

中華人民共和國香港特別行政區
參照
《經濟、社會與文化權利的國際公約》
提交的報告

**Report of the Hong Kong
Special Administrative Region
of the People's Republic of China
in the light of the
International Covenant on
Economic, Social and Cultural Rights**

International cooperation

466. As explained in paragraph 294 of the previous report, Hong Kong maintains close cooperation with the WHO, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Bank. We draw on the experience of other countries to formulate policies and programmes suited to local circumstances.

Environmental and industrial hygiene

Environmental protection strategy

467. In paragraph 295 of the previous report, we explained that the 1989 White Paper, 'Pollution in Hong Kong - A Time to Act', had initiated a ten-year Environmental Protection Strategy for achieving certain environmental aims by specific target dates. The strategy included a comprehensive legislative framework for controlling pollution. A final review of the strategy was carried out in 1997 and the results published in May 1998. In 1997, the Government initiated a study of "Sustainable Development for the 21st Century". The aim is to establish, through public consultation and review, a planning tool that will integrate social, economic and environmental indicators. The objectives are to provide a framework for the review of policies and programmes and to plan for the future in a way that reconciles social and economic aspirations with the need to sustain a healthy environment for Hong Kong and for our neighbours.

Control of water pollution

468. In paragraph 296 of the previous report, we explained that - in 1990, the Government amended the Water Pollution Control Ordinance (Chapter 358) to tighten controls over discharges and deposits within specified water control zones. At the time of the previous report, controls were in place in nine zones. Now, the controls are in force throughout the territory. Marine dumping activities are controlled under the Dumping at Sea Ordinance (Chapter 466) through a permit system for the disposal of substances and articles in specific areas.

469. The comprehensive sewage strategy - adopted in 1989 - provides for stronger legislative control of effluent disposal; improved local sewage collection and treatment through 16 regional sewerage master plans; and a four-stage 'Strategic Sewage Disposal Scheme'. The aim of the latter was (and remains) to process urban sewage in a central treatment plant before disposal via an oceanic outfall. Detailed design or construction works for all 16 master plans are underway. Further treatment facilities are being planned to cope with the expanding population. Construction work on the first stage of the 'Disposal Scheme' started in April 1994 and the centralised sewage treatment works was commissioned in 1997. The related tunnel collection system is expected to be completed in 2000. The environmental impact assessment for the second stage is in progress. So too are the feasibility studies for the third and fourth stages.

Water quality at beaches

470. In paragraph 297 of the previous report, we explained that notwithstanding the steps being taken to control water pollution, significant problems remained. The situation has somewhat improved in 1998. Nine out of the territory's 41 gazetted beaches⁹ failed to meet the statutory water quality objectives for bathing beaches as compared with 15 in 1997. Among the five beaches closed to the public only one had "very poor" water quality in 1998. The problem is caused primarily by high background pollution. However, the progressive provision of local sewerage treatment will continue to bring about environmental improvements in the early-2000s.

Water quality in rivers

471. The improvements mentioned in paragraph 298 of the previous report have steadily continued. But some of Hong Kong's rivers remain severely polluted.

⁹ Since the submission of the previous report (which stated that there were 41 gazetted beaches), two beaches have been degazetted and one gazetted.

Livestock waste remains a major contributor. Controls extended to the whole territory in 1997¹⁰ have helped to reduce the amount of pollution by livestock waste. Even so water quality objectives still cannot be met. We will review the position to establish what further improvements can be made.

Water quality in marine waters

472. In paragraph 299 of the previous report, we said that marine water quality was generally acceptable except in Tolo Harbour, Victoria Harbour and Deep Bay. The position in Tolo Harbour has improved. But the other two areas remain unacceptable. In Victoria Harbour the very poor water quality is due to largely untreated commercial, industrial and domestic sewage. The conditions should improve greatly upon completion of the sewerage schemes explained in paragraph 469 above. In Deep Bay the problem is due largely to livestock waste and domestic sewage from both Hong Kong and the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone in Guangdong Province. Again, the progressive implementation of the new sewerage projects and controls of livestock waste should improve the situation provided similar action is also taken in the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone (Guangdong Province), which borders the SAR in the north. This is one of the key objectives of the Hong Kong Guangdong Environmental Protection Liaison Group.

Disposal of solid wastes

473. In paragraph 300 of the previous report we explained that the 1989 Waste Disposal Plan proposed replacing existing urban landfills and incinerators with three new state-of-the-art landfills in the New Territories, serviced by a network of refuse transfer stations. At that time (1995), three transfer stations were in operation. Now there are seven. More are in the planning or construction stage. The new landfills have long been operational. We are now reviewing the Waste Disposal Plan with a view to updating it.

