

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2124/14-15
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/FE

Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 12 May 2015, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

- Members present** : Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP
- Member attending** : Hon KWOK Wai-keung
- Members absent** : Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP, PhD, RN
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP

**Public Officers : Item V
attending**

Professor Sophia CHAN Siu-chee, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Mr Kenneth CHAN Siu-yum
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 1

Dr LEE Siu-yuen, JP
Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control),
Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Dr Raymond HO Lei-ming
Principal Medical Officer (Risk Management),
Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item VI

Professor Sophia CHAN Siu-chee, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Mr FORK Ping-lam
Assistant Director (Operations) 3
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr YUEN Ming-chi
Pest Control Officer In-charge
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item VII

Professor Sophia CHAN Siu-chee, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Ms Maisie CHAN Kit-ling
Deputy Director (Environmental Hygiene)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr CHIU Yu-chow
Assistant Director (Grade Management and Development)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Mr Edward CHAN Yiu-keung
Assistant Director (Operations) 2 (Acting)
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Alice LEUNG
Chief Council Secretary (2) 2

Staff in attendance : Ms Ivy CHENG
Research Officer 3

Ms Wendy LO
Senior Council Secretary (2) 2 (Acting)

Mr Richard WONG
Council Secretary (2) 2

Miss Emma CHEUNG
Legislative Assistant (2) 2

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(2)1392/14-15)

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2015 were confirmed.

II. Information papers issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1304/14-15(01) & (02), CB(2)1334/14-15(01), CB(2)1432/14-15(01), CB(2)1433/14-15(01), CB(2)1442/14-15(01), CB(2)1448/14-15(01), CB(2)1449/14-15(01), CB(2)1450/14-15(01) and CB(2)1451/14-15(01))

2. Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last meeting -

- (a) Letters dated 16 and 17 April 2015 respectively from Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Miss Alice MAK concerning the linkage between consumption of contaminated berries and the rise in hepatitis A cases in 2015;
- (b) Administration's response to Dr Kenneth CHAN's letter dated 20 March 2015 on the handling of unsold food by the stall tenants of public markets;

Action

- (c) Letter dated 5 May 2015 from Dr Helena WONG on food safety surveillance mechanism;
- (d) Letter dated 6 May 2015 from Dr Helena WONG on pesticides residues in tea leaves and flora tea;
- (e) Administration's response to Dr Helena WONG's letter dated 20 March 2015 on issues relating to the penalties under section 52 of the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap. 132) and the enforcement situation of the Demerit Points System for licensed food premises;
- (f) Administration's response to the letters dated 16 and 17 April 2015 respectively from Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Miss Alice MAK expressing their concerns about the linkage between consumption of contaminated berries and the rise in hepatitis A cases in 2015;
- (g) Administration's response to Dr Helena WONG's letter dated 9 March 2015 concerning that an importer was found illegally importing 10 boxes of carrots from Chiba, Japan, for sale in Hong Kong and about the actions to be taken by the Administration to prevent similar incidents from happening again;
- (h) Administration's response to Miss Alice MAK's letter dated 1 April 2015 on issues relating to the import of food products to Hong Kong from the five prefectures of Japan affected by the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident in Japan in 2011; and
- (i) Administration's response to Dr Helena WONG's letter dated 8 April 2015 concerning that some smoke salmon manufactured by Polyfood Food Service Co. Ltd. were detected with *Listeria monocytogenes* and about the follow-up actions taken by the Centre for Food Safety ("CFS") on the incident.

III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1394/14-15(01) and (02))

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 9 June 2015 at 2:30 pm -

- (a) Consultation paper on the new agricultural policy;

Action

- (b) Implementation of the trawl ban; and
- (c) Implementation of the Nutrition Labelling Scheme.

4. Members agreed that deputations would be invited to give views on item (a) of paragraph 3 above at the next regular meeting. To allow sufficient time for discussion, members also agreed that the meeting would be extended for one hour to end at 5:30 pm.

