

Views on the proposed reorganization plan for the food safety regulatory framework in Hong Kong.

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The following views and comments are mainly based on information given in the document “Reorganization Plan for the Food Safety Regulatory Framework and Integration of Nature Conservation with Environment Protection Functions (LC Paper No. CB(2) 464/05-06(01))”.

1. I support the main theme of the proposal that reorganization in the roles, functions, and administrative structures of Government Departments are needed to improve food safety in Hong Kong. As food safety is an important and demanding task, it should be carried out by a dedicated team of staff with clear responsibilities. The proposed structure of the new department, Department of Food Safety, Inspection and Quarantine can achieve this purpose.
2. Food safety issue deserves a priority in Hong Kong, and therefore it is reasonable to allocate more sources to the new department and for upgrading the required professional posts. However, these additional expenses must be fully justified, monitored, and reviewed.
3. Given the limited resources as in any society, it is unlikely that the new department can address all food safety issues. A cost-effective approach with prioritization based on local information is necessary. This information should be collected systematically and analyzed scientifically.
4. The reorganization plan should include how to better utilize the existing academic experts, and also how to facilitate the development of such expertise in Hong Kong. This is an important element as academics can play a unique role and work in collaboration with the new department, for example:
 - *Provide different levels of education targeted for individuals working in the field as well as the public.*
 - *Conduct research projects to understand the epidemiology and health impact of different food safety issues in Hong Kong. This serves an essential basis for prioritization and justification of resource allocation.*
 - *Develop new testing techniques tailored according to the special local demand.*
 - *Transfer methods and knowledge. e.g. in the form of seminar, workshop or certificate course, to individuals working in the field particularly the food industry.*