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Measures to prevent and control dengue fever enhanced

Prompt prevention and control measures by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in the past year coupled with community participation have effectively prevented secondary spread of dengue fever.

In 2001, Hong Kong has not recorded any local cases of dengue fever among the 17 cases reported.

The Chairman of the Inter-departmental Coordinating Committee on Dengue Fever, Dr Tse Lai-yin said today (March 27): "However, we must always remain vigilant against dengue fever as it is endemic in our neighbouring countries and our weather is favourable to the propagation of the mosquitoes carrying dengue virus.

"The Department of Health (DH) will continue to closely monitor the dengue fever situation both locally and in neighbouring countries and areas."

The Inter-departmental Coordinating Committee on Dengue Fever had decided in a meeting yesterday (March 26) that efforts should be continued this year by instituting a series of enhanced prevention and control measures against the mosquito transmitted disease.

Yesterday's meeting also confirmed that the territory-wide inter-departmental anti-mosquito campaign would be strengthened and implemented from April 2.

"Dengue fever is a viral infection caused by the dengue virus. The virus is transmitted by infective mosquitoes that bite during the day. A mosquito vector that is capable of transmitting dengue virus exists in Hong Kong and is called *Aedes albopictus*. Dengue fever is not transmitted directly from person to person."

Dr Tse who is the Consultant (Community Medicine) of DH, advised persons travelling outside Hong Kong, to adopt the following preventive measures to protect themselves against dengue fever and other mosquito-borne diseases:

- * wear long-sleeved clothes and long trousers;
- * use insect repellent over the exposed parts of the body;
- * use mosquito screens or nets when the room is not air-conditioned;
and

- * avoid staying in scrubby areas.

People who return from a dengue-infected area and fall sick within one month should immediately consult a doctor and give complete travel history to facilitate early diagnosis and management.

Dr Tse said that the most effective control strategy against dengue fever was to enhance disease surveillance and control the mosquito vector.

Dr Tse said: "Special attention will be given to areas favoring the harborage of mosquitoes or in close proximity to human residence. These include waterfront public and private cargo working areas, piers and ferry terminals, construction sites, housing estates, schools and hospitals.

"It is important for members of the public to clear stagnant water in their homes and surrounding areas to avoid breeding of mosquitoes."

They should:

- * put all used cans and bottles into dustbins with cover;
- * change water for plants at least once a week, leaving no water in the saucers underneath flower pots;
- * cover tightly all water containers, wells and water storage tanks; and
- * keep all drains free from choke.

The FEHD will track Ovitrap Indices in parallel with the campaign to monitor the change in the territory-wide situation of mosquitoes.

A community-wide publicity campaign to encourage the public to participate actively in controlling mosquito breeding will be launched from April 2.

The campaign, with the slogan "Let's remove stagnant water. Eliminate mosquitoes for healthy living", will be joined by the FEHD; DH; Hospital Authority; Housing Department; Education Department; Leisure and Cultural Services Department; Social Welfare Department; Labour Department; Home Affairs Department; Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department; Lands Department; Environmental Protection Department; Architectural Services Department; Highways Department; Marine Department and Information Services Department.

District Councils and District Areas Committees will be invited to participate in the campaign, which will be conducted in three phases.

The first phase will be conducted between April 2 and 27 while the second and third phases will be carried out from July 15 to August 10 and from September 23 to October 12 respectively.

The Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and Communication) of the FEHD, Dr Ho Yuk-yin said: "The future of Hong Kong rests with the younger generation.

“To solicit their support and to promote practices unfavourable to mosquito infestation, a photo-taking competition will be organised for secondary school students, a poster-design competition for upper primary school students and a colouring competition for lower primary school students.”

Apart from television and radio announcements and publicity materials like banners and posters, letters to target groups such as management of construction sites, public/private housing estates, schools and hospitals/clinics will be sent.

Moreover, roving exhibitions at major shopping malls of housing estates; outreaching health talks for schools, construction sites management and workers; as well as a theme exhibition at the Public Health Laboratory Centre at Nam Cheong Street, Sham Shui Po will be arranged to drive the message home.

Details of the campaign can be found at the FEHD's home page <www.fehd.gov.hk>.

Dr Ho added: "Enforcement actions and public education will be stepped up against mosquito breeding, particularly in construction sites and other targeted areas.

"Members of the public are reminded that under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, Cap 132, any person found accumulating water containing larvae or pupae of mosquitoes on his premises will be liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000 plus a daily fine of \$450."

Communication channels between DH, Hospital Authority and private sector will be strengthened to detect suspected cases of dengue fever.

The Port Health Office of the DH will increase the frequency of broadcasting dengue fever prevention messages at the airport, ferry terminals and border control points. There will be an increased supply of pamphlets and posters on dengue fever available to travellers. Support has also been solicited from the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong to remind its members to disseminate health messages to clients and to encourage them to take precautions during outbound trips.

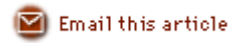
Travel health information including information on mosquito-borne diseases is available at DH's travel health website <<http://www.info.gov.hk/trhealth>>.

To-date, two imported cases of dengue fever were reported in Hong Kong this year and both patients had recovered.

End/Wednesday, March 27, 2002

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Public urged to guard against mosquito breeding

In view of the prevailing humid and hot weather, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) strongly urged the public to remain vigilant to mosquito breeding and the spread of mosquito transmitted diseases like dengue fever, a spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) advised today (May 22).

Dengue fever, a viral disease commonly found in tropical and subtropical regions, can be imported into Hong Kong through infected travellers.

Moreover, *Aedes albopictus*, which is a vector of the disease, is abundant in Hong Kong. Infected mosquitoes may transmit the disease.

"The World Health Organisation has warned that climate plays an important role in the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases and affects the pattern of mosquito reproduction," said the spokesman.

"Higher temperature and rainfall will favour the growth of vector mosquitoes. The recent downpours call for public participation in our ongoing battle against mosquitoes.

"We need to keep up with our anti-mosquito efforts, which aim to curb the spread of dengue fever in Hong Kong."

The spokesman warned: "Any laxity may open the gate for dengue fever, which is extremely difficult to eliminate once it has established its foothold in a territory."

The first phase of the 2002 Anti-mosquito Campaign was launched between April 2 and 27 to arouse public awareness of the importance of mosquito prevention and control.

In the first four months of this year, over 9,770 mosquito breeding places were eliminated while 81 warning letters were issued and 99 summonses taken out against mosquito breeding.

"To guard against the breeding of mosquitoes and the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases, the public should play their part by taking proper anti-mosquito measures," added the spokesman.

"The key to prevent mosquito breeding is to eliminate all stagnant water which provides a favourable breeding ground for mosquitoes.

"The public should keep their homes and surroundings clean."

