

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)604/17-18
(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, 14 November 2017, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS (Chairman)
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP
Hon Claudia MO
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon HO Kai-ming
Hon SHIU Ka-fai
Hon SHIU Ka-chun
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon Tanya CHAN

Hon HUI Chi-fung
Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH
Hon KWONG Chun-yu
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho

Member attending : Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP

Members absent : Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP

Public Officers attending : Item IV

Dr CHUI Tak-yi, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Miss Diane WONG Shuk-han
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2

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

Mr LEE Ming-wai
Pest Control Officer-in-charge
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Item V

Dr CHUI Tak-yi, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Mr Eugene FUNG Kin-yip, JP
Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2

Dr Samuel YEUNG Tze-kiu
Consultant (Community Medicine) (Risk Assessment
and Communication), Centre for Food Safety
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Dr Anne FUNG Yu-kei
Assistant Director of Health (Health Promotion),
Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health

Item VI

Dr CHUI Tak-yi, JP
Under Secretary for Food and Health

Mr Bill WONG Kwok-piu
Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 3

Mr Mickey LAI Kin-ming
Assistant Director (Fisheries)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Mr CHAN Kim-hung
Senior Fisheries Officer (Fisheries Supporting Services)
Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department

Clerk in attendance : Miss Josephine SO
Chief Council Secretary (2) 2

Staff in attendance : Ms Wendy LO
Senior Council Secretary (2) 2

Miss Michelle TANG
Council Secretary (2) 2

Miss Cally LAI
Legislative Assistant (2) 2

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I. Confirmation of minutes
(LC Paper No. CB(2)229/17-18)

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2017 were confirmed.

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II. Information papers issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)42/17-18(01), CB(2)172/17-18(01), CB(2)178/17-18(01), CB(2)179/17-18(01), CB(2)204/17-18(01), CB(2)204/17-18(02), CB(2)282/17-18(01) and CB(2)290/17-18(01))

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

- (a) joint submission dated 11 October 2017 from six organizations concerning the proposed development of an Agricultural Park;
- (b) letter dated 26 October 2017 from Hon CHAN Han-pan concerning the promotion of the sustainable development of the sea fish farming industry;
- (c) letter dated 27 October 2017 from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki concerning the composition and operation of the Liquor Licensing Board ("LLB");
- (d) joint letter dated 27 October 2017 from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki, Hon Tanya CHAN and Hon Jeremy TAM on issues relating to suspected smuggling and entering into the local market of hairy crabs;
- (e) referral arising from the meeting between Legislative Council ("LegCo") Members and Sham Shui Po District Council ("DC") members on 14 July 2017 regarding the enhancement of the facilities and management of public markets;
- (f) referral arising from the meeting between LegCo Members and Sham Shui Po DC members on 14 July 2017 regarding the development and planning of the Tung Chau Street Market;
- (g) Administration's response to the joint letter dated 27 October 2017 from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki, Hon Tanya CHAN and Hon Jeremy TAM relating to suspected smuggling and entering into the local market of hairy crabs; and
- (h) Administration's response to the letter dated 27 October 2017 from Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki concerning the composition and operation of LLB.

3. The Chairman informed members that a joint letter from Mr Tommy CHEUNG and Mr CHAN Han-pan, which had been tabled at

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the meeting, was received shortly before the meeting. Mr CHEUNG and Mr CHAN proposed in the joint letter that the Panel should conduct a duty visit to Brazil to better understand the food safety control and surveillance work of the Brazilian authorities on meat and poultry meat products for export purposes. The Chairman suggested and members agreed that the joint letter be dealt with under the agenda item "Any other business".

(Post-meeting note: The joint letter dated 14 November 2017 from Mr Tommy CHEUNG and Mr CHAN Han-pan was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)325/17-18(01) on 15 November 2017.)

III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)263/17-18(01) and (02))

Regular meeting in December 2017

4. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting scheduled for Tuesday, 12 December 2017 at 2:30 pm:

- (a) Implementation of the Private Columbaria Ordinance, including matters relating to the Private Columbaria Appeal Board;
- (b) Anti-mosquito campaign for 2018 and prevention and control of biting midges; and
- (c) Study on "cooking oils in use".

5. Members agreed that the December meeting would be extended by half an hour to end at 5:00 pm to allow sufficient time for discussion of all items on the agenda.

Items for discussion at future meetings

6. The Chairman informed members that he and the Deputy Chairman had met with the Secretary for Food and Health ("SFH") on 3 November 2017 to discuss the work plan of the Panel for the 2017-2018 legislative session. The Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion had been updated to reflect members' suggestions made at the Panel meeting on 12 October 2017 and the discussion with the Administration at the work plan meeting.

