 – Choi Yuk Wai

FLN-R3752, KTN-R3302 – Chan Suet Yan

FLN-R3753, KTN-R3303 – Pang Man Yee

Ms Li Yin Fong (東北城規組) - Representers' representative

FLN-R3755, KTN-R3305 – Wong Man Zan

FLN-R3756, KTN-R3306 – Yau Yee Man

Mr Ngan Fai Ming (東北城規組)- Representers' representative

FLN-R3859, KTN-R3409 – Lam Hiu Long

Mr Lam Hiu Long - Representer

FLN-R4094, KTN-3644 – Ho Lai Ying

Ms Chow Koot Yin (東北城規組)- Representer's representative

FLN-R4182, KTN-3732 – Wong Wing Kin

Mr Wong Wing Kin - Representer

Mr Anuj Chopra (東北城規組)- Representers' representative

4. The Chairman extended a welcome and explained the procedure 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 Fanling North (FLN) Outline Zoning Plan No. S/NE-FLN/1 and the Draft Kwu Tung North (KTN) Outline Zoning Plan No. S/NE-KTN/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 Outline Zoning Plan (OZP) 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 on-line, and the video recording of the presentation made by the representative of the PlanD on the first day of the Group 4 hearing (i.e. 13.10.2014) had been uploaded to the Board's website and would not be repeated at the meeting. He would first invite the representers/representers' representatives to make their oral submissions, following the reference number of each representer who had registered with the Board's Secretariat on the day. After all registered attendees had completed their oral submissions, there would be a question and answer (Q&A) session which Members could direct enquiries to any attendee(s) of the meeting. Lunch break would be from about 1:00pm to 2:00pm 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-R3648, KTN-R3198 - Yip Mee Yung

8. Ms Yip Mee Yung made the following main points:

- (a) although she was a city dweller, she spoke to uphold her right to voice out her opinions on the North East New Territories (NENT) New Development Areas (NDAs) for the Board's consideration;

- (b) the Lei Tung Street incident showed that the overall development situation in Hong Kong was not conducive to sustainable development. Instead of inclining towards property development, Members should pay greater attention to the agricultural needs of society;
- (c) our society was polarising: the rich could pursue further development but the poor was marginalised. That problem was not only limited to the NENT NDAs. It was commonly seen in many parts of Hong Kong;
- (d) the NENT area had provided food for Hong Kong during the period of Japanese Occupation. Now that the property market was thriving, the Board was pro- development and had neglected the interests of the NENT residents;
- (e) the affected residents might not want to be rehoused in public housing. They would prefer to stay in their own place even though the existing living environment might not be good. As in the case of Gwei Suk (貴叔), he was saddened for being forced to move to a public housing flat due to the Board's previous decision on developing the Blue House Cluster in Wanchai; and

[Mr F.C. Chan left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

- (f) for sustainable development, existing farmers should be given the option to retain their way of living. They should not be forced to have to learn new employment skills afresh as a result of the NENT NDAs.

[Actual speaking time: 7 minutes]

[Mr F.C. Chan returned to join the meeting and Ms Anita W.T. Ma left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

FLN-R3860, KTN-R3410 – Joanne Choi

9. With the aid of a Powerpoint presentation entitled “The Visible, The Invisible”, Ms Joanne Choi made the following main points:

- (a) while town planning mainly focused on things at a macro level, her presentation aimed to take a closer look at a micro aspect of the NENT NDAs, namely the plants;
- (b) an informal ecological survey for Ma Shi Po was conducted from 2010 to 2011. The key characteristics of the wild plants found were highlighted, viz. Cairo Morning Glory, Bur-marigold, Billygoat-weed, Tassel Flower, Sorrel, Lavender Sorrel, Sensitive Plant, Cherry Tomato, Shepherd’s Purse and Mile-a-Minute Weed;
- (c) different from the other plant species, Mile-a-Minute Weed was harmful to the local ecology, as its growth was unchecked by the climate in Hong Kong. It was invasive and prolific. It colonised uncultivated fields quickly and killed other plants. The fencing of farmlands by developers had encouraged the spread of the weed, thereby affecting the local ecology and biodiversity;
- (d) local farming experience was an eye-opener for many city dwellers. They could learn the full features or growing characteristics of various plants, such as broccoli, white carrots, tong hou, green beans, parsley, and sweet corn. The photos showed at the meeting were taken in 2010 and 2011 during the aforementioned ecological survey. An average of about 30 to 40 species of vegetables and wild flowers were recorded;

- (e) developers had moved in because they learnt about the NENT development proposals. Farms were wired and fenced off, and the plots therein were abandoned. Before that, people could get close to nature and farms, get familiar with food sources, and get amazed by the wonders of living things. Plants should also have the right to stay put;

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

- (f) farmlands were diminishing in Hong Kong. We should not continue to allow the demise of farmlands. We should proactively conserve the farmlands and revitalise local agriculture, so that kids and adults alike could learn about food, associate with nature, and regain well-being; and
- (g) the ending of the presentation did not represent the ending of the NENT story. It depended on how the land would be used.

