Urban Renewal Strategy (URS) Review
Public Engagement Stage
Gist of Topical Discussion 7:
Social Impact Assessment and Socal Service Team

Date: 26th September, 2009 (Saturday)
Time: 2:30p.m. - 5:00p.m.
Venue: Room 502 Lecture Hall, The Boys' & Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong, 3 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong
No. of participants: 91 (including 10 representatives from the Development Bureau and the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) as observers[1], and 6 discussion group facilitators from the social welfare sector)

Gist of the Public Presentation

Presentation 1

Topic: The six main principles of social impact assessment
Speaker: Ms. Wong, Social Impact Research Group

The speaker cited the six principles of social impact assessment (SIA) as described in an American academic paper:

(1) have a deep understanding of the background of the affected areas, including identifying affected people via public engagement, as well as collecting basic information and the historical background of the concerned area;

(2) pay attention to social welfare factors, including questions raised by the public, the community culture, the impact of renewal, the opinions of the disadvantaged groups in the area, and problems identified by experts;

(3) identify methods of study and analysis, because the former directly affects the results of the study. In addition, transparency should be maintained to enhance persuasiveness;

(4) the amount and quality of data collection must be governed by fixed parameters to ensure completeness;

(5) suggest relief measures for any adverse effects, and set up assessment and monitoring mechanisms;

(6) through the SIA, guarantee that nobody suffers losses, and provide a framework for policy makers to make policy decisions. Therefore the SIA must be carried out before the announcement of the project.

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[1] The observers are the representatives of the Development Bureau and the URA. They were present to listen to the opinions and clarify or supplement certain facts and information. Their comments would not be regarded as valid opinions.

<u>Presentation 2</u>

Topic: Ideal methods for social impact assessment
Speaker: Mr. Wong Ho-yin

The speaker stated that SIA was a statutory process that the URA carried out according to the URS. Its aim was to conduct a comprehensive assessment on all social impacts caused by the project, as well as the community links and resettlement needs of affected residents. The assessment was divided into two stages. The first was a non-public[2] preliminary assessment, carried out before the announcement of the project on the population and economic characteristics, living environment, community facilities, history and culture encompassed by the scope of the project, its potential impacts and mitigation measures. The speaker called this preliminary assessment into question: why was a non-public social impact assessment carried out? He also questioned its operative and analytical methods, as well as who would assess and study the contents of the report. The speaker also pointed out that because this was not a public assessment, the public had no way of knowing the advantages and disadvantages of the project, and whether or not they should support the project concerned.

He added that after the project was officially gazetted, the second stage open assessment would be carried out, which would deal in detail with residents of the area who were affected by redevelopment. The assessment would cover the population characteristics, resettlement needs, housing aspirations, special needs for the disabled and community networks etc. He quoted the SIA report of Shun Ning Road to illustrate the existing problems on the assessment methods, lack of documentary support, unclear source of information, over-simplification of questionnaires leading to a lack of substance of the study, and the lack of an assessment of the impact on peripheral communities. The speaker considered that the mitigation measures, which were drawn up according to current policies, lacked originality or sincerity.

<u>Presentation 3</u>

Topic: The mechanism for appointing social service teams needs total reform
Speaker: Ms. Wong Yat-man, Alliance of Owners' Corporations in Kwun Tong Town Centre Redevelopment Project

The speaker considered that the social service teams (SSTs) should work for residents in redevelopment areas and act as a communication channel between the residents and the URA. The SSTs were specifically responsible for relaying the various social problems, as well as family and compensation

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[2] The 'non-public' ('non-obtrusive' as specified in the URS) or the first stage assessment referred to the one which studied the socio economic data and local features of the project and its periphery before the project was publicly announced. Therefore, the assessment was not carried out openly. However, after the project had been officially gazetted, a detailed (or second stage) SIA would be carried out. The 'non-public' first stage and the detailed second stage assessments would then be submitted along with the other project application documents to the Town Planning Board, allowing the public to review the documents and put forward opinions.

problems arising from renewal. However, she noted that the body in charge of the SSTs was in fact the URA, which created both administrative and financial pressure on the SSTs.

Regarding the administrative pressure, the URA had continuous control over the selection, employment and re-employment processes for the SSTs, making it difficult for the SSTs to provide the best service. She gave an example of the Kwun Tong SST, stating that it turned the tables around by adopting service targets for the URA instead of the community. Because the SSTs were completely financed by the URA, they were alienated from the residents and were unable to uphold their values and conviction to fight for guarantees for the residents. Therefore, she suggested that the SSTs should be organised and run by independent organisations in order to enhance their creditability among members of the public and residents of redevelopment areas.