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7. The Deputy Chairman expressed strong dissatisfaction with the Administration's response to issues raised in his letter concerning the composition and operation of LLB (LC Paper No. CB(2)290/17-18(01)), as referred to in paragraph 2(c) and (h) above. He considered it necessary for the Panel to discuss as early as practicable LLB's procedures for vetting liquor licence applications, the composition and operation of LLB and the system of declaration of interests adopted by LLB. Pointing out that a relevant item "Liquor licensing system in Hong Kong and regulation of upstairs bars" was already on the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion, the Chairman suggested that the issues raised by the Deputy Chairman be subsumed under this item. He would liaise with the Administration after the meeting on the timing for discussing the item.

8. The Deputy Chairman said that the Office of The Ombudsman had undertaken a direct investigation and found inadequacies in the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department ("FEHD")'s sampling checks on fruits and vegetables imported by land and its surveillance on those by sea. According to his understanding, it was pointed out in the direct investigation report that no clear regulatory standards had been set for some vegetables commonly consumed in Hong Kong, and the Ombudsman had made recommendations to FEHD regarding inspection and statutory standards for more effective regulation of imported fruits and vegetables. The Deputy Chairman suggested that the Administration should be requested to brief members, no later than January 2018, on its responses to the observations and recommendations set out in the direct investigation report. The Chairman said that he would request the Administration to first provide an information paper and to expedite the relevant discussion with the Panel.

IV. Extension of the Internet Protocol Camera Scheme to all districts and other keep clean measures for enhancing environmental hygiene and eradicating rodent infestation

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)263/17-18(03) and (04))

9. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Food and Health ("USFH") briefed members on the keep clean measures for improving environmental hygiene and eradicating rodent infestation implemented by FEHD in 2017, as well as the Administration's proposal to extend the Internet Protocol ("IP") Camera Scheme to all districts in Hong Kong, as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)263/17-18(03)). Members noted the background brief on the subject (LC paper No. CB(2)263/17-18(04)) prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

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Effectiveness of camera surveillance

10. Referring to the photos at Appendix I to the Administration's paper which showed the on-site situations of refuse dumping blackspots before and after the installation of IP cameras, the Chairman, the Deputy Chairman, Ms Tanya CHAN, Dr Helena WONG and Mr CHAN Han-pan queried whether the improved hygiene condition at those blackspots was attributed solely to the installation of IP cameras. The Deputy Chairman and Dr WONG were concerned whether the environmental hygiene condition of the neighbouring areas/streets had worsened, as offenders might try to evade monitoring by dumping refuse at other locations not under camera surveillance.

11. Mr CHAN Han-pan said that as most of the refuse collection points ("RCPs") managed by FEHD were closed at night, refuse from residential buildings in the area collected by private refuse collectors very often was stacked up along the pavements outside RCPs pending collection by refuse collection vehicles. In his view, FEHD should consider extending the opening hours of RCPs, so as to cope with the demand for refuse collection service at midnight and in the early morning. He also suggested that FEHD should strengthen the refuse collection facilities/services in rural areas. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen shared a similar view that the opening/service hours of RCPs/refuse collection vehicles, in particular those located at/servicing major bar areas (e.g. Lan Kwai Fong in Central), should be extended to provide convenience to the public.

12. Assistant Director (Operations) 3, FEHD ("AD(Ops)3/FEHD") made the following response:

- (a) having considered the suggestions of DCs, FEHD conducted a pilot scheme to install IP cameras at six refuse dumping blackspots in Central & Western, Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long Districts from late December 2016 to June 2017 ("the pilot scheme"). The pilot scheme aimed at enhancing surveillance on illegal dumping of refuse and facilitating the planning of more effective enforcement actions. FEHD had conducted evaluation of the effectiveness of the pilot scheme and found that the amount of refuse illegally deposited at the blackspots and the number of complaints received had dropped significantly after the installation of the IP cameras. The trial had proven that the installation of IP cameras could have a deterrent effect and was helpful in improving the hygiene condition at the blackspots;

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- (b) although a small amount of refuse was found in other areas in the vicinity of the blackspots under surveillance, the problem of illegal dumping in those areas was not serious and the situation had improved after enforcement actions had been taken;
- (c) in addition to the installation of IP cameras, FEHD had carried out other supportive measures to curb illegal dumping activities. While the IP camera as a tool could assist in the enforcement actions, some preparations were necessary to complement the enforcement strategy. In particular, FEHD needed to identify the potential offenders, the pattern of their illegal activities and the causes of such irregularities, in order to formulate a targeted publicity and educational programme and effective enforcement strategies, aiming at changing the behaviour and attitude of the offenders within a short period of time, and encouraging them to become law-abiding citizens and to form good habits; and
- (d) in considering whether the opening hours of an RCP should be extended, the Administration would take into account a number of factors such as the views of local residents and the demand for refuse collection service during midnight or in small hours of the day. Also, the views of the respective DC had to be obtained. To cater for the needs of bars and food premises located in Central, Lan Kwai Fong RCP and Gage Street RCP were open 24 hours a day. Private refuse collectors could deposit waste and refuse collected within the district in these RCPs. It should also be noted that to address the service demand of various districts, the number of RCPs providing 24-hour service had increased in recent years. For example, five out of seven permanent off-street RCPs in Yuen Long town centre, including the Tung Tai Street RCP, were already operating 24 hours.

