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Waste Management and Reduction Initiatives

PURPOSE

This paper reports the waste management and reduction initiatives launched by the Government.

BACKGROUND

2. The Government announced the “Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035” in February 2021, advocating the vision of “Waste Reduction • Resources Circulation • Zero Landfill”. It sets the medium-term target to gradually reduce the per capita municipal solid waste (MSW) disposal rate by 40-45% and raise the recovery rate to about 55%. One major measure is to implement MSW charging, which sits at the centre of the overall waste reduction strategy of the Government. Premised on the “polluter pays” principle, it aims to make use of financial disincentives to encourage the public to treasure resources, reduce waste at source and practise clean recycling with a view to reducing the amount of waste disposed of at the landfills.

3. MSW charging and waste reduction and recycling initiatives complement with each other. We envisage that members of the public will be incentivised to practise waste reduction and recycling more proactively with the implementation of MSW charging so as to minimise the charges payable. Therefore, apart from actively taking forward the preparatory work for MSW charging, we have also adopted a multi-pronged approach to implement a series of complementary waste reduction and recycling initiatives, such as launching producer responsibility schemes (PRS) for different products, providing central collection service for certain types of waste and expanding the community recycling network.

PREPARATORY WORK FOR MSW CHARGING

4. The Amendment Bill to implement MSW charging has been passed by the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 26 August 2021. We are actively taking forward relevant preparatory work, including the establishment of a manufacturing, inventory and distribution system and a retail network for the supply of designated bags (DBs) and designated labels (DLs); communication with various stakeholders (such as property management companies, frontline cleansing workers, waste collectors, etc.) to formulate relevant guidelines and provide support to them; as well as launching extensive public education and publicity campaigns on waste reduction and recycling, so as to enable the Government, various stakeholders and the public to prepare for the implementation of MSW charging by end this year.

Establishment of the Manufacturing, Inventory and Distribution System of DBs and DLs

5. In order to ensure a stable and sufficient supply of DBs and DLs in the market for the public to purchase at ease, we are establishing a comprehensive “Manufacturing, Inventory and Distribution System”, which includes DBs manufacturing contracts, DLs manufacturing contracts and logistics coordination service contract (logistics contract). With regards to the DBs manufacturing contracts, we conducted an open tender exercise for the five contracts in June 2022. A total of 26 tenders were received by the closing date. However, the tender prices of all conforming tenders that can fully comply with the technical requirements are much higher than expected¹. In order to utilise public financial resources prudently, we have decided to cancel this tender exercise and re-examine the specifications of DBs and the terms of tender documents, with a view to reducing costs for the production of DBs.

6. We have adopted the following measures so as to confine the tender price to the original estimate, while not impairing the quality of DBs:

- (i) Allowing the production process be conducted outside the territory of Hong Kong;
- (ii) Changing the thickness and material requirements of DBs for reducing the amount of material consumption and cost;

¹ According to our understanding from the tenderers, the plastic material cost accounts for more than one half of the tender price. When marking the tender price, the tenderers had made reference to the trend of plastic price in the past two years (the plastic price had increased by over twofold since 2020, hovered at high level until 2022, and then receded mildly) so as to secure their profit. Their pricing had also taken into account other factors, such as the risks of further increase in plastic price, inflation and other uncertainties in the five-year contract period, as a result, the tender prices were higher than expected.

- (iii) Shortening the contract period (from the original 5 years to 3 years) to reduce the contractors' risks associated with long-term operation (such as price fluctuations for raw materials, inflation and other uncertain factors etc.); and
- (iv) Increasing the price ratio in tender assessment and the number of contracts (from the original 5 contracts to 9 contracts) to promote competition.

7. Since the production process of DBs can be conducted outside the territory of Hong Kong, other than strengthening the monitoring of DBs production and transportation processes, we have adopted stringent measures² to combat and prevent counterfeit products from entering the market.

8. We have consulted the manufacturers who have expressed interests in bidding the tender on the practicability of the above measures and received positive responses. We have revised the tender terms based on the proposals above and we expect that these measures can effectively confine the tender price to the original estimate. The tender for the DBs contracts was re-invited in March 2023. We have also invited tenders for the logistics contract and the DLs contracts in March and May 2023 respectively. We expect to award all contracts by July 2023, with a view to commencing the production of DBs and DLs in the third quarter, in preparation for the implementation of the MSW charging by end this year.