In addition, she asserted that the Kwun Tong District Advisory Committee was an illegal organisation because there was no property owners' engagement. Any complaints made to the SST were ineffectual as the chairman of the Advisory Committee was also a social worker.

<u>Presentation 4</u>

Topic: Social Impact Assessment
Speaker: Dr. Ernest Chui Wing-tak, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong

The speaker explained that the Government introduced SIA when the URA Ordinance was enacted in 2000. The United States only recognised social impact assessment as a systematic method of study in the 1990s, with the aim of predicting, preventing and minimising problems, as well as devising solutions for their remedy. He pointed out, however, that SIA could not necessarily ensure that everyone goes unaffected and that it would take time to improve SIA in Hong Kong.

SIA was particularly complex as it covered tangible and non-tangible factors. The former included amounts of compensation as renewal could lead to the relocation or closure of commercial premises, leading to redundancies of employees. These financial losses affected the community, even the society as a whole. For example, could the Langham Place redevelopment project benefit the overall economic development or employment opportunities? Non-tangible factors included more complicated issues such as collective memory, community networks and preservation.

Studies were being awaited on who to be included in an SIA, whether its scope should be enlarged (such as the affected residents nearby), and the non-tangible factors involved. If its scope was to be extended, the duration and cost would increase proportionately. Concerning the timing of the SIA, the speaker believed that if an assessment was performed too early, it could lead to speculative buying; therefore a balance must be struck for the openness of the assessment. He also mentioned that the public should consider whether or not the assessment should be carried out by an

independent organisation or by the URA, or whether assessment should be performed employing different methods. He believed that each system had its advantages and disadvantages, and that the question was how to achieve a balance. He hoped to collect a wide range of public opinions in order to improve the SIA.

Presentation 5

Topic: Social service teams/ service model
Speaker: Mr. Ng Sze-on, Concern on Urban Housing Rights Social Workers Alliance

The speaker noted that SSTs were responsible for assisting the smooth relocation of residents in redevelopment areas. However, the problem was that by the time the project had been announced, the SSTs could only play a limited role. It was difficult for them to gain the confidence of the neighbourhood. He said that the ideal community service model should be in line with the ideals of urban renewal, namely to improve the quality of life under the principles of assisting in and promoting residents' participation in urban renewal and community planning, and respecting the interests of differing stakeholders, and to ensure that sufficient resources which were relevant to community needs were provided.

The service targets of SSTs included residents and shop operators who were affected by redevelopment, residents who lived nearby, community stakeholders and parties who had an interest in community building and planning. SSTs were involved in the whole area, resolving disputes and balancing the interests of different parties through contacts with stakeholders, and assisted local people to participate in and help define the manner of the redevelopment in the area. When an urban renewal project was about to be implemented, SSTs would provide emotional support and coordinate other professional assistance such as legal services, property valuations and architectural design.

He believed that the URA should assist in and facilitate community-led urban redevelopment projects, provide resources for engaging the residents and the shop operators, as well as coordinate work on the 4Rs in the district. In addition, he urged the authorities to allow SSTs to get involved with the communities as early as possible, and to improve relevant policies, ultimately achieving an improvement in quality of life.

Presentation 6

Topic: The role and function of social work in urban renewal
Speaker: Mr. Lai Kin-kwok, Caritas Francis Hsu College

The speaker raised the problems faced by SSTs employed by the URA and the Hong Kong Housing Society, namely, lack of independence, confusion of roles, lack of resources leading to difficulties in building trust with residents or shop operators, unclear positioning and failure to pass on experience.

He quoted the *Code of Practice for Registered Social Workers* issued by the Social Workers Registration Board, to explain that social workers had the responsibilities to protect human rights, promote social justice and to maximise the benefits of residents. Their primary obligation was to be responsible for its service targets, helping them to understand their rights and obligations. The strengths of social workers were in building of relationships, consolidating community resources, connecting different parties and advocating policy refinement. They should therefore be employed to the fullest to help encourage public engagement in drawing up and improving social policies and systems. Should problems occur, social workers were responsible for relaying the truth and advocating policy revisions.

Regarding the role of social workers in urban renewal, he recalled the words of the then Director of Social Welfare, Mr. Stephen Fisher, that social workers must stand on the side of the neighbourhood, providing help and assistance.

