

Completion of non-in-situ land exchange procedures for long-term conservation of Sha Lo Tung

The Government executed the documents for the non-in-situ land exchange of Sha Lo Tung (SLT) with the Sha Lo Tung Development Company Limited (SLTDC) yesterday (July 18), marking the completion of the land exchange procedures, a Government spokesman said today (July 19). The private land surrendered by the SLTDC and the adjacent Government land amount to over 50 hectares. The Government will adopt a strategy of active nature conservation to take forward the long-term conservation of Sha Lo Tung. This signifies a new important milestone for Hong Kong's nature conservation policy and demonstrates the Government's commitment in terms of nature conservation.

SLT has very high ecological value and ranks second among the 12 priority sites requiring enhanced conservation under the New Nature Conservation Policy, second only to the Mai Po Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site. The rich and diverse habitats in SLT, such as fung shui woods, freshwater marshes and an "ecologically important stream", nurture many rare species including butterflies, fireflies, freshwater fish, amphibians and birds, rendering it one of the important breeding and nursery grounds for dragonflies in Hong Kong as well as earning it a reputation for being a sanctuary for dragonflies.

In view of the very high ecological value of SLT, the Government will strike a suitable balance between conserving ecologically sensitive habitats and assisting members of the public in enjoying nature when formulating the long-term conservation plan for SLT, including implementing suitable crowd control measures. The primary means of visiting SLT in future will be mainly by walking. The Government will establish walking trails and signage systems to divide SLT into different habitat zones, in order to minimise the impacts brought about by human activities to the ecological value and wildlife there. The Government will be able to protect the precious ecological resources of SLT while allowing members of the public to enjoy the beautiful scenery there.

In terms of the work of nature conservation, the Government will enhance the quality of the habitats in SLT and increase the biodiversity there through implementing proactive habitat management measures, including protecting important habitats, restoring abandoned agricultural land, enhancing the ecological value of secondary woodlands and removing exotic species. The Government will also provide suitable public facilities (e.g. toilet facilities with low-carbon emission) as necessary, suitably introduce technologies to complement the conservation work and educate visitors on the importance of conserving the ecology of SLT.

The Government will also maintain communication and liaison with the

relevant stakeholders for the long-term conservation of SLT and give due consideration to the views of different stakeholders when mapping out and implementing the future plans for SLT.

For the long-term conservation of SLT, the Chief Executive in Council gave in-principle agreement in June 2017 and approval in February 2021 for the proposed non-in-situ land exchange in SLT. The Government will grant an area of land at the Shuen Wan Restored Landfill in Tai Po to the SLTDC at full market value for developing a private golf course in exchange for its surrender of the ecologically important private land in SLT to the Government.

The land exchange documents will be registered in the Land Registry and the relevant land transaction records will also be uploaded to the Lands Department's website, and will be available for public inspection in due course.