

**立法會**  
***Legislative Council***

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LC Paper No. CB(2) 2520/02-03  
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the Administration)

**Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene**

**Minutes of special meeting  
held on Monday, 19 May 2003 at 4:30 pm  
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

**Members present** : Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP (Chairman)  
Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP  
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo  
Hon Michael MAK Kwok-fung  
Dr Hon LO Wing-lok

**Members attending** : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan  
Dr Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP

**Members absent** : Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon WONG Yung-kan  
Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, MH, JP  
Hon WONG Sing-chi

**Public Officers attending** : Mr John TSANG  
Head (Team Clean)  
  
Mr W H CHEUK  
Deputy Head (Team Clean)  
  
Miss Monica CHEN  
Assistant Director of Home Affairs (1)

**Clerk in attendance** : Mrs Constance LI  
Chief Assistant Secretary (2)5

**Staff in attendance** : Ms Joanne MAK  
Senior Assistant Secretary (2)2

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**I Work plan of Team Clean and implementation measures**

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2102/02-03(01) and CB(2)2113/02-03(01)]

The Chairman welcomed members of Team Clean and Assistant Director of Home Affairs (1) (AD/HA(1)) to the meeting.

2. Head (Team Clean) (H/TC) briefed members on the discussion paper which set out the mission, terms of reference, membership, work plan and strategy of Team Clean.

3. Referring to the membership of Team Clean, the Chairman asked about the difference among the full-time, part-time and co-opted members of Team Clean. H/TC responded that he, Mr W H CHEUK and four other government officials were full-time members and they worked solely for Team Clean for a period of three months. Part-time members were drawn from the relevant bureaux and departments and they would mainly attend meetings chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS). Co-opted members were also government officials who would be co-opted to the team as and when required. He added that Team Clean had held its first meeting on 6 May 2003 which was attended by all the three groups of members.

4. Ms Cyd HO asked why Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (SETW) was not a member of Team Clean. She said that keeping the environment clean also involved improvements to town planning, building design and refuse collection systems.

5. H/TC responded that town planning and building design were under the purview of the Housing, Planning and Lands Bureau. As he had been the Permanent Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands (Planning and Lands) before his secondment to Team Clean, he would be able to contribute from the town planning and building design perspectives. H/TC added that the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene was also a member of Team Clean and he could advise on ways to tackle refuse collection problems. Moreover, SETW could be co-opted to Team Clean as and when required.

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6. Noting that Team Clean only had a tenure of three months, Miss CHAN Yuen-han asked whether Team Clean aimed at introducing some short-term measures, such as organising one-off campaigns for cleaning Hong Kong, or to establish Hong Kong into a clean, modern city of international standard. She said that many problems had been exposed in the recent outbreak of SARS, including problems with the planning and design of buildings, drainage systems, and environmental hygiene, etc. She asked whether Team Clean would address these problems.

7. H/TC responded that Team Clean aimed at establishing Hong Kong as a clean, modern city. He said that Team Clean would work out, within three months' time, a sustainable system and a timeframe for implementing the medium- and long-term initiatives with the use of existing resources.

8. Miss CHAN Yuen-han asked about the details of the sustainable system and the concrete measures to establish Hong Kong as a clean city. H/TC said that Team Clean had been set up for only 10 days and it was now collecting views from various sectors of the community. The short-term measures would be announced in about two weeks' time, and the long-term measures in about the first week of August. He invited members to give their views on the improvement measures to be introduced.

9. Dr David CHU expressed support for the setting up of Team Clean. However, he considered that it needed not wait until the announcement of short-term measures in taking actions to clean up environmental blackspots in Hong Kong. He asked whether Team Clean had looked into why these blackspots had been allowed to exist for such a long time. He added that action should be taken immediately to reduce the strong odour of the refuse collection point (RCP) in Lan Kwai Fong. The Chairman commented that the odour problem was caused by the open-air design of the RCP.