[Actual speaking time: 17 minutes]

FLN-R3579, KTN-R3129 – Wan Kam Lan

FLN-R3582, KTN-R3132 – Lai Wen Yin

FLN-R3584, KTN-R3134 – Lai Chi Wah

FLN-R3585, KTN-R3135 – Lai Chi Man

FLN-R3589, KTN-R3139 – Lau Wai Kuen

FLN-R3633, KTN-R3183 – Chung So Chun, Kasan

10. With the aid of a Powerpoint presentation entitled “Guarding the Northwest, Urban-rural Symbiosis”, Mr Lau Hoi Lung made the following main points:

- (a) the presentation would explore the difference between “urban-rural integration” and “urban-rural symbiosis” as well as the issue of

“Mainland-Hong Kong integration” raised by Members last week;

- (b) the urban and rural landscapes had been changing in Hong Kong. As shown in a photograph extracted from the 1962-63 Annual Report of the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), Hong Kong used to have terraced farms in many areas;

Late 1940s to End 1960s: Agriculture for ensuring Social Stability

- (c) during the post-war period, population surged from about 0.5 million in 1945 to 3 million in 1960. Agriculture provided a form of social services in that many refugees and grassroots were relying on it to make a living. The Kadoorie Agricultural Aid Association had assisted in promoting animal husbandry of pigs and chickens, thereby supporting the living of some 9,000 post-war widows and many Hong Kong-based Gurkha soldiers;
- (d) according to a retired official, indigenous villagers would prefer growing rice paddy to yam so as to maintain subsistence after surviving through hunger in World War II. New immigrants, on the other hand, would grow vegetables mainly because they could sell at a better price and support a better life. Some photographs of the paddy fields and vegetable plots, as extracted from the Hong Kong Annual Report 1966, were displayed;
- (e) the 1967 riots were regarded as a touchstone. They showed that the colonial Government had maintained certain degree of resilience in local food production and food reserve. Quoting from a 1962 report of AFCD, “these events emphasised the degree of Hong Kong’s normal dependence on China as a source of food and the desirability of fostering home production”;

- (f) during that period, municipal resources were well-recycled for beneficial uses. For example, the practice of “nighttime manure collection” (“Dao Ye Heung”) in the urban areas at that time was common and the Government treated the manure into compost (“Dai Fei”) for supply to the farmers;
- (g) as shown in the 1957 and 1980 Hong Kong Annual Reports, Hong Kong had considerable export of salted dried plum to overseas Chinese communities and tea plants were grown on Lantau Peak;

Early 1970s to Early 1980s: Agriculture prioritising for the Economy

- (h) the period was the golden era of agriculture in Hong Kong. Agriculture production had reached its apex. The Government had promoted mechanical cultivation and fertiliser application. The vegetables grown in Hong Kong were of superior quality as compared to Mainland produce. Agricultural shows were held in Hong Kong. There were many famous localised brands of produce, such as cone-shaped bitter gourds in Ta Kwu Ling, pak choi in Hok Tau, and Welsh onions in Ma Shi Po;
- (i) the period was also an era of urban-rural conflicts. Vast amount of rural land was resumed for new town development, and the social and environmental functions of rural land were diminishing. These had led to the demise of agriculture in Hong Kong;

Mid 1980s to Mid 1990s: Agriculture Demise

- (j) the demise of local agriculture was accelerated by the thriving property market, as seen in the pervasive development of low-density housing and small houses in the New Territories. That was coupled with the influx of cheaper food from the Mainland into the local market. Many farmers from Hong Kong were investing in big

vegetable farms in Guangdong and selling the produce to Hong Kong. As a result, many local farmers abandoned their farms and moved to the urban areas to work;

- (k) the social functions and status of agriculture practice had plunged, aggravated by the food security issues relating to local pesticide-toxicated vegetables incidents in the 1980s. A contemporary saying was “Go farming if you fail in your study!”;
- (l) environmental pollution was getting serious. Livestock farms discharged their wastewater into the river courses, resulting in pollution. Small-scale livestock farms were then banned. The Education Department had publications which highlighted the adverse impacts of farming on the environment and the proper method of waste treatment for farming activities;
- (m) organic farming was pioneered with the establishment of Produce Green in 1989. As remarked by a tutor of a farming workshop, the participants of the early organic farming workshops mainly comprised two groups: Geography teachers and the potential middle-class migrants who wanted to learn home gardening;

Agriculture as the Key to Urban-rural Symbiosis

Late 1990s to the Present: Urban Agriculture in Restructuring

- (n) Avian Influenza and Swine Flu had deepened the downturn of the livestock industry. There was a lack of protection policy for agricultural land. Such land was first ruined and then redeveloped, and the agricultural sector was in a difficult situation;
- (o) the SARS outbreak in 2003 had led to a rethink of the role of agriculture in society. City dwellers removed their face masks and

entered the rural areas. The 2009 incident of “Oppose High-speed Rail, Protect Choi Yuen” had brought the agrarian groups to the media mainstream and sparked off a phenomenon of agriculture-centric community building;

