

Motion Debate on
“Improving Environmental Hygiene in the Community”
at the Legislative Council Meeting on 10 June 2009

Progress Report

Purpose

The motion on “Improving Environmental Hygiene in the Community” passed by the Legislative Council on 10 June 2009 urges the Government to focus on hygiene problems in the community , take effective measures to ensure a clean community environment and enhance public awareness on environmental hygiene. This paper follows up on the motion debate and report to Members on the latest progress of the work of the Government in this respect.

Funding to step up environmental hygiene and control human swine influenza

2. At the meeting on 14 July, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved the funding of \$289.8 million for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD), the Social Welfare Department (SWD), the Drainage Services Department (DSD) and the Home Affairs Department (HAD) to launch a number of initiatives for environmental hygiene improvement to fight against human swine influenza (HSI). For details, please refer to FCR(2009-10)38. The paper also indicated that the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) and the Marine Department (MD) will spend an additional \$6 million and \$4.2 million respectively to step up environmental hygiene. The various departments have embarked on the relevant work and the latest progress is set out below.

FEHD

3. To enhance the hygiene conditions in various districts and address the problem of environmental hygiene blackspots, the FEHD has completed a large-scale cleansing operation to carry out cleansing and disinfection work at environmental hygiene blackspots in all districts to improve their hygiene conditions. Apart from

tackling the environmental hygiene blackspots identified by the FEHD and district councils, the FEHD will also extend the operation to all places with hygiene problems brought up by LegCo, district councillors and members of the public. After the cleansing operations, the number of blackspots has been reduced from 105 to 72.

4. In addition, the FEHD will enhance cleansing and disinfection services in public facilities such as public markets and public toilets etc., and increase the frequency of street washing services to maintain the cleanliness and hygiene of public places and utilities.

5. To enable the management bodies of private buildings to have a clear understanding of the disinfection procedures and criteria for common parts of these buildings, the FEHD has uploaded the *Guidelines on Disinfection of Common Areas of Buildings* to its website for reference by the management bodies of the buildings to promote an effective concern for the cleansing and disinfection work of the buildings and estates.

6. The hygiene awareness and active participation of the public plays a crucial role in improving the environmental hygiene of the community. To promote personal and environmental hygiene, the FEHD will launch a series of publicity activities starting from October, including holding fairs to promote environmental hygiene and distributing pamphlet to highlight the importance of this issue. FEHD will also promote the message of personal and environmental hygiene to targeted groups, which include domestic helpers, new migrants and ethnic minorities. Exhibition, game booths and workshops in public markets will also be held in order to enhance public awareness on environmental hygiene and encouraging the public to observe good personal and environmental hygiene practices.

LCSD

7. To step up cleansing and disinfection work in the leisure and cultural venues,

the LCSD is liaising with the relevant contractors and planning for large-scale cleansing and disinfection work at the venues under its purview to ensure good hygiene conditions in the leisure and cultural venues and prevent the spread of virus therein. The work is expected to be commenced in September. Besides, the LCSD has recruited 106 Health Ambassadors (HAs) to publicise and promote the measures for the prevention of the dissemination and spread of HSI in leisure and cultural venues, as well as educating venue users on ways to minimise the chance of HSI infection. The recruitment interviews have been completed by the end of July and the first batch of HAs have commenced work in August while the others will join the service in September.

SWD

8. The SWD will utilise the funding to step up the cleansing services in welfare service units and minimise the chance of HSI infection among service users and staff. SWD has notified various social welfare groups and non-profit making organization on 17 August regarding the arrangement and cleaning measures. The funding will be available in September. The SWD will require the welfare service units to submit progress reports in February and September 2010 to ensure improvement of the hygiene conditions.

DSD

9. The DSD will carry out additional cleansing works to underground drains and sewers in blockage-prone areas and downstream of hospitals, Government clinics and public markets to minimise the risk of occurrence of unhygienic sewage overflows. The DSD is preparing for the relevant work and will issue work order in the short term for official commencement of the exercise.

HAD

10. To call on the public to pay more attention to domestic and community hygiene, 18 District Offices, Clean Hong Kong District Committees, other district

organizations and Government Departments have co-organised different large-scale activities such as district clean-up days and building cleansing campaigns to demonstrate the Government's determination to promote environmental hygiene at the district level. Different talks and hygiene seminars have been held to provide local residents with information on environmental hygiene and messages about the fight against HSI. Since May, more than 100 promotion activities have been held by different District Offices and district organizations in this regard.

11. The HAD has mobilised volunteer work teams to visit people in need to help them clean up their homes, so as to ensure the elderly and other people in need can also maintain domestic and environmental hygiene.

AFCD

12. Starting from September, the AFCD will step up the cleansing services in country parks, in particular at dumping black-spots and refuse accumulation sites near recreational facilities, to ensure a clean and hygienic environment. To enhance the hygiene conditions of public toilets in country parks, the AFCD will provide more mobile toilets and upgrade permanent toilet facilities, such as installing sensor-activated water taps and soap dispensers to reduce the chance of contact with bacteria in public facilities. Besides, the AFCD will also increase the manpower for cleansing wholesale markets to improve their hygiene conditions. Preparations for these initiatives are underway, including liaising with various contractors to proceed with the arrangements concerned and drafting of the contracts required. The various works will be carried out progressively starting from September.

MD

13. Since August, the MD has employed eight additional cleansing workers to take up the cleansing work of public toilets at the Macau Ferry Terminal and the China Ferry Terminal to ensure that they are clean and hygienic. The MD will conduct a large-scale cleansing and washing exercise at the two ferry terminals and replace the rubbish bins therein in September, with a view to thoroughly enhance the

hygiene conditions of the ferry terminals. Preparations are underway.

14. In addition, to maintain the hygiene of coastal areas, the MD set up a Special Team for scavenging refuse at littoral foreshore areas in August. The team has started to scavenge the littoral refuse in the Islands and the Hong Kong South districts. The MD is working on the procurement of six sets of pressurized water spray gun for cleansing marine refuse collection points. The spray guns are expected to be available in late August.

Other initiatives to improve environmental hygiene in the community

15. Apart from the departments mentioned above which have stepped up measures to improve environmental hygiene with the additional funding, other departments also continue to monitor hygiene conditions in the community and maintain regular cleansing work in order to promote environmental hygiene. The SFH has addressed the initiatives concerned in the motion debate.

Conclusion

16. The Government will closely monitor the progress of the enhanced initiatives introduced by various departments to step up environmental hygiene. It will continue to implement feasible policies and measures to improve environmental hygiene in the community and raise public awareness of hygiene, with the long-term objective of keeping Hong Kong clean.

Food and Health Bureau

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