10. H/TC responded that there were many factors which had accounted for the existence of many environmental blackspots over a long time. He said that as described in the paper, it would be necessary to break new policy grounds and abandon traditional demarcation of responsibilities in Government, in order to resolve these long-standing problems. He pointed out that as Team Clean comprised representatives from all concerned bureaux and departments, he was hopeful that there would be better inter-departmental coordination in resolving such problems. As regards the case of Lan Kwai Fong mentioned by Dr CHU, H/TC said that he would take it up with the relevant departments to seek improvements. In response to the Chairman, H/TC assured members that Team Clean would tackle the problem of environmental blackspots throughout the territory.

11. Dr LO Wing-lok asked whether there was any difference between Team Clean and the former Steering Committee on Healthy Living. He further asked how Team Clean could establish Hong Kong as a clean city, if the previous campaigns had not been able to do so.

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12. H/TC responded that previous campaigns organised for promoting cleanliness of Hong Kong had made definite achievements, for example, the cleanliness of streets and public toilets had improved. He agreed that there was still room for improvement given the rising expectation of the community. He said that Team Clean had the advantage that it could build on the new-found momentum in the community after the SARS outbreak that there should be determined action to clean up Hong Kong. He added that Team Clean hoped to marshal community support to make sustained efforts in keeping Hong Kong clean.

13. Dr LO Wing-lok asked how the views and comments of the community could be channelled to Team Clean since its membership was made up of government officials only. The Chairman pointed out that the other task force set up in the wake of SARS outbreak, i.e. the Economic Relaunch Strategy Group chaired by the Financial Secretary, comprised not only government officials but also representatives of relevant sectors of the community.

14. H/TC responded that both the Chief Executive and CS had stressed on many occasions that community involvement was vital to the success of the work of Team Clean. He said that one way to encourage community participation was to invite community leaders to attend meetings of Team Clean. Alternatively, Team Clean could approach relevant community organisations and different sectors directly to gauge their views on the strategy and measures to be taken. He said that given the tight timeframe and the need for Team Clean to contact people across a wide spectrum, Team Clean considered that the latter method was more appropriate. H/TC said that so far Team Clean had met about 10 to 20 focus groups.

15. Mr Michael MAK said that he had high expectations of Team Clean and hoped it could eradicate the long-standing environmental hygiene problems in Hong Kong. He pointed out that cleaning up Hong Kong would rely on long-term measures such as public education to cultivate the civic-mindedness of people. He was of the view that previous campaigns, such as the Territory-wide Cleansing Day, had not been successful in promoting cleanliness in Hong Kong as many places remained dirty after the Cleansing Day. He was worried that the short-term measures to be introduced were little more than window dressing and would not achieve real, lasting effect. Mr MAK urged the Administration to take stringent enforcement measures against people who committed public cleanliness offences such as spitting. He suggested that in addition to imposing a fine on offenders, the Administration should consider imposing Community Service Orders on them.

16. H/TC responded that the suggestion of imposing harsher penalties on offenders of spitting was under consideration but he noted that the community had divided views on this. He clarified that the short-term measures largely referred to those which would not require changes in policies or legislation and could be implemented within a short time. Long-term measures were those which required changing the law or Government policies for their implementation, and these would include civic education and cultural change.

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17. On civic education, AD/HA(1) said that the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and Home Affairs Department (HAD) had been working closely with the relevant committees, such as the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education, on strengthening public education in keeping Hong Kong clean. She said that the SARS outbreak aroused greater awareness among people in Hong Kong of the importance of environmental hygiene. She added that HAB/HAD and relevant committees would coordinate with Team Clean and step up public education to help people understand their responsibility as citizens. Moreover, the 18 Clean Hong Kong District Promotion Committees had also organised educational and publicity activities for promoting environmental hygiene in Hong Kong.

18. Mr Michael MAK asked how Team Clean would coordinate with the Clean Hong Kong Committees, and what was the difference in the scope of their initiatives. The Chairman asked whether the Clean Hong Kong Committee would still exist and what past experiences could be learnt by Team Clean.