5. Referring to her letters to the Administration regarding the food safety surveillance mechanism for food products imported via marine channel and the detection of excessive pesticides residues in tea leaves and floral tea samples available in Taiwan market in items (c) and (d) of paragraph 2 above, Dr Helena WONG suggested that the Panel should hold a special meeting to discuss the items with the Administration. If a special meeting could not be arranged, she hoped that the two items could be added to the agenda for the next Panel meeting for members' discussion. The Chairman advised that the Administration had been requested to provide written response to the concerns raised in Dr WONG's letters for further consideration of the Panel. He would discuss with the Administration on how Dr WONG's suggestion could be pursued after considering the Administration's response.

IV. Matters arising

(LC Paper No. IN09/14-15)

Consideration of an overseas duty visit to the United States

6. The Chairman advised that at the request of members, the Research Office of the Information Services Division of the Legislative Council ("LegCo") had prepared an information note on the regulation of food truck operations in selected places, including, among others, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New York City and Sydney (LC Paper No. IN09/14-15) for consideration of the Panel to conduct an overseas duty visit in the coming summer recess. The Chairman suggested that the Panel could visit both New York City and San Francisco of the United States where there were a high prevalence of food trucks operating and different regulatory approaches had been adopted to regulate food truck operations. Given that the air ticket expenses would be very high and a long flight time would be required for visiting two countries, he considered it not desirable to include other cities like Sydney in the proposed visit. Regarding the date of the proposed overseas duty visit, the Chairman suggested that the visit be tentatively conducted around early to mid September 2015, lasting for about one week. Subject to members' views, the Panel on Commerce and Industry and

Action

officials from the relevant bureaux would be invited to join the visit. He sought members' views on the proposed overseas duty visit.

7. Dr Helena WONG said that if the sole objective of the proposed duty visit was to study the business operations of food trucks, it would be more appropriate for other Panels to follow up on the matter. She held the view that in addition to study the regulatory framework on food truck operations, the duty visit should also aim to understand the experience of the United States in the regulatory control of imported food products, such as surveillance of imported food at ports of entry by the relevant regulatory bodies (e.g. the Los Angeles District Import Operations of the United States Food and Drug Administration).

8. The Chairman advised that since the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD") would be responsible for handling licence applications for food trucks if they were introduced in Hong Kong, he considered it appropriate for the Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene to conduct an overseas duty visit to study the regulation of food truck operations. The Deputy Chairman said that there was a suggestion in the last meeting that the Panel could take the chance to study the agricultural development of the United States in the proposed visit. He considered it inappropriate to do so as the experience of the United States might not be applicable to Hong Kong. Taking into account the flight time required to visit both New York City and San Francisco and the duration of the proposed visit, he concurred that the scope of the visit should be focused on food trucks operations. Mr Vincent FANG also expressed support for conducting a duty visit to the United States to study the regulatory framework governing the food truck operations. He agreed with the view that it was not feasible to include programmes of different nature in the proposed visit, given that the duration of the visit was not long.

9. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan also indicated support for the proposed duty visit to the United States to study the regulatory framework on food truck operations. Referring to the information note prepared by the Research Office, she asked whether there were food trucks operating in Taiwan and about the regulation of food trucks there. Research Officer 3 of the LegCo Secretariat advised that as mentioned in the information note, the study found that there were food trucks operating in Taiwan but Taiwan had not established any dedicated regulatory framework for food truck operations. The study therefore did not cover the food truck operations in Taiwan. Dr CHIANG suggested that the Panel should consider studying food truck operations in other densely populated cities for reference of Hong Kong. She also hoped that the scope of the visit could include other food-related issues, such as food labelling and regulation of pet food.

Action

10. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen said that he was opposed to the proposed duty visit to the United States as the experience of the United States in food truck operations might not be applicable to a densely populated city like Hong Kong. Dr Helena WONG indicated that she would not support the duty visit if its scope did not include the study of the regulatory control of imported food products in United States.

11. Ms Cyd HO said that there was no controversy over the proposal of introducing food trucks to Hong Kong in the community. She therefore considered that the visit should mainly focus on studying food safety issues and related policies in the United States. She would not support the proposed visit if its aim was just to study the regulatory framework on food truck operations. Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that while he had no objection to the proposed visit to study the regulation of food truck operations, he considered that the scope of the visit should also include the study on the experience of the United States in regulatory control of imported food products.

12. The Chairman said that he was open-minded about the suggestion of studying the regulatory control of imported food products and other related issues in the proposed visit to the United States. The visit programme, however, would have to be worked out subject to the confirmation of the receiving organizations. Mr Vincent FANG said that the LegCo Secretariat could approach the relevant parties in relation to the regulation of food truck operations and the regulatory control of imported products in the United States to draw up the visit programme. Dr KWOK Ka-ki hoped that the LegCo Secretariat could make some preliminary enquiries to explore whether the programmes suggested by members could be included in the duty visit for further consideration of the Panel.

13. The Chairman said that Panel members should first indicate whether they supported the proposed duty visit before the LegCo Secretariat could proceed to make any logistical arrangements. At the suggestion of the Chairman, members agreed that Panel members' views on the objectives of the proposed visit should be sought by circulation of paper to facilitate the Panel to consider whether the proposed visit should be conducted and how the matter should be further pursued.

(Post-meeting note: Members' views on the objectives of the proposed duty visit were sought by circulation of paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1494/14-15) on 14 May 2015.)

Duty visits previously proposed by the Panel

14. Dr Helena WONG enquired about the progress of the proposed duty

Action

visits respectively to Guangdong Province to understand the regulation and operation of registered farms and Taiwan to study its agricultural development. The Clerk to the Panel advised that the LegCo Secretariat had written to the Food and Health Bureau to seek its assistance in arranging the proposed duty visit of the Panel to Guangdong Province. The Secretary for Food and Health had informed members on several occasions that the Administration had relayed the Panel's request to the relevant Mainland authorities and the Panel would be informed if there was any progress. Regarding the duty visit to Taiwan proposed by the Deputy Chairman, the Deputy Chairman had indicated that he agreed with the Chairman's suggestion of conducting the duty visit to the United States during the coming summer recess due to a longer travel time required. The Deputy Chairman considered that the Panel could decide at a later stage on whether and when the proposed duty visit to Taiwan should be pursued.

15. Mr Vincent FANG said that, in his view, the operators of registered farms in the Guangdong Province might not welcome the visit of the Panel. The Deputy Chairman advised that visitors were required to undergo very strict disinfection procedures before entering pig farms and chicken farms so as to avoid cross infection. Both the Deputy Chairman and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan pointed out that the assistance of the relevant Mainland authorities was required to arrange a duty visit to the Mainland registered farms.

16. Dr Helena WONG opined that FEHD should invite members to join its inspection visits to the registered farms on the Mainland so that members could have the opportunity to exchange views with the relevant Mainland authorities on the safety requirements on vegetables and livestock supplied to Hong Kong. Dr KWOK Ka-ki agreed that a duty visit should be arranged to visit Guangdong Province to understand the regulation and operation of registered farms there. He hoped that the proposed duty visit to Guangdong Province could be arranged during the summer recess.

(To allow sufficient time for discussion of the remaining items on the agenda, the Chairman directed that the meeting be extended by 15 minutes.)

V. Implementation of the Food Safety Ordinance (Cap. 612)
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1394/14-15(03) and (04))

17. Under Secretary for Food and Health ("USFH") briefed members on the implementation of the Food Safety Ordinance (Cap. 612) ("the Ordinance") which came into full operation on 1 February 2012, as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1394/14-15(03)). Members

Action

also noted the background brief on the subject (LC Paper No. CB(2)1394/14-15(04)) prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

18. Dr KWOK Ka-ki was concerned that CFS had not taken prompt follow-up actions on a number of food incidents occurred in Hong Kong and the neighbouring regions recently, including the rise in hepatitis A cases in Australia after consumption of contaminated berries; the detection of *Listeria monocytogenes* in some smoke salmon manufactured by Polyfood Food Service Co. Ltd in Hong Kong and the detection of excessive pesticides residues in tea leaves and floral tea samples in Taiwan. He enquired when CFS learnt about the incidents and about its follow-up actions taken.