13. Mr LAU Kwok-fan expressed support for the Administration's plan to extend the pilot scheme to other districts on a trial basis for one year. He, Ms Tanya CHAN and Dr Helena WONG enquired about the Administration's considerations in deciding the locations for installing IP cameras and the number of IP cameras to be set up in each district. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung considered that the pilot scheme had achieved considerable deterrent effect and was helpful in improving the hygiene condition at refuse dumping blackspots, in particular those in rural areas such as Pak Sha Tsuen. He enquired about the Administration's next course of action.

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14. AD(Ops)3/FEHD responded that the Administration had completed consultations with DCs on the installation of IP cameras and the hygiene blackspots at which IP cameras should be installed. Feedbacks from DC members were very positive. The Administration aimed to install, in the first phase, some 40 IP cameras at hygiene blackspots across the territory (i.e. one to three cameras in each district) in the second quarter of 2018 and would review the situation from time to time. An overall review would be conducted when the trial ended.

15. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan opined that the Administration should consider installing IP cameras in rear lanes where illegal deposits of construction wastes and accumulation of disused articles were serious (e.g. rear lanes between Kai Tak Road and Tak Ku Ling Road in Kowloon City) to facilitate the planning of more effective enforcement actions. Mr KWOK Wai-keung suggested that consideration be given to installing IP cameras to monitor fly-tipping activities in private streets. AD(Ops)3/FEHD responded that as the installation of IP cameras in private streets might involve complex legal issues in respect of land right or property right, the pilot scheme would only cover public streets/areas for the time being.

Enforcement issues

16. Mr LAU Kwok-fan, Mr Jeremy TAM and Mr HUI Chi-fung expressed concern on how the footage recorded by IP cameras would be used for enforcement and prosecution purposes. Ms Tanya CHAN asked whether and how the identity of offenders could be verified from the footage captured by the IP cameras.

17. AD(Ops)3/FEHD responded that although the faces of the offenders could not be clearly captured, the installation of IP cameras was especially effective in tackling direct deposit of refuse from vehicles or unloading of refuse from vehicles by offenders at blackspots. This was because the cameras could capture the registration information of the offenders' vehicles which could be a cue for investigation by enforcement officers, making evasion of liability less likely. As for the other category of illegal acts, i.e. delivery and deposit of refuse at blackspots by handcarts, IP cameras had certain deterrent effects, though their primary function was to collect information (such as the time and pattern of the irregularities) for planning targeted enforcement actions. Based on the intelligence collected by the footage, blitz operations could be scheduled at the peak time of the illegal dumping activities.

18. In response to Mr Charles MOK's enquiry, AD(Ops)3/FEHD said that the installation and implementation works (including the recording of footage) was outsourced to a contractor. FEHD would access and view the footage

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captured for enforcement purpose and conduct audit checks to monitor the performance of the contractor.

19. Ms Tanya CHAN, Dr Helena WONG and Mr LEUNG Che-cheung enquired about the number of enforcement actions taken against illegal dumping of refuse at blackspots since the installation of IP cameras. AD(Ops)3/FEHD responded that, for example, among the 70 to 80 cases of illegal deposits of refuse identified at Pak Sha Tsuen RCP, Shap Pat Heung since the installation of IP cameras, some 60 successful prosecutions were instituted, with the remaining pending court proceedings. At the request of members, the Administration undertook to provide the number of prosecutions instituted against illegal dumping of refuse at the six refuse dumping blackspots in the Central & Western, Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long Districts and how many successful prosecutions were made, since IP cameras had been installed at those blackspots.

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20. Mr HUI Chi-fung held the view that FEHD should deploy additional manpower resources to each district to support the enhanced enforcement actions against illegal dumping of refuse by food premises and bars, particularly in the early hours of the morning. AD(Ops)3/FEHD responded that FEHD had flexibly deployed existing staff in carrying out enforcement actions. Since late June 2017, FEHD had set up six dedicated enforcement teams ("DETs") in six districts (i.e. one team in each district) to step up enforcement action against public cleanliness offences. Responding to Mr HUI's and Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiries, AD(Ops)3/FEHD said that FEHD planned to seek more resources to set up DETs for deployment to every district in the long run to support its work in this respect.