Improper management of containers will create breeding places for *Aedes albopictus* which is a container breeder.

Therefore, small containers, disused tyres, discarded containers, saucers of potted plants and so on should be cleared.

The spokesman also advised the public to take the following precautionary measures to curb the breeding of mosquitoes:

- * stop storing water along morning walk trails or Government land for planting and irrigation;
- * cover all containers properly and remove all unnecessary water collection;
- * change at least once a week the water in flower vases and saucers of potted plants to prevent the breeding of mosquitoes. The use of saucers should be avoided whenever possible;
- * keep all drains free from choke;
- * dispose of articles that contain water easily, such as empty lunch boxes, cans and tyres;
- * top up all defective ground surfaces to prevent the accumulation of stagnant water;
- * make large holes on tyres which are used as anti-bumping device in car parks or garages or wrap tyres up with plastic cover to prevent water trapping;
- * use mosquito screen to prevent the invasion of mosquitoes;
- * use insect repellents or wear long-sleeved clothes to provide temporary protection from mosquito bites; and
- * use mosquito coils or aerosols to kill mosquitoes if necessary.

He warned that any person found accumulating water containing larvae or pupae of mosquitoes on his premises would be liable for a maximum fine of \$25,000 plus a daily fine of \$450.

"Should there be any mosquito problems, the public may report to the FEHD's district environmental hygiene offices or through the department's hotline 2868 0000," he added.

End/Wednesday, May 22, 2002

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Concerted efforts called for mosquito control

In view of the high Ovitrap Index recorded in April this year, the Inter-departmental Working Group on Pest Prevention and Control has decided to advance the launch date of the second phase of the Anti-mosquito Campaign 2002 from July 15 to May 28, and to extend the campaign period from four weeks to six weeks.

Moreover, the public should be vigilant and take proper measures to curb mosquito breeding and the spread of mosquito-transmitted diseases like dengue fever.

The Chairman of the Working Group, Dr Ho Yuk-yin, who is also the Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and Communication) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), made the above appeal at a press conference this (May 28) afternoon.

He said: "To monitor the change in the vectors' situation, we have been conducting an Ovitrap survey since 2000.

"We have found that the average Ovitrap Index in April this year (30.2 per cent) is much higher than that of last year (17.6 per cent), indicating that the number of *Aedes albopictus*, which will transmit dengue virus if infected, is abundant in Hong Kong."

There may be a number of factors contributing to the sudden upsurge of the population of *Aedes albopictus*.

"According to our Ovitrap surveys conducted in 2000 and 2001, seasonal variation plays a major part in the proliferation of *Aedes albopictus*," he elaborated.

For example, the Ovitrap Indices recorded in the first quarter of these years were lower than five per cent and reached the peak in summer.

The World Health Organisation has also warned that climate is a key factor in the transmission of mosquito-borne diseases and affects the proliferation of mosquitoes.

"According to the Hong Kong Observatory," Dr Ho said, "March 2002 is the warmest month on record. The total rainfall in the month was 238.7 mm, which was over four times than that of March 2001.

"We believe the unusually high temperature and humidity in March this year facilitated the growth of vector mosquitoes," he added.

Apart from weather, there are also other factors conducive to mosquito breeding.

For example, stagnant water and improper management of containers provide favourable breeding grounds for *Aedes albopictus*, which is a container breeder.

In the first four months of this year, over 9,770 mosquito breeding places were eliminated.

"Although only three imported cases of dengue fever were reported in the first five months of this year, the public should spare no efforts in taking proper precautionary measures," Dr Ho appealed.

"The most effective control strategy in reducing mosquito population is to remove all stagnant water and keep homes and surroundings clean. Active participation of the public holds the key to its success."

As stipulated in the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap 132), any person found accumulating water containing larvae or pupae of mosquitoes on his premises will be liable to a maximum fine of \$25,000 plus a daily fine of \$450.

Between January and April this year, 81 warning letters were issued and 99 summonses were taken out against mosquito breeding.

"Our past experience also revealed that water stored for irrigation for the purpose of illegal planting along morning walk trails and Government land gives chance to mosquito breeding.

"Therefore, people should stop the illegal practice," Dr Ho warned.

In addition to active community involvement, the Government will step up operations in eliminating mosquito breeding places and prevention of mosquito-borne diseases during the second phase of the Anti-mosquito Campaign.

With the slogan "Let's remove stagnant water. Eliminate mosquitoes for healthy living", all members of the Working Group will take part in the campaign, including FEHD; Department of Health; District Councils, Housing Department; Highways Department; Education Department; Leisure and Cultural Services Department; Lands Department; Labour Department; Social Welfare Department; Home Affairs Department; Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department; the Hospital Authority; Architectural Services Department and Environmental Protection Department.

Special attention will be given to areas favouring the harbourage of mosquitoes or in close proximity to human residence, including waterfront public and private cargo working areas, piers and ferry terminals, construction sites, housing estates and schools.

Publicity materials like banners and posters, pamphlets and videos as well as letters to target groups such as management of construction sites and housing estates have been distributed to disseminate the anti-mosquito message.

Roving exhibitions at major shopping malls of housing estates, outreaching health talks for schools, construction site management and workers are being conducted to drive home the message.

The FEHD's Health Education Exhibition and Resource Centre is also staging a theme exhibition on ways to prevent mosquito breeding.

More information and advice on mosquito control can be found at the FEHD's web site: www.fehd.gov.hk or the hotline 2868 0000.

End/Tuesday, May 28, 2002

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Anti-mosquito messages well-received by students

Primary and secondary school students have their awareness of mosquito prevention and control strengthened through active participation in competitions recently organised by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD).

Some 11,000 entries were received for the Photo-taking, Colouring, and Poster Design Competitions bearing the theme "Let's remove stagnant water - Eliminate mosquitoes for a healthy living".

Gold awards went to Tang Kim-kui of Kowloon Technical School; Lee Pei-yu of Sha Tin Government Primary School (AM Section); and Chan Lim-bob of Ma Tau Chung Government Primary School for the competitions of Photo-taking; Poster Design; and Colouring respectively.

Winning entries were selected on the creativity, artistry and aesthetic sense.

Joining the Chairman of the Legislative Council's Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene, the Hon Fred Li Wah-ming to officiate at the prize presentation today (July 5), the Deputy Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene, Dr Mak Sin-ping, said that the competitions received a very good response and the entries were of high quality depicting participants' sound knowledge in mosquito prevention.

Dr Mak said: "Dengue fever is a viral disease commonly found in our neighboring regions and Hong Kong's hot and humid weather favours the growth of *Aedes albopictus*, a vector of the disease.

"Though all cases of dengue fever reported so far are imported ones, we need to remain vigilant and spare no efforts in guarding against the breeding of mosquitoes.