He hoped that the SSTs could become truly independent, get involved in redevelopment projects at the earliest stage, acquire sufficient resources, encourage resident engagement, promote policy reform and realise inter-professional cooperation. He encouraged the neighbourhood to monitor the work of the SSTs, to lodge appeals and to participate in relevant discussions.

Presentation 7

Topic: The impact of urban renewal on the family
Speaker: Mr. Lau Wai-chung, Alliance of Owners' Corporations in Kwun
             Tong Town Centre Redevelopment Project

The speaker related a number of stories from personal experience to illustrate that urban renewal stirred up many family conflicts and revealed many family scars which the SIA and social workers could not resolve. He requested the URA to seriously experience these problems and to avoid harsh provisions that can cause great pain to the neighbourhood. Besides, compensation must not be described as social welfare, since residents could choose not to receive social welfare. Redevelopment however entails forced resettlement in which residents had no choice.

Presentation 8

Topic: Social impact assessment and social service teams
Speaker: Mr. Tang Chung-wah, Working Group on URS Review, Hong
             Kong Council of Social Service

The speaker described the difficult situation faced by neighbourhoods in redevelopment areas:
(1) They were mostly comprised of disadvantaged and poor social groups with relatively weak support networks. Therefore they were under greater pressure than in an ordinary relocation;
(2) Compensation could not resolve all problems and choices were limited. Residents and property owners were not privy to first hand information, and

thus required the assistance of SSTs;

(3) Compensation policy could not completely guarantee the interests of disadvantaged groups and tenants. Since security of tenure had been abolished, redevelopment usually made tenants to bear costly rents or face forced relocation.

SSTs also faced a considerable number of restrictions:

(1) SSTs were employed by the URA. This affected the SSTs' relationship with residents and the willingness of residents to appeal to the SST for help, hindering the service progress and reducing efficacy;

(2) Due to a lack of trust, social workers needed to deploy more resources to plan and provide their services, which in turn affected the efficiency of their work;

(3) SSTs were not involved in the community until redevelopment was already in progress, so they could only carry out remedial work;

(4) SSTs were contracted for two years, and due to instability of work, it was difficult for the team members to accumulate experience.

Presentation 9

Topic: Social impact assessment and social service teams
Speaker: Ms. Leung Sin-yee, Working Group on URS Review, Hong Kong
            Council of Social Service

The speaker explained the discussion results on the role of SSTs from working groups set up by different social work organisations under the jurisdiction of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service. They suggested that the following principles should be adopted:

(1) independence must be maintained by detaching from the URA's funding support and supervision. It was recommended that the Development Bureau should establish a fund dedicated for such funding support and supervision;

(2) suggest to divide SSTs by the electoral boundary of the District Councils. SSTs should be formed in densely populated old areas, targeting the residents of old buildings to help them face the impacts brought by urban renewal;

(3) SSTs should be allowed to enter the community earlier to deliver services, so as to build better relations with the neighbourhood.

Previously, SSTs focused more on neighbourhoods in redevelopment areas. However, if urban renewal was carried out, the service model would change. It was suggested that 'urban renewal service teams' be established to provide services and enhance the level of residents' engagement. On community planning and construction, social workers should take up the roles of monitoring, assisting and networking. Regarding the redevelopment projects, the duties of social workers were to assist residents in seeking professional support and grasping information, to help them maintain communication, to protect their rights and interests where reasonable, and to assist in mitigating any impact that the project would cause. On rehabilitation, social workers could provide professional support and information to neighbourhoods and owners incorporations. In addition, revitalisation and preservation were

topics about which the public had more concerns in recent years. Their influence could reach to every member of the neighbourhood and even the whole community. Therefore, SSTs could provide assistance to help promote neighbourhood engagement.

The ideal service model that the working group envisaged was for urban renewal to be taken forward with resident engagement. This would include individual home visits, establishing relations with the neighbourhood early, promoting research on SIA, and assisting to the community in paying attention to the needs and opinions of affected neighbourhoods.

Presentation 10

Topic: Not provided
Speaker: Mr. Mike Ng, Kwun Tong Urban Renewal Social Service Team, Christian Family Service Centre (CFSC)

The speaker noted that essentially SSTs could not be separated from their funding systems and the problem of trust. Of paramount importance was for the SSTs and recipients of their service (i.e. the neighbourhood) to establish mutual trust. Under the present funding system, however, this was relatively difficult to accomplish, and the work progress and the willingness of residents to seek help were more or less affected. For example, the office of the CFSC SST was adjacent to the URA's office, inviting doubts whether the social work team were officials or 'spies'.