21. Mr Charles MOK and Ms Tanya CHAN were concerned that the installation of IP cameras at public places might give rise to privacy concerns. They asked whether the operational guidelines on the use and retention of surveillance footage would be made available for public reference. AD(Ops)3/FEHD responded that the Administration attached great importance to personal privacy. FEHD had solicited the views of the Department of Justice and followed the "Guidance on CCTV Surveillance and Use of Drones" issued by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data in the implementation of the pilot scheme. Clear operational guidelines had been promulgated for strict compliance by staff and measures had also been taken to ensure all footage recorded would be kept in safe custody. As the set of operational guidelines was an internal document of FEHD and contained operational details, it was not appropriate to disclose the guidelines.

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22. Mr Charles MOK sought confirmation as to whether the footage captured by IP cameras would be deleted within six months if no evidence of offence was captured. He and Mr Jeremy TAM further enquired whether the footage recorded would be provided to the Police/relevant law enforcement agents for their taking of enforcement action against offences other than public cleanliness offences. AD(Ops)3/FEHD advised that footage with investigative or evidential value would be treated as case exhibit and retained until the conclusion of the investigation and court proceedings. The disclosure of the footage captured was and would be restricted to the extent necessary for legal action to be taken. If no prosecution was instituted against the offences within six months from the date of recording, the footage so captured would be deleted. AD(Ops)3/FEHD further advised that in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486), FEHD could provide the footage recorded to the Police for investigation of crimes if a data access request was raised by the Police in writing; and if necessary, FEHD would refer cases involving suspected criminal offences to the Police for follow-up.

23. In response to the Deputy Chairman's enquiry, AD(Ops)3/FEHD said that the Administration aimed to start installing IP cameras at some hygiene blackspots in the second quarter of 2018 and conduct further review when the trial ended. When, in one day, it was concluded that the scheme had effectively brought about change to the habit of illegal dumping with the environmental hygiene of individual blackspots thoroughly improved, the Administration would not rule out the possibility of terminating the IP camera scheme. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen asked whether consideration would be given to installing IP cameras without video recording function at hygiene blackspots. AD(Ops)3/FEHD replied in the negative, but the Administration would not preclude flexible deployment of such equipment should the need arise.

Government's efforts to enhance environmental hygiene

24. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan expressed grave concern about the increasing trend of illegal disposal of domestic waste on streets or at the side/on the top of litter containers by members of the public. She considered that FEHD should step up enforcement action against public cleanliness offences. The Administration should review and examine whether the existing penalties for such offences should be increased to enhance the deterrent effect.

25. Mr LAU Kwok-fan suggested that FEHD should engage DC members in the formulation of enforcement strategies for DETs to execute, as it might help improve the work efficiency of DETs. For example, DC members could assist in identifying littering blackspots that required more frequent inspection and deciding the timing for conducting blitz operations.

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26. Mr HO Kai-ming opined that FEHD's practice of awarding cleansing service contracts under the existing service contract tendering mechanism to the lowest bidder was the main reason for inferior cleansing services. He urged FEHD to review its cleansing service contract awarding system and enhance the supervision of contractors' performance in street cleansing and pest control services. AD(Ops)3/FEHD responded that from 2016-2017 onwards, FEHD had allocated additional resources, including deploying more street washing vehicle teams and high pressure hot water cleaner teams, to enhance street cleansing services. In parallel, FEHD had strengthened its supervision of the performance of in-house staff and outsourced workers on street cleansing duties, to ensure the provision of quality street cleansing services to the public.

Eradicating rodent infestation

27. Mr CHAN Han-pan enquired how the rodent infestation rate ("RIR") in each district was arrived at. Pest Control Officer-in-charge/FEHD ("PCO I-c/FEHD") responded that FEHD conducted RIR surveys every six months in rodent-infested areas or places likely to have rodent problems, in particular areas bustling with human activities. The selection of bait locations was based on established scientific criteria. Around 100 to 150 baits, with each one placed at least 50 metres apart, were set in selected localities to gather statistics on the ratio of baits bitten by rodents for the purpose of making meaningful comparison of RIRs using the same standard. Although RIRs could not tell the exact number of rodents in each district, changes to the RIR readings in individual districts over time facilitated FEHD's assessment of progress made in containing rodent infestation and the overall efficacy of the work.

28. Mr CHAN Han-pan and Mr HO Kai-ming expressed concern that the rodent problem in fresh markets and rear lanes adjacent to food premises could not be reflected in RIRs, as the ratio of baits placed in these areas and bitten by rodents would unlikely be high due to clear food attractions around the monitoring baits. PCO I-c/FEHD responded that as rodents had the habit of biting hard objects such as the baits set up by pest control staff, the rates of bait consumption could reflect the effectiveness of FEHD's rodent control work.

