

(Translation)

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 19

(Written Reply)

Asked by the Hon SIN Chung-kai

Date of Meeting : 11 February 2004

Replied by : Secretary for Housing,
Planning and Lands

Question

It has been reported that starting from this year, the Guangdong Provincial Government plans to sell to private buyers the rights to use uninhabited islands within the province with a view to increasing financial revenue. At present, there are over 200 islands in Hong Kong, some of which are uninhabited and sizeable. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether :

- (a) it has enquired about the above plan from the authorities of the Guangdong Province; if it has, of the details of the plan; and
- (b) the authorities will conduct studies to find out the number of islands in Hong Kong of which the rights to use are available for sale, the total area of the islands concerned, the restrictions on the sale of the rights to use, the impacts of the sale, and the estimated amount of revenue to be generated from the sale, for future reference when considering whether the rights to use these islands should be sold?

Reply

President,

My replies to the two parts of the question are as follows :

- (a) Government has not enquired about Guangdong authorities' plan to sell uninhabited islands to private individuals. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government is responsible for the management, use and development of the land and natural resources within the HKSAR. In this respect, if vacant Government land is considered suitable for development, it will be disposed of with reference to the prevailing planning and land disposal policies.

- (b) The development potential of our uninhabited islands has been studied, among other things, in the context of the various sub-regional Development Strategy Reviews. The findings of these reviews show that the development potential of these islands is severely constrained by their physical endowment such as the lack of developable land, poor accessibility and lack of infrastructure and related services e.g. water, electricity. Many of these islands have been recommended for landscape protection and conservation purposes in view of their ecological and scenic values. Generally, the scope for commercial development on these islands or for them to be sold is rather limited.