- (p) agriculture and environmental conservation were chained up again. In Long Valley, wetland farming was practised together with the ecology conservation projects. Food waste was recycled into compost. Migratory birds could replenish food supply in fish ponds. As remarked by a fish-farmer, the fish ponds would have been converted into luxury apartments if not for the visits of the migratory birds. It was worth forsaking 20% of the produce for feeding the birds, treating it as a kind of “protection fee”;
- (q) the societal functions of agriculture were re-established, including community building, food education, and health and cure. As shown in the U.S. researches, farming experience could help reduce obesity. Jamie Oliver’s testimony also pointed out that junk food was causing health problems. Urban agriculture became multi-functional, as featured in the 2014 PlanD’s Annual Report;
- (r) significant changes in the use of agricultural land were noted between 1953 and 2011. The value of agricultural production in 2013 was nearly halved of that in 1983, and the number of farmers had declined from about 119,700 in 1961 to 4,400 in 2013. In terms of agriculture sufficiency, local vegetables had recorded a 40% subsistence level in the 1970s but the 2012 level was only 1.2%. For pigs, a 20% subsistence level was recorded in the 2000s but the 2012 level was only 7.1%. For domestic poultry (mainly chickens), the annual number reached 16,000,000 in the early 1980s, while the subsistence level for live chickens in 2012 was 59.5%. Hong Kong should seriously consider boosting the subsistence level of live chickens;

Mainland-Hong Kong Integration: Regional Division of Labour?

- (s) the northwestern region of China was dubbed the “Granary of China” as it had a vast area of black soil which was conducive to cultivation. However, the soil level had been eroding. To address the food security issue, China signed an agreement with an Ukrainian company, KSG Agro, in 2013 for farmland purchase in Ukraine. Yet, it was reported in South China Morning Post dated 23.10.2014 that China sued Ukraine for breach of US\$3 billion loan-for-grain agreement. That showed that even China was concerned about the food security issue;
- (t) food production in China would be affected by climate change and heavy metal pollution. With the conversion of farmlands for property development in the Mainland, the Mainland food market was willing to pay a higher price for vegetables and less supply might be exported to Hong Kong. The map showing the distribution of accredited farms in Mainland China illustrated that most of the vegetable supply to Hong Kong came from Ningxia. Those farms were in the oases of a desert environment, which were not suitable for growing the vegetable species commonly consumed by Hong Kong people;

Shenzhen-Hong Kong Integration?

- (u) the news reported in January 2014 showed that people in Shenzhen were opposed to the landfill expansion in Hong Kong. Hence, environmental concerns were not limited by territory boundary. Where would the city stop expanding? If Victoria Harbour were reclaimed for development, the environmental quality of the northern part of Hong Kong Island and Kowloon peninsula would deteriorate

and would no longer be liveable. As an analogy, if NENT NDAs were developed as proposed by the Government, the living quality of Northern New Territories and Shenzhen would be much worsened;

- (v) the self-sufficiency ratio in food supply in Shenzhen was no better than that in Hong Kong. According to Professor Graeme Lang, he predicted that Shenzhen would be forced to convert golf courses into urban farms by 2040;

Food Policy in Hong Kong?

- (w) urban agriculture was a strategic direction of such global metropolises as New York, London, Singapore and Shanghai. Relying on food import would not address the issue of carbon footprint, food waste and equity. According to a report published in Ming Pao on 13.7.2014, pursuing a two-pronged approach to agricultural rehabilitation could raise the self-sufficiency ratio in food supply to about 41%;
- (x) given its multi-functional values, urban agriculture should be promoted particularly in NENT. Sustainable development comprised economic, social and environmental aspects. So far, new town developments were implemented by sacrificing the environment. That was not the real meaning of urban-rural integration;

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

A New Town for Hong Kong People? This wasn't the 80s!

- (y) over the last half-century, farmlands in Hong Kong were diminishing, while developers were accumulating more farmlands. It was not true that there was no land for housing. About 800 ha of brownfield sites, 2,000 ha of military land, 2,300 ha of land for short-term tenancy, and

more than 3,900 ha of vacant government land were available. The Government had shelved the housing proposal at the brownfield sites in Wang Chau due to the opposition from the rural indigenous villagers. The land could have been used to build 17,000 flats, which was equivalent to about 46% of the public housing flats in NENT NDAs;

- (z) behind the veil of his wedding photo taken on a meadow in Long Valley, the landscape would be transforming with the advent of the NENT NDAs. The existing farms would be removed. The elderly home in Dills Corner Garden would be affected. Massive development would be built, notwithstanding that Valais was like a “ghost town” with only a few residents. On the other hand, there was no good reason for not redeveloping Fanling Golf Course in lieu for housing land supply; and
- (aa) to conclude, the NENT NDAs should be withdrawn for the sake of Hong Kong, our neighbouring region, and China.

