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Advisory Council on the Environment
Resolution on Municipal Solid Waste Charging

At its meeting on 8 March 2021, the Advisory Council on the Environment (the Council) had a discussion on the invitation by the Legislative Council (LegCo) for written submissions from the public on the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018 (the Bill). The Council unanimously passed the following resolution.

Resolution

The Council has acknowledged the following since the Government introduced the Bill into the LegCo in November 2018:

- (i) the former Bills Committee had invited deputations and written submissions from the public in January 2019, and the Council passed a resolution in support of the Bill;
- (ii) the former Bills Committee had detailed and in-depth discussion on the Bill at numerous meetings held; and
- (iii) a new Bills Committee was formed by the LegCo in October 2020 to study the Bill.

2. As mentioned in the *Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035* announced by the Environment Bureau on 8 February 2021, Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) charging is the cornerstone for promoting waste reduction and recycling. The Council concurs with this, and urges the LegCo again to pass the Bill as soon as practicable so as to drive behavioral and cultural changes among members of the public with a view to practising waste reduction at source and recycling proactively. In addition, the Council also hopes that government departments would work with stakeholders and provide appropriate support to the industry, with a view to facilitating circular economy through the formulation and implementation of policies and legislations, and achieving the goal of “Zero Landfill”. This would also contribute to decarbonisation in order to mitigate climate change.

3. The Council welcomes the Government's ongoing and stepped-up efforts in undertaking various waste reduction and recycling complementary measures since its introduction of the Bill into the LegCo, such as upgrading and improving the scale of existing community recycling network, as well as launching various pilot schemes of collection service on recyclables. The Council concurs that these measures could complement the implementation of MSW charging in future. The Council supports the Government to continue to expand the community recycling network and take forward other waste reduction and recycling initiatives, with a view to facilitating and encouraging members of the public to practice waste reduction and recycling further in their daily lives.

4. The Council takes note and understands the potential challenges involved in the implementation of MSW charging. Considering that waste reduction is a shared responsibility of the entire community and a preparatory period will be put in place after the passage of the Bill to facilitate the community to get prepared, the Council opines that the Government should step up publicity and public education before the Bill takes effect in order to facilitate the members of the public to understand the importance of MSW charging in waste reduction and recycling and the requirements of the charging mechanism. The Government should continue to combat illegal disposal of waste so as to pave the way for effective implementation of MSW charging in future.

5. The Council urges all parties, including the Government and the LegCo, to work together and facilitate the early passage of the Bill. After the passage of the Bill, the Government should implement MSW charging at an opportune time having regard to factors such as the overall economic situation of the society, the preparedness of stakeholders, etc.