Retail Network for DBs and DLs

9. For the sales of DBs and DLs, we will establish a retail network comprising of few thousands of retail outlets covering supermarkets, convenience stores, pharmacies, houseware stores and online platforms etc. To further expand the retail network, we are exploring with property management companies (PMCs) and Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) the feasibility of selling DBs and DLs at the housing estates³ under their management.

10. Upon passage of the Amendment Bill, we have conducted more than 40 physical or online briefings for major retail chains, on-line retailers, the Hong Kong General Chamber of Pharmacy Limited and its members. We have received

² Including (i) setting up freight tracking system for the cross-border transportation of DBs to obtain real-time shipment information; (ii) changing the combination of anti-counterfeit features regularly to increase the production cost of counterfeit products; and (iii) only permit authorised retailers to sell DBs and DLs, and explicitly publicise the "authentic goods" sales channels to the public. We will also work with relevant law enforcement departments to closely monitor the sales of DBs and DLs through different means, and take enforcement actions against infringement under the Trade Descriptions Ordinance or the Copyright Ordinance.

³ Under section 20U(2) of the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Ordinance 2021, PMCs, which in the course of businesses, provide or arrange for provision of the waste collection services, are permitted to sell to their residents (i.e. users of the services) the DBs/DLs at the prices prescribed by the legislation.

Expression of Interest returns from 33 retail chains and seven on-line retailers comprising around 3 200 outlets and 18 on-line platforms. In addition, five distributors who are currently distributing garbage bags and cleaning products have also indicated that they could assist in the nomination of and providing support to more than 1 000 small stores, including small-to-medium sized pharmacies, for the provision of sales services of DBs and DLs.

11. We have been following up with the interested retail chains, on-line retailers, pharmacies and wholesalers to finalise the operational arrangements with them individually for the subsequent drafting of the terms and conditions of the authorisation agreement.

12. To further promote waste reduction and reuse of resources, we have invited the retail sector to actively consider the sales of DBs in lieu of the plastic shopping bags currently sold, so as to achieve the effect of “one bag for dual-use”. Among the 33 major retail chains which responded to us, 32 retail chains have showed support to the proposal. Apart from retail chains, we will also promote the idea of “one bag for dual-use” to the small-to-medium sized stores and to garner their support.

Smart Inventory Management (SIM) System

13. In order to achieve more effective management of the manufacturing, inventory, distribution and sales of DBs and DLs, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) awarded a contract to the information technology contractor in September 2022 to develop the SIM System and relevant mobile application. The SIM System will help monitor the inventory of the DBs and DLs and the delivery progress to retail outlets. Retailers can also place orders, monitor inventory levels and observe their monthly sales status conveniently through the SIM System. In addition, the SIM System-related mobile application will be equipped with a search function to facilitate the public to instantly locate nearby retail outlets of DBs and DLs and the corresponding stock status. Moreover, members of the public may make use of the mobile application, coupled with the global positioning system of their mobile phones, to take pictures in connection with suspected MSW charging non-compliant cases and immediately upload such cases to this platform, which will facilitate follow-up actions by law enforcement departments. We are now developing the system, with a view to conducting the SIM System connection and testing processes with manufacturers of DBs and DLs, logistics service provider and authorised retailers starting from the third quarter this year.

Enhancing Stakeholder Engagement

14. To facilitate different stakeholders to better understand the arrangements of MSW charging, EPD has continued to organise operational briefings and specialised trainings for stakeholders from various sectors. As of April 2023, we have conducted over 140 physical or online meetings and briefings, reaching out to about 6 200 stakeholders from various trade sectors to introduce to them the latest development of MSW charging and listen to their concerns.