[Actual speaking time: 67 minutes]

[Mr Peter K.T. Yuen, Mr F. C. Chan, and Mr Roger K.H. Luk left the meeting temporarily, and Ms Bonnie J.Y. Chan returned to join the meeting at this point.]

FLN-R3591, KTN-R3141 – Shek Chi Hing

FLN-R3746, KTN-R3296 – Cheng Kam Lin

FLN-R3750, KTN-R3300 – Chan Man Chung

11. Ms Angel Chan made the following main points:

- (a) the long-term housing policy should be critically re-examined. It might have over-estimated the population growth. The crux of the

housing problems was not the lack of housing. Rather, housing was unaffordable to many;

- (b) the objection was posed not for themselves. As a public housing resident in Tuen Mun, the neighbourhood would mean little to her. On the contrary, the places of residence were the “roots” of the NENT villagers. Their loss of homes could not be compensated in monetary terms. Redevelopment would bring irreversible changes to the existing community, which could not be rebuilt by top-down planning;

[Mr Roger K.H. Luk returned to join the meeting and Mr Lincoln L.H. Huang left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

- (c) rural living provided the possibility for a diverse and autonomous lifestyle. People should not be forced to confine themselves to urban living with limited choices;
- (d) in the proposed NENT NDAs, public housing would only account for a small percentage of the housing units. The Government should not use the young generation as an excuse to build houses for the sake of transferring the interests to developers. Members should make good use of their power to ensure that the development plan would reflect what people wanted. That would be very important to the future development of Hong Kong;
- (e) the existing rural and farming communities in NENT were a kind of sustainable neighbourhood. They were environmentally conscious and helped revitalise the communities; and
- (f) her participation in the NENT affairs started from the public meeting held in Sheung Shui on 22.9.2012. The recent Legislative Council

(LegCo)'s approval of funding for the initial works for the NENT NDAs showed that the Government had not been listening to the people.

[Actual speaking time: 23 minutes]

[The meeting was adjourned for a 10-minute break.]

[Mr Peter K.T. Yuen, Mr F. C. Chan and Mr Lincoln L.H. Huang returned to join the meeting, and Mr Frankie W.P. Chou left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

FLN-R3751, KTN-R3301 – Pang Si Nga

12. Ms Angel Pang said that her mum had made a request that her family should not be displaced and their home should not be demolished due to the NENT NDAs.

[Actual speaking time: 1 minute]

FLN-R3825, KTN-R3375 – Puk Yin Lai

FLN-R4085, KTN-R3635 – Eva Ho

13. Ms Yu Ying Kuen made the following main points:

- (a) she planted vegetables in the NENT village to maintain self-subsistence. She demanded for no relocation and no demolition;
- (b) the sprawling developments had caused pollution and damaged the environment; and
- (c) people enjoyed cycling along Sheung Yue River during weekend. The invaluable recreational environment should not be destroyed by the NENT NDAs.

[Actual speaking time: 3 minutes]

FLN-R3827, KTN-R3377 – Choi Yuk Wai

FLN-R3752, KTN-R3302 – Chan Suet Yan

FLN-R3753, KTN-R3303 – Pang Man Yee

14. Ms Li Yin Fong made the following main points:

- (a) Hong Kong was land scarce but densely populated. Town planning was unbalanced and housing became unaffordable to many, especially the lower class. Nevertheless, the Government should not eye on the villagers' homes for housing development. The Government was not people-oriented. The Long Term Housing Strategy (LTHS) should be re-examined to ensure that the interest of Hong Kong people would not be sacrificed as a result of unchecked Mainland migrants;
- (b) she opposed the NENT NDAs. It was ironical that many pieces of agricultural land were fenced up, while farmers were queuing up for allocation of a suitable piece of farmland for farming;
- (c) the displaced villagers might not be eligible to apply for public housing. They might not be rehoused in-situ. Their choice of living would be affected;
- (d) the Government should build on the brownfield sites instead;
- (e) the number of trees to be affected by NENT NDAs should be more than those registered by the Government, not to mention the animals including dogs and cats which would be affected;
- (f) only the big developers would benefit from the NENT NDAs, while

the properties of those affected villagers would be seized;

- (g) taxpayers would need to bear the huge amount of costs involved in the the development of NENT NDAs;
- (h) the villagers did not want to leave their homes and they felt helpless. They could barely afford a living in their existing communities. If they were forced to leave, they would have no choice but to apply for the comprehensive social security assistance; and
- (i) Members were requested to plan well for the people.