"Any laxity may open the gate for dengue fever," she added.

The competitions are part of a series of activities for the Anti-mosquito Campaign 2002, the second phase of which was launched between May 28 and July 6.

During the campaign period, in addition to strengthened operations by various government departments, other educational and promotional activities including talks for students and construction site staff, roving exhibitions at major shopping malls of housing estates were held to drive home the anti-mosquito message.

To prevent mosquito breeding, the key is to eliminate all stagnant water and keep our homes and surroundings clean.

The public can also report any mosquito problems to the FEHD's district environmental hygiene offices or call the department's hotline 2868 0000.

End/Friday, July 5, 2002

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Be watchful over mosquito breeding

In view of the persistent hot and humid weather, members of the public should remain vigilant to the spread of mosquito-transmitted diseases like dengue fever and should spare no effort in the removal of stagnant water to curb mosquito breeding.

Meanwhile, refuse like small containers and disused tyres should be disposed of properly to avoid the accumulation of water, the Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and Communication) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), Dr Ho Yuk-yin, made the appeal today (August 16).

He explained: "Hong Kong is under constant threat of dengue fever as its climate is highly favourable to the proliferation of mosquitoes, and the optimal temperature for mosquito breeding is between 25 to 30 degrees Celsius."

For example, the average temperatures for April, May and June are 24.6 degrees Celsius, 27 degrees Celsius and 28.8 degrees Celsius respectively.

Coupled with showers, the Ovitrap Indices, which reflect the situation of *Aedes albopictus* in Hong Kong, went up from 30.2 per cent in April to 34.2 per cent and 35.6 per cent in May and June respectively.

"Nevertheless, climate is only one of the contributory factors," Dr Ho said.

"The presence of containers, such as improperly disposed soft drink cans and lunch boxes, as well as the storage of water in open area also facilitate the growth of mosquitoes, in particular *Aedes albopictus*, which is a vector of dengue fever.

"Although the Ovitrap Index for July was dropped to 29.5 per cent and all cases of dengue fever reported so far are imported ones, we need to keep up our anti-mosquito efforts to further reduce the risk as the hot and humid weather is expected to continue in the next couple of months.

"Any laxity may open the gate for dengue fever, which is extremely difficult to eliminate once it has established its foothold in Hong Kong."

He called on the public to keep homes and surroundings clean by clearing accumulated water and disposing of refuse properly.

They should not store water along morning walk trails or Government land for irrigation.

In parallel, the FEHD will continue to conduct cleansing operations and prosecution actions to remove potential breeding places.

"To tackle the accumulation of refuse and illegal cultivation, which provide favourable breeding grounds for mosquitoes, 790 special operations were mounted between January and July this year and will be continued from time to time," added Dr Ho.

Between January and July this year, over 27,900 mosquito breeding places were eliminated and 2,433 complaints were handled.

On the prosecution front, 934 warnings were issued and 190 prosecutions against mosquito breeding were taken out.

"Any person found accumulating water containing larvae or pupae of mosquitoes on his premises will be liable for prosecution with a maximum fine of \$25,000 plus a daily fine of \$450 if convicted," he warned, adding that specially designed posters will be distributed to remind the public to remove stagnant water and dispose of refuse properly.

To report mosquito problems, the public may contact the FEHD's district environmental hygiene offices or through the department's hotline 2868 0000.

End/Friday, August 16, 2002

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Hong Kong keeps vigilance against mosquito breeding

Hong Kong, with a climate favourable to the proliferation of mosquitoes, is keeping high vigilance against the constant threat of dengue fever.

To add an impetus to Government's anti-mosquito drive, members of the public are called upon to play their part by taking appropriate measures to guard against mosquito breeding as well as the spread of mosquito-borne diseases.

The Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment and Communication) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), Dr Ho Yuk-yin, said today (September 20) that keeping homes and surroundings clean was the most effective way to eradicate mosquito breeding and threat.

Dengue fever, a viral disease commonly found in tropical and subtropical regions, may be transmitted by *Aedes albopictus*, a container breeder which is abundant in Hong Kong.

To enhance anti-mosquito efforts, the FEHD will be launching the third phase of the Anti-mosquito Campaign 2002 between September 23 and October 12 this year to appeal to the public to attach importance to the issue.

During the first seven months of 2002, the department eliminated more than 27 900 mosquito breeding places, issued 934 warnings and lodged 190 prosecutions against mosquito breeding.

Dr Ho said: "Although the Ovitrap Indices dropped from 35.6 per cent in June to 29.5 in July and 26.7 in August, we should not be complacent.

Any laxity may open the gate for dengue fever. Dengue fever is extremely difficult to eliminate once it has established its foothold in Hong Kong," he cautioned.

Active public participation will complement Government's cleansing operations and is crucial to uphold Hong Kong free from dengue fever threat.

Dr Ho said the public could easily fulfill their obligations by taking simple and easy-to-follow anti-mosquito measures.

The public should remove breeding grounds for mosquitoes like improperly disposed soft drink cans, lunch boxes and disused containers at once.

They should not store water along morning walk trails or Government

land for irrigation.

To drive home the message, three specially-designed posters reminding the public to clear stagnant water and dispose of refuse properly have been prepared for distribution.

During the campaign period, a theme exhibition featuring winning entries of the Anti-mosquito Campaign 2002- Photo-taking, Colouring and Poster Design Competition will also be staged at FEHD's Health Education Exhibition and Resource Centre in Tsim Sha Tsui.

In addition, information and advice on mosquito control, including two Chinese songs composed and written for children, have also been uploaded at FEHD web site: www.fehd.gov.hk.

End/Friday, September 20, 2002

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Schools reminded of dengue fever prevention

The Education Department (ED) today (September 26) reminded all schools to be on guard against dengue fever by taking necessary preventive measures against mosquito breeding and the spread of mosquito-borne infectious diseases.

The reminder, as part of the territory-wide efforts on dengue fever prevention stepped up by the Government, came after the recent confirmed cases of dengue fever.

"A circular letter on the prevention of dengue fever has been issued to all kindergartens, primary and secondary schools," an ED spokesman said.

"Given the considerable number of students in each school, it is of utmost importance that the school environment should not have elements to promote breeding of mosquitoes, and school staff and students should have the necessary knowledge to control and prevent mosquito problems in general and dengue fever vector in particular."

"Staff and students are requested to take the necessary preventive measures detailed in the leaflet entitled 'Anti-mosquito Measures' distributed direct to schools in April 2002 by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), which can also be downloaded from the FEHD homepage (http://www.info.gov.hk/fehd/safefood/library/mosquito_school/1.html)."

"They can also listen to information on anti-mosquito measures through the FEHD 24-hour telephone hotline at 2868 0000," he added.