On the other hand, the social work team of the CFSC had begun to work in the district since 1997, and had established a wide interpersonal network. However, when the URA's SSTs were established in 2007, some members of the neighbourhood began to lose trust, suspecting that they had turned against them and become part of the URA.

He explained that the root of the problem was about financial backing. Since the URA subsidised the SSTs, the impression of 'conflicting loyalties' was formed. On the one hand, the SSTs acted on the orders of the URA, but in fact they were providing services to the neighbourhood. He clarified that the objectives of SSTs were to provide assistance to those in need and to resolve social problems. Their service targets were the neighbourhood in redevelopment areas, and they should uphold their service objectives, values and integrity.

Presentation 11

Topic: Not provided
Speaker: Mr Fung Chi-ming, Old Urban Tenant Alliance

The speaker said that since the SSTs were employed by the URA, it led people to suspect whether they were there to provide sincere help to the residents of redevelopment areas. He therefore did not dare ask for help. He noted that the URA had a public fund of HK$10 billion in public to carry out

redevelopment, but residents were deprived of peace and happiness, even being forced to relocate.

Presentation 12

Topic: Not provided
Speaker: Mr Chan Wai-hing, H15 Concern Group

The speaker pointed out that the source of SSTs' problems was that they were employed by the URA, facing pressures and restrictions which made it impossible to fully perform their duties.   At present, SSTs gave the impression that they were simply relocating residents at the behest of the URA, yet when it came to more practical requirements that were not in line with the wishes of the URA, SSTs did not provide very much assistance.   SSTs in general only complied with related regulations when performing their duties during their two-year contracts.   This was not a positive thing for the society.

Additionally, the SIA procedures were problematic as it was uncertain who was targeted by the SIA and the assessment report was unclear.   Even when the assessment was completed, the end result was the construction of luxurious housing that even middle class residents could not afford.

The consensus of the H15 Concern Group was that SSTs should be independent of the URA.   The URA should be responsible for financing only, and should not steer the actions of the SSTs. Considering that public monitoring was essential, the Group would publicly publish their non-governmental green paper on October 24th.   As the URS Review was currently underway, SIA and other procedures should also come under scrutiny to prevent the impairment of interests of residents.

Presentation 13

Topic: Not provided
Speaker: Ms. Tanya Chan, Member of the Legislative Council

The speaker declared that she was a member of the URA's Board of Directors, and as such received the URA Board members' allowance.   She was however still a representative of the residents.   She believed that the crux of the problem was how the URA viewed its role – if it wanted to change and beautify communities, its role was for the long term and it would carry out research into community characteristics, preservation and planning needs etc. If it treated itself as a developer, then it would leave as soon as money had been made.   She pointed out that the current situation had already been improved.   For example, the Kwun Tong SST entered the community two months in advance to make contacts with residents.   With the role to improve the community, she hoped that their resources could be allocated to benefit the residents of peripheral communities.   Now that the URA conducted both the population freezing surveys and SIAs, it appeared that the SSTs were serving the URA and not truly helping the community.   She pointed out that the Legislative Council had previously deliberated on how to avoid the conflict of roles of the SSTs, which was for the URA to consider injecting capital to set up

a fund to subsidise the SSTs and even carry out long-term community assessments and surveys.

She supported the independence of SSTs, and suggested that such teams should be in place early to carry out community research and get to know the community as a whole. This is because redevelopment affected the community and people's lives in the long run and had particular profound impacts on the elderly members of the neighbourhoods. Any possible conflicts should be smoothed over as soon as possible.

Presentation 14

Topic: Social Impact Assessment
Speaker: Ms. Iris Tam Siu-ying, Executive Director of the URA

The speaker briefly introduced the current policies on SIA. According to the "URS", an SIA was divided into two phases, i.e. before and after gazettal of a project. The first phase was translated as "non-public (「非公開」)" SIA. It did not however mean that the SIA would not be accessible to the public. It was only translated from the English words 'non-obtrusive', which might result in some misunderstanding.

