

Second phase of "Plastic-Free Takeaway, Use Reusable Tableware" saves over 1 million sets of disposable tableware

To encourage the public to go "plastic-and-disposable-free" when ordering takeaways, the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) and the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) collaborated with the food and beverage (F&B) industry to organise the "Plastic-Free Takeaway, Use Reusable Tableware" publicity and education campaign. Phase 2 of the campaign concluded successfully on August 9.

The Phase 2 promotion programme was launched in mid-June 2019 by the ECC and the EPD together with some 700 eateries across the territory (including over 630 eateries under more than 30 catering businesses and over 50 canteens and restaurants in government venues), to encourage the public to bring their own reusable tableware and avoid the use of disposable tableware so as to reduce single-use plastic waste. During the two-month programme, around 1.2 million sets of disposable tableware were saved by the public. Members of the public also saved around 1.2 million sets of disposable tableware during the first phase of the campaign, a two-month pilot programme at the extensive networks of three major fast food chains across the territory, held from November 2018 to January this year. The two phases of the campaign have saved a total of about 2.4 million sets of disposable tableware.

The EPD spokesman said, "Participation from the entire community is crucial to achieving 'less waste, plastic-free'. The campaign has received wide support from the F&B industry. The Phase 2 promotion programme included a diverse range of eateries, from fast food chains and Hong Kong-style tea restaurants to Chinese restaurants, Western cafés and restaurants, light refreshment restaurants, kiosks and stores, as well as online takeaway platforms. Together they have provided environmentally friendly customers with various complimentary offers and gifts. The ECC and the EPD also actively released information about the programme and promoted the message of 'say no to disposables, bring your own tableware' through various channels including public transport, radio and newspapers, social media and webpages to help instill a 'plastic-free for all' culture in society."

Under the promotion programme, customers may receive a sticker for each takeaway order made at participating restaurants/catering businesses without obtaining disposable tableware, so as to encourage the public to cultivate green lifestyle habits and avoid using disposable plastic tableware in everyday life. After collecting six stickers, they can redeem a reusable stainless steel cutlery set sponsored by the ECC for free, or a complimentary offer/gift (e.g. discount coupon, dessert, snack and drink) provided by individual restaurants/catering businesses. During the programme, participating restaurants distributed around 1.2 million stickers to take-

away customers, while about 38 000 sets of stainless steel cutlery and some 30 000 complimentary offers/gifts were redeemed. Stainless steel cutlery sets have also been stored at Community Green Stations across the territory and at designated offices of the ECC and the EPD, which members of the public with unused and sufficient stickers may visit for redemption by September 10, 2019. Please refer to the ECC's Facebook page for detailed addresses (www.facebook.com/ECC1990/posts/2338582506179095).

The EPD is reviewing the implementation of the promotion programme and its operational experience, and will maintain close liaison with different stakeholders in the F&B sector to consider further collaboration in promoting reduced use of disposable plastic tableware. Meanwhile, the EPD is also holding the 2019 "Plastic-free Beach, Tableware First" campaign at all public beaches during this year's swimming season. More environmentally friendly tableware including paper straws, wooden forks, paper containers and reusable utensils will be used in place of disposable plastic tableware, with a view to promoting a "plastic-free" culture and protecting the oceans.

In the long run, the EPD is conducting a study on the control of disposable plastic tableware, which includes making reference to developments in other countries or places regarding the control of disposable plastic items as well as exploring the necessity and feasibility of such control, in order to draw up proposals suitable for implementation in Hong Kong. The experience gained from promoting reduced use of disposable plastic tableware in the food and beverage sector will also be taken into account in the study, which is scheduled for completion in 2020.