

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL  
PANEL ON ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS**

**Recovery and Recycling of Plastic Waste**

This paper provides supplementary information on the recovery and recycling of plastic waste in Hong Kong, in response to Members' request at the Panel meeting on 16 July.

**Overall Statistics**

2. According to the "Monitoring of Solid Waste in Hong Kong 2006", about 1.27 million tonnes of plastic waste are generated in Hong Kong every year. Plastic waste consists of plastic bottles, plastic bags, polyfoam dining wares, as well as plastic scraps. Notwithstanding the light weight and bulky nature of plastic waste in general, more than 640,000 tonnes or 51% of plastic waste were recovered and recycled last year. Compared to 40% in 2004, the recovery and recycling rate increased by 11 percentage points in two years' time.

**Recovery and Recycling Measures**

3. Since January 2005, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has rolled out the "source separation of domestic waste" programme territory-wide. Plastic waste is separately collected for recycling under the programme. As at August 2007, over 680 housing estates have joined the programme, covering a population of about 2.7 million. According to available data, over 2,100 tonnes of plastic waste have been recovered under the programme.

4. In tandem with the "source separation of domestic waste" programme, the materials collected by the 3-colored waste separation bins have been expanded since May 2005. The brown bins, which originally collect plastic bottles only, now also collect other types of plastic waste, including plastic bags. As at August 2007, some 28,000 3-coloured waste separation bins are placed in public places all over the territory. In the past two years, over 230 tonnes of plastic waste were recovered by these bins.

**Support to Recycling Industry**

5. Apart from the recovery and recycling initiatives above, we have also

been supporting the development of our local recycling industry. To provide long-term land for the environmental industry, EPD has established an EcoPark of some 20 hectares in Tuen Mun Area 38. Three tenancies for the Phase I lots of the EcoPark were awarded in April 2007, one of which was for plastic waste recovery and recycling. The tenant is required to process at least 6,000 tonnes of locally produced plastic waste at the EcoPark each year. Another lot for plastic waste recovery and recycling, with a minimum throughput of 4,000 tonnes per year, has been earmarked in the second batch of lots in Phase I of the EcoPark. The tenancies for the second batch of lots are expected to be awarded within this year.

6. Moreover, EPD has also provided short-term tenancy sites (STTs) for local waste recovery and recycling operators. As at August 2007, a total of 36 STTs covering some 7.4 hectares has been granted to such operators, of which nine are involved in the recovery and recycling of plastic waste.

### **Public Education and Publicity**

7. Public participation is very important for environmental protection. The Government has been promoting waste recovery and recycling through publicity campaigns and public education programmes. In the past six years, the Environment and Conservation Fund allocated more than \$23 million to support public education programmes and community projects on waste recovery and recycling. Last year, the Environment and Conservation Fund Committee further agreed to dedicate \$10 million to support a public education programme under the "Policy Framework for the Management of Municipal Solid Waste (2005-2014)". Recovery and recycling of waste is a major focus of the programme.

### **"Basel Convention on the Control of Trans-boundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and Their Disposal"**

8. The Basel Convention regulates the trans-boundary movements of hazardous wastes and their disposal between countries. Therefore, the Basel Convention is *not* directly applicable to the movements of hazardous waste between the Mainland and Hong Kong. Instead, such movements between the Mainland and Hong Kong are subject to the control framework established in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the State Environmental Protection Administration and the EPD of Hong Kong SAR in 2000. Under the MOU, movements of hazardous waste between the Mainland and Hong Kong are not allowed unless prior written consents are given by the competent authorities of both sides (i.e. the State Environmental Protection Administration and the EPD of Hong Kong SAR). Aside from the MOU, the

Waste Disposal Ordinance (Cap. 354) controls the import and export of waste by permit in Hong Kong.

### **Way Forward**

9. Waste reduction, reuse, recovery and recycling are the key cornerstones of waste management. EPD will continue to strengthen our support to plastic waste recovery and recycling through various means, so as to develop a sustainable circular economy.

Environmental Protection Department  
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