The first phase of an SIA would be carried out before the Freezing Survey by employing indirect information including the Government's population census data and on-site observation. It would initially evaluate the population and economic characteristics, business activities, living environment, level of overcrowding, history and culture, local features, community facilities, potential effects of the project and mitigation measures etc. of the district in question. Phase two of the SIA took reference from information collected directly from affected residents and shop operators during the Freezing Survey, including population characteristics, resettlement needs, housing aspirations, employment situation, workplace locations, community networks, educational needs, potential impacts of the project and mitigation measures, as well as the special needs of the elderly, disabled and single parent families. In fact, the content coverage was fairly wide.

The URA would submit Phases 1 and 2 of the SIA to the Town Planning Board and the Secretary for Development for consideration, and provide it for public review and comments in accordance with the URA Ordinance. Through other various impact assessments, the URA would study the projects' broader impacts on traffic, environment, landscape, air ventilation and heritage etc. Apart from monetary compensation, there were other mitigation measures to assist businesses with local character to return after redevelopment, rehouse the eligible household tenants, offer to owner-occupiers Expressions of Interest in Purchasing Arrangement for residential units in the redevelopment and arrange for SSTs to follow-up on individual cases.. The URA has also started two tracking surveys in its Hai Tan Street and Kwun Tong projects. The URA and the SSTs worked as partners.

Topic: Social Service Team
Speaker: Ms. Tong Yat-man, URA

The speaker pointed out that as prescribed clearly in the URS, the URA had to establish SSTs in redevelopment target areas to provide assistance and counseling services to affected residents. The appointed SSTs were non-government social welfare organisations which operated independently. The major service areas of SSTs included residents in the areas, affected property owners, tenants and shop operators. She reiterated that the SSTs' service target was not the URA.

No matter if residents chose to stay in the original district or move to other areas, the SST would assist in maintaining or rebuilding their community network. Even if the residents moved to other districts, the SST would still provide follow-up services, including understanding whether they were able to adapt to the new environment and assisting them in gaining support or social welfare services in the new community. In addition, as owners and tenants were usually anxious and worried after the announcement of a project or the commencement of acquisition, the SST would help residents to discuss with the URA issues like compensation for acquisition and resettlement etc. With the help of the SST, through explanation and coordination, residents and the URA could develop mutual trust.

Since 2002, the SSTs had already handled more than 1,400 cases, while 300 more cases were still being processed. The speaker quoted some cases to illustrate that the SSTs were whole-heartedly helping the residents and improved their living conditions.

Gist of Group Discussion Report

1. The current situation of the Social Impact Assessment, its problems and methods of improvement

Some participants pointed out that in general, residents in the redevelopment areas thought that redevelopment projects had long-term impacts on the whole community and local people. The current SIA however had its inadequacies:
(1) the assessment failed to achieve the objective of 'predicting' future problems. For example, some residents mentioned that property developers had been speculating in the H19 redevelopment area and they did not understand why the impact of these speculation activities on the redevelopment progress had not been foreseen in the assessment;
(2) the assessment had not covered the demand for 'flat for flat' and 'shop for shop' exchange arrangements, which were the aspirations of many in the neighbourhood;
(3) interactive elements were insufficient in the assessment process, for example, regular sharing sessions with residents in the redevelopment

areas which were organised by the Government in the past had been cancelled;

(4) the sentiments of owners who were deprived of their private property ownership and their feelings for a destroyed community network had not been included in the assessment, which revealed that it was not comprehensive.

Some groups stated that the SIA should cover a wider scope to include the individual and family way of life, the economy, the environment and the community network, as well as compensation and rehousing aspirations etc.

Some pointed out that if there were long-term SIAs for different communities, speculation activities resulting from information leakage could have been prevented. SIAs might not be carried out only for redevelopment projects, as they could assist the Government in better understanding both the community and the impacts of policies on the community. The assessment would therefore benefit other policies. In the long run, legislation should govern the compulsory conducting and endorsement of an SIA for a redevelopment project before its commencement.

Moreover, the SIA should not be limited to the redevelopment areas, but should also be extended to neighbouring and peripheral communities.

Some participants opined that the current SIA methodology had its flaws. For example, the wordings used in the questionnaire might be misleading, the multiple choice questions could not cover all opinions, and some topics (such as community network) were difficult to comprehend through questionnaires. It was suggested that the local people's living conditions and neighbourhood relations be mapped out via focus groups and group discussions. A detailed 'recommendation' section should be included in the conclusion of the assessment report.