[Actual speaking time: 19 minutes]

FLN-R3755, KTN-R3305 – Wong Man Zan

FLN-R3756, KTN-R3306 – Yau Yee Man

15. Mr Ngan Fai Ming made the following main points:

- (a) it was unfair for the Government to resume the land occupied by non-indigenous villagers in Long Valley for the NENT NDAs, instead of the land of those indigenous villagers in Ho Sheung Heung and Yin Kong;
- (b) the proposed Business and Technology Park should be located near the Science Park instead and would likely become a property project, just like Cyberport;
- (c) the reprovisioning arrangement for the affected elderly home at Dills Corner Garden was only confirmed just before the LegCo approved the funding for the advanced works of the NENT NDAs;

- (d) the social worker team involved in the NENT NDAs was merely informing the villagers of the development details instead of dealing with the villagers' concerns;
- (e) the previous consultation exercises did not say anything about what would happen to his home. The Government had not provided any effective channels to communicate with the affected villagers. The villagers would lose their means to earn a living after relocation, given that they only had farming skills. The proposed farming re-provisioning at Kwu Tung South was not realistic;

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

- (f) the site where LegCo had approved funding for the advanced works of the NENT NDAs was polluted with toxic substance. Any site investigation works on it might pollute the underground water and pose health concerns;
- (g) the Government was unfair and allowed the agricultural land to be ruined for development. It would be fairer if the proportion of public housing in the NENT NDAs was raised to half of the proposed total housing stock; and
- (h) the Government should withdraw the NENT NDAs, as there was insufficient consultation.

[Actual speaking time: 15 minutes]

FLN-R3859, KTN-R3409 – Lam Hiu Long

16. Mr Lam Hiu Long made the following main points:

- (a) he objected to the NENT NDAs. As a resident in Kwu Tung North, the development would affect the way of living of his family. He used to live in a flat in the urban area, but the current rural living was more enjoyable. He could plant crops for sharing with his neighbours. He also enjoyed working in his home-office. Their private property rights should be duly respected;
- (b) not only that imported food had higher carbon footprint, people were more concerned about the food security issue as many farmlands in the Pearl River Delta region had been formed for development or polluted with toxic substance. The supply of live chickens to Hong Kong had not yet been resumed since the outbreak of the Avian Influenza, as the Mainland authorities might have influence on the policy. Instead of relying on Dongjiang water, Hong Kong was also pursuing a seawater desalination option to ensure a stable water supply. Similarly, more options for ensuring local food security should be considered by the Government;
- (c) Valais was like a “ghost town”. Such low-density development was a waste of land; and
- (d) developing the Fanling Golf Course would affect fewer people.

[Actual speaking time: 10 minutes]

[Ms Bonnie J.Y. Chan left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

FLN-R4094, KTN-3644 – Ho Lai Ying

17. Ms Chow Koot Yin made the following main points:

- (a) having discussed the subject matter with the local community, she

was asked to bring back the message that everyone should have the right to pursue his or her way of living. “Development” should not be narrowly defined. Farming activities were also a kind of development. A win-win solution should be pursued by the Government, villagers and objectors. The crux of the issue was not about the conflict of development and conservation. It was about the principles of distributing the scarce land resources; and

- (b) the famous Japanese independent film director, Ogawa Shisuke, had produced films on rural farmers. He filmed for the sake of freedom and mankind. He was actively participating in the agricultural movement in Japan in order to protect freedom of life.

18. Ms Chow then showed a video clip with episodes of an affected Kwu Tung villager, Chuen Suk (存叔). She said that the NENT NDAs should refrain from destroying homes, livelihoods and communities. Committing a wrong deed for the first time was a tragedy, but repeating it would be a farce.

[Actual speaking time: 10 minutes]

FLN-R4182, KTN-3732 – Wong Wing Kin

19. The Chairman invited the representer or his representative to make a presentation. The representer and his representative indicated that no presentation would be made.

20. As the representers and their representatives had finished their presentations, the Chairman invited questions from Members.

21. The Vice-chairman said that there seemed to be a consensus that Hong Kong was land scarce but highly populated, and that housing was a critical issue. Some representers/representers’ representatives suggested using brownfield sites and golf courses

to cater for the housing needs. While objecting to the NENT NDAs, some queried why the proportion of public housing proposed was apparently inadequate. He observed that many features of the NENT NDAs seemed different from conventional new towns such as Sha Tin and Tuen Mun. He asked DPO/FS&YLE to explain the planning concept for the NENT NDAs and the public-private housing ratio, and the rehousing arrangement for the affected residents.

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

- (a) there were currently 125,000 applicants waiting for public housing in Hong Kong, and LTHS had set a 10-year annual housing production target of 47,000 flats. The Government had adopted a multi-pronged approach in identifying potential housing sites in the short, medium and long term. The NENT NDAs was intended to cater for the medium to long-term housing needs as well as economic and social needs of Hong Kong;
- (b) the brownfield sites in Hong Kong covered various types of land such as open storages, container yards, industrial workshops, and ruined farmlands. There was no territorial total of the land involved, but the Government had been closely monitoring such land. Turning such pieces of land, which were often remote, for housing development would require supporting infrastructure development and relevant planning and engineering studies. A number of studies had been commenced to investigate releasing brownfield sites for housing development, such as in Yuen Long South and Hung Shiu Kiu. Notwithstanding that, brownfield sites would not suffice in replacing the NDAs in catering for the housing needs of Hong Kong. All options would need to be pursued;
- (c) the proposed Kwu Tung North (KTN) and Fanling North (FLN)