For information about dengue fever, staff and students can visit the website of the Department of Health (DH) (<http://www.info.gov.hk/healthzone>), or dial the 24-hour health education hotline at 2833 0111.

Nine talks will be jointly organised by the DH and FEHD between October 2 and 7 to equip school staff with the necessary knowledge about the control and preventive measures. For details, please call DH at 2835 1820.

End/Thursday, September 26, 2002

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AFCD steps up mosquito control measures in country parks

Following the discovery of local dengue fever cases, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) had in the past few days stepped up measures in eliminating mosquito breeding grounds to prevent the spread of the disease.

"AFCD staffs had inspected 20 trails and 135 recreational sites, including barbecue sites, picnic sites, and camp sites in various country parks. Over 2,500 containers were removed, and depressions found on sites were leveled to prevent holding of stagnant water.

"We have also cleared drains and kept them free from choke. Petroleum oil or larvicide was applied to water bodies at work sites wherever necessary," a spokesman for AFCD said today (September 27).

Cleaning contractors were advised on measures against dengue fever. They were instructed to collect litter left over by visitors as soon as possible and prevent the accumulation of water on the floor of all flushing toilets in country parks.

We also display posters on prevention and control of mosquitoes at country parks information boards and visitor centres. A film on dengue fever was also broadcasted to the public in all visitor centers.

"AFCD officers had given advice and distributed leaflets to country parks visitors and morning walkers advising them on measures against dengue fever. The morning walkers were also advised not to store water in morning walking areas.

"Advice had also been given to groups joining our activities in country parks to take preventive measures, such as wearing of long-sleeved clothes and trousers.

"We will continue our blitz against mosquitoes in country parks in support of the territory-wide efforts on vector prevention and control," the spokesman added.

End/Friday, September 27, 2002

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FEHD in full swing to combat Dengue fever threat

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) continues to spare no effort in the control and prevention of mosquito breeding and in particular with the recent threat of Dengue fever.

FEHD staff has started from today (September 25) inspections at densely populated areas like housing estates, schools and hospitals following the completion of a blitz inspection on construction sites.

A spokesman for FEHD said: "Warnings will be given for irregularities found in these three specific areas for rectifications.

"Prosecutions will be given afterwards if irregularities remain," he added.

Rounding up the past two days' blitz operations at construction sites, the spokesman said FEHD staff had visited and inspected a total of 575 construction sites throughout the territory, resulting in 86 prosecutions and 36 warnings issued against mosquito breeding.

Two seminars specially tailored for construction site management are held on September 25 and 26.

The spokesman said: "The enhanced operations have successfully aroused public awareness, in particular management of construction sites, of the importance of mosquito prevention.

"We will revisit the sites next week to ensure that proper vector prevention and control measures are in place," he stressed.

"Continued control measures on mosquitoes will be implemented on Ma Wan area to contain the outbreak."

To further complement the Department's anti-mosquito efforts is a series of public education programmes launched with an objective to solicit public participation in guarding against mosquito breeding and the spread of mosquito-borne diseases.

A thematic exhibition on mosquito prevention and control is being held at FEHD's Health Education Exhibition and Resource Centre at Block S4, Kowloon Park, Tsim Sha Tsui. Related topical roving exhibitions will also be staged at three public housing estate shopping centres namely Wong Tai Sin Shopping Centre, Long Ping Estate and Lei Tung Estate.

In addition, talks and seminars will be organised for different target groups to drive home the message.

The spokesman stressed that the proliferation of mosquitoes could

only be effectively put under control should the public strictly observe anti-mosquito measures. These include:

- * dispose of used containers and bottles properly;
- * clear stagnant water in their homes and surrounding areas;
- * change water for flowers and plants at least once a week;
- * remove water in vases and saucers underneath flower pots;
- * cover all water containers tightly;
- * top up all defective ground surfaces to avoid accumulation of stagnant water; and
- * disused tyres as anti-bumping device in car parks should be replaced by markings on the floor; if tyres are used, they should be properly wrapped by plastic bags or large holes must be made on the tyres.

"There is no excuse for not taking the measures that are simple and easy to follow," the spokesman said.

"Hong Kong can stay away from the threat of mosquito-borne diseases only when the community at large proactively takes heed of vector-control measures."

End/Wednesday, September 25, 2002

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Lands Department takes action against dengue fever

The Lands Department today (September 26) conducts a clearance action to eliminate potential mosquito breeding sources at the hillside near Lei Muk Shue Estate at Sheung Kwai Chung, Tsuen Wan.

The move is in response to a call by the Department of Health for all Government departments to take immediate measures against the spread of dengue fever in Hong Kong.

Following report of the infection on Ma Wan, the District Lands Office in Tsuen Wan took the initiative to liaise with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department to conduct a joint operation for the removal of overgrown grass on Government land there.

It was completed on September 25.

To help prevent the spread of the disease, District Land Offices all over the territory are conducting inspections to vacant Government land sites with a view to identifying blackspot areas for clearance actions.

In addition, they are promoting the mosquito prevention message by putting up posters in their offices.

During today's action, a large number of water containers believed to have been placed by morning walkers for watering the plants they grew on the hillside were removed.

A Lands Department spokesman said that such containers were ideal breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

He urged residents not to cultivate on Government land, particularly on hill slopes, which often create mosquito problems.


"Those who are convicted of illegal occupation of unleased land are liable to six months' imprisonment and a \$10,000 fine, while illegal excavation on such land can bring six months' imprisonment and a \$5,000 fine," he said.

He added that the clearance action will continue on Government land in various districts in the coming weeks.

End/Thursday, September 26, 2002

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Anti-mosquito measures stepped up at LCSD venues

The Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) has taken vigorous operational measures against mosquito breeding in LCSD venues to prevent the spread of dengue fever.

A spokesman for LCSD said today (September 30): "We have stepped up anti-mosquito measures at our leisure and cultural venues to prevent and control the spread of dengue fever by eliminating the accumulation of water at these venues."

"In addition to daily inspection at these venues to ensure there is no stagnant water, all venue staff have been instructed to clear choked surface drainage channels, empty all receptacles regularly and to tightly cover all water containers, water storage tanks and wells."

"Discarded bottles and tins would also be properly disposed of, rubbish should be kept in disposable plastic bags and tied up at the openings to avoid accumulation of water," the spokesman added.

"On the horticultural front, staff will empty the natural water receptacles on tree holes and bamboo stumps. They will also frequently drain water from the vases or saucers of ornamental potted plants to avoid accumulation."

Apart from operations, LCSD will also take every opportunity to solicit the public's cooperation on the prevention and control of mosquitoes by displaying posters and banners at LCSD venues and distributing leaflets to disseminate the anti-mosquito messages.