29. Noting that the annual RIR had risen from 1.5% in 2010 to 4% in 2016, the Deputy Chairman expressed concern about the effectiveness of FEHD's rodent control measures. He requested the Administration to provide detailed information on the resources and manpower deployed (including the staffing establishment and ranks of the staff of DETs) for conducting the 28 926 inspections to prevent and control rodent infestation during the Anti-rodent

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Campaign 2017 and the average number of FEHD officers involved in each of the inspections.

30. Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned whether the regular exchanges with overseas rodent control experts had helped FEHD improve its rodent control method and techniques. The Deputy Chairman, Mr KWOK Wai-keung and Mr KWONG Chun-yu asked whether FEHD would adopt new methods and techniques for rodent prevention and control. PCO I-c/FEHD responded that the rodenticides and rodent disinfection methodologies/techniques currently adopted by FEHD were in line with those promoted in the international arena. It should be noted that most of the latest rodent control techniques adopted by other places/countries were recommended for use in indoor environment. That said, FEHD would keep in view the latest advances in rodent control methodologies and techniques and would carry out tests to assess the suitability of such methodologies/techniques for local use. The rodenticides used by FEHD were also regularly tested to ensure their effectiveness. When the current rodenticides were no longer effective, FEHD would consider using other rodenticides as replacement.

31. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan asked whether the Administration would consider keeping and nurturing cats to assist in eliminating rodents. Ms Claudia MO held the view that the Administration should consider allowing public market tenants to keep cats to help control rodent infestation. Mr KWONG Chun-yu called on the Administration to conduct studies on the effectiveness of keeping cats to control rodent infestation by making reference to overseas experience. In response, PCO I-c/FEHD explained that although cats had the ability to prey on rodents, their predation targets were not limited to rodents. Besides, the keeping of cats in public markets might cause environmental hygiene problem. While the effectiveness of keeping cats to control rodent infestation had yet to be proved empirically, FEHD would engage relevant stakeholders to look into such possibility.

V. Initiatives on the reduction of salt and sugar in food
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)263/17-18(05) and (06))

32. At the invitation of the Chairman, USFH briefed members on the Administration's initiatives to reduce salt and sugar in food (LC Paper No. CB(2)263/17-18(05)) with the aid of power-point presentation. Members noted the background brief on the subject prepared by the LegCo Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(2)263/17-18(06)).

(Post-meeting note: The softcopy of the power-point presentation materials was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)322/17-18(01) on 15 November 2017.)

The work of the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food

33. The Deputy Chairman, Ms Tanya CHAN and Mr Tommy CHEUNG queried the need to continue to engage the Committee on Reduction of Salt and Sugar in Food ("CRSS") in making recommendations to SFH on the formulation of policy directions and work plans to reduce the intake of salt and sugar by the public. In their view, the work tasked upon CRSS could be undertaken by the Food and Health Bureau ("FHB"), the Department of Health ("DH") and/or the Centre for Food Safety ("CFS"). Ms CHAN wondered whether CRSS had achieved any concrete results since its establishment in March 2015. The Deputy Chairman and Mr Jeremy TAM further asked whether any performance indicators had been set for assessing the effectiveness of CRSS' work in reducing the dietary intake of salt and sugar by the public.

34. Mr Tommy CHEUNG considered that in devising initiatives in promoting less salt and sugar in food, the Administration should strike a balance between protecting public health and avoiding undue impact on consumer choices of food. In his view, the Administration should strengthen publicity efforts to raise public awareness of healthy diets instead of rolling out various measures which might increase the burden on the food trade.

35. USFH and Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 2 ("DSFH(F)2") explained that as excessive intake of salt and sugar had harmful effect on health and local research studies had showed that the dietary intake of salt or sugar among the general public had exceeded the levels recommended by the World Health Organisation, the Administration considered it necessary to set up CRSS to map out an effective strategy for reduction of salt and sugar in food. DSFH(F)2 further said that as the first step of work, CRSS had advised the Administration to work with stakeholders to cultivate a culture of low-salt-and-sugar diet in the community along the three directions of "starting from an early age", "enhancing transparency of information" and "strengthening publicity and education". The Administration and CRSS had also been discussing with the trade on product reformulation to reduce salt and sugar in food, which was a longer-term goal of CRSS. Such work would take time to achieve concrete results. CRSS would conduct opinion surveys in due course to assess the effectiveness of its initiatives in reducing salt and sugar in food.

36. Ms Tanya CHAN sought information on (i) the number of meetings held by CRSS since its establishment; (ii) the attendance rates of individual CRSS members at each of the meetings; and (iii) the concrete strategies and work plans devised by CRSS for consideration of the Administration, with a view to reducing the intake of salt and sugar by the public. DSFH(F)2 undertook to provide the requisite information after the meeting.

