

**Speaking Note for Secretary for Food and Health  
at the Special Meeting of the Finance Committee  
on 15 April 2021**

<b>Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene</b>
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**Chairman and Honourable Members,**

The Food and Health Bureau is committed to ensuring food safety and environmental hygiene as well as promoting the sustainable development of the local agriculture and fisheries industry.

2. In the 2021-22 Estimates, about \$10.78 billion is earmarked for recurrent expenditure in the policy portfolio of “Environment and Food”, representing an increase of about \$470 million (4.6%) over the previous year and accounting for 2.1% of recurrent government expenditure.

**Public Markets**

3. The new public market projects have made good progress in the past year. The Skylight Market of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) in Tin Shui Wai was commissioned at the end of last year. We conducted local consultations on the sites for the new public markets in Tseung Kwan O and the Kwu Tung North New Development Area, and preliminary planning is now under way. Furthermore, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council (LegCo) has recently approved funding

of about \$250 million for the overhaul of Aberdeen Market, the pioneering project of the Market Modernisation Programme (MMP). The works are scheduled to commence in the third quarter of this year. We will continue to take forward the new public market projects and expedite the implementation of the MMP.

### **Environmental Hygiene and Pest Control**

4. In order to maintain environmental hygiene and fight against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) epidemic, FEHD has substantially increased the resources for street cleansing work and will make continuous efforts to strengthen the cleansing of facilities including public markets, public toilets and refuse collection points etc. and step up enforcement actions against public cleanliness offences such as littering. In 2021-22, FEHD's estimated expenditure on environmental hygiene and related services is about \$5.9 billion.

5. As for rodent control, various departments will carry out targeted rodent prevention, cleansing and disinfestation work in the venues under their purview. To strengthen interdepartmental coordination, FEHD and the Housing Department have set up a joint working group to formulate and implement more effective rodent control measures and provide relevant facilities in public housing estates. This year, the Housing Authority will select around 80 priority public housing estates for implementing more intensive rodent control measures and conducting promotional and education work. Moreover, FEHD has earmarked about \$260 million for implementing rodent control measures. It will enhance the effectiveness of surveillance, prevention and disinfestation work by various measures including deploying useful tools such as thermal camera monitoring systems at suitable locations,

increasing the number of rodent survey locations and enhancing the transparency of the Rodent Infestation Rate.

### **Food Safety**

6. In regard to food safety, the Centre for Food and Safety (CFS) of FEHD is rolling out new information technology systems to provide various online services for the industry and enhance CFS's capability in risk assessment, food safety control and management of food safety incidents. The related work is expected to be completed by early 2024. Furthermore, the public consultation on strengthening regulation of harmful substances in food has ended. We will update the relevant Panel on the outcome of the consultation and table the amendment regulation before LegCo later. The amendment regulation is expected to come into force by the end of 2023.

### **Animal Welfare**

7. To further safeguard animal welfare, the Government has proposed to amend the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Ordinance (Cap. 169) by introducing a positive "duty of care" on persons responsible for animals, as well as enhancing the provisions of preventing animal cruelty and enforcement powers. The amendments include the introduction of an indictable offence and raising the penalties. We are pressing ahead with the drafting of the bill so as to introduce it to the LegCo as soon as possible.

### **New Agriculture Policy**

8. On agriculture, the works of the Agri-Park Phase 1 have commenced, and are expected to be completed in stages from late 2021 to 2023. The Agri-Park will be managed by the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) on the advice of the Agricultural Park Advisory Committee, which is expected to commence operation in mid-2021. In addition, the Sustainable Agricultural Development Fund (SADF) has approved direct funding of about \$110 million for farmers to acquire farming equipment.

### **Fisheries Development**

9. As for fisheries, the Sustainable Fisheries Development Fund (SFDF) has approved over \$170 million. The funded projects are to support aquaculture and capture fisheries, and subsidise the trade to participate in the development of deep-sea mariculture in the Greater Bay Area over the next few years so as to help Hong Kong mobile fishermen switch to sustainable aquaculture.

10. The steel truss mariculture demonstration farm established by AFCD came into operation at the end of 2020 as a training platform for the trade. Besides, to promote the development of aquaculture, we issued eight new marine fish culture licences in mid-2020 and are currently conducting environmental impact assessments for designating new fish culture zones.

11. Chairman, my colleagues and I are happy to answer questions from Members.