"We have mobilized our Green Volunteers to help disseminate the anti-mosquito messages by distributing leaflets to all the participants attending our greening projects such as the tree-planting days and horticultural talks," the spokesman added.

He said that all staff have already been advised to wear long-sleeved clothes, long trousers and apply insect repellent when working outdoors for protection against mosquito bites.

End/Monday, September 30, 2002

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Public urged to prevent dengue fever

The government today (September 21) called on members of the public to be on guard against dengue fever by taking preventive measures against mosquito breeding and the spread of mosquito-borne diseases.

The appeal was made following the detection of local cases of dengue fever in which three men working in a construction site on Ma Wan have suffered from the disease recently.

Speaking at a press briefing this afternoon, Consultant (Community Medicine) of the Disease Prevention and Control Division of the Department of Health (DH), Dr Tse Lai-yin said DH was closely monitoring the situation to prevent spread of dengue fever in the territory.

"We have been working with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) closely to make an all-out effort to prevent the proliferation of mosquitoes," Dr Tse said.

Persons working at the construction site or residing near the construction site on Ma Wan since June 1, 2002 and had symptoms like fever, severe headache, myalgia, arthralgia and rash. are advised to call a special hotline 2961 8966 set up by DH for health advice and counseling. The hotline, which starts operation this afternoon until 7 pm, will be manned from 9 am to 5 pm from tomorrow.

The first case involved a 21-year-old man who developed clinical symptoms compatible with dengue fever including fever, severe headache, myalgia, arthralgia and rash. He was admitted to Tuen Mun Hospital on September 14 and is now in stable condition.

The patient had not traveled outside Hong Kong during the incubation period which lasts from three to 14 days. His case has been classified as a confirmed local case.

Staff of DH and FEHD visited the construction site yesterday for an epidemiological survey and a comprehensive mosquito control action. 244 construction site workers were successfully interviewed.

Two of them, aged 28 and 38, were found to have symptoms of dengue fever in early September and blood specimens were obtained for laboratory test. Laboratory results showed probable results for dengue fever. As they did not have recent travel history, these two cases were classified as suspected local dengue fever cases. They have recovered from the illness.

Health advice was given and posters and pamphlets were distributed to the workers at the scene. The management of the construction site

has also been reminded to keep a clean environment at the site. Other workers will be put under DH's medical surveillance.

At the same time DH staff also visited the 21-year-old patient's home and distributed questionnaires in his neighbourhood yesterday with a view to identifying if people living there had developed dengue fever symptoms.

"The risk of contracting dengue fever can be effectively minimized should anti-mosquito measures be strictly observed by members of the public," Dr Tse said.

Dr Tse reminded members of the public to clear stagnant water in their homes and surrounding areas to avoid breeding of mosquitoes. They should:

- * Put all used cans and bottles into dustbins with cover,
- * Change water for plants at least once a week, leaving no water in the saucers underneath flower pots,
- * Cover tightly all water containers, wells and water storage tanks, and
- * Keep all drains free from choke.

The public should also adopt the following preventive measures to protect themselves against dengue fever:

- * Wear long-sleeved clothes and long trousers,
- * Use insect repellent over the exposed parts of the body,
- * Use mosquito screens or nets when the room is not air-conditioned.

Dr Tse said a meeting of the Inter-departmental Co-ordinating Committee on Dengue Fever will be held early next week to step up inter-departmental efforts in territory-wide vector prevention and control.

To-date, 11 confirmed cases of dengue fever were reported in Hong Kong this (2002) year. Of these, 10 were imported cases and one local case.

End/Saturday, September 21, 2002

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Dengue Fever Update

Staff of the Department of Health today (September 22) visited residents on Ma Wan for a health talk and an epidemiological survey at a local rural centre during which residents were briefed on the symptoms of dengue fever and preventive measures to protect themselves against the disease. Publicity leaflets were distributed.

At the same time DH staff carried out individual interview with the residents with a view to identifying if they had developed dengue fever symptoms in recent months.

Of the 69 residents interviewed, a 32-year-old woman was found to have fever in July. She has recovered. Blood specimens were obtained for laboratory test. None of them is referred to hospital.

As at 3 pm today, the Department of Health's (DH) hotline 2961 8966 received 93 enquiries on dengue fever.

Most of the calls were general enquiries. Nine callers, being six male and three female aged between 19 and 60, worked or lived on Ma Wan. Among them, a 38-year-old man, who had worked on Ma Wan, claimed to have fever in end June, was immediately referred to DH's regional office for blood test. He has recovered. None was admitted to hospital.

The hotline, operated since September 21, is manned by healthcare professionals from 9 am to 5 pm daily.

End/Sunday, September 22, 2002

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Dengue Fever Prevention Stepped Up

The Government will take vigorous and effective measures against mosquitoes to prevent the spread of dengue fever in Hong Kong.

Speaking after a special meeting of the Inter-departmental Co-ordinating Committee on Dengue Fever held this (September 23) afternoon, the Department of Health's (DH) Deputy Director, Dr P Y Leung, said territory-wide efforts on vector prevention and control would be strengthened by 16 Government departments.

"Active community participation in mosquito control and prevention against mosquito bites is the most effective control strategy to prevent the spread of the disease," Dr Leung said.

"At present, there is no evidence that the infection has gone beyond the construction site. Further investigation is continuing. So far no new confirmed cases are reported."

"As Hong Kong is surrounded by dengue-endemic countries, the public are urged to take precautionary measures against mosquito bites while traveling. This reduces their own risk of being infected and also reduces the risk of bringing the virus back to Hong Kong."

DH staff today took blood samples of about 100 workers of the construction site on Ma Wan for information gathering and disease surveillance.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) inspected Ma Wan daily and would complete a blitz round of construction sites in Hong Kong by tomorrow for vector prevention and control.

The FEHD today also took 43 prosecutions against construction sites and issued 20 warnings against mosquito breeding.

Dr Leung reminded members of the public to clear stagnant water in their homes and surrounding areas to avoid breeding of mosquitoes. They should:

- * Put all used cans and bottles into dustbins with cover,
- * Change water for plants at least once a week, leaving no water in the saucers underneath flower pots,
- * Cover tightly all water containers, wells and water storage tanks, and
- * Keep all drains free from choke.

The public should also adopt the following preventive measures to

protect themselves against dengue fever:

- * Wear long-sleeved clothes and long trousers,
- * Use insect repellent over the exposed parts of the body,
- * Use mosquito screens or nets when the room is not air-conditioned.

The Lands Department will step up inspection, clearance and grass-cutting at unallocated Government land sites to eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) will step up mosquito measures in country parks. Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) will also step up anti-mosquito measures at their venues such as beaches, gardens and recreation and sports centres. Education Department(ED) will advise schools and Social Welfare Department (SWD) will advise elderly homes to inspect and eliminate mosquito breeding grounds.