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37. Dr Helena WONG expressed support for the initiatives carried out by the Administration and CRSS to reduce salt and sugar in food. She suggested that measures for reducing fat and saturated fat in food facilitating the public to make healthier choices should also be introduced. In her view, food premises and restaurants should be encouraged to include in their menus more "low-salt-and-sugar" dishes. DSFH(F)2 responded that DH and CFS had been actively promoting healthy dietary habits through collaboration with the food trade, schools and other stakeholders. For example, DH launched the EatSmart@restaurant.hk Campaign in 2008 to encourage and assist restaurants to provide dishes with more fruit and vegetables and less oil, salt and sugar. It also promoted healthy eating and physical activity among pre-schoolers and primary students by launching the StartSmart@school.hk Campaign and EatSmart@school.hk Campaign respectively in 2012 and from the 2006-2007 school year.

"Salt/Sugar" Label Scheme for Prepackaged Food Products

38. Dr Helena WONG noted that under the voluntary "Salt/Sugar" Label Scheme for Prepackaged Food Products jointly launched by FHB, CFS and CRSS in October 2017, the trade could display labels on all prepackaged food products that were in compliance with the definitions of "low salt", "no salt", "low sugar" and "no sugar" under the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations (Cap. 132W). She asked whether the Administration would consider drawing reference to and adopting in Hong Kong the traffic-light food labelling system implemented by the Government of the United Kingdom (i.e. a voluntary scheme under which participating manufacturers/retailers used green, amber and red colour coding (traffic lights) to indicate whether levels of nutrients (e.g. fat, saturated fat, sugar and salt) were low, medium or high for front-of-pack labelling) which, in her view, was easy to understand and had proven to be useful in helping consumers identify healthier products.

39. DSFH(F)2 responded that both the Administration and CRSS were of the view that a step-by-step approach should be adopted in promoting a low-salt-low-sugar dietary culture, starting from aspects which were more achievable first before tackling the more difficult ones. The first and foremost task was to promote a culture of low-salt-and-sugar diet, which would see the public gradually change from a high-salt-and-sugar diet to a relatively healthier one. Such a change would generate the demand for low-salt-and-sugar food and stimulate proactive response from the food trade. In addition to the existing Nutrition Labelling Scheme for prepackaged food, the Administration and CRSS hoped to encourage trade operators to provide more low-salt and low-sugar food products and to assist consumers to easily identify such products through the promotion of the "Salt/Sugar" Label

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Scheme for Prepackaged Food Products. The Administration and CRSS would review the effectiveness of the Scheme at a later stage to see whether there was room for improvement. The Administration would provide a written response to Dr Helena WONG's question regarding the traffic-light food labelling system.

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40. Noting from data collected from the dietary studies conducted by CFS that about 32% of total sugar intake was from non-alcoholic beverages, Mr Jeremy TAM opined that CRSS should promote less consumption of drinks with a high sugar content. He enquired about the estimated number of prepackaged drinks available in the local market that were in compliance with the definitions of "low sugar" or "no sugar" under the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations and were allowed to display corresponding labels on the products under the "Salt/Sugar" Label Scheme for Prepackaged Food Products. DSFH(F)2 responded that according to available information, there were about 200 prepackaged food products (including drinks) available in the local market that were in compliance with the definitions of "low salt", "no salt", "low sugar" and "no sugar" under the Food and Drugs (Composition and Labelling) Regulations. The Administration would provide after the meeting supplementary information as requested by Mr TAM.

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Other measures to reduce salt and sugar

41. Dr Helena WONG suggested that consideration should be given to enacting legislation to regulate the salt and sugar contents in food in order to better safeguard public health. Ms Tanya CHAN asked whether the Administration would make reference to experience of overseas jurisdictions (e.g. France and Hungary) and consider imposing a "sugar tax" on food manufacturers/importers according to the volume of the sugar-sweetened food/drinks they produced or imported.

42. The Chairman held the view that the Administration should promote in Hong Kong a healthy dietary culture through promotion and publicity instead of resorting to legislative means. He suggested that the Administration should conduct studies to collect updated information on the intake of salt and sugar by the local population and the impact of those levels on public health to facilitate the formulation of effective strategies for reducing salt and sugar in food.

43. In response, USFH and DSFH(F)2 stressed that the Administration and CRSS considered that the first and foremost task was to strengthen publicity and education work to promote less consumption of food that was high in salt and sugar contents. The Administration would continue to make

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reference to relevant measures and experience relating to reduction of salt and sugar in food in other places, including the implementation of "sugar tax", and would give full and thorough consideration to the local situation in mapping out concrete measures suitable for Hong Kong. If healthy eating habits had been built up among local people, it might not be necessary to regulate salt and sugar contents in food by legislative means.

VI. Progress report on the implementation of the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)263/17-18(07) and (08))

44. At the invitation of the Chairman, USFH briefed members on the implementation progress of the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund ("SFDF"), as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)263/17-18(07)). Members noted the background brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat on the subject (LC Paper No. CB(2)263/17-18(08)).