Adm 19. H/TC responded that the Clean Hong Kong Committee still existed and some of its members were also members of Team Clean. He said that there would be good coordination between the two set-ups and there would not be an overlapping of functions. H/TC pointed out that Team Clean had a wider scope of work, and it aimed at mapping out a long-term system and strategy capable of sustaining a high level of cleanliness throughout the territory. The Chairman suggested that Team Clean should review the implementation experience of the Clean Hong Kong Programme and find out why it had not been successful in meeting its targets.

20. Mr Michael MAK asked whether Team Clean would make reference to overseas experience, such as Japan and Singapore, in promoting environmental hygiene. H/TC said that the experience of overseas countries had been studied and it was found that the measures adopted by a country were often related to its social and cultural background. Therefore, it might not be appropriate to directly apply the measures adopted in overseas countries to Hong Kong. H/TC added that modifications of such measures would be required having regard to the circumstances in Hong Kong.

21. Miss CHAN Yuen-han sought clarification on the sustainable system to be established. She asked whether there would be a new bureau or department responsible for matters on environmental hygiene. H/TC responded that there was no intention to set up a new bureau or department for implementation of the improvement initiatives. He explained that the existing bureaux and departments would be responsible for implementing the medium- and long-term initiatives within their respective jurisdictions. He said that details of the sustainable system, including its composition, had yet to be worked out.

22. Referring to paragraph 6(c) of the paper, Miss CHAN Yuen-han requested H/TC to explain what Team Clean meant by "a novel approach" and "breaking new policy grounds" in its strategy. H/TC said that Team Clean would approach

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problems of environmental hygiene from the perspective of citizens and take measures to meet their expectation of a hygienic city. He explained that Team Clean would not address the problem solely from the resources angle, and it would break policy barriers and abandon traditional demarcation of responsibilities in Government if required.

23. Dr LAW Chi-kwong commented that Team Clean seemed to have attributed all the long-standing problems to the traditional demarcation of responsibilities and bureaucracy in Government. Dr LAW considered that Team Clean should first find out what had prevented the long-standing environmental hygiene problems from being resolved over the years. He was worried that without first understanding the causes of these problems, Team Clean would not succeed in finding effective, sustainable ways to solve them.

24. H/TC responded that, as common to all governments, many problems including human and organisational problems did exist in Government. However, given the tight timeframe, Team Clean could not afford the time to trace back and study the complex background of all these problems. He reiterated that Team Clean would study problems from the perspective of citizens and meet their expectations of what a clean city should be by making the best use of existing resources. Dr LAW Chi-kwong remained of the view that without first tackling the human or organisational problems in Government that had contributed to the long-standing environmental hygiene problems, any new strategy adopted by Team Clean just would not succeed or sustain.

25. The Chairman shared the concern of Dr LAW and pointed out that some long-standing problem was simply caused by ineffective management or slack attitude of the departments concerned. For example, the handling of refuse in public housing estates had long been a problem and the Housing Department (HD) still could not make improvements over the years. He said that even though the management of some public housing estates were contracted out to private management companies, the problem of refuse remained unresolved. The Chairman queried whether Team Clean would be able to meet its targets without first resolving those problems which had existed in individual departments for a long time.

26. H/TC responded that Team Clean was aware of the problems of individual departments and Team Clean was mainly concerned with finding the most efficient and effective solutions to these problems. He believed that Team Clean would do better than the previous Clean Hong Kong campaigns with the aid of the new-found momentum in the community after the SARS outbreak. He expected that the public would give more support to the cleaning-up efforts this time.

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27. Miss CHAN Yuen-han asked that, with the signing of the hygiene charter, whether any guidelines on hygiene practices would be issued to individual industries such as catering trade. She also requested Team Clean to look into the following long-standing environmental problems and make improvements -

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- (a) the poor hygiene conditions in many public housing estates (e.g. the Lower Ngau Tau Kok Estate) and the poor handling of refuse in public housing estates resulting in serious odour and hygiene problem;
- (b) the poor hygiene conditions in many old districts (e.g. To Kwa Wan) and private streets;
- (c) the environmental hygiene problems posed by leakage in sewage pipes of buildings and in public housing estates;
- (d) the short distance between building blocks might easily give rise to transmission of disease by means of "chimney effect" as demonstrated in the case of the Amoy Gardens;
- (e) the risks of cross-border spread of diseases and the problem of illegal disposal of waste in the New Territories, resulting from the heavy cross-border traffic;
- (f) ways to step up monitoring of the disposal of waste by Government contractors to ensure that they disposed of the construction and demolition waste properly; and
- (g) ways to ensure cleanliness in country parks and prevent them from becoming littering hotspots.