15. We have been preparing Best Practice Guides (BPGs) jointly with working groups comprising stakeholders from property management, and environmental hygiene, recycling and security trades. A total of eight BPGs concerning the trades/sectors listed below have been uploaded to the EPD's thematic website on MSW charging (<https://www.mswcharging.gov.hk>) for the relevant stakeholders' reference in getting ready for the implementation of MSW charging:

- Residential Premises with Property Management Organisations;
- Private Waste Collector Trade;
- Rural Villages/Rural Areas;
- Catering Trade;
- Hotel Trade;
- General Commercial and Industrial Buildings (e.g. office buildings and multi-storey factory buildings for sale/letting);
- Shopping Malls/Wet Markets; and
- Single-occupier Premises (e.g. educational institutions, private hospitals and factories without any parts rented out to third parties).

16. At the same time, we have been arranging briefings and specialised trainings for frontline staff of the property management, environmental hygiene and other relevant trades so as to assist them to better understand the relevant legal requirements and BPGs, and provide recommendations for them to suitably adjust their frontline operational arrangements. The training programmes have been rolled out progressively since mid-May 2023. We are also collaborating with the Property Management Services Authority to organise continuing professional development courses related to MSW charging, so as to enhance the knowledge of the holders of the Property Management Practitioner Licence.

Trial Projects and Community Involvement Projects related to MSW charging

17. EPD has partnered with some 20 relevant government departments and organisations to launch trial projects on MSW charging in different sectors (including public rental housing (PRH) estates, rural villages, shopping malls, catering trade and government premises) since 2018, for participants to get first-hand experience of the quantity-based charging arrangements. In addition, since 2015, EPD has launched the "Waste Separation Projects to Pave the Path for MSW Charging" (Community Involvement Projects, CIPs) funded by the Environment and Conservation Fund. The project allows non-profit making organisations and bodies to try out MSW charging in different types of premises (including three-nil building⁴, commercial and industrial (C&I) premises, single-block buildings, public institutions, residential estates with PMCs, rural and other low-density residential buildings).

⁴ They refer to buildings without Owners' Committees or residents' organisation of any kind, and without PMCs.

18. EPD provides dummy DBs (dummy bags) of different capacities for participants of trial projects and CIPs to try out, and calculate a mock charge based on the capacities and quantities of dummy bags requested by participants. Various publicity and public education activities are also organised to enrich participants' understanding of the objectives of MSW charging and its implementation arrangements.

19. So far, the trial projects and CIPs have covered about 2 200 premises, including some 700 which are underway. Given the trial project and CIPs have already extensively covered all 18 districts in Hong Kong and different types of premises⁵ and also effectively achieved their objectives⁶, we will cease the distribution of dummy DBs as well as wrap up all trial projects and CIPs before the fourth quarter of 2023 to avoid unnecessary confusion to the public for using authentic DBs and dummy DBs upon the implementation of MSW charging.

20. We will continue to assist proactively all sectors of the community to get prepared for the implementation of MSW charging. The focus of our work will be shifted to promote the BPGs to the stakeholders of different sectors and provide training to relevant frontline staff to facilitate their better understanding of the legislative requirements and guidelines.

Public Education and Publicity

21. To prepare the public for the implementation of MSW charging, we will carry out extensive public education and publicity activities through the Environmental Campaign Committee. Under the theme of "Recycle More, Dump Less, Save More", the campaign will be carried out by phases starting from the second quarter of this year for a period of about 8 months.

22. Before the implementation of MSW charging, we will focus on promoting the culture of "Recycle More, Dump Less, Save More", in order to build up a foundation for cultivating the habit of waste reduction and recycling.

23. During the promotion period of MSW charging, the key publicity activities will be promoting the commencement date as well as the related information of MSW charging such as the charging mechanism, legislative requirements and the best practices for various sector, etc.

⁵ Including three-nil buildings, C&I premises (restaurants, offices, shopping malls, industrial buildings, shops), single-block buildings, public institutions (post-secondary schools, secondary/primary schools, government premises, social service units), PMCs (PRH estates, subsidised housing, private buildings), rural and other low-density residential buildings.

⁶ The questionnaire survey of the trial project and CIPs indicated that around 88% of the respondents acknowledged that the trial project could make them to have more understanding and concern about MSW charging and the "polluter-pays" principle.

24. Upon implementation of MSW charging, we will continue to promote the detailed arrangement of MSW charging, for example, the retail network of DBs and DLs, ways to comply with the legislation, successful cases on effective implementation of MSW charging, and encourage the public to continue practising waste reduction and recycling. We will organise a variety of publicity activities including displaying advertisements at public transport vehicles and stations; producing TV, radio programs and social media clips; collaborating with influencers or celebrities for promotion; and producing promotional materials for different target groups such as foreign domestic helpers, the elderly and residents of three-nil buildings etc.