NDAAs would harness the development potential generated by the existing Fanling/Sheung Shui New Town and transport infrastructure such as rail stations. The plot ratios of the residential sites at the future town centres of the NDAAs would be about 5 to 6;

- (d) the overall public-private housing ratio in terms of number of flats for the two NDAAs was about 60:40 to ensure a balanced and socially integrated community. The housing split was in line with the target of LTHS and 2014 Policy Address to provide 470,000 new housing units for the coming 10 years, of which 60% would be public housing. Adopting a higher public-private housing ratio of say 80:20 as in the case of Tin Shui Wai might not be conducive to creating a diverse community. Lower density developments would be planned towards the riverside to create a more appealing townscape;
- (e) the KTN and FLN NDAAs covered a total area of about 600 ha. About half of the land (about 300 ha in total) was zoned for green or conservation related purposes such as “Open Space”, “Agriculture” (“AGR”), “Green Belt” (“GB”) and “Conservation Area”. Agriculture related zones accounted for about 95 ha, while agriculture use was also permitted in “GB” zones. In that connection, about 58 ha of land were zoned for agriculture purposes on the KTN and FLN Outline Zoning Plans (OZPs), and 37 ha of land were reserved for Long Valley Nature Park (LVNP) to allow the continuation of farming activities in the areas. Different from the conventional new town development, urban-rural integration would be a key element in the NDA development. Nature and rural character would be respected;
- (f) in view of the high ecological value of the area to the north of LVNP, the land would be resumed for the nature park for management by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD). AFCD would liaise with the concerned farming operators regarding

the details of the agricultural and associated activities in the area;

- (g) about 37,700 new employment opportunities of different types would be provided in the NDAs, of which about 20,000 would be related to business, retail and government/institutional/community uses; and
- (h) regarding the compensation and rehousing arrangements, the villagers' concerns were well-noted. The Government had established arrangements to deal with these issues, taking into account the concerns and needs of the affected parties.

23. The Chairman said that some representers/representers' representatives appeared to be objecting the proposed LVNP, while it was supported by some green groups. He asked the representers/representers' representatives to clarify their views on the Government's proposal to resume the land in Long Valley for nature park purposes.

[Mr Frankie W.C. Yeung left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

24. Mr Lau Hoi Lung replied that he was not opposing the proposed LVNP for allowing the continuation of agricultural activities. However, it was noted that nature park was not entirely the same as "AGR" zoning, and that the Government had not yet confirmed whether the current co-existence of wet and dry agricultural activities could be continued. If dry agricultural activities were to be displaced by the wet ones, those dry farmers previously rehoused there from Ngau Tam Mei would be aggrieved. The Government should also duly consider the compensation issues for farmlands in the whole territory. The compensation level for the land to be resumed for LVNP was too high, far exceeding the values of farmlands. It would merely benefit the owners, but would have adverse implications for the whole compensation system for agricultural land.

25. Mr K.K. Ling, Director of Planning, said that land resumption for LVNP was for conservation-related agricultural purposes. The proportion of wet and dry agriculture was to be further discussed by AFCD, green groups and local farmers. As regards

brownfield sites, they were not an established land use type but generally covered a variety of land uses such as open storages and rural workshops. They were commonly found in the North West New Territories areas. It should be noted that they were not vacant sites, and both economic activities and domestic structures were often found. Hence, redeveloping such land would also involve land resumption, removal, compensation and supporting infrastructure development. The development potential of such sites would be taken into account in the Hung Shui Kiu and Yuen Long South studies.

26. The Chairman asked Ms Joanne Choi whether those plants shown in her Powerpoint presentation were unique to the NENT area or commonly found in Hong Kong. In response, Ms Joanne Choi said that those wild plants shown in her presentation were surveyed in Ma Shi Po. They should be commonly found in the farmlands in Ping Che and Ta Kwu Ling, as well as in other parts of Hong Kong. Nevertheless, the presence of such plants in the farmlands had a different meaning from those found in the country parks as people could directly relate to them more often. While community farms operated by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) were often excessively managed, the inter-relationship between nature and mankind was more subtle in the farmlands.

27. A Member asked DPO/FS&YLE to clarify whether the farmlands shown on the OZPs would be put into agricultural uses by individual farmers or commercial operators. In response, Ms Chin said that AFCD was liaising with the relevant stakeholders on the farming issues in LVNP. As regards the other agricultural land on the OZPs, farming co-operatives and individual farmers were involved.

28. The Chairman asked the representers/representers' representatives whether the farmers would need to remove the wild plants from the farms before farming and, if so, how that could reconcile with suggestion of symbiotic growth with the wild plants in the farms. In response, Ms Joanne Choi said that whether wild plants would need to be removed or not would depend on the mode of farming practice involved. Organic farming, permaculture or natural farming as advocated by a Japanese practitioner, for example, would refrain from using pesticides or fertilizers. There would be minimal human intervention, and wild plants would be allowed to grow. The photographs of the

wild plants shown in her presentation were taken along the fringes or paths of the farms. They would not affect the farm crops. On the contrary, they might help promote biodiversity in the area by adding more plant species and attracting different types of insects. If the land was fenced up and left vacant, weeds (including Mile-a-Minute Weed) might colonise the plot, leading to an “all-or-none situation”.

