

## EPD's "Plastic Free Beach, Tableware First" campaign launched today

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) will hold the "Plastic Free Beach, Tableware First" campaign at all public beaches this summer with the aim of achieving a plastic-free ocean. The campaign seeks to encourage members of the public to go plastic-free on beaches and reduce the use of disposable plastic utensils. It also aims to mobilise support from eateries on beaches or in the vicinity to avoid using or handing out disposable plastic tableware as far as possible. Witnessed by various supporting organisations, a ceremony was held today (July 19) at Repulse Bay Beach to launch the campaign.

Speaking at the launch ceremony, the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, said that the problem of excessive plastic waste is immediate and worldwide, and it is currently a global challenge to prevent plastic waste from entering the marine environment. Through the "Plastic Free Beach, Tableware First" campaign, the Government seeks to raise public awareness on the impact of plastics to the marine environment and the importance of going plastic-free. He said he was delighted to learn that quite a number of food premises, ranging from kiosks selling fish balls and siu mai to high-end restaurants in shopping arcades, have already pledged their support to the campaign to help protect the ocean.

Mr Wong stressed that the campaign is only a starting point and that green promotion efforts to encourage members of the public to reduce the use of disposable plastic tableware will go beyond beaches. He said he hopes that the campaign will serve as a positive example and a promotion drive to encourage all sectors of the community to go plastic-free and minimise the use of disposable plastic tableware. The Government will organise a wide range of public education and publicity campaigns to foster a plastic-free culture for all.

In addition to public education and publicity campaigns, Mr Wong said that the Government is considering a series of new measures to reduce disposable plastic tableware usage, including to explore means to require the operators of all canteens and refreshment kiosks in government properties and venues to avoid distributing disposable tableware, and to prepare the launch of voluntary schemes on using less plastic and disposable tableware in the food and beverage sector. The EPD will also commence a consultancy study in 2018-19 to obtain in-depth knowledge about worldwide proposals on the future control of disposable plastic tableware, and consider whether it is suitable to implement such control in future having regard to the local situation.

The "Plastic Free Beach, Tableware First" campaign covers all fast food kiosks and restaurants at public beaches and in their vicinity and has been joined by 47 of them so far. During the campaign, the participating food premises will try to avoid using or distributing plastic straws and disposable plastic tableware as far as possible to eliminate plastic waste on

beaches. In addition, they will try using more environmentally friendly tableware (such as paper straws, bamboo sticks, paper bags or reusable utensils) to replace items made of disposable plastics. Posters will also be put up on-site to support marine protection.

Today's launch ceremony was also joined by the Deputy Director of Leisure and Cultural Services (Leisure Services), Ms Ida Lee, and representatives from green groups and participating organisations. After the launch ceremony, volunteer ambassadors promoted the message of plastic-free beaches to swimmers at Repulse Bay Beach.

For more details on the "Plastic Free Beach, Tableware First" campaign, please visit the event information on the Big Waster Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/events/251123192141266/](http://www.facebook.com/events/251123192141266/).