

Joint Statement from Green Groups

Objection to Developing Country Parks and the Adjustment Mechanism Make Use of Brownfield Sites, Military Camps and Spare Land

The Chief Executive Mr. CY Leung told the media that he has instructed relevant departments to conduct a study on developing country parks. Green Groups are furious and strongly opposed to this, as the public has already voiced opposition to the development of country parks. However, the government still insists on doing so and, furthermore, devotes more resources to this, deliberately leading to conflict within our community.

In fact, there is still a lot of land available for development in Hong Kong. The housing shortage problem has originated from “Uneven Distribution”. Over the years, the government has avoided reviewing the “Small House Policy” (land designated for New Territories Exempted Houses), unused Military Camps and Brownfield sites. These are the main reasons for the present situation. Moreover, the government has failed to address the problem of vacant housing units and private flats used for investment and speculation purposes, falsely presenting the situation as a “lack of land”. As there are other land resource options, it is totally unacceptable for the government to use the welfare of the elderly as an excuse for developing country parks.

Country Parks are important features and treasures in Hong Kong. Apart from the environmental value of preserving our precious ecology, they are also well-known for eco-tourism, community enjoyment (for public recreation) and even have a role to play in urban planning (for preventing over-expansion of the urban areas). Country parks are also important water catchment areas, which allow rainwater to flow into surrounding reservoirs. Furthermore, trees in country parks can absorb carbon dioxide and offset some of the greenhouse gas emissions from burning fossil fuels, which relieves global warming.

Mr. CY Leung pointed out that low ecological parts of country parks can be developed. We totally disagree with his claims. All the plants, flowers and birds in the country parks have their own meaning and value to the natural environment. Ecological value cannot be measured in objective criteria. He further suggested the “Adjustment Mechanism” in Country Parks, which we consider to be “weasel words” designed to mislead the public about conservation. The geographical location, the terrain, environment and the ecology of each existing country park are unique and should not be replaced by any excuses. The exchange of another “new” country park area is totally a mistake.

Mr. CY Leung hasn't made good use of brownfield sites, military campsites or spare land before advocating the development of country park borders. Hong Kong's housing problem could also be solved not just by finding land but also by controlling housing demand through a population policy. Once the natural environment is destroyed, it cannot be restored to what it was before. Therefore, the government should not develop our country parks, which are the pride of Hong Kong people.

Co-sign Parties (Alphabetical Order)

伊甸方舟 Ark Eden、香港地貌岩石保育協會 Association for Geoconservation, Hong Kong、
爭氣行動 Clean The Air、創建香港 Designing Hong Kong、
香港大學學生會理學會環境生命科學學會 Environmental Life Science Society, SS, HKUSU、
地球之友 Friends of Earth、海下之友 Friends of Hoi Ha、大浪灣之友 Friends of Tai Long Wan、
綠領行動 Greeners Action、綠色社區 Green Community、綠色大嶼山協會 Green Lantau Association、
綠色和平東亞分部 Green Peace East Asia、綠色力量 Green Power、環保觸覺 Green Sense、
香港自然生態論壇 HKWildlife.net、香港觀鳥會 Hong Kong Bird Watching Society、
島嶼活力行動 Living Islands Movement、群峰學會 Range Education Centre、
長春社 The Conservancy Association、綠惜地球 The Green Earth、
香港自然探索學會 Society of Hong Kong Nature Explorers Kong Nature Explorers