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PRESS RELEASE
26 June 2014

**The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers 、 The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects
The Hong Kong Institute of Planners 、 The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors**

A Balancing Act Leads to Sustainable Growth in Hong Kong

The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers, The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects, The Hong Kong Institute of Planners and The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors (The Four professional institutes), are aware of the disputes expressed in the community on the North East New Territories New Development Areas (“NENT NDAs”) Project. The Four professional institutes hope that the community can adopt a wider perspective to perceive the problems:

(1) Limited Land Supply

Housing land supply remains tight. There is an urgent need to exploit new development areas and increase land supply. In the past two years, the land supply for private residential flats failed to meet the target of 20,000 flats set by the Government. Rezoning land use is one of the major ways to solve this problem. However, the progress of rezoning is not satisfactory and some rezoning proposals have received objections from a number of districts over the past six months. There is a pressing need of land supply for housing.

(2) Important Sources of Long Term Land Supply

The NENT NDAs Project (Kwu Tung North and Fanling North) provides a major source of long term land supply to Hong Kong. Both Kwu Tung North and Fanling North can offer approximately 300 hectares for development, including more than 90 hectares for housing, providing about 60,700 residential units, which is equivalent to 1.5 years of the targeted housing supply mentioned in the Policy Address. The experience gained in the implementation of this project, such as issues associated with technical aspects, land resumption, compensation for relocation, can be a reference for similar future development proposals (including projects in Hung Shui Kiu and Yuen Long South and NT North) so that a better arrangement to address the request from the affected parties can be formulated.

(3) Essential Preparation

Currently, the Government has submitted a funding application to the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council mainly for the preparation of site formation and basic infrastructure, such as expenditure associated with detailed design and investigation for roads, water supplies, sewage treatment systems. The project still has to pass through the procedures set forth by the Town Planning Board and the land acquisition process before practical implementation. The community can still have adequate opportunity to monitor the project.

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(4) Cost-Benefit Balance

Land is limited in Hong Kong, yet land use planning must cater the needs of the community and cost-benefit of infrastructure and transportation development. Kwu Tung North is selected as a new development area with reference to the provision of relevant infrastructure including the reserved station during the construction of the MTR's Lok Ma Chau Spur Line. Fanling North will be an extension of Fanling new town development and it can benefit from the existing municipal facilities and infrastructure development. When developing a new town, it is unavoidable that some local residents would be affected. The Government should balance the cost-benefit and associated impact and strive to provide reasonable compensation, relocation and re-settlement arrangement to the persons affected by the project. In-depth study on the policy associated with compensation, comprehensive farming and conservation strategies should be conducted to address the needs of the affected parties. In the implementation of the development proposals, the Government should consider the views and requests from the stakeholders and provide reasonable arrangement to achieve mutually acceptable solution including those engaged in farming activities. On the ground that the NENT NDAs can address long-term land demand and provide benefits to the community at large, we appeal to the public to place the benefits of the community as a priority and support that the project is essential.

(5) New Town Development

Currently, the supply in the residential market is inadequate and one of the viable solutions is to increase the land supply. There were opinions suggesting the development of Yuen Long South and the Fanling Golf Course as alternative locations. However, there is no adequate land reserve available for such development in Hong Kong. NENT NDAs Project is required to meet the need of new town development and implementation of these viable proposals can cater for the city's long term and sustainable development.

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Contact Us

香港工程師學會 The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers <http://www.hkie.org.hk>
9/F Island Beverley, No. 1 Great George Street Causeway T : 2895 4446 F : 2577 7791 E : hkie-sec@hkie.org.hk
Bay Hong Kong

香港園境師學會 The Hong Kong Institute of Landscape Architects <http://www.hkila.com>
P.O. BOX 20561, Johnston Road Post Office, Wanchai, T : 2896 2833 F : 2896 3938 E : secretariat@hkila.com
Hong Kong

香港規劃師學會 The Hong Kong Institute of Planners <http://www.hkip.org.hk>
Unit No. 201, 2/F, Prosperity Millennia Plaza, 663 King's T : 2915 6212 F : 2915 7616 E : hkiplann@netvigator.com
Road, North Point, Hong Kong

香港測量師學會 The Hong Kong Institute of Surveyors <http://www.hkis.org.hk>
Room 1205,12/F, Wing On Centre, 111 Connaught Road T : 2526 3679 F : 2868 4612 E : media@hkis.org.hk
Central, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong