

## **Tapescript EPT 3.5 Listening Exam 2**

Chairman: Welcome, ladies and gentlemen, to this press conference on the new Environmental Centre that the government has decided to set up. Let me stress that we are still at the planning stage, and that what we are presenting today are our first ideas, we want in this way to set off a period of public consultation. The more ideas we receive, the happier we will be. As you know, the Government has given us a large piece of land not far from the University of Science and Technology, and has promised us generous funding, so now we need to decide what exactly we should do to make this Environmental Centre most useful and valuable to the people of HK. I have three members of the Planning Committee with me this morning, and they are going to share with us some of their preliminary ideas. First of all, let me introduce Dr. Amy Leung, who is a senior lecturer in Environmental Studies at the City University, and an eminent authority on the marine environment, which is, of course, of much importance to us all here in HK.

Dr. AL: Well, let me start by saying what we want the Environmental Centre to be. We want it to be the place where all the other aspects of work on the environment here in HK come together. We already have university departments, and we have community interest groups, and international groups such as Green Peace and the World Fund for Nature. We also have a government department that monitors some aspects of the environment here in HK, and which enforces current environmental legislation. All these organisations are doing fine work, but at the Environmental Centre we want to pull it all together and try to ensure that we are all working towards the same goals, sharing the same information, and not unnecessarily duplicating each other's work. So we want to be a place where people come together. That's one of the main elements of my vision for the Centre. It will be a place that's always bustling with activity, with groups of people going in and out — experts and the general public. There'll be constant meetings, film shows, seminars, exhibitions, talks, whatever you like, but it will genuinely be a centre of activity.

So how will we achieve this? I think we will need a large building with a large hall, some lecture theatres, and quite a few meeting rooms. We need space for people to come together. Then we need a superb library. This must include everything — beautiful picture books on the wonders of nature, academic works by biologists, ecologists and so on, magazines from all around the world, and an extensive collection of

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brochures, posters, government leaflets and things like that. The library will also need to be able via computer networks to call up information from the world's great libraries and universities. Whether it's a government official needing some complex information on sewage systems, or a school child doing a project, I want them to be able to find what they want easily and conveniently. This will make the Centre a centre of information, and will really attract people.

I very much hope also that we can have a Research Unit in the Centre. We can have one or two permanent staff, and then make arrangements for people to join the unit for short periods. And again I want range and diversity. I want us to be able to attract very eminent visiting scholars to come and share with us their learning and experience, and I also want ordinary HK people to be able to come and join for a month or so, and conduct small research projects of their own, or help larger groups with their projects. There is no doubt in my mind that we cannot know too much about our environment. The world is such a complex and interconnected place, and we have hardly begun to understand how it works, so there's a lot of exciting research to be done. And doing research gets people involved; they get excited about things they hardly noticed before. That's why I want as many ordinary people as possible to be given a chance to come and join the team for a time.

So to summarise my ideas — the Centre will be a place where everyone interested in the environment, and that should actually include everyone, can come together, and for that purpose there'll be a meeting centre, a library and a research unit. And I'm sure there'll be a lot more as well, but that's where we need to begin.

Chairman: Thank you very much, Dr. Leung. I particularly enjoyed the sense of enthusiasm you gave in what you said. I could almost see this exciting place full of people exchanging ideas. Now, I'm going to ask Dr. Simon Ko, the well-known local writer to add his ideas.

Simon Ko: Good morning, everyone. It's a great honour to be able to participate in this new project and I'm fully behind everything that Dr. Leung just said, and in a way, I'm saying the same as her. What I think will be the main function of the Centre is public education and of course, this is what will result from setting up a meeting place with a library and research facilities. For public education to flourish, there are four more amenities that will help. Firstly, we need a school centre. We must actively encourage schools to bring their students along in large numbers to make full advantage of the Environmental Centre. The

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School Centre will organise the visits, set up interesting programmes, and make sure that arrangements are made for everyone to access whatever information they need, have some fun, have something to eat, and so on. Then we need an exhibition area. I don't want a permanent exhibition. Some of those are brilliant, but once you've seen it, well, you've seen it. I want people to keep on coming back to the Centre, so we'll need to have a creative team that is capable of changing the display frequently, maybe six months on rainforests, followed by six months on global warming, and so on. There are obviously lots of possible topics — the problems of landfills, wild life in urban HK, clean water, desertification — lots and lots. So we'll stage interesting and, I hope, hi-tech exhibitions on a variety of matters. Maybe there'll be some way of relating the research going on, and the visiting experts and the current display, so for a few months the Centre will be, say, the world centre on, say, toxic chemicals in the food chain, and international experts will visit us, the local media will get interested in the topic, and through our work and the backup from newspaper articles, TV programmes and so on, the public will have a chance to become well-informed about it. I will also encourage our own government to do what it can on the matter. My third wish is a cinema. There are lots of wonderful documentaries on wildlife — incredible films of insects, the life-cycle of plants, the majesty of the whole world and a million other topics. We need to be showing these all the time, offering a really rich programme of environmentally aware viewing. And my fourth idea is that we become a publication centre. HK is a world printing centre, so there's nothing improbable about my idea. We'll publish academic books, novels with an environmental message, children's books, textbooks, and picture books. A lot of the research carried out here can be published. And we'll produce beautiful catalogues for our exhibitions. You see how everything connects together so well; we decide to invite leading experts on marine pollution to our centre; we launch research programmes on it; we put on a big exhibition; the local media start covering it; we show films about it; students come and visit and learn about it; and we put it altogether in a book that will be, for a time, the standard reference. If we are ambitious and produce plenty of high-quality material, we can very soon gain an international reputation, and lots of people will come rushing up, asking us to publish their books. We'll also be able to print lots of little booklets on environmental issues and a wide range of pamphlets.

So, to add to the meetings, research scholars and library - let's have school children, exhibition, films and lots of good print materials.

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Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Ko, I have to say your ideas fit in well with a couple of my own. I think it's very important that we don't become inward-looking. Obviously this sometimes happens with universities — academics do excellent work and inform their fellow scholars and produce clever papers, but the general public don't really know much about it, because it's all rather technical.

The Royal Society in London has an excellent tradition of organising lectures on scientific matters for the general public, lectures which reasonably intelligent non-scientists can understand. In the same way, I hope we can have a lot of talks at a variety of levels. Talks for school children, for the advocated public, for civil servants, for experts, for the whole community. I think there should be a few talks every day of the year to keep up this incredible atmosphere of learning and enjoyment that we all hope to create.

As well as this ambitious talk programme, I believe we should have a very large shop. Of course, we'll have to have one to sell all our publications, but I hope we'll sell much more than that. I have travelled quite widely and it is amazing what you can find for sale in some world-class museums, as well as books and posters and post-cards and T-shirts and key-rings, and don't look down on such things, they all help to spread our message. You can buy fascinating educational kits — sets to do your own pollution analysis with, collections of different types of stone, fine imitation insects, traditional Amazonian crafts, a wonderful range of products that make you stop and think about the world. Attractively displayed, such goods should prove to be very popular and help generate income for all our projects. After all, we know HK people don't think it's been a perfect day out there if they haven't had a chance to do some shopping.

Anyway, that's enough from me. It's time to hear from our third speaker, Mrs. Rosa Chow, Senior Officer with Green Watch, a local environmental group. Mrs. Chow.

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Mrs Chow: Thank you, Chairman I think what I'm going to say may be fairly controversial. A lot of people who are very concerned about man's impact on the environment take what I might call a very 'pure' attitude towards it. They dislike commercialism; they fight for animal rights, and they are fairly hostile to modern society. There is, indeed, a sort of contradiction here today in what we are planning. We want to preserve the environment, so we are going to build over a piece of open land, we are going to bus in lots and lots of people, who will generate mountains of waste and sewage, and we are going to sit and complain about environmental degradation. Mr. Ko is going to have us cut down a whole forest to print all his books and the printing process will involve polluting huge amounts of water and the use of all sorts of unpleasant chemicals such as bleaches. The chairman's shops will sell the products of international trade that is the main cause of our destruction of the environment. There is definitely a contradiction. It's the same with ecological tourism. The only way to save a rain forest may be to make people aware of it and willing to spend some money on it, and that may involve building airports and hotels and wrecking a lot of what you are trying to save. Well, all I can say is that if that is the price we have to pay, we'll just have to accept the contradiction and by doing some damage, prevent a great deal more. The purists won't like it, and I understand their objections, but I think we should take a sort of theme-park approach. Talks and films and books are fine, but people really like a sort of fake reality. Many people think that it's wrong to keep dolphins in captivity, and it's insulting to them to make them perform tricks to amuse humans. Yes, maybe it is, but such shows make a lot of people love dolphins, and that makes it possible to protect them. It's a price we just have to pay. So I believe that we should produce a number of simulated environments at the centre — bird houses, desert areas, aquaria — a little like Ocean Park but with a more scientific and educational emphasis. Let youngsters walk through a rain forest, let them see animals in the wild, so to speak, let them feel they have the experience that we are in danger of losing, and I believe they will be far more impressed and become far more environmentally aware. Yes, there is something very artificial about creating a rain forest under a glass dome and putting captive monkeys in it, but it is effective at getting people interested in the world. I honestly believe an environmental Disney World would be an amazing success.