25. To complement the publicity activities, the Green Outreach in EPD will provide outreaching support to the community on waste reduction and recycling initiatives, and remind the public to observe the relevant regulations. Through launching promotion activities and providing on-site demonstrations, the Green Outreach will coach the public and frontline property management and cleaning workers on the legal compliance requirements on MSW charging.

CONTINUOUS WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING EFFORTS

Producer Responsibility Schemes (PRSs)

26. PRS is one of the key policy tools in the waste management strategy in Hong Kong. Based on the principle of “polluter-pays” and the concept of “eco-responsibility”, the PRS requires relevant stakeholders, including manufacturers, importers, wholesalers, retailers and consumers to share the responsibility for the collection, recycling, treatment and disposal of end-of-life products with a view to avoiding and reducing the environmental impacts caused by such products.

27. The Product Eco-responsibility Ordinance (Cap. 603) (PERO) was enacted in July 2008 to provide a legal framework for PRSs and other measures to minimise the environmental impact of certain types of products. Since then, we have progressively implemented or are planning to implement PRSs for different products.

PRS on Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WPRS)

28. Since the full implementation of WPRS in 2018, more than 100 000 tonnes of regulated electrical equipment (REE, namely air-conditioners, refrigerators, washing machines, televisions, computers, printers, scanners and monitors) have been processed at the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Treatment and Recycling Facility (WEEE•PARK). Taking into account factors including the actual implementation of WPRS, REE’s sales figures and recycling/landfill disposal situation, and the development of relevant recycling market and technology, EPD proposes to expand the coverage of the existing REE items (i.e. raising the cap of rated storage volume of refrigerators from 500 to 900 litres, raising

the cap of the rated washing capacity of washing machines from ten to 15kg, and adding stand-alone tumble dryers and dehumidifiers) and to streamline the operation of the WPRS by removing the requirements in relation to the provision of recycling labels in the distribution of REE. We submitted the relevant legislative proposals to the LegCo on 15 March 2023. Subject to the passage of the relevant legislative amendments, we expect the enhanced WPRS to be implemented in 2024.

PRS on Glass Beverage Containers (GPRS)

29. Since the passage of the Promotion of Recycling and Proper Disposal (Product Container) (Amendment) Ordinance 2016, EPD has been making arrangements to implement the GPRS progressively, including the appointment of glass management contractors since 2017/2018 to provide regional collection and treatment services for waste glass containers across the territory and the drafting of the relevant subsidiary legislation to provide for the operational details of the GPRS. The relevant subsidiary legislation was passed by the LegCo on 3 November 2022. The GPRS is fully implemented on 1 May 2023 with about 900 suppliers of glass-bottled beverages (including manufacturers and importers) registered with EPD as at the end of April. EPD has granted levy exemptions to two registered suppliers who have established their own reuse arrangements (collection, cleaning and rebottling) of glass beverage containers. As at end of March 2023, about 4 600 glass container collection points have been set up in Hong Kong and more than 90 000 tonnes of waste glass containers have been collected for proper treatment.

PRS on Plastic Beverage Containers and Beverage Cartons

30. The Government conducted a public consultation from February to May 2021 on the introduction of a PRS on Plastic Beverage Containers (PPRS). The community responded positively to the proposal in general. Having considered the views received, the experience in other places and the development of the local recycling market, the Government will adopt a “market-based model” for implementation of the PPRS, and will include beverage cartons in the scheme, which in turn will help enhance the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of the recycling arrangement. We will finalise the regulatory framework and the operational details of the scheme as soon as possible and start drafting the relevant legislative proposals with a view to introducing the relevant bill into the LegCo for scrutiny in 2023.

31. To pave the way for the implementation of the PPRS, EPD launched a pilot scheme with 60 reverse vending machines (RVMs) in the first quarter of 2021 to assess the application of RVMs for recovering plastic beverage containers in Hong Kong. The pilot scheme has further expanded in the second quarter of 2022, with the number of RVMs increased to 120. By the end of April 2023, over 53 million plastic beverage containers have been recovered under the pilot scheme.

PRS on Retired EV Batteries

32. The Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles has set out the policy direction of the introduction of a producer responsibility scheme to further ensure the proper collection and handling of retired EV batteries. We are liaising with the trade and relevant stakeholders and have started conducting business impact assessments, and will conduct the consultation this year. The aim is to introduce a bill within 2024.

Plastic Shopping Bag (PSB) Charging Scheme

33. The PSB Charging Scheme was fully implemented in 2015. The enhanced Scheme was implemented on 31 December 2022, which increased the minimum charging level for each PSB from 50 cents to \$ 1, and tightened the scope exemptions (including the removal of exemptions for PSBs carrying frozen/chilled foodstuff and foodstuff in non-air tight packaging). To facilitate the understanding of the enhanced Scheme by the retail trade and general public, EPD has launched a series of publicity, including briefings for the trade, a brand new set of TV and radio announcements in the public interest, posters, promotional leaflets, advertisements on public transport, online advertisements, etc. The thematic website of the PSB Charging Scheme and the Practical Guideline for reference by the trade and the citizens have also been updated.

34. The enhanced PSB Charging Scheme has been running smoothly in general since its implementation. According to the recent inspections by EPD to 650 supermarkets or food stores in the 18 districts of Hong Kong in February 2023, it was observed that over 90 per cent of the stores inspected have posted posters to remind customers of the measures under the enhanced Scheme, and over 99 per cent of the stores no longer provide flat-top bags at the places where they sell fruits and vegetables or chilled/frozen foodstuff items for customers to take. For the remaining few stores that allow customers to pick up flat-top bags, most of them have reminders on the charge of the flat-top bag and circumstances exempted from the charge.

35. According to the information EPD obtained from major retail groups (including major supermarket chains and convenience stores) in Hong Kong, the overall distribution of PSBs (excluding flat-top bags) dropped by more than 60% from January to February this year compared to the same period last year, and the distribution of flat-top bags by major supermarket chains even dropped by more than 80%. EPD will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the enhancement measures to assess their effectiveness.

Formulation of PRSs More Effectively

36. The existing PERO stipulates the detailed provisions for the PRS of each type of product. In order to introduce new PRSs in a more effective way, we are reviewing how to amend the PERO to simplify the legislative process. For

example, the general operational arrangement of PRSs and the responsibilities of relevant stakeholders can be stipulated in the main Ordinance, while the operational details applicable to individual products can be prescribed in subsidiary legislation or other instruments. Besides, with reference to the experience in other places, we are inclined to implement new PRSs in the future based on a “market-based model”, and relevant regulatory requirements will be introduced for individual products taking into account their recycling operation. We will review various types of products from time to time to determine the priority of implementing PRS for them. Products under review include electric vehicle batteries, vehicle tyres and lead-acid batteries.

Central Collection Services for Food Waste, Waste Plastics and Waste Paper

Food Waste Collection

37. EPD expanded the scale of the Pilot Scheme on Food Waste Collection (Pilot Scheme) in 2021 by rolling out four two-year service contracts in phases, covering relatively clustered premises in different districts in Hong Kong, which generate larger quantities of food waste with less impurities, including public premises (such as shopping centres of PRH estates, cooked food centres and public markets, catering facilities of social service organisations, canteens in tertiary institutions and hospitals) and commercial and industrial premises (such as food factories, hotels, large shopping malls, airline caterers). The first contract covering Hong Kong Island & Islands District and the second contract covering Kowloon (including Tsuen Wan, Kwai Tsing and Tseung Kwan O) commenced service in September 2021 and February 2022 respectively. The remaining two contracts serving the New Territories East and New Territories West have also commenced service in April this year. The quantity of food waste collected through different channels in Hong Kong is increasing progressively with an average daily collection quantity exceeding 150 tonnes.