The Information Services Department would step up broadcasts of TV and radio Announcements in Public Interests (APIs) on mosquito prevention and control.

The message was promulgated at the Public Enquiry Service Centres and Building Management Resource Centres of the Home Affairs Department, recreation and sports venues of the LCSD, District Lands Offices of the Lands Department, estate and management offices of the Housing Department, District Environmental Hygiene Offices and Education Centres of FEHD, and DH's General Out-patient Clinics, Maternal and Child Health Centres and Health Education Centres.

AFCD, ED, SWD and the Hospital Authority (HA) also contributed to the publicity and public education programmes.

Publicity and public education materials on prevention and control of mosquitoes including videos, VCDs, leaflets, banners and posters were produced and distributed by various departments.

The 21-year-old man admitted to Tuen Mun Hospital of confirmed dengue fever was in stable condition. Laboratory results to confirm two other suspected cases involving two construction workers aged 28 and 38 are still pending. As they did not have recent travel history, these two cases, if confirmed, would be local cases.

As for the suspected imported case involving a man who had recent travel history, Dr Leung said the case could be confirmed when laboratory results were available.

Special mosquito control measures had been deployed in the neighbourhood of patients confirmed or suspected to have dengue fever.

As at 3 pm today, DH hotline 2961 8966, operated since September 21, received a total of 300 calls.

Most of the calls were general enquiries. Eighteen callers, being 13

male and five female aged between 19 and 60, worked or lived on Ma Wan. Among them, two men aged 38 and 41 were referred to DH's regional offices for blood tests as they developed symptoms of fever earlier. They have recovered. None was admitted to hospital.

During a visit by DH staff to Ma Wan yesterday, blood sample was taken from a woman living there who claimed to have fever earlier.

Dr Leung called on persons working or living on Ma Wan since June 1 to call the hotline for enquiries and health advice. The hotline is manned by healthcare professionals from 9 am to 5 pm daily.

"A letter was being issued to all medical practitioners to inform them of the dengue fever situation and to solicit their support in early notification," Dr Leung added.

"Forums will be organised by DH and HA for them," he added.

Information on dengue fever are available at DH website <http://www.info.gov.hk/dh> and information on mosquito control at FEHD website <http://www.info.gov.hk/fehd>.

End/Monday, September 23, 2002

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Public Urged to Prevent Dengue Fever

The Department of Health (DH) today (September 24) urged members of the public to be on guard against dengue fever by taking preventive measures against mosquito breeding and the spread of mosquito-borne diseases.

The appeal was made following the confirmation of three more local cases of dengue fever and an imported case of dengue fever.

A local case of dengue fever involved a 32-year-old woman living in Ma Wan. She had her blood sample taken during a visit by DH staff to Ma Wan on September 22. She developed fever, headache and muscle pain in July and has recovered. As she did not have recent travel history, the case was classified as a local dengue fever case.

Another local case of dengue fever involved a 39-year-old male worker of a construction site in Ma Wan. He had his blood sample taken during a visit by DH staff to the construction site in Ma Wan on September 23. He developed fever, headache and joint pain on September 8. He has recovered. The case was classified as a local dengue fever case. He lives in Yuen Long.

The third new local case of dengue fever involved a 42-year-old female worker of a construction site in Ma Wan. She was found to have symptoms of fever, headache and muscle pain on September 19. She was admitted to Prince of Wales Hospital on September 22 and is now in stable condition. As she did not have recent travel history, the case was classified as a local dengue fever case. The patient lives in Sha Tin.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has taken special anti-mosquito measures in their neighbourhood.

A DH spokesman said patients of all six local cases of dengue fever confirmed so far were either workers of the construction site or nearby resident. Their onset dates of the disease occurred before September 20 when FEHD started mosquito control action. At present, there is no evidence that the infection has gone beyond Ma Wan. DH is closely monitoring the situation.

Persons working or living in Ma Wan since June 1, 2002 and had symptoms like fever, severe headache, muscle pain, joint pain and rash are advised to call a special hotline 2961 8966 set up by DH for enquiries and health advice.

As for the imported case, a 22-year-old female with travel history was admitted to Ruttonjee Hospital in early September because of fever, muscle pain and rash. She was discharged and has recovered. She lives in Central and Western District.

To-date, 18 confirmed cases of dengue fever were reported in Hong Kong this (2002) year. Of these, 12 were imported cases and six local cases.

End/Tuesday, September 24, 2002

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Dengue Fever Update

As at 3 pm today (September 25), the Department of Health's (DH) hotline 2961 8966 received a total of 509 enquiries on dengue fever.

Most of the calls were general enquiries. Thirty callers, being 25 male and five female aged between 19 and 59, worked or lived in Ma Wan. Among them, 13 callers, 11 male and two female aged 20 to 59, were referred to DH's regional offices for blood tests as they developed symptoms of fever earlier. Four other callers (one male and three female aged 29 to 35) who visited Ma Wan were also referred to regional offices for blood tests as they were found to have fever earlier. None was admitted to hospital.

The hotline, operated since September 21, is manned from 9 am to 5 pm daily by healthcare professionals.

DH today confirmed one more local case of dengue fever and an imported case of dengue fever.

The local case of dengue fever involved a 36-year-old man living in Ma Wan. He developed fever, muscle pain, joint pain and rash in July and was admitted to Queen Elizabeth Hospital from July 25 to August 2. He had recovered. As he did not have recent travel history, the case was classified as a local dengue fever case. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has taken special anti-mosquito measures in his neighbourhood.

A DH spokesman said patients of all seven local cases of dengue fever confirmed so far were either workers of the construction site or nearby residents. Their onset dates of the disease occurred before September 20 when FEHD started mosquito control action. At present, there is no evidence that the infection has gone beyond Ma Wan. DH is closely monitoring the situation.

Persons working or living in Ma Wan since June 1, 2002 and had symptoms like fever, severe headache, muscle pain, joint pain and rash are advised to call a special hotline 2961 8966 set up by DH for enquiries and health advice.

Members of the public should guard against dengue fever by taking preventive measures against mosquito breeding and the spread of mosquito-borne diseases.

As for the imported case, a 68-year-old female with travel history developed symptoms of fever, muscle pain, joint pain and rash on September 7. She was admitted to Prince of Wales Hospital on September 16. She was discharged and had recovered. She lives in Tai Po.

To-date, 20 confirmed cases of dengue fever were reported in Hong Kong this (2002) year. Of these, 13 were imported cases and seven local cases.

End/Wednesday, September 25, 2002

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Dengue Fever Update

As at 3 pm today (September 26), the Department of Health's (DH) hotline 2961 8966 received a total of 554 enquiries on dengue fever.