¹⁰ Under the Waste Disposal Ordinance (Chapter 354) and the Waste Disposal (Livestock Waste) Regulations (Chapter 354 sub-legislation A).

Disposal of special wastes

474. As explained in paragraph 301 of the previous report, these include chemical, abattoir and medical wastes. Chemical wastes are treated at the Chemical Waste Treatment Centre commissioned in 1993 and their production, transport and disposal remains under strict legal control¹¹. We previously reported that Government was planning to build an incinerator for medical waste and for animal carcasses. Now, the intention is to use separate incinerators for each of those purposes.

Waste reduction

475. In 1997, we consulted the public on the findings of a study into means to avoid waste, to increase reuse and recycling, and to reduce the final volume of municipal waste in an environmentally acceptable way. The resulting 'Waste Reduction Framework Plan' was launched in 1998. The objective is to double the level of material diverted from the waste stream to reuse or recycling from the present 30%, and to reduce the overall level of waste production.

Control of air pollution

476. In paragraph 303 of the previous report, we explained that the Government continuously monitored air quality at nine sites throughout Hong Kong. Now, there are 12 such sites. As previously reported, air quality in many parts of Hong Kong is reasonably good on a day-to-day basis. But, the chronic presence of respirable particulate matter in the more congested urban districts continues consistently to exceed annual acceptable levels. This poses a threat to the health and well-being of the community and reduces visibility. The main sources of air pollution in Hong Kong are road vehicles, construction activities and industry.

¹¹ Again, by regulations under the Waste Disposal Ordinance.

477. Legal measures for the control of air pollution remain as previously reported. The major instrument for such control is the Air Pollution Control Ordinance (Chapter 311). Ozone depleting substances are controlled under the Ozone Layer Protection Ordinance (Chapter 403)¹². Hong Kong is, as before, divided by statute into ten Air Control Zones. The Air Pollution Control (Fuel Restriction) Regulations (sub-legislation under Chapter 311) sets the maximum permitted level of sulphur in industrial fuel oils at 0.5%.

Vehicle emissions and fuel standard

478. Good progress has been made since we submitted the previous report. The standards imposed in 1995 (paragraph 305 of the previous report) have brought Hong Kong's standards into line with those of the European Union. And, in April 1998, we introduced emission standards for new diesel private cars comparable to those in California. We will continue to tighten emission and fuel standards in accordance with international trends.

479. As explained in paragraph 306 of the previous report, diesel vehicles are a major source of air pollution in Hong Kong because of their intensive use for mainly commercial reasons. The Government has been seeking clean alternatives to such vehicles. Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) has been identified as a clean and practicable alternative to motor diesel fuel. In November 1997, we initiated a one year trial of LPG-powered taxis to assess the operation of such vehicles in the local driving environment. Although the trial still has a few months to run, it has already found LPG taxis a practicable alternative to diesel. We are now working on a proposal to introduce LPG taxis on a large scale.

480. But diesel vehicles are not the only source of vehicle emissions. The Government's strategy is to -

¹² This implements the requirements of the Montreal Protocol. The latter seeks to control production, trading, and hence the supply of ozone depleting substances; and further to phase out the use of the substances eventually as a means of eliminating their release to the atmosphere.

- (a) adopt stringent vehicle emissions and fuel standards;
- (b) strengthen emission inspection;
- (c) strengthen enforcement against smoky vehicles; and
- (d) educate the public.

Control of other air pollution sources

481. The Air Pollution Control Ordinance imposes stringent controls over environmental asbestos and all air polluting processes. As foreshadowed in paragraph 311 of the previous report, the licensing exemptions previously enjoyed by certain polluting industries are being removed in phases. The de-exemption exercise is ongoing. Our target remains to remove all exemptions by the year 2000.

482. The controls over premises where asbestos containing materials are suspected to be present remain as described in paragraph 310 of the previous report (owners to engage consultants to prepare an asbestos investigation report for submission to the Environmental Protection Department; owners to submit an "asbestos abatement plan" if such materials are discovered; consultants, work supervisors, laboratories and contractors involved in the use or handling of asbestos-containing materials to be registered). The import and sale of amosite and crocidolite were banned in May 1996.

