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27 November 2003

Leaflet "Our Harbour – Past, Present and Future"

Land is the primary infrastructure that supports development of Hong Kong. Over the years, land is not "intrinsic" and Hong Kong's prosperity has been built upon land "created" through various means including reclamation. With growing housing and economic development, comes the increasing infrastructure demands and rising aspirations for better living and working environments, the extent of reclamations has increased over the past decades. In the past few months, we heard fresh debates in the community over how to strike a balance between the pursuit of reclamation to meet development needs on the one hand and the public sentiment for the preservation of the Harbour.

Like you, the Government treasures the Harbour and will protect and preserve it as a special public asset of Hong Kong people. We have repeatedly assured the public on various occasions, including in the consultation booklet on "Hong Kong 2030" Study published on 25 November 2003, that reclamation schemes in Central, Wan Chai North and Southeast Kowloon are the only reclamation schemes left inside the Harbour limits. Of the three schemes, the Central reclamation scheme is underway and we have a contractual obligation to deliver the project to meet essential transport needs.

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To better explain the Government's stance on the issue of reclamation in the Harbour, we have produced a bilingual leaflet on "Our Harbour – Past, Present and Future". Copies of the leaflet are herewith enclosed. If you need extra copies for distribution to your members or students, please contact Mr Oscar Wong at 2848 2725.

We look forward to your views which will help us build a greater consensus on protecting the Harbour in the community. Thank you.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael Suen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Suen".

(Michael M Y SUEN)

Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands