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Design and Planning Competition for the Central Waterfront
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Central Waterfront Design Exhibition Opens at Pier 8

Hong Kong, 8 September 2007 – The Secretary for Development joined the four founders of Designing Hong Kong in opening the design exhibition for the Central Waterfront today.

Over eighty (82) entries have been submitted by teams from around the world for the HK\$1 million planning and design competition for the Central Waterfront. The public of Hong Kong is invited to vote on their favorite designs at Pier 8 (Star Ferry to Hung Hom) from 8 to 28 September and on-line at www.designinghongkong.com.

The 82 entries include 69 professional and 13 student teams, of which 5 are from Hong Kong. Teams from the following countries are participating: 27 from Hong Kong, 14 USA, 6 China, 4 Australia, 4 Italy, 4 Spain, 3 England, 3 Netherlands, 2 Austria, 2 France, 2 Malaysia, and 1 each from Belgium, Canada, Germany, Indonesia, Poland, Portugal, Serbia, Taiwan, Thailand, and Turkey.

The jury will meet on September 15 to select a maximum of eight (8) most 'innovative yet feasible' designs. Three (3) finalists will be selected and invited to build models of their designs for the future waterfront. These finalists will be required to complete the models by mid October to compete for the cash prizes. Another five (5) entries may be recognized with a design merit.

Mr. Peter Wong welcomed the Secretary for Development and expressed great appreciation for her support. He also explained that the objective of Designing Hong Kong, a non-profit organization, is to promote innovative thinking and building consensus on sustainable planning for Hong Kong.

Commending the organiser, Designing Hong Kong, for sponsoring the competition, Mrs. Carrie Lam, Secretary for Development, said that the large number of people involved in this initiative and the enthusiastic response received reflected the passion for the Victoria Harbour and a common aspiration to create a vibrant harbourfront for the enjoyment of all.

"The HKSAR Government shares this passion and we will work hard to meet the public's aspirations. We will engage the public actively and listen to your views in taking our work forward," Mrs. Lam said.

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She referred to the ongoing Urban Design Study for the new Central Harbourfront, and the plan to organise exhibitions, forums, and other activities to engage the community in providing further views to the designs in the next few months.

"These quality entries in the competition will no doubt be a source of inspiration," she added.

Mrs. Lam also said that the newly constituted Harbour-front Enhancement Committee would play an important part in the public engagement work over the Central Harbourfront Urban Design Study.

Ms. Christine Loh emphasized that this is the first permanent waterfront after 150 years of reclamation, and the last available land with many competing and conflicting demands in Central. She reminded all that the area was formed from the harbour which is constituted a 'special public asset' and a 'natural heritage of Hong Kong people'. She urged the Government to recognize its conflicting role as land owner with a significant direct financial interest and its role as administrator, and to ensure that there was full and proper public representation in the design and the management of the waterfront.

Mr. Markus Shaw outlined that the current plans for Central have been designed by engineers to accommodate perceived transport requirements. The priority given to vehicular capacity is resulting in massive surface based infrastructure. He urged the audience to ask themselves why they would come to the waterfront? What activities and facilities would attract them? He called for a pleasant boulevard to replace the planned thundering thoroughfare, aligned with a very diverse mix of land uses at a human scale and interactive at ground level, and much smaller than what has been built along the waterfront over the last 20 years.

Mr. Paul Zimmerman concluded the opening pointing out that Hong Kong has the assets to become the most beautiful city in the world: the mountains, the harbour, the seas, the shorelines, the islands, the parks, the reservoirs and more. However, it is our harsh urban development which is a threat to Hong Kong's quality of life, the tourism industry and the diversity of Hong Kong's economic development. From walled buildings to West Kowloon to village house policies, Hong Kong is facing many critical challenges in its development processes, and the development of the Central Waterfront is a critical barometer. With little open land left around the harbour, there are relatively few opportunities to give Hong Kong a soft edge. He hoped that the competition would inspire a change in thinking.

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Background

The Central Waterfront competition seeks creativity to assist the government define the character and identity of the front door to Asia's World City. Competition submissions are expected to be innovative, yet practical and feasible, and are expected to challenge the existing land use and transport plans for the Central Waterfront. The site area for the competition runs from the Four Season's Hotel to the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. The competition supports the Central Reclamation Urban Design Study which is undertaken by the Planning Department of the Hong Kong Government. All designs will be submitted to the Government, the Town Planning Board, the Legislative Council, the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee and the community at large.

The fund for prize money and honorariums stands at HK \$ 1,000,000.

The members of the jury consist of a team advisor, three technical advisors, and eleven jury members:

- *Christine Bruckner, Architect and member of the American Institute of Architects' Hong Kong Chapter, will oversee the structure and proceeding of the competition.*
- *Fred Brown, Transport Engineer and Managing Director of MVA HK Ltd., Hung Wing-tat, Transport Engineer and Associate Professor of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, and Andrew Thomson, CEO of the Business Environment Council and Member of the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee will advise the jury on the compatibility of the proposals with infrastructure, transportation and committed developments.*
- *The jury members participating in their personal capacities are:*
 - *Peter Hills, Director, and Chair Professor of the Centre for Urban Planning & Environmental Management, The University of Hong Kong;*
 - *Peter Cookson-Smith, Planner, Author and Director of Urbis Ltd.;*
 - *Leslie Lu, Architect, and Associate Professor and Head, Department of Architecture, The University of Hong Kong*
 - *Essy Baniassad, HKIA, FAIA (HON), Professor, Department of Architecture, Chinese University of Hong Kong;*
 - *Raymond Fung, Artist and Architect, Vice Chairman of Hong Kong Designers Association;*
 - *Vincent Ng, Architect, and Convenor of Citizen Envisioning @ Harbour, member of the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (2004-2007);*
 - *Patrick Lau, Architect and Member of the Legislative Council;*
 - *Nicholas Brooke, Surveyor, and Chairman of Professional Property Services Ltd., member of the Harbour-front Enhancement Committee (2004-2007);*
 - *Barry Cheung, Businessman and Chairman of the Urban Renewal Authority;*
 - *John Herbert, Consultant and Chairperson of the Hong Kong Sustainable Development Forum;*
 - *Xu Xi, Author (including 'The Unwalled City', 'Hong Kong Rose', and 'Overleaf Hong Kong'), Prose Faculty at Vermont College, Masters of Fine Arts in Writing; part-time writing professor at SPACE and the Department of English, University of Hong Kong.*

The competition is supported by the Centre of Urban Planning and Environmental Management and Department of Architecture of the Hong Kong University; the Department of Architecture of the Chinese University of Hong Kong; the Society for the Protection of the Harbour; the Harbour Business Forum; The Conservancy Association; Citizen Envisioning @ Harbour; the Hong Kong Sustainable Development Forum; the Hong Kong Designers Association; and Cities on Water in Venice Italy.

Designing Hong Kong is an alliance of four individuals, including Ms. Christine Loh, former Legislative Councilor and CEO of the non-profit think-tank Civic Exchange; Mr. Peter H. Y Wong, Chartered Accountant, Immediate Past Chairman of the Business and Professionals Federation of Hong Kong, and member of the Greater Pearl River Delta Business Council and the Executive Committee of the Commission on Strategic Development; Mr. Markus Shaw, Chairman of the Worldwide Fund for Nature, Hong Kong, and member of the Advisory Council on the Environment; and Paul Zimmerman, Executive Director of Jebsen Travel, Convenor of Designing Hong Kong Harbour District and Vice-Chairman of the Coalition on Sustainable Tourism.