Management of SFDF

45. Ms Claudia MO noted that since the establishment of the \$500 million SFDF in 2014, only a total commitment of about \$41 million had been approved upon the recommendation of the SFDF Advisory Committee. She was concerned whether the Administration had injected into SFDF funding more than needed. She also wondered whether the assessment criteria for SFDF were too stringent, thereby discouraging potential applicants from making applications.

46. Assistant Director (Fisheries), Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AD(F)/AFCD") responded that SFDF was introduced and open for applications in mid-2014. So far, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department ("AFCD") had received more than 20 applications; and as at end-October 2017, a total of eight applications had been approved upon the recommendation of the SFDF Advisory Committee. Two vetting committees overseen by the SFDF Advisory Committee had been formed to consider and vet funding applications against a set of assessment criteria. The major consideration was whether the proposed projects could contribute to fostering the sustainable development and enhancing the overall competitiveness of the fisheries industry, with such initiatives bringing benefits to the operations of the local fisheries community as a whole. It was noteworthy that some funded projects had already shown encouraging preliminary results. Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health (Food) 3 ("PASFH(F)3") supplemented that members of the SFDF Advisory Committee included representatives from the fisheries industry. Its members would ensure that public fund was put to good use.

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47. The Chairman declared that he was a member of the SFDF Advisory Committee. He advised that the SFDF Advisory Committee had taken much longer time to process and vet some applications, as members of the SFDF Advisory Committee had divergent views on the prospect of success of individual projects which involved the development of new technology and practices.

48. Ms Claudia MO sought details on the project approved and awarded with the highest amount of funding (i.e. \$10.5 million). AD(F)/AFCD advised that the project "Promotion and Support Scheme on Organic Certification for the Organic Aquaculture in Hong Kong" was proposed by Hong Kong Organic Resource Centre Certification Limited, an entity established by a local university. The project provided assistance to fish farmers in obtaining organic accreditation, organized activities to enhance public understanding of organic aquaculture and promoted the development of a high-end market for organic aquaculture products.

49. Noting that "Mariculture Using Enclosure Net Cages" and "Depurated Oyster Project Proposal" were commercial projects, the Deputy Chairman expressed concern that these two projects might only benefit the project owners, instead of the local fisheries industry as a whole. He enquired about the reasons why other applications were rejected and the nature of the projects involved.

50. In response, AD(F)/AFCD and PASFH(F)3 made the following points:

- (a) the two commercial projects approved and funded by SFDF were initiated by companies established by local fishermen. The projects involved commercial elements and were funded on a dollar-for-dollar matching basis, with the Government's total contribution capped at the applicant's total contribution. If profits were realized from these projects in the future, the Government's share of funding contribution would be recouped;
- (b) AFCD had declined 11 applications. One of the reasons was that some of those project proposals were either in repetition of or similar to the projects already approved; and
- (c) depending on the nature of individual projects, new technology and practices developed in funded projects would have to be shared within the fisheries industry in an open, transparent and non-exclusive manner, and the final report of all projects would be made available for public reference to ensure that the industry as a whole could benefit from the project outcome. Citing the

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project "Mariculture Using Enclosure Net Cages" as an example, the project owner was expected to transfer the knowhow acquired to the mariculture sector by organizing on-site visits to the fish farm and seminars for other local fishermen and fish farmers to share with them the valuable experience and technique in culturing the white flower croaker as well as the successful operation of a fisheries company.

51. The Chairman opined that SFDF had not been put to the optimal use and there was room for improvement in the management of SFDF. In his view, the Administration should approve and fund a few more projects despite the similarity in nature of some of the projects. He and Mr SHIU Ka-fai said that some fishermen and fishermen organizations still encountered difficulties in preparing and filing applications for SFDF. They called on the Administration to streamline the application procedures and consider providing additional resources and manpower to assist fishermen and fisheries organizations during the application process. PASFH(F)3 responded that for optimal usage of resources, SFDF would not fund projects of similar nature but the SFDF Advisory Committee would consider the merits of individual application having regard to the application's unique focus and target.

52. Mr Tommy CHEUNG and Dr Helena WONG expressed concern whether the two funded projects relating to the development of fisheries-related eco-tourism and new recreational fisheries would be conducive to the sustainable development of the local fisheries industry. The Deputy Chairman opined that those two projects sought to promote the tourism industry rather than the fisheries industry.

53. AD(F)/AFCD responded that the two funded projects as referred to by members assisted fishermen in developing fisheries-related eco-tourism business by equipping them with the necessary knowledge and skills as well as practical experience in operating eco-tours. Aside from providing training to fishermen, the projects also involved the planning and design of new eco-tour routes incorporating fisheries culture and conservation elements and formulation of publicity plan of the tours. So far, some 110 fishermen trained under the two projects had been participating in the operation of eco-tours. The experience of these fishermen could set an example for other fishermen who were interested in switching to eco-tourism or recreational fisheries. With more fishermen practicing in these recreational fisheries operations, local fishing efforts could be reduced and marine resources could be restored in the long run.