29. Mr Lau Hoi Lung supplemented that the name of the Japanese natural farming practitioner was “Masanobu Fukuoka”. He said that instead of leaving a piece of farmland vacant and susceptible to the spread of Mile-a-Minute Weed, a small-scale agriculture model was more conducive to maintaining ecological balance. As compared to intensive farming, small-scale agriculture with minimal management was suitable in the context of Hong Kong. As regards the brownfield sites, the Government would need to review the requirement of such sites taking into account the prospect of container port and logistics industries in Hong Kong in view of competition from Yantian Port in Shenzhen. Given the vast number of and supporting grounds for the objections against the NENT NDAs, the Government should clarify why the brownfield sites, especially those in Wang Chau, were not developed instead. People might feel that the Government was appeasing the rural indigenous villagers at the expense of the affected villagers in the NENT area.

30. Mr Ling clarified that there were also plans for redeveloping the brownfield sites. For example, such proposals had been included in the planning studies for Hung Shui Kiu and Yuen Long South respectively. He reiterated that brownfield sites were not vacant and their redevelopment would also involve complicated procedures and affect existing residents and economic activities.

31. A Member said that the representers/representers’ representatives were proposing to develop land elsewhere such as brownfield sites, vacant urban lots, and country parks. Developing such land, however, would also have various complications and the discussion could be never ending. It seemed that the crux of the issue was to let the affected villagers have a reasonable rehousing arrangement which was acceptable to them. The Member asked DPO/FS&YLE to clarify the implications of the NENT NDAs for the existing agricultural land, and the matching and rehousing arrangements for the

affected farmers, in particular whether they would have any priority in allotment of farmlands in the future NDA development.

32. In response, Ms Chin made the following main points:

- (a) about 24 ha and 4 ha of agricultural land on the FLN OZP and KTN OZP respectively would be affected by the NENT development. A total of 15 ha of agricultural land in the FLN, KTN and LVNP were vacant;
- (b) the agricultural land would be resumed for revitalising the LVNP and AFCD would undertake its management in future. AFCD would follow up with the detailed matching arrangement for the concerned farmers;
- (c) a survey was done for about 103 ha of land in the Kwu Tung South area, of which 34 ha of land were of high agricultural rehabilitation potential. In quantitative terms, the total amount of agricultural land available in the local and Kwu Tung South area (i.e. 15 ha + 34 ha = 49 ha) should be adequate to compensate the total amount of affected agricultural land (i.e. 24 ha + 4 ha = 28 ha). AFCD would proactively work on an appropriate matching arrangement; and
- (d) a genuine farmer fulfilling AFCD's eligibility requirements would be allowed to live in a domestic structure on the farm plot. Those farm houses currently existed in the Long Valley Wetlands and "AGR" zones.

33. The same Member suggested that as the affected farmers were concerned about the matching and rehousing arrangements, representative(s) from AFCD should be invited to the Board to address such issues. The Chairman said that the Secretariat would invite AFCD's representative(s) to attend the hearing session as suggested.

34. The Chairman asked Ms Li Yin Fong as to whether she was a farmer and her views on the rehousing matter. In response, Ms Li Yin Fong said that she was not sure whether she was considered a farmer. Her family of more than 10 members was living in a domestic structure of about 2,000 ft², and grew vegetables mainly for self-subsistence purpose in the backyard of about 5,000 to 6,000 ft². She would collect fruits from the backyard from time to time for sharing with neighbours. It was a very pleasant living environment. They were not the land owner, but were allowed to live there without paying any rent. Her family had been living there for about 60 years. She wondered how rehousing for her family with a backyard of a similar size could be arranged.

35. A Member asked whether the future farmlands in the area would be for market gardening or self-subsistence purposes, and whether they would be operated by farming individuals, farming co-operatives similar to the European cases or commercial farmers. The Chairman said that it was outside the ambit of the Board to control the mode of farming operation. Mr Ling said that it would be more appropriate to invite AFCD's representative(s) to address those matters in the hearing session.

36. A Member said that in addition to the amount of agricultural land concerned, information on the proportion of agriculture land allotted for different nature (e.g. active agriculture land, horticulture, leisure farming, etc) should also be made available to ensure that the affected farmers would be able to continue their farming practices after relocation. In response, Ms Chin made the following main points:

- (a) a total of about 24 ha of active agricultural land were found in the FLN area, mainly in Ma Shi Po (10 ha). Others were also found in Tin Ping Shan Tsuen and Shek Wu San Tsuen. The agricultural land in Fu Tei Au would be retained for agricultural uses;
- (b) the OZPs showed the land use zonings, including land zoned "AGR";
- (c) the villagers involved self-subsistence farmers growing vegetables and

orchards in their backyards as well as farmers who satisfied AFCD's "farmer" criteria and made a living by growing crops for selling in the market. In LVNP, farmers were involved in planting crops as well as leisure farming. Some green groups also planted crops to attract birds. Currently, about 33% of land was used for wet agriculture, 30% for wetlands and the remaining for dry agriculture. The appropriate proportion for each type of uses in LVNP would be further studied in future;

- (d) PlanD was liaising with LCSD to investigate whether community farms could be further promoted in the proposed large-scale open space in the NDA development; and
- (e) the KTN and FLN NDAs were planned to optimise the development potential near the existing Fanling/Sheung Shui New Town, with higher density development near the rail stations and public transport interchanges. In the two NDAs, the total flat supply would reach about 60,000 and the total population would be about 170,000. Maintaining low-density rural development in the area might not be in line with the planning intention of optimising the land resources.

