

Statement by Council for Carbon Neutrality and Sustainable Development on implementation of municipal solid waste charging scheme in Hong Kong

The following is issued on behalf of the Council for Carbon Neutrality and Sustainable Development:

The Council for Carbon Neutrality and Sustainable Development (the Council) announced today (January 31) the below statement on the implementation of the municipal solid waste (MSW) charging scheme in Hong Kong:

Hong Kong is progressing steadily towards the goal of carbon neutrality through the four deep strategies to reduce carbon emissions, namely net-zero electricity generation, energy saving and green buildings, green transport and waste reduction. The three existing landfills in Hong Kong are expected to reach their capacity one after another in the coming few years, therefore the work on waste reduction is a matter of great urgency. To move away from over-reliance on landfills for municipal waste disposal, apart from actively developing waste-to-energy facilities and promoting resources circulation, Hong Kong should also provide incentives for businesses and the public to practise waste reduction and recycling through the implementation of MSW charging, and at the same time promote the sustainable development of the recycling industry as well as the creation of green employment opportunities.

Waste reduction and recycling are the shared responsibilities of every individual. The smooth implementation of MSW charging requires the full support and co-operation from each and every one of us. The Council fully supports the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in taking the next few months to explain the importance and details of MSW charging to all sectors of the community in a more specific manner before the new legislation takes effect on August 1, and in helping the community adapt to the new measures through real-life examples and demonstrations, so as to gradually drive behavioural and cultural changes, and ultimately achieve waste reduction for all.

We have been supporting MSW charging all along and will actively work with the Government in the areas of youth engagement and sectoral promotion. In parallel, we would like to call on all partners of the Council to continue their staunch support and join hands with us to promote Hong Kong's low-carbon transformation.

LCQ18: Cross-boundary transport services during major festivals

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Dennis Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (January 31):

Question:

According to the Government's statistics, 195 000 Mainland visitors came to Hong Kong on December 31 last year. It has been reported that due to insufficient cross-boundary transport services, a large number of Mainland visitors were stranded in Hong Kong in the early hours of the following day after watching the fireworks display, and some visitors had to wait for hours at a terminus for cross-boundary coach service to the Huanggang Port as they were unable to display the QR code tickets for All China Express service on their mobile phones due to suspected telecommunications network problems. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the numbers of Mainland visitors to Hong Kong on major festivals (such as New Year's Day, the Lunar New Year, Labour Day and National Day) in each of the past three years;

(2) whether it will consider setting up high capacity government Wi-Fi hotspots near the All China Express cross-boundary coach service terminus at Arran Street, Mong Kok, so as to facilitate visitors purchasing tickets through the Internet and displaying the QR code tickets; and

(3) as the Government has indicated that it will discuss with the Mainland authorities about increasing the number of boundary control points (BCPs) with 24-hour clearance, of the latest progress of the relevant work; whether it will first extend the opening hours of some BCPs to 3am on major festivals before the introduction of the relevant measures?

Reply:

President,

Since the full resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland in February 2023, all boundary control points (BCPs) have been in full operation to enable normal cross-boundary travel by people of Hong Kong and Shenzhen. Currently, all land BCPs are equipped with comprehensive and advanced clearance facilities for relevant departments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government to provide quality and efficient clearance services to cross-boundary passengers and vehicles.

Anticipating that a considerable number of visitors would use the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point to return to the Mainland after the 2023 New Year's Eve fireworks event, the Transport Department had liaised with the service operators of cross-boundary coaches and Lok Ma Chau-Huanggang cross-

boundary shuttle bus (Yellow Bus) in advance and requested to increase the headway. The number of vehicles deployed for service operation was already double of that of weekdays, so that more visitors could take cross-boundary coaches or Yellow Bus to return to the Mainland via the BCP. Nevertheless, as there were over 1 200 private cars concentrated to cross at the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point in a short time, even though eight private car clearance kiosks at the BCP were all in operation and three goods vehicle clearance kiosks were re-deployed for private car clearance, the total number of vehicles to be processed had exceeded the handling capacity of the BCP, resulting in traffic congestion where many cross-boundary coaches and Yellow Bus could not return to terminus in time to pick up visitors.

In consultation with the Transport and Logistics Bureau and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), my reply to the question raised by Dr the Hon Dennis Lam is as follows:

(1) Passenger traffic of Mainland visitors during major festive periods in the past three years is set out at Annex.

(2) At present, for visitors taking cross-boundary coach of the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point to travel to the Mainland at Arran Street in Mong Kok as indicated in the question, apart from purchasing tickets at the cross-boundary coach terminus, they may also pre-order coach tickets on the website of relevant cross-boundary coach operator, or through mobile applications such as WeChat and Alipay. To avoid passengers from failing to show their ticket QR code due to telecommunications network issues at the boarding point, passengers may capture the mobile phone screenshot of the ticket QR