

DIGITAL 21 STRATEGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Summary of Meeting-cum-Lunch held on 4 December 2008 at 12:00 noon on Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance (COIAO)

Members were briefed on the latest progress of the first round of consultation on the review of COIAO, and their views were sought on the review. It was stressed by the Government that the ultimate goal of the review was to protect children in this fast changing world, and that there was no preconceived idea on the consultation outcome. In addition, the Government had no intention to limit freedom of speech or to control access to the Internet. An important goal for the Government was to have a regime in place to reflect community aspirations on protection of children and youngsters. It would be up to the community to draw the line on which articles were acceptable for exposure to children and youngsters.

Members stressed the importance of involving academics and parents in the on-going consultation exercise. They suggested that government should be careful in addressing concerns in the community about the impact on freedom of speech. They also remarked that control of obscene and indecent articles was a cultural and educational issue. It was suggested that the Government should try to play the role of a facilitator and tool provider. For example, arrangements could be made for parents to go to Government's webpages to download tools (with instructions) to prevent children from accessing problematic webpages.