2. Tracking study

Some groups believed that a tracking study was very important in understanding whether the lives of those affected were improved by redevelopment or renewal, or the number of residents who could move back into the new redevelopment.   Although the URA had been carrying out tracking studies, it only selectively investigated those affected residents who had their living environment improved; excuses such as 'information not found' or 'bound by non-disclosure agreement' were used for the seriously affected residents.   Therefore, an independent and comprehensive tracking study must be undertaken.   Consideration could be given for entrusting different organisations, professionals, academics or tertiary institutions to conduct the study.   Some participants suggested encouraging residents who have moved out to participate in the tracking study by offering them rewards.[3]

3. Conflicting roles of social service teams in urban renewal

Some believed that the fundamental problem of the SSTs was their lack of independence.   Most participants believed that the SSTs must be independent.   They should be community-centred and serve genuinely the neighbourhood of the redevelopment area.

Some group members referred to the example of public housing redevelopment where the SSTs were under separate management, funding and executive arms.   Only then could social workers genuinely help the residents and voice opinions or fight on behalf of their interests.   Some suggested that funding could be provided by a third-party organisation instead of the URA, and that the SSTs themselves should determine the cases to be handled, or appointment should be arranged through open tender by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service.   Some considered however that it might not be appropriate for SSTs to be held responsible for the SIA.

Some participants thought that the SIA was not influential. Projects were still taken forward even though major problems were revealed in the assessment. SSTs could only take remedial action and ease residents' sentiments. Some stated that the follow-up actions by social workers were limited by the policy framework. For example, there was nothing the social workers could follow-up even when the assessment revealed a demand on 'flat-for-flat' exchange arrangements.

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[3] Regarding residents' opinions of tracking study, Ms. Tam Siu-ying from the URA responded as follows: 'Tracking Study' was, in fact, not a surveillance operation.   The URA had already commenced studies on the Hai Tan Street and Kwun Tong redevelopment projects.   In order to maintain neutrality, the URA had selected the University of Hong Kong and Chinese University of Hong Kong to perform the studies.   In order to respect residents' aspirations, letters had been issued to all residents to request them to participate in the tracking studies. In the Hai Tan Street redevelopment project, more tenants responded positively but the response from owner-occupiers was not encouraging.   The Kwun Tong redevelopment project also faced many difficulties, as many owners had already moved out.   The URA, however, would endeavour to carry out the tracking studies.

Some groups thought that SSTs were too fearful, and the limited provision of resources also hindered their work, resulting in their low credibility among residents. Some participants suggested that since SSTs were funded by the URA, they should therefore be renamed as 'URA Customer Service Teams' or 'Coordination Teams'.

4. The role of social service teams under 'district-based' planning

Many groups believed that participation from the community should be strengthened to realise the 'bottom-up' approach. The mode of community participation should be made permanent in order to develop a continuous understanding of the community and to perfect development planning, thus avoiding problems such as short term subsidy and a lack of continuity. Through the establishment of community participation planning centres, existing SSTs could be deployed to pre-organise participation among residents and voice their opinions on the 4Rs strategy. Some groups raised a similar suggestion – i.e. establishing community development centres to provide the neighbourhood with a platform to express their community development aspirations. When redevelopment was required in the area, the centres could provide assistance to the neighbourhood immediately. Social workers should apply professional knowledge and techniques to gather different resources, such as those from professionals and the URA. They should assist the neighbourhood in obtaining planning information and expressing opinions so as to become better involved in planning. This could also reduce resentment.

Some participants stated that foreign experience offered lessons. Professionals appointed by the Government, in collaboration with social workers, could enter the community and provide planning assistance. Planning participation would then be community-led under a 'bottom-up' approach.

5. Other views

- Some individual participants proposed that SIA reports should be open to the public and easily accessible. They could be uploaded onto the relevant website for public inspection.
- It was suggested to allot a certain percentage of the proceeds of redevelopment to affected residents who had been required to move out from the redevelopment area. This could lessen the indignation and discontent of residents and property owners.
- Some participants stated that the URA's role should be 'people-centred' and 'community-centred' but the URA distorted this role into 'money-centred'. The URA was also not bounded by legislation or other controls. Therefore, the URA should be monitored.
- The role of the URA should be to facilitate spontaneous redevelopment among property owners and the neighbourhood. Social workers could provide assistance in this process.
- Forced redevelopment was an act of robbery and profiteering. It was very unfair that residents were forced to move out.

- Some participants thought that the time for the group discussion was insufficient. Some also pointed out that it was unnecessary for the URA to introduce individual SST cases in its projects.
- Redevelopment should aim at community improvement and sustainable development, which should also be the objectives of the SSTs.

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