

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(February 22nd 2008, Hong Kong)

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A harbour land use study commissioned by the Harbour Business Forum (HBF) has found that over 60 per cent of Hong Kong's harbour-front is inaccessible to the public.

The report, 'What is on Hong Kong's Harbour', prepared by Wilbur Smith and TMA Planning, found that over 60 percent of existing waterfront areas are either cut off by highways and roads, or blocked by industrial buildings, temporary car parks and vacant land. Access is also denied by features such as cargo working areas, sewage treatment facilities and utility installations. Much of the harbour is also visually obscured by skyscrapers. In addition to this, areas such as the old Kai Tak airport and the West Kowloon Cultural District, which represent 9.5 per cent of the harbour, are currently under development planning and while it is noted that West Kowloon has a temporary pedestrian walkway on the waterfront it is quite difficult to access as is Kai Tak.

Accessible areas of the harbour represent 30.5 per cent of the total and can be found mainly in Tsim Sha Tsui, Hung Hom and Tsing Yi North East coast, where continuous waterfront promenades and landscaped areas are provided.

The report also found that very few of the areas around the Harbour are connected to each other, denying opportunities for extended pedestrian and cycling promenades for the enjoyment of the public. The report also found a marked lack of diversity in land use around the harbour. Sixty per cent of harbour-front land is built up land, 21 per cent is roads, 11 per cent is vacant land, with 6 per cent being open land and only 2 per cent defined as green.

Commenting on the report, Jon Addis the Executive Committee Chairman of the Harbour Business Forum (HBF) said: 'This is the most comprehensive review yet undertaken of public access to the harbour-front in Hong Kong.' Mr Addis also added. 'We commissioned the report to help inform public debate and prompt wider discussion about how we can recreate the harbour as a place that can be enjoyed by the people of Hong Kong and visitors alike. Surveys constantly show that the harbour is regarded as one of Hong Kong's greatest assets. We all want an accessible harbour in the heart of our community.'

Maggie Brooke, Chair of the HBF's Best Practice's Committee that commissioned the report, said: 'One policy option that has emerged from the report is the adaptive reuse of existing buildings, such as older, rundown industrial buildings. Internationally, urban regeneration in places such as New York or London, has begun with the imaginative adaptation of older sites to modern, alternative uses. This is a natural process that preserves the character of cities while creating districts that meet contemporary needs. Already, this process can be seen at work in areas such as Soho on Hong Kong Island. To give the necessary incentives to the private sector, the HBF suggests there should be lease modification premium concessions offered for the life of a refurbished building.'

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Further information and a full download of this report is available at:

www.harbourbusinessforum.com

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