

(Translation)

Director of Audit's Report No. 75

Chapter 2: Government's efforts in tackling shoreline refuse

Public Accounts Committee (Public Hearing)

12 March 2021

Opening Remarks by the Secretary for the Environment

Mr Chairman,

First of all, I would like to thank the Audit Commission for conducting a comprehensive audit and making valuable recommendations on the Government's efforts in tackling shoreline refuse. We accept the recommendations made by the Audit Commission in the Report, and the Government is proactively implementing the relevant follow-up measures. I will now give a brief account of the Government's efforts in tackling shoreline refuse, and the Director of Environmental Protection and the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation will then elaborate on the follow-up measures of and their implementation by the Environmental Protection Department and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department respectively. Later in the second session of the public hearing, I will also invite the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene and the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services to elaborate on the follow-up measures of and their implementation by the two departments.

Environment Bureau/Environmental Protection Department

2. In 2012, the Government set up an Inter-departmental Working Group on Clean Shorelines (now known as the Inter-departmental Working Group on Marine Environmental Management) with the Task Force on Marine Refuse and the Task Force on Emergency Response to Marine Environmental Incidents set up under it to co-ordinate efforts in tackling marine and shoreline refuse and provide steer to the work on tackling marine environmental incidents. The Environmental Protection Department, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, which have sent representatives to attend this hearing today, are members of the Working Group.

3. Regarding the maintenance of shoreline cleanliness, the Environmental Protection Department conducts regular inspections at specific coastal sites which are more prone to marine refuse accumulation and monitors the improvement made at the priority sites. It has also devised a five-level grading system based on cleanliness conditions to assess the effectiveness of the enhanced cleaning efforts.

4. In addition, the Environmental Protection Department established a Clean Shorelines Liaison Platform in 2018 which, through different media and channels, coordinates and promotes shorelines clean-up actions, provides appropriate support and assistance to facilitate participation by community groups, shares the clean-up results, etc.

5. Now, let me give a brief introduction on the division of work among the relevant government departments on cleaning up shoreline refuse:

Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

6. The Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department is responsible for the clean-up work at the Marine Parks, Marine Reserve, country parks and designated special areas (created mainly for the purpose of natural conservation) outside the country parks.

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

7. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department is responsible for the clean-up work at gazetted beaches.

Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

8. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department is responsible for the clean-up work at ungazetted beaches and coastal areas (not within the jurisdiction of other government departments). The services include cleaning up the marine refuse being washed ashore (i.e. shoreline refuse), and cleaning up the refuse accumulated along the foreshores jointly with the Marine Department.

9. I will now invite the Director of Environmental Protection and the Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation to elaborate on the follow-up measures of and their implementation by the Environmental Protection Department and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department in response to the Audit Commission's recommendations. Later in the second session of public hearing, I will invite the Director of

Food and Environmental Hygiene and the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services to elaborate on the follow-up measures of and their implementation by the two departments. Director of Environmental Protection, please.

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