483. In paragraph 311 of the previous report, we explained that 31 industrial processes with the potential to adversely affect the environment¹³ were subject to licensing controls under the Air Pollution Control Ordinance and were required to adopt the best practicable means to prevent emission of air pollutants. The controls were being implemented in phases with some existing plants being exempted to give the owner time to comply with the emission requirements. That process is continuing and we aim to extend the controls to all affected premises by the year 2000.

¹³ These include such industries as incineration, aluminium works, petrochemical processing and gas production.

484. The Air Pollution Control (Open Burning) Regulation¹⁴, introduced in 1996, prohibits open burning of construction wastes, tyres and cables for metal salvage. It also prescribes strict controls over other open burning activities. And the Air Pollution Control (Construction Dust) Regulation¹⁴ 1997 requires works contractors to adopt measures to minimise dust emissions from construction activities.

New regulation

485. To reduce the exposure of the public to air toxics, we shall introduce two set of regulations in 1999 to control benzene emissions from petrol filling stations and perchloroethylene emissions from dry cleaning operation.

486. Benzene is a human carcinogen. Unloading of petrol in petrol filling stations is one of the major sources that people are exposed to due to the proximity of the stations to the residential premises. The regulation requires that all petrol delivery vehicles and petrol filling stations to be equipped with vapour recovery system to minimise the benzene emissions. Similarly, perchloroethylene is a toxic air pollutant which may cause liver problems, miscarriages, and probably cancer. The regulation requires that all dry-cleaning machines have to be non-vented type meeting some stringent specified standards. The two regulations will bring Hong Kong in line with the practices of many other developed countries.

Indoor air pollution

487. The 18-month consultancy study foreshadowed in paragraph 312 of the previous report has been completed. The Government will consult the public on its findings and on a draft code of practice to improve indoor air quality, particularly in public indoor areas and offices.

¹⁴ Sub-legislation under Chapter 311.

Control of noise pollution

488. In paragraph 313 of the previous report, we described the measures then in place. We also explained that the Government intended introducing new subsidiary legislation¹⁵ to impose further and tighter controls over construction noise. That was accomplished in 1996. The new controls cover such activities as hammering and rubble disposal. They also tighten noise limits on the use of certain mechanical equipment. Noise from motor vehicles came under statutory control in August 1996¹⁶. Vehicle intruder alarm systems followed in April 1997¹⁷. And the provisions were introduced - again in 1997 - for the phased abolition of excessively noisy percussive piling machines such as diesel, pneumatic and steam hammers.

Environmental education

489. Paragraph 315 of the previous report referred to the statutory "Environment and Conservation Fund" that was established in 1994 to support education and research activities undertaken by community groups. In 1998, the Fund's capital was increased from \$50 million to \$100 million.

490. Both the Education Department and the Environmental Protection Department run extensive education programmes. These are directed principally towards schools. An Environmental Campaign Committee co-ordinates public education campaigns to inform the community about environmental issues and to encourage the attitudinal and behavioural changes that will help to bring about a healthier living environment. This work provides permanent, systematic environmental education to back up more narrowly targeted campaigns such as the Clean Hong Kong Campaign (annual anti-littering and environmental hygiene programme) and the recently launched campaign: "Health Living for the 21st Century".

¹⁵ Under the Noise Control Ordinance (Chapter 400).

¹⁶ Under the Noise Control Ordinance and the Road Traffic Ordinance (Chapter 374).

¹⁷ Under the Noise Control Ordinance.

Environmental impact assessment

491. In paragraph 316 of the previous report, we described the measures then in place to ensure that the environmental implications of major development proposals were properly assessed. The statutory framework foreshadowed in that paragraph was put into effect in April 1998 with the implementation of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance (Chapter 499). It is now an offence to construct or operate a designated project or decommission a designated project as defined under the Ordinance without an environmental permit or contrary to the conditions, if any, set out in the permit. Applicants must submit project profiles to the Director of Environmental Protection who will either require them to prepare EIA reports or allow them to apply direct for permits. Project profiles and EIA reports prepared under the Ordinance must be made available for public inspection and comment. Such comments must be taken into account before EIA study briefs are issued and EIA reports approved. To facilitate public inspection, all project profiles, EIA study briefs, approved EIA reports and environmental permits issued are placed in the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance Register Office, and placed on the internet during the public inspection period.

Occupational health

492. This is discussed in paragraphs 102 to 111 above in relation to Article 7.

The Occupational Safety and Health Service of the Labour Department

493. As explained in paragraph 317 of the previous report, the Occupational Health Service works to maintain and improve employees' physical and mental well-being. It continues to pursue these tasks in the ways previously described. That is, it -

- helps employers manage job-related health hazards by adopting preventive measures and safe practices;