Most of the calls were general enquiries. Thirty-six callers, being 31 male and five female aged between 19 and 59, worked or lived in Ma Wan. Among them, 15 callers, 13 male and two female aged 20 to 59, were referred to DH's regional offices for blood tests as they developed symptoms of fever earlier. Five other callers (two male and three female aged 29 to 40) who visited Ma Wan were also referred to regional offices for blood tests as they were found to have fever earlier. None was admitted to hospital.

The hotline, operated since September 21, is manned from 9 am to 5 pm daily by healthcare professionals.

DH has uploaded useful information on mode of transmission, symptoms and preventive measures of dengue fever to its health education hotline 2833 0111. Similar information is found in DH's website <http://www.info.gov.hk/dh>.


DH works closely with other Government departments such as the Education Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and Highways Department to organize health talks for the school community and partners concerned. They will begin early next week.

Pamphlets and posters on dengue fever were sent to various Government departments for display and distribution to the public. Members of the public may also access copies of related educational materials from DH's Maternal and Child Health Centres, Women Health Centres, Elderly Health Centres, Student Health Centres and General Out-patient Clinics.

End/Thursday, September 26, 2002

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Dengue Fever Update

As at 3 pm today (September 27), the Department of Health's (DH) hotline 2961 8966 received a total of 607 enquiries on dengue fever.

Most of the calls were general enquiries. 41 callers, being 36 male and five female aged between 19 and 59, worked or lived in Ma Wan. Among them, 16 callers, 14 male and two female aged 20 to 59, were referred to DH's regional offices for blood tests as they developed symptoms of fever earlier. Five other callers (two male and three female aged 29 to 40) who had visited Ma Wan earlier and subsequently found to have fever were also referred to regional offices for blood tests. None was admitted to hospital.

The hotline is manned by healthcare professionals from 9 am to 5 pm from Monday to Friday and from 9 am to 1 pm on Saturday.

DH today confirmed four more local cases of dengue fever, involving a Ma Wan female resident and three men working in a Ma Wan construction site.

The first case involved a 26-year-old man who developed fever, headache, muscle pain and joint pain on August 25.

The second case involved a 20-year-old man who developed fever, headache, joint pain and rash on September 6.

The third case involved a 42-year-old woman who developed fever, joint pain and muscle pain on July 29.

These three persons did not require hospitalization and had recovered. They did not have recent travel history and the cases were classified as local ones.

The fourth case involved a 39-year-old man. He developed fever, headache and joint pain on September 24. He was admitted to Princess Margaret Hospital today and is in stable condition. He did not have recent travel history.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has taken special anti-mosquito measures in Ma Wan.

A DH spokesman said patients of all 11 local cases of dengue fever confirmed so far involved people working or living in Ma Wan. DH is closely monitoring the situation.

Persons working or living in Ma Wan since June 1, 2002 and had symptoms like fever, severe headache, muscle pain, joint pain and rash are advised to call DH's special hotline 2961 8966 for enquiries and health advice.

Members of the public should guard against dengue fever by taking preventive measures against mosquito breeding and the spread of mosquito-borne diseases.

To-date, 24 confirmed cases of dengue fever were reported in Hong Kong this (2002) year. Of these, 13 were imported cases and 11 local cases.

End/Friday, September 27, 2002

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Dengue Fever Update

As at 12 noon today (September 28), the Department of Health's (DH) hotline 2961 8966 received a total of 634 enquiries on dengue fever.

Most of the calls were general enquiries. 45 callers, being 40 male and five female aged between 19 and 59, worked or lived in Ma Wan. Among them, 19 callers, 17 male and two female aged 20 to 59, were referred to DH's regional offices for blood tests as they developed symptoms of fever earlier. Five other callers (two male and three female aged 29 to 40) who had visited Ma Wan earlier and subsequently found to have fever were also referred to regional offices for blood tests.

The hotline is manned by healthcare professionals during office hours. After office hours, members of the public may get pre-recorded message on dengue fever by dialing DH's Central Health Education Hotline 2833 0111.

DH today confirmed one more local case of dengue fever involving a 60-year-old male resident of Ma Wan who developed fever, headache, bone pain and rash in mid-August. He did not require hospitalisation and had recovered.

A DH spokesman said patients of all 12 local cases of dengue fever confirmed so far involved people working or living in Ma Wan. DH is closely monitoring the situation.

"Members of the public should guard against dengue fever by taking preventive measures against mosquito bite and active elimination of mosquito breeding sites.

"People who have symptoms like fever, severe headache, myalgia, arthralgia and rash should consult a doctor," the spokesman said.

To-date, 25 confirmed cases of dengue fever were reported in Hong Kong this (2002) year. Of these, 13 were imported cases and 12 local cases.

End/Saturday, September 28, 2002

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Public Urged to Prevent Dengue Fever

The Government today (September 29) called on members of the public to guard against dengue fever by taking preventive measures against mosquito breeding so as to avoid contracting the disease and prevent spread of the disease.

The Consultant (Community Medicine) of the Department of Health (DH), Dr Tse Lai-yin, made the appeal following confirmation of one more local case of dengue fever at a press conference held this afternoon.

The case involved a 28-year-old man who lived in Tin Shui Wai. He developed fever and headache on September 22. He was admitted to Tuen Mun Hospital on September 25 and is in stable condition. He had neither gone to Ma Wan nor travelled outside Hong Kong during the incubation period and the case is a local one. The patient recalled mosquito-bites while fishing near Fish Marketing Organization Market in Cheung Sha Wan before the onset of the illness.

Dr Tse said this was the first local case of dengue fever unrelated to Ma Wan. Investigation into the source of infection is continuing.

She said that dengue fever was an acute febrile viral illness transmitted by the bite of infective *Aedes* mosquito.

"Prevention of mosquito bites and elimination of mosquito breeding places are the most important components of the prevention strategy, and community participation is essential to its success," Dr Tse stressed.

Workers around the Market in Cheung Sha Wan are advised to call the DH special hotline 2961 8966 for enquiry and health advice if they have febrile illness with other symptoms like rash, intense headache, eye pain and generalized aches after July 1, 2002.

The hotline is manned by healthcare professionals from 9 am to 5 pm Mondays to Fridays and from 9 am to 1 pm on Saturdays.

Dr Tse reminded members of the public to clear stagnant water in their homes and surrounding areas to avoid breeding of mosquitoes. They should:

- * Put all used cans and bottles into dustbins with cover,
- * Change water for plants at least once a week, leaving no water in the saucers underneath flower pots,
- * Cover tightly all water containers, wells and water storage tanks, and

* Keep all drains free from choke.