28. The Chairman also raised the following concerns -

- (a) Government should step up enforcement actions against spitting in public places as spitting could spread infectious diseases. The other six enforcement departments, other than the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, apparently had been rather lax in enforcing the Fixed Penalty (Public Cleanliness Offences) Ordinance which was enacted in 2001. The Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands also admitted at a recent Council meeting the poor performance of Housing Department in issuing fixed penalty tickets to offenders of spitting in public housing estates. To enhance the deterrent effect, consideration should also be given to introducing additional measures against offenders of spitting, such as imposing Community Service Orders on them;
- (b) Government should tackle the hygiene problems in private places (e.g. rear lanes, light wells and other places inside private residential buildings);
- (c) Government should eliminate the malpractice of some food premises which prepared food and washed dishes in rear lanes;

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- (d) All commercial malls could be required to provide hand soap and toilet paper in their toilets; and
- (e) The design of those refuse collection points should be improved to prevent posing hygiene and odour problems.

Adm 29. The Chairman requested Team Clean to provide responses on how to resolve the concerns raised at this meeting. He also requested Team Clean to immediately follow up the problem of spitting without waiting for the announcement of its short-term or long-term measures.

Adm 30. Mr Michael MAK said that he supported increasing the level of penalty for people committing offences of spitting. He suggested that Team Clean should engage tertiary institutions to conduct studies on the attitude of repeated offenders, and the reasons of such persistent behaviour despite efforts made in public education.

31. Ms Cyd HO suggested that Team Clean should also look into the problem of refuse handling in old districts. She said that there was no refuse collection service for residents in some old buildings, and there was also no space for the business establishments to dispose of their refuse. She suggested that consideration should be given to providing additional refuse collection points in these old districts.

Adm 32. H/TC said that Team Clean was also concerned about these problems and was studying how to resolve them. Team Clean had also collected many suggestions and views on environmental hygiene problems from political parties and different sectors of the community over the past week. H/TC assured members that Team Clean would study all the views and suggestions received and would include them as far as possible in its reports. He also undertook to convey members' concerns to the relevant departments for follow up. As regards Mr Michael MAK's suggestion of conducting studies on the behaviour of repeated offenders, it would be referred to HAD and the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education for consideration.

33. Ms Cyd HO asked whether Team Clean had widely publicised the channels available for members of the community to give their views and suggestions. The Chairman asked whether there was any website or fax number provided by Team Clean for collection of public views. H/TC responded that as Team Clean had only been set up for about 10 days, it had concentrated on collecting views through the different focus groups. However, it had also studied the public views expressed in newspapers and magazines. Team Clean would take all these views into account in drawing up its report on the short-term measures to be introduced.

34. In response to Ms Cyd HO, H/TC said that in the past week, Team Clean had met with a wide range of organisations, including District Councils, local leaders, professional bodies, medical practitioners, microbiologists, the media, political parties, academics, etc. Ms Cyd HO said that many environmental groups and



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Adm medical groups also wanted to meet with Team Clean. She requested Team Clean to invite views from these groups as soon as possible. H/TC agreed to follow up.

Adm 35. The Chairman said that Team Clean should encourage as many organisations as possible to give their views and suggestions. He suggested that if Team Clean could not meet all the relevant organisations before releasing its report on short-term measures, it should still meet with them afterwards and incorporate their views in the report to be published at the end of its three-month timeframe. H/TC said that this was also the work plan of Team Clean.

36. In response to the Chairman, H/TC said that the report to announce short-term measures drawn up by Team Clean should be available in about 10 days. The Chairman said that the Panel would hold a special meeting in early June to discuss the report.

37. The meeting ended at 5:45 pm.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
17 June 2003