

LCQ6: Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Chun-ying and a reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (July 10):

Question:

The Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign (the Campaign) has been implemented for more than a decade. In February this year, the Food Wise Hong Kong Steering Committee indicated that it would extend the Campaign for two years, and a series of activities and schemes would be launched to encourage and facilitate various sectors of the community to participate in food waste reduction and recycling. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Food Wise Eateries Scheme (the Scheme) has put in place the Gold and Silver Classes of recognition to recognise the efforts and commitment of participating eateries in food waste reduction, of the respective numbers of eateries which have been awarded the Gold and Silver Classes since the launch of the Scheme;

(2) whether it has regularly reviewed if the participating eateries of the Scheme can fulfil the requirements for the relevant classes of recognition on a continuing basis; if it has not, of the reasons for that; if it has, the details, and whether any participating eateries have been removed from the list of participating eateries after being reviewed; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(3) in respect of the extension of the Campaign for two years, whether it has drawn up specific targets and action plans (for example, increasing the number of participating eateries awarded with the Gold and Silver Classes); if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Currently, about 11 000 tonnes of municipal solid waste are generated in Hong Kong per day, of which around 30 per cent is food waste. The Government has always attached great importance to promoting food waste reduction at source and recycling. Since its launch in 2013, the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign has been promoting a "food wise" culture and encouraging behavioural change in the community to avoid and reduce food waste generation at source through various schemes and activities. The major schemes and activities include the Food Wise Charter, the Food Wise Eateries Scheme, Food Wise talks, the "Big Waster" social media pages, as well as promotion and publicity on "food wise" to the public through online platforms, mobile applications, public transport networks, television and radio.

Over the past 11 years, we have observed significant changes in the

overall eating habits of the general public. At present, there are fewer cases of people ordering excessive amount of food in eateries or wasting a large amount of food at buffets. Taking home leftovers from eateries is now widely accepted by members of the public and is no longer seen as stinginess. Based on statistics, the per capita domestic food waste disposal rate in Hong Kong has reduced by about 15 per cent from 0.37 kilograms per day in 2013 to 0.31 kilograms per day in 2022. These reflect that a "food wise" culture has gradually taken shape in Hong Kong.

The reply to the question raised by the Hon Chan Chun-ying is as follows:

(1) The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) launched the Food Wise Eateries Scheme in November 2015 to encourage eateries to work with customers towards reduction of food wastage and food waste generation at source by offering food portioning options and adopting food waste reduction measures. The Food Wise Eateries Scheme has two classes of recognition, namely Gold Class and Silver Class, corresponding to the different levels of efforts and commitment of the participating eateries. Silver Class eateries need to convey the "food wise" message at their stores and provide food portioning options. In addition to meeting the requirements of Silver Class, Gold Class eateries need to take additional measures at the management level to avoid and reduce the generation of food waste.

The Scheme has received support from a considerable number of eateries since its implementation. A total of 532 eateries and 1 076 eateries have been awarded the recognition of Gold and Silver Classes respectively. Eateries accredited under the Scheme will receive corresponding stickers to display in their stores to facilitate promotion and for customers' identification. In addition, the list and addresses of participating eateries are published on a restaurant searching platform and the Hong Kong Waste Reduction website for members of the public to search and learn more information about environmentally friendly eateries.

(2) The accreditation of Gold and Silver Classes of Food Wise Eateries is valid for two years. If the eateries concerned confirm with the EPD before the expiration date that they will continue to take forward the committed measures, the EPD will renew their accreditation. The EPD will also conduct random inspections to verify that the participating eateries have continuously fulfilled their commitment to reduce food waste. Over the past three years, the EPD inspected a total of 212 eateries and observed that they generally adopted measures corresponding to their classes. Some eateries were unable to show the "food wise" message in their stores might be due to damage or fading of the promotional materials previously distributed to them. In such cases, the EPD staff will provide new promotional materials and remind the eateries to fulfil the requirements on publicity and message dissemination. Since the launch of the Scheme, no eateries have been removed from the list of Food Wise Eateries, except for those that have closed down.

(3) As I pointed out in the beginning, since the launch of the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign, we have observed significant changes in the overall eating

habits of the general public, and a "food wise" culture has gradually taken shape in Hong Kong. The per capita domestic food waste disposal rate has also decreased, reflecting that the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign has borne fruit. To further reduce food waste, we also need to explore new directions in addition to continuing the promotion of the "waste less" concept. Currently, the EPD is actively implementing various measures to support food waste recycling from commercial, industrial and domestic sectors to gradually increase the amount of food waste recycled in Hong Kong and further reduce food waste disposal, with a view to achieving the goal of "Waste Reductionâ€§Resources Circulationâ€§Zero Landfill".

Members of the Food Wise Hong Kong Steering Committee agreed at the meeting held in February this year to actively co-operate with the Government in promoting food waste reduction at source and recycling. They also called on relevant stakeholders and partners of the industry for their full support.

The Steering Committee will step up publicity and promotion efforts of food waste recycling in the 2023-2025 session to encourage and assist the community to participate in food waste reduction and recycling. The Steering Committee has developed a series of plans to strengthen training, support, publicity and education to raise public attention to food waste issues and increase participation in food waste recycling. For eateries, the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign will focus on strengthening promotion and encouraging eateries to participate in the EPD's food waste recycling programmes, or using food waste recycling points set up at refuse collections points in various districts and food waste recycling spots in "food and beverage clusters" to reduce the disposal of food waste in landfills.

The Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign will also update the Food Wise Charter in this quarter to include a commitment to support food waste recycling programmes. We will introduce the EPD's latest food waste recycling measures to the signees of the Charter and other organisations that have yet to sign up, and invite them to actively participate in and sign the new Charter.

In the meantime, the EPD will further strengthen the promotion of the "waste less" and "food wise" messages to encourage members of the public to reduce food wastage when dining out. We will also organise interactive dramas with the theme of Food Waste Reduction and Recycling through the Sustainable Development School Outreach Programme to instill a "food wise" and waste reduction culture in students from around 150 primary and secondary schools, and educate them on how to participate in food waste reduction and recycling in their daily lives.

Regarding the Food Wise Eateries Scheme, we are planning to set up an honourable Diamond Class of recognition on top of the existing Gold and Silver Classes to increase the attractiveness of the Scheme. As the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign promotes the "food wise" and waste reduction culture from various aspects, we have not set a target on the number of Food Wise Eateries in particular. Nevertheless, we will attempt to double the number in the upcoming two years through stepping up on promotional efforts.

Thank you, President.