The public should also adopt the following preventive measures to protect themselves against dengue fever:

* Wear long-sleeved clothes and long trousers,

* Use insect repellent over the exposed parts of the body,

* Use mosquito screens or nets when the room is not air-conditioned.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) continues to spare no effort in the prevention of mosquito breeding and proliferation under the current threat of dengue fever.

FEHD Consultant(Community Medicine), Dr Y Y Ho, said, "We have already carried out control measures around the Fish market. Starting tomorrow, our pest control staff will revisit the construction site to ensure that proper vector prevention and control measures are in place.

"In addition, a series of public education programmes will be launched with an objective to solicit public participation in guarding against mosquito breeding and the spread of mosquito-borne diseases."

Dr Ho pointed out that as the FEHD's anti-mosquito slogan "Let's remove stagnant water - Eliminate mosquitoes for a healthy living" had clearly shown, Hong Kong can stay away from the threat of mosquito-borne diseases only when the community at large proactively takes heed of vector-control measures.

Following a meeting of the Inter-departmental Co-ordinating Committee on Dengue Fever on September 23, 16 departments Government departments and public organizations strived to promote public awareness towards dengue fever and eliminate mosquito breeding sites.

Information on dengue fever are available at DH website <http://www.info.gov.hk/dh> and information on mosquito control at FEHD website <http://www.info.gov.hk/fehd>.

To-date, 26 confirmed cases of dengue fever were reported in Hong Kong this (2002) year. Of these, 13 were imported cases and 13 local cases.

End/Sunday, September 29, 2002

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Dengue Fever Update

The Inter-departmental Co-ordinating Committee on Dengue Fever (ICC) has been geared up to fight against mosquitoes with a view to stamping out the spread of dengue fever in Hong Kong, chairman of ICC, Dr Tse Lai-yin said today (September 30).

"In fact the Government attached great importance to dengue fever and set up the ICC in 2001 in order to enhance co-operation among Government departments in the prevention and control of such disease following a cluster of cases reported in Macao last year."

Roles of various departments in the anti-mosquito campaign have been ascertained at the first meeting held on August 30 last year.

Dr Tse said all departments strived to prevent mosquito breeding. However, she added, community participation is essential to the success of the prevention strategy.

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has undertaken control measures around the patients' residence, workplace and other places. Inspections were made to all construction sites in the territory.

FEHD has conducted a community-wide anti-mosquito campaign, with the slogan "Let's remove stagnant water. Eliminate mosquitoes for healthy living".

The first phase was launched between April 2 and 27, 2002.

In view of the high Ovitrap Index recorded in April this year, the launch date of the second phase of the Anti-mosquito Campaign 2002 was advanced from July 15 to May 28, and the campaign period was extended from four weeks to six weeks.

The third phase started from September 23 and operations are on-going.

The FEHD will track Ovitrap Indices in parallel with the campaign to monitor the change in the territory-wide situation of mosquitoes. Members of the public are encouraged to participate actively in controlling mosquito breeding.

Special attention will be given to areas favouring the harbourage of mosquitoes or in close proximity to human residence, including waterfront public and private cargo working areas, piers and ferry terminals, construction sites, housing estates and schools.

Publicity materials like posters, pamphlets and videos as well as letters to target groups such as management of construction sites and

housing estates have been distributed to disseminate the anti-mosquito message.

Roving exhibitions at major shopping malls of housing estates, outreaching health talks for schools, construction site management and workers are being conducted to drive home the message.

The Housing Department has instructed frontline staff, managers of construction projects and cleansing contractors to step up preventive measures. Special cleansing squads have been deployed to intensify patrols and cleansing at estate level. Tenants were advised to eliminate indoor breeding places.

Special articles will be posted in upcoming issues of Estate Management Advisory Committee Newsletters to disseminate relevant messages.

A Departmental Working Group on dengue Fever was set up by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department to monitor implementation of control measures. Frequency of inspections to venues including beaches, gardens and recreation and sports centres has been increased. Publicity materials are displayed and distributed through venues. Anti-mosquito messages were disseminated through events such as tree-planting days and horticultural courses.

The Highways Department has immediately inspected its roadwork sites, cut roadside overgrown grass and step up inspection to roads, slopes, structures and depot maintained by the Department.

In addition to making available leaflets at District Offices, the Home Affairs Department further distributes leaflets by the Clean Hong Kong Ambassadors and Community Organizers to the public on the streets and to kindergartens, primary and secondary schools in some districts in the past week.

Leaflets are also distributed through Labour Department's field offices to construction sites during field visits by labour officers.

The Education Department has sent letters to all primary and secondary schools and kindergartens reminding them of the importance of preventive measures and arranged a series of talks on dengue fever for them this week.

The Social Welfare Department has sent information sheets to all welfare services units run by the Department such as child care centres, residential homes for the elderly and drug treatment centres and Non-government Organizations. Inspectors of the Licensing Office will further advise operators to take necessary measures to prevent dengue fever during inspections to the centres/homes.

The Hospital Authority issued a fact sheet to all its hospitals, organized forums for hospital staff and staged exhibitions for the public. All HA hospital managements are reminded to enhance anti-mosquito control measures within hospital compound.

The Lands Department has conducted inspection to vacant Government land sites to identify mosquito breeding places for

clearance. Major joint operations were conducted with FEHD in the past few days to clear the identified breeding places in Ma Wan and other parts of the territory. Posters are put up and pamphlets distributed to the public through its enquiry counters.

The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department has stepped up measures in country parks, fish culture zones and markets.

The Marine Department has inspected the public cargo working areas to eliminate potential mosquito breeding places and distributed pamphlets to the operators and users in the public cargo working areas.

Surveillance of on-site cleanliness and control is carried out by the Architectural Services Department on Government construction sites.

The Information Services Department had stepped up broadcast of TV and radio Announcements in Public Interests (APIs) on mosquito prevention and control.

The Department of Health is closely monitoring the dengue fever situation in Hong Kong. Health education on prevention of dengue fever is actively promoted through Central Health Education Unit and the clinic network. The Port Health Service inspected island ferries and promoted travel health.

As at 3 pm today (September 30), the Department of Health's (DH) hotline 2961 8966 received a total of 913 enquiries on dengue fever.

Most of the calls were general enquiries. 60 callers, being 52 male and eight female aged between 19 and 59, worked or lived in Ma Wan. Among them, 19 callers, 17 male and two female aged 20 to 59, were referred to DH's regional offices for blood tests as they developed symptoms of fever earlier. Five other callers (two male and three female aged 29 to 40) who had visited Ma Wan earlier and subsequently found to have fever were also referred to regional offices for blood tests. A 30-year-old man who worked near the fish market in Cheung Sha Wan also called the hotline for enquiry.

The hotline is manned by healthcare professionals from 9 am to 5 pm daily.

End/Monday, September 30, 2002

NNNN

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