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Chairman: I can only say that if half these ideas come to realization, the Environmental Centre will be an enormous success and have a tremendous impact. But now we'll have a short coffee break, and then the panel will try to answer any questions you may have.

(noises off)

During the break I've collected some questions, so perhaps between us we can try to answer them now. The first is from John Wong, a reporter for the Central News. He asks if we think visits by school children should be made compulsory. What do you think, Mr. Ko, as you were so keen on having a School Centre?

Mr. Ko: Well, of course, I'm very keen to get all our young people visiting, but I'm not sure we should start talking about compulsion. If we manage to make the centre extremely attractive, I imagine we'll be bombarded with requests for visits any way. What I would like, actually, is to make Environmental Studies compulsory. It should be a part of the curriculum for primary and junior secondary students. I'd say about 2 lessons a week on a whole range of issues, including practical ways in which we can help protect the environment. I'd also like the Examinations Authority to make Environmental Studies a subject you can take at HKCEE. If it were part of the curriculum, it would become more or less part of the course to come to our Centre. That way we'd achieve our aim without actually ordering people to come!

Chairman: Thank you, Mr. Ko. Maybe Dr. Leung would like to try to answer the next question, from Gary Lee of Cable News. Will the public have to pay to use the centre?

Dr. Leung: We've begun to talk about this and there's no hope of a decision for a long time. Basically, we would like to make visiting the centre free of charge. It's a public facility doing a great job, so it's reasonable for it to be paid for by the community and open to everyone regardless of income. That's our general principle, I think, but that doesn't really answer the question. Obviously, if you want books or food or so on, you'll pay, so where do we draw the line? A membership fee for the library? A few dollars to see a film? Free for students, but not for adults? I don't know. The second thing is simply practicability. We have the land. We have 3 billion dollars available from the Government. The Jockey Club has promised 750,000,000 dollars, the Chan Foundation has offered us \$350,000, and I believe the Environmental Trust of New York is giving us U.S. \$200,000. Out of this we

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must build whatever we are going to build. What remains will be invested to produce the income to pay salaries, buy books, make repairs, pay scholarships and so on. Obviously we'll need the accountants later on to calculate what exactly we can do, and whether we need to raise any other income from the public. And some of our ideas are a bit unpredictable. If we publish a lot, for example, will that be highly profitable or will it cost us money? We'll try to make the Centre as free as possible, but the exact details are really impossible to foresee. Sorry, that's the most I can say.

Chairman: There's another question here for you, Dr. Leung. Could you explain a little more how the research scheme would work? That's asked by Donald Fong from the E.P.A.

Dr Leung: Well, I haven't worked out the details. It would partly depend on how much money was available - but I imagined paying people to come for a month or so. Obviously, with major scholars there's more or less an established system, but with ordinary people I was hoping, for example, a teacher could take a month's unpaid leave and we'd pay the salary to do a short project. I know it's a bit vague, and has shortcomings, but if we work on it, I hope we can find ways in which to involve lots of non-specialists.

Chairman: Thank you, Dr. Leung. Can I pass this one to Mrs. Chow, from Sarah Cheung of Save the Earth — will your publications use recycled paper?

Mrs. Chow: Oh, I think Mr. Ko should answer this! Though I suppose it's part of the contradiction I referred to earlier. Using paper wastefully is bad, throwing away things that can be reused is irresponsible, so recycling paper has a lot to be said in its favour. Unfortunately few things in life are simple. Recycling paper is rather expensive — collecting it, sorting it, processing it and so on, so we'd have to charge more, and that might reduce our ability to sell, make profits and subsidise other activities. Also recycling paper is a very polluting process and involves lots of bleach if we want paper we can print on. So there are drawbacks to the process. I'm afraid that whatever decision we take will be open to criticism. It simply isn't an ideal world.

Chairman: Well, I think that's all for today. I hope you'll all report what's been said to as many people as possible so that we'll get lots of feedback, new ideas and, hopefully, helpful criticism. Thank you all for being here today.