37. A Member asked if AFCD could clarify the relationship between the number of people on the waiting list for the agricultural rehabilitation scheme and the amount of agricultural land available in the area. He also asked for information on the existing development and future prospect of hydroponic planting, noting that representers' representative had mentioned about the contribution of urban agriculture to local food subsistence.

38. In response, the Chairman said that representatives from AFCD would be invited to address these issues. Ms Chin said that AFCD had been promoting modern farming practices and organic farming as well as supporting farmers in terms of funding, training, marketing, research and techniques.

39. Mr Lau Hoi Lung said that land use planning was inextricably related to agriculture. AFCD had been doing a good job within its ambit. Agriculture policy must be pursued as a collaborative effort of all relevant government bureaux and departments. He said that he had known a farmer, Mr Lai, who had long been farming in Ma Shi Po on a piece of government land. The farmer was aggrieved by the Lands Department (LandsD)'s decision of putting the land in a public tender and allotting it to the highest bidder. The land was subsequently left vacant. He also said that notwithstanding that hydroponic planting was less land-intensive and had higher yield compared to traditional farming, it had missed out the environmental and social functions associated with traditional agricultural practice. Even though the Government wanted to develop hydroponic planting, traditional farming should not be pushed aside.

40. Ms Bernadette H.H. Linn, Director of Lands, said that the concerned farmer mentioned by the representers' representative was illegally occupying a piece of government land of about 5000 m². He applied for regularising the unlawful occupation. It would be unfair and improper for LandsD as the land authority to grant the site directly to the occupant when there was market demand for such a large site. The department therefore put the piece of land to public tender for farming or nursery purposes under a short-term tenancy (STT), and the occupant could compete for the site in the tender process. The farmer failed to win the tender. She added that if anyone observed that the land was found to be left idle by the successful tenderer, he or she would be welcome to report the case to LandsD for follow-up actions in accordance with the terms of the tenancy.

41. Ms Chow Koot Yin said that although she was not directly involved in Mr Lai's case, she knew that Mr Lai had submitted the tender application and had discussed his case with an officer of LandsD in the North District. The officer indicated that bidding price would not be the sole criterion in considering the tender application and implied that Mr Lai's previous farming efforts on the land would be given due consideration. The land was however granted in the form of STT to the highest bidder, which was a company recently set up by a lawyer with no prior farming experience. The incident made people

think that the tendering procedure was unjust. She also agreed with the request to invite the relevant representative(s) of AFCD to the hearing session. She further said that the entire public engagement process was unfair to the non-indigenous villagers as they were not the first batch of people to be consulted on the NENT NDAs. The Board should take note of the situation that not all stakeholders were equally represented in the planning process. Without properly addressing the situation, it was premature to talk about the rehousing issue.

[Mr Sunny L.K. Ho left the meeting temporarily at this point.]

42. Ms Linn said that it was common for LandsD to reserve for itself the right not to award a tender at the end. This was the reason for the standard tender condition in cash tenders stating that the tender might not be granted to the highest bidder. The condition did not in itself suggest that the department would take into account factors other than the bidding price. LandsD's intention of tendering the land was to make gainful use of the site for agricultural including plant nursery uses on a short-term basis. She reiterated that if anyone observed that the site was left idle, he or she would be welcome to report the case to LandsD for follow-up actions. Mr Ling also clarified that all residents were provided with the same information package during the public engagement process of the NENT NDAs and the process was transparent.

43. Ms Joanne Choi said that if LandsD intended to promote agricultural uses on the piece of land previously farmed by Mr Lai, it was not understandable why the land was not granted to Mr Lai who was a farmer but to someone with no farming experience. In response, Ms Linn said that the background of the successful tenderer would not be a relevant factor in the tender process. The key would be whether the tenderer would indeed use the land for the purposes permitted.

44. The Chairman said that Mr Lai's case should not be the focus of the meeting, and the concerned parties could liaise with LandsD for any necessary follow-up actions on the case.

45. Ms Li Yin Fong supplemented that the backyard of her house was also used for planting orchids for earning a living. The Chairman said that AFCD had a set of criteria for considering agricultural resite.

46. As Members had no further questions to raise, the Chairman thanked the government representatives, representers and representers' representatives for attending the meeting. They left the meeting at this point.

47. The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.