19. USFH advised that the Ordinance introduced a food tracing mechanism to enable CFS to identify the source of problematic food more effectively and take prompt actions when dealing with food incidents. CFS would first ascertain whether the problem food products had entered into the local market based on the registration records under the Ordinance and intelligence collected. Assistant Director (Food Surveillance and Control) of CFS ("AD(FSC)/CFS") supplemented that CFS took immediate actions after it had learnt about the three incidents as mentioned by Dr KWOK Ka-ki. CFS regularly monitored the websites of overseas food safety agencies and the media reports on food safety issues. It learnt about the smoke salmon incident and the tea leaves incident from the Macau authorities and the media reports and websites in Taiwan respectively. Regarding the contaminated berries incident, CFS had informed the public through its website that the affected berries had not been imported to Hong Kong. AD(FSC)/CFS explained to members that CFS did not conduct hepatitis A virus tests on the berries sold in the market as it was not an effective way to detect hepatitis A virus according to the expert advice.

20. Expressing concern about the smuggling of vegetables from the Mainland into Hong Kong via the Lo Wu Control Point, Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked the Administration about its measures to combat the smuggling activities. USFH advised that the Customs and Excise Department ("C&ED") would notify FEHD of any suspicious cases so that FEHD could investigate the cases and take follow-up actions. C&ED and FEHD would also carry out joint operations against smuggling of vegetables via control points.

21. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was concerned that an importer was found illegally importing 10 boxes of carrots for sale in Hong Kong from Chiba, Japan, one of five prefectures from which imports of fresh vegetables and fruits had been banned since the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident in 2011. He enquired about the surveillance work of CFS on food products

Action

imported from Japan. AD(FSC)/CFS advised that in response to the Fukushima nuclear power plant incident, CFS had been conducting tests on radiation levels of every consignment of food products imported from Japan to ensure food safety. C&ED would notify CFS of the import of Japanese food via marine channel upon its receipt of manifests and import declaration forms lodged by importers. She explained that the contact address of the Hong Kong importer was wrongly reported in the customs declaration documents in the case as referred by Mr WONG Kwok-hing, thus adding difficulties of CFS to trace the sources for inspection. In spite of this, CFS had acted on complaints promptly and prohibited the problem carrots from entering the local market.

22. Dr Helena WONG opined that there were loopholes in the current Ordinance and the penalties for contravention of the Ordinance lacked sufficient deterrent effect. In her view, the Administration should strengthen the enforcement of the Ordinance. Referring to the Administration's response to her letter about the illegal import of carrots from Chiba, Dr WONG raised concern that the importer concerned had not registered under the Ordinance and CFS did not know about the illegal import of the carrot until someone reported it. She also pointed out that traders were allowed at present to make declarations within 14 days upon arrival of food products in Hong Kong, making it unable for CFS to conduct prior checks before the products entered into the local market. However, there was no food inspection checkpoint at the Kwai Chung container terminal to conduct checks on food products imported via marine channel. She asked how CFS would plug the loopholes.

23. USFH advised that CFS did carry out routine surveillance and inspection on food imported into Hong Kong by sea at the seaport, though control over such imports were covered by inspections at the warehouse, wholesale and retail levels. In addition, the Administration was considering the feasibility of establishing a checkpoint in the Kwai Chung container terminal to step up the surveillance work. CFS and C&ED were also reviewing their cooperation and administrative measures in identifying the source of problem food. On the Administration's advice, the Chairman suggested that the Administration should consider requiring the importers to make advance declarations for Japanese food products imported via sea to facilitate CFS to conduct prior checks at the Kwai Chung container terminal. Alternatively, the imported food products should be stored temporarily in warehouses for CFS's inspection before the products entered into the local market.

24. Dr Helena WONG said that under section 22 of the Ordinance, importers were required to state the "place" from which the food products were imported in the relevant customs declaration forms. She queried how

Action

CFS could prohibit the import of food products from the five prefectures of Japan if importers only stated the countries of origin but not the cities/prefectures in the declaration forms. AD(FSC)/CFS advised that an importer was required to state the prefectures concerned for Japanese food in the relevant documents and CFS would take follow-up actions if the requisite information was not provided by the importer. At the request of Dr WONG, AD(FSC)/CFS undertook to provide information on the number of cases that importers did not state the relevant prefecture of Japan where the food came from or provided wrong information on the place of origin in the relevant customs declaration documents since the implementation of the import ban on Japanese food and the follow-up actions taken by CFS on the cases.

Admin

25. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan said that members of the public were concerned about the detection of excessive pesticides residues in tea leaves and floral tea samples in Taiwan. She enquired whether regular tests on tea leaves/floral tea sold in the market were conducted by CFS in accordance with the Ordinance. USFH advised that in response to the incident, CFS had liaised with the relevant Taiwan authorities and the trade for more details on the matter. CFS had so far conducted tests on a total of 97 samples in tea leaves/flora tea in Hong Kong and no unsatisfactory samples were found. CFS had also conducted about 100 tests on tea leaves/flora tea samples in its yearly sampling programme in the past few years and no unsatisfactory samples had been found. CFS had reminded the public and the trade to inform CFS if problem products were identified.

26. Noting that the Ordinance required food traders to maintain proper transaction records of the businesses from which they obtained their food and the businesses to which they supplied their food in order to enhance food traceability, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan enquired how CFS could trace the source and movement of the food purchased through offshore shopping websites. The Chairman asked whether CFS had required operators of offshore shopping websites to submit transaction records for inspection.

27. AD(FSC)/CFS advised that each case should be determined on its own merits. If the website operator was an importer/distributor/retailer, he or she had to keep all food import and local acquisition records in accordance with the Ordinance. The Chairman asked whether CFS had identified any selling of the problem tea leaves/floral tea on the internet and whether CFS had conducted tests on the tea leaves/flora tea purchased through the relevant websites. AD(FSC)/CFS advised that no shopping website had been found selling the problem tea leaves/floral tea so far.

28. In response to the enquiry of the Deputy Chairman about the legal liability imposed on food traders under the Ordinance, USFH advised that

Action

food traders were required to maintain proper transaction records and submit the records to CFS for inspection within the timeframe specified by the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene. The Deputy Chairman, however, pointed out that under the Pesticide Residues in Food Regulation (Cap. 132CM) ("the Regulation"), a person who imported or delivered a food which contained pesticide residues would commit an offence even if he/she submitted the transaction records concerned to the authorities for inspection. He considered that the Administration should review the offences and penalties under the Regulation. USFH advised that the various food safety laws and regulations were enacted with different legislative intents and policy objectives. The Administration would review the laws from time to time having regard to the actual circumstances.

VI. Dengue and Japanese encephalitis vector surveillance programme and Anti-mosquito Campaign 2015

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1394/14-15(05) and (06))

29. USFH briefed members on the dengue and Japanese encephalitis vector surveillance programme and the anti-mosquito campaign 2015 of FEHD, detail of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1394/14-15(05)). Members also noted the background brief entitled "Mosquito control work" (LC Paper No. CB(2)1394/14-15(06)) prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

30. Referring to the monthly Area Ovitrap Index for *Aedes albopictus* ("AOI") for 44 locations in 19 districts in 2014 as set out in Annex II to the Administration's paper, Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired why high AOIs were recorded in Shau Kei Wan and Sai Wan Ho, Deep Water Bay and Repulse Bay and Tseung Kwon O and Ma On Shan from May to July in 2014. He also asked about the anti-mosquito measures taken by the relevant government departments to tackle the problem.

31. USFH advised that FEHD had been monitoring the AOIs in different districts and anti-mosquito work had been carried out to address the issue. Pest Control Officer In-charge of FEHD ("PCO I-c/FEHD") explained that high AOIs were recorded in Shau Kei Wan and Sai Wan Ho because there were many housing estates in the districts. Containers and water storage devices placed in hillsides in the public areas, accumulation of water on manhole covers at road side and breeding of mosquitoes at drains and keyholes of manhole covers in housing estates also contributed to the high AOIs recorded in Deep Water Bay and Repulse Bay, Tseung Kwon O and Ma On Shan respectively. PCO I-c/FEHD advised that FEHD and the relevant government departments had taken immediate measures in view of

Action

the situation. Such efforts included requesting the Housing Department ("HD") and property management companies for private housing estates to clear drains and surface channels to prevent blockage and working with the relevant government departments to clean up rubbish at slopes and to seal up keyholes of manhole covers to prevent accumulation of water and breeding of mosquitoes in venues under their management. The AOIs in these districts had fallen to lower levels with the enhanced anti-mosquito actions taken.

32. Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed concern about the rise in imported dengue fever ("DF") cases in recent years and the prevalence of DF in Guangdong Province (from below 3000 cases in 2013 to about 45 000 cases recently). He pointed out that the Port Monthly Ovitrap Index for *Aedes albopictus* recorded at cross boundary check points on land and cross boundary ferry piers were particularly high, posing threat to the residents living in nearby areas (e.g. Tin Shui Wai and Yuen Long). Dr KWOK enquired whether there were targeted measures to strengthen the anti-mosquito work in the port areas so as to prevent DF from being introduced into the territory. PCO I-c/FEHD advised that the port dengue vector surveillance programme in nine port areas had been stepped up from a monthly interval to twice a month since November 2014 and the strengthened surveillance would be extended to all the 29 port areas starting from the summer of 2015. Quick tests on dengue virus had been conducted on dengue vectors collected from ovitraps set up in the port areas starting from 2015. FEHD had also worked with the MTR Corporation Limited to set up mosquito catching apparatuses at the station platforms for through trains.

33. USFH advised that the Anti-Mosquito Steering Committee held a meeting in April 2015 to formulate strategies for territory-wide anti-mosquito efforts. To step up anti-mosquito work, the Committee had decided to carry out anti-mosquito campaign throughout the winter in 2014 until the upcoming rainy season. The Administration had allocated additional resources to FEHD in 2014 and 2015 for its anti-mosquito work. In February 2015, FEHD launched a new anti-mosquito campaign in collaboration with other relevant government departments to maintain the momentum. From 4 May to early June 2015, relevant departments had joined hands to launch two rounds of intensive mosquito preventive and control exercises across the territory covering areas under their purview. FEHD would continue to work jointly with District Councils and the relevant organizations to enhance mosquito control work at the district level.

34. The Deputy Chairman were concerned that more than 75 000 DF cases were recorded in Guangdong Province, Taiwan and Southeast Asian countries (including Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand) from early 2015 to end April 2015 and almost all DF cases in Hong Kong were imported from

Action

these endemic areas. He suggested that the Administration should collect information on the specific cities/regions of these countries with higher risks of DF and advise Hong Kong residents not to visit those places to avoid infection of DF.

35. USFH advised that there were 108 and 30 imported DF cases in Hong Kong in 2014 and 2015 respectively. FEHD would monitor the situations in neighbouring countries and strengthen public education on prevention of DF accordingly. At present, information about the countries visited by infected people would be collected. PCO I-c/FEHD supplemented that as DF was endemic in many Southeast Asian countries, people would have the chance to get infected with the disease irrespective of which part of the countries they visited. FEHD would work with the Port Health Office of the Department of Health to remind Hong Kong residents to take mosquito preventive measures when travelling abroad and to seek medical advice if they felt sick after visiting endemic areas.

36. While expressing appreciation for FEHD's mosquito control and preventive work, Miss Alice MAK said that it appeared to her that the other government departments (such as the Leisure and Cultural Services Department ("LCSD")) did not attach the same importance to mosquito control in venues under their management and were not proactive in undertaking anti-mosquito work. She was particularly worried that the ponds and children playgrounds in the parks managed by LCSD would become mosquito breeding grounds if the need to implement control measures was taken lightly. Miss MAK enquired about the coordination between FEHD and LCSD on mosquito control work.

37. USFH advised that the relevant government departments would carry out anti-mosquito measures in places under their charge every year. Assistant Director (Operations) 3 of FEHD ("AD(O)3/FEHD") supplemented that all FEHD District Environmental Hygiene Offices would convene a special anti-mosquito task force meeting each year before the rainy season to enhance the awareness of the relevant departments (such as HD and LCSD) of the importance of mosquito control in venues under their management. FEHD officers would provide necessary advice and assistance to the concerned departments and parties in formulating mosquito control strategies if problems were identified during FEHD's inspections. He hoped that the two rounds of intensive mosquito prevention and control exercises organized by the relevant government departments would help eliminate mosquitoes effectively.

38. Dr Helena WONG said that she had received complaints from residents of Kai Ching Estate, Tak Long Estate and Sorrento about the

Action

serious mosquito problem in their estates caused by the accumulation of water in nearby construction sites. She hoped that FEHD would remind the MTR Corporation Limited to take anti-mosquito measures in their construction sites. Dr WONG said that she learnt from some FEHD officers that some water plants in the gardens of Kai Ching Estate and Tak Long Estate were more prone to attract mosquitoes. She was concerned that the gardens would easily become potential mosquito breeding grounds and considered that FEHD should provide staff of HD and the property management agents with updated knowledge in mosquito prevention and control work.

39. AD(O)3/FEHD advised that FEHD had strengthened the mosquito prevention and control work in Kai Ching Estate and Tak Long Estate and would continue to provide assistance to HD in implementing anti-mosquito measures. Such efforts included conducting regular checks in the construction sites in the Kai Tak Development Area; organizing talks on mosquito prevention and control for staff of HD and property management agents and conducting inspections in housing estates in conjunction with HD to monitor the effectiveness of the anti-mosquito measures. Apart from the above, the Civil Engineering and Development Department would also convene bi-monthly joint departmental meetings to remind the relevant departments to take necessary anti-mosquito measures.

VII. Measures to enhance training and protection of law enforcement officers of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1394/14-15(07) and (08))

40. USFH briefed members on the measures being taken to enhance the training and protection of law enforcement officers of FEHD for hawker management, as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1394/14-15(07)). Members also noted the information note on the subject (LC Paper No. CB(2)1394/14-15(08)) prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

41. The Deputy Chairman expressed condolence for the passing away of Mr WU Kwong-sum, an Hawker Control Team ("HCT") officer of FEHD, after he was attacked by a hawker when performing duties in March 2015. Noting that 42 members of HCT were injured during frontline operations in 2014, he enquired whether there were measures to reduce physical confrontation between HCT officers and hawkers and the number of injuries of HCT officers at work. He considered that the Administration should review the enforcement procedure and provide photographic equipment to HCT officers to facilitate their enforcement work.

Action

42. USFH advised that apart from providing "self defence" training and other tailor-made training programmes to equip HCT officers with skills in handling difficult situations, 39 new posts were being created in 2015-2016 to relieve the workload of the existing hawker control squads. Deputy Director (Environmental Hygiene) of FEHD ("DD(EH)/FEHD") advised that the main enforcement strategy against hawking activities was to maintain hawker-free situation in major thoroughfares and areas of high pedestrian flow and to prevent resurgence of unlicensed hawking at the major hawker black spots or locations. Generally speaking, HCT officers would verbally warn the hawkers first and ask them to disperse before taking prosecution action.

43. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that he received complaints from the relevant staff unions that a number of posts of the Hawker Control Officer ("HCO") grade were frozen at present and that the proposed creation of 39 new posts could not meet the service demand. He said that the staff unions requested FEHD to fill the vacancies to strengthen the manpower of the HCO grade to cope with the heavy workload. Mr WONG hoped that FEHD would review the manpower requirement as early as possible. Miss Alice MAK asked when FEHD would complete the manpower review and whether the Administration would start recruitment next year to fill the posts as requested by the staff unions.

44. DD(EH)/FEHD advised that 39 new posts would be created by June 2015 to combat illegal shop front extensions ("SFEs") in the short run. She explained that some posts of the HCO grade were frozen due to the voluntary retirement scheme carried out in 2003. FEHD was reviewing the manpower requirement and would consider the need to fill such posts having regard to the service demand. The Administration would shortly meet with the union representatives in May 2015 to further exchange views on the manpower review. She undertook to follow up the matter with the staff unions.

45. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that the staff unions also requested that sector patrols be carried out by two HCT officers to ensure their personal safety at work. USFH clarified that the operational guidelines issued by FEHD stipulated that each hawker control squad assigned to carrying out sector patrols be divided into sub-teams, each comprising two Assistant Hawker Control Officers ("AHCO"), so that they could look after each other. DD(EH)/FEHD said that Mr WU Kwong-sum was a squad leader responsible for assigning AHCOs to form sub-teams to conduct frontline sector patrols. Mr WONG Kwok-hing suggested that warning signs in different languages be set up at the black spots to remind illegal hawkers who were from the ethnic minorities that illegal hawking was not allowed in Hong Kong. USFH said that the Administration would consider the suggestion.

Action

46. Mr KWOK Wai-keung considered that the Administration should address the concerns of HCT staff on manpower shortage and sector patrols arrangements. Mr KWOK said that some HCT officers expressed worries that they had to absorb the additional workload arising from the implementation of the proposed fixed penalty system against offences related to SFEs in future. DD(EH)/FEHD said that the Administration was discussing with the union representatives on their concerns about the enforcement of the proposed fixed penalty system which had yet to be implemented. In response to the enquiry of the Chairman, DD(EH)/FEHD advised that the relevant enforcement work would be carried out by HCOs as they were responsible for handling SFE offences at present. The proposed fixed penalty system would serve as an additional enforcement tool to achieve greater deterrence against SFEs.

47. Noting that a "self-defence" training module had been included in the induction training for HCT officers since April 2015, Mr Michael TIEN expressed concern that HCT officers recruited before April 2015 were only given CD-ROMs containing a self-learning video on self-protection when being attacked, but without any formal training on "self defence". He enquired whether FEHD would request HCT officers to attend the "self-defence" training mandatorily. He also expressed concern about the personal safety of frontline staff if they were required to issue many fixed penalty tickets against SFEs.

48. USFH advised that apart from enhancing the training to HCT officers, efforts would be made to strengthen the communication among frontline staff in hawker control squads. Assistant Director (Grade Management and Development) of FEHD advised that at present, all new recruits at the AHCO rank (the entry rank in the HCO grade) were required to undergo mandatory induction training programme which covered a module on "self-defence". In view of the recent attack on an HCT officer, the "self defence" training module in the induction training had been strengthened since April 2015 to put more emphasis on "self-protection when being attacked".

49. While agreeing that the Administration should undertake measures to enhance staff training and protection of HCT officers at work, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen expressed concern about the conflicts between HCT officers and unlicensed hawkers in HCT enforcement operations. He asked whether the operational guidelines issued by FEHD had been made available to the public. He also enquired about the number of complaints received against HCT officers in carrying out enforcement operations and the number of cases that HCT officers were found to have violated the operational guidelines in discharging their duties. DD(EH)/FEHD said that although the operational guidelines were not made public, the gist of the guidelines were set out in the

Action

Admin

Administration's paper. The guidelines stated clearly that the safety of hawkers, passers-by and HCT officers was of primary importance. HCT officers would immediately stop the enforcement operations if the safety of any parties were at stake. DD(EH)/FEHD undertook to provide the relevant figures as requested by Mr CHAN.

VIII. Any other business

50. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:41 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
22 September 2015