Stepping up Food Waste Collection at PRH Estates

38. EPD, in collaboration with the Housing Department and the Hong Kong Housing Society, launched an 18-month food waste collection trial scheme in PRH estates in October 2022. The trial scheme uses smart recycling bins equipped with overflow prevention and odour abatement devices to collect food waste, so as to maintain environmental hygiene. GREEN\$ points are provided to encourage the participation of residents in food waste recycling. The first phase of the trial scheme covers 34 blocks of five PRH estates. The scheme will be expanded to 100 blocks of PRH estates, covering about 150 000 residents, in 2023-24. As of April 2023, a total of about 400 tonnes of food waste has been collected under the scheme.

Collection of Waste Plastics and Waste Paper

39. On waste plastics, EPD has extended the Plastic Recycling Pilot Scheme from three to nine districts⁷ progressively since late March 2022 to collect all types of non-commercial and non-industrial plastics for proper handling and recycling. The service covers about half of the population in Hong Kong and the total collection amount is expected to reach 5 000 tonnes per year. As for the implementation of the waste paper collection and recycling services, the recovery quantity of waste paper increased in 2021 and remained generally stable since 2022, with a monthly average of about 49 000 tonnes collected. In addition, the modern pulping facility in EcoPark is expected to commence operation in 2025 and, by then, there will be more diversified recycling outlets for local waste paper.

Community Recycling Network (CRN)

40. To complement the implementation of MSW charging, EPD continues to expand the CRN, namely GREEN@COMMUNITY, over the territory so as to strengthen recycling facilities at community level and provide proper outlets for recyclables of low commercial values. The GREEN@COMMUNITY currently consists of facilities at three levels: (i) 11 Recycling Stations occupying larger areas to instill green living education and provide recycling support at district level; (ii) 31 Recycling Stores mostly located near clusters of single-block buildings (including three-nil buildings) to provide recycling support for residential buildings that are lack of necessary capability to set up recycling facilities; and (iii) over 120 Recycling Spots operating weekly in the form of kerb-side collection booths at fixed locations to enhance the coverage of community recycling services. All GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities receive at least eight common types of recyclables, including plastics, paper, metals, glass containers, small electrical appliances, regulated electrical equipment, fluorescent lamps and tubes, and rechargeable batteries, etc. which will be delivered to downstream recyclers for proper processing.

41. Upon the commencement of service of 10 new Recycling Stores in early 2022, the service coverage of the GREEN@COMMUNITY for single-block buildings (including three-nil buildings) has been increased to 80%. In 2022, the GREEN@COMMUNITY attracted about 5.2 million visitors to participate in clean recycling, collected around 20 300 tonnes of recyclables, and organised about 2 000 environmental education activities. The average monthly quantity of recyclables collected by Recycling Stores had been increased by more than seven times of that collected by the last generation Community Recycling Centres funded by the Environment and Conservation Fund.

⁷ The nine districts covered by Plastic Recycling Pilot Scheme are Eastern District, Kwun Tong, Sha Tin, Central and Western District, Sham Shui Po, Tsuen Wan, Sai Kung, Tai Po and Tuen Mun.

42. EPD has also been enhancing the community recycling services and efficiency through application of technology. We launched a Pilot Programme on Smart Recycling Systems (the Pilot Programme) in late 2020 to test smart recycling systems for local application and assess their effectiveness. We have commenced a new phase of trial since mid 2022, which will cover about 100 application points progressively by the second quarter of 2023, including outlets of GREEN@COMMUNITY, major housing estates, shopping centres, rural villages, government premises, universities, etc. Taking the opportunity of the Pilot Programme, EPD rolled out in November 2020 the GREEN\$ Electronic Participation Incentive Scheme (ePIS) and launched a mobile application in January 2022 to encourage members of the public to participate in clean recycling. GREEN\$ points can be earned when they carry out recycling at the GREEN@COMMUNITY facilities as well as smart recycling bins which are now being gradually put in service at around 70 locations including Recycling Stations, public and private housing estates, rural villages, universities, shopping malls, etc. The GREEN\$ ePIS has now built up to about 260 000 membership accounts since its commencement of operation and over half of the recyclables collected by the GREEN@COMMUNITY were collected through the GREEN\$ ePIS.