Sustainable development of the fisheries industry

54. Mr Tommy CHEUNG considered that apart from setting up SFDF, the Government should explore complementary policy measures to facilitate the sustainable development of the fisheries industry. In his view, the policies of other bureaux were not compatible with the existing agriculture and fisheries policy of the Government. The Chairman echoed Mr CHEUNG's view and sought clarification as to whether SFDF was intended to be a measure to compensate fishermen affected by reclamation projects or the trawl ban.

55. PASFH(F)3 advised that the Government had implemented other support measures to create a conducive environment to complement SFDF, with a view to helping the industry develop towards high-value operations. These measures included (a) providing free and tailor-made training courses and seminars to assist fishermen in developing sustainable fisheries and related operations, (b) implementing a phytoplankton monitoring programme to enable early detection of the formation of red tides and issuing timely warnings and (c) conducting adaptive studies on fish husbandary practices and new culture species and transferring the technology and skills to fish farmers. PASFH(F)3 further advised that to mitigate the impact of marine works projects on fishermen, the Government had put in place a mechanism to provide compensation to affected fishermen resulting in a permanent or temporary loss of fishing grounds.

56. Noting that some overseas jurisdictions provided various forms of support to assist their fishermen to catch fish in the high seas to pursue increase in productivity, Mr SHIU Ka-fai urged the Administration to follow suit and to play a more active role to provide assistance to local fishermen to catch fish in the high seas. He also suggested that the Administration should make use of SFDF to help local fishermen upgrade their fishing fleet. USFH noted the suggestions of Mr SHIU.

57. Dr Helena WONG considered that the Administration should set long-term goals for the sustainable development of the fisheries industry, such as adopting large-scale mariculture operations in the deep waters offshore. She enquired whether the Administration had set any self-sufficiency target (e.g. in terms of market share in the supply of fish produce or proportion of the fish produce traded in Hong Kong) for the local fisheries industry, and whether the Administration had assessed the contribution of SFDF in the sustainable development of the local fisheries industry.

58. AD(F)/AFCD responded that the industry's future lied in modernizing their operations to enhance efficiency and switching to high value-added

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operations or products in order to attain a sustainable mode of development. Taking into account the global depletion of fishing resources, the Administration had implemented various measures to help fishermen switch from capture fisheries to aquaculture fisheries. Six projects funded by SFDF sought to promote the development of aquaculture. Regarding Dr WONG's suggestion on exploring mariculture opportunities in deep waters offshore, AD(F)/AFCD advised that to provide more room for the development of the mariculture industry, AFCD had commissioned a consultancy study on identifying potential sites for designating as new fish culture zones for the long-term development of the mariculture sector. The Chairman drew members' attention that issues relating to mariculture development had been included in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion.

VII. Any other business

Proposed continuation of work of the Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Animal Rights

(LC Paper No. CB(2)279/17-18)

59. The Chairman sought members' views on the proposed continuation of work of the Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Animal Rights for a period of 12 months, details of the justifications for which were set out in the paper prepared by the LegCo Secretariat (LC Paper No. CB(2)279/17-18). Members agreed to the proposal.

Proposed overseas duty visit by the Panel

(LC Paper No. CB(2)325/17-18(01))

60. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Tommy CHEUNG briefed members on the proposal to conduct an overseas duty visit. He said that as Brazil was a major supplier of frozen and chilled meat and poultry meat to Hong Kong, the Panel should consider conducting a visit to Brazil to gain first-hand information about the Brazilian Government's safety and quality control over frozen and chilled meat and poultry meat for export purposes. The Panel could take the opportunity to understand the surveillance and control measures adopted by the Brazilian authorities to ensure food safety in the wake of the incident occurred in March 2017 concerning the quality of frozen and chilled meat and poultry meat exported to other countries. Mr CHEUNG suggested that the Panel might meet with relevant government authorities, meat exporters and relevant trade associations in Brazil, and visit meat plants authorized to export meat products to the international market to observe the production and supply chain of frozen and chilled meat and poultry meat at the export level.

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61. Members raised no objection to Mr Tommy CHEUNG's and Mr CHAN Han-pan's proposal for the Panel to conduct an overseas duty visit to Brazil. The Chairman directed the Clerk to work out the details of the proposed duty visit for members' further consideration, including setting out the proposed scope and objectives as well as timing of the visit and drawing up a tentative visit programme. Members' views on the duty visit proposal and the permission of the House Committee for the Panel to conduct the visit would then be sought.

62. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:15 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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