One-stop Reliable Recycling Service GREEN COLLECT

43. To tie in with the progressive expansion of the coverage of the pilot scheme to collect and recycling plastic the Plastic Recycling Pilot Scheme from three districts to nine districts mentioned in paragraph 39 above, EPD has enhanced recycling support to those housing estates in those nine districts that have participated in the Programme on Source Separation of Domestic Waste by rolling out a new one-stop reliable recycling service, GREEN COLLECT, in mid July 2022. Under GREEN COLLECT, GREEN@COMMUNITY's operators and EPD's other recycling service contractors will collect recyclables with low market values, including plastics, glass bottles, rechargeable batteries, fluorescent lamps and tubes, small electrical appliances and REE, from the participating estates to ensure the recyclables collected will be properly handled and recycled. This initiative could help boost the public's confidence in practising clean recycling. At present, around 95% major⁸ private housing estates and all PRH estates in the nine districts have subscribed to GREEN COLLECT. Together with other participating estates, more than 3.1 million people accounting for about 75% of the total population in the nine districts are being served by GREEN COLLECT. EPD will review the effectiveness of the service and the experience gained for considering the further expansion of the service to other districts in future.

Green Outreach

44. To strengthen on-site recycling support, EPD has set up a team of about 200 staff called Green Outreach to provide outreaching services in all the 18 districts of Hong Kong. Through on-site guidance and hands-on demonstrations, the Green

⁸ Refers to Housing estates not less than 1 000 residential units.

Outreach reaches out to the community to promote the importance of waste reduction at source on a long-term and regular basis, facilitates members of the public to practise source separation of waste and clean recycling, and disseminate the latest information on waste management. The Green Outreach also identifies proper outlets for recyclables, formulates collaboration plans on community recycling support for individual districts and coordinates the implementation of the one-stop reliable recycling service GREEN COLLECT. By March 2023, the Green Outreach has conducted about 135 000 visits and established connections with over 4 400 property management offices and residents' organisations, and organised over 3 500 publicity and promotion activities that attracted about 270 000 participants.

NEW WASTE REDUCTION AND RECYCLING INITIATIVES

Regulation of Disposable Plastic Tableware and Other Plastic Products

45. As stated in the Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address, a bill for the regulation of disposable plastic tableware and other plastic products would be introduced into the LegCo in early 2023. The bill was introduced into the LegCo on 15 March 2023 for scrutiny. To expedite the move towards "plastic-free", and at the same time allow time for the society to get prepared, we propose to implement the first phase of the regulation six months after the passage of the bill (early 2024 at the earliest).

Regulating the Proper Collection and Handling of Recyclables in Residential Buildings

46. To ensure that sufficient recycling facilities are set up in residential buildings and the recyclables collected are properly handled so as to strengthen the public's confidence towards the recycling system, the Chief Executive's 2022 Policy Address announced that the Government would explore requiring by legislation the property management companies and owners' organisations of major housing estates and single-block buildings with relatively large number of flats to separately collect common types of recyclable and pass them to downstream recyclers for proper processing, with effect from 2024 or earlier. We are now considering the legislative framework and operational details having regard to the situation in Hong Kong (including the types of residential buildings to be covered by the law and the respective household thresholds, as well as the types of recyclables, etc.) and consulting the stakeholders. Our preliminary thinking is that the regulation will cover all PRH estates and subsidised housing estates, as well as private housing estates and single-block buildings with 100 flats or above.

Expansion of CRN to PRH Estates

47. Over 2 million people are residing in PRH estates. To strengthen the community recycling support to PRH residents and complement the forthcoming implementation of MSW charging, the EPD plans to set up "Mini-Recycling Stores"

in selected PRH estates to facilitate their residents and those living nearby to participate in clean recycling and enhance the cost effectiveness of the recycling networks. Smart recycling bins will be installed in the Mini-Recycling Stores and residents can earn GREEN\$ points when they practise recycling. A pilot trial of this new operation mode will first be launched in June 2023 in Kwai Tsing District, which has a large number of PRHs that are close to single-block buildings, MTR Stations or public transport interchanges. EPD is working closely with the Housing Department to take forward the pilot trial, with a view to commencing the recycling service in the second quarter of 2023. Moreover, EPD is planning to extend this scheme progressively to around 50 PRH estates by end 2023.

ADVICE SOUGHT

48. Members are invited to take note of the preparatory work for the implementation of MSW charging and various waste reduction and recycling initiatives and offer views.

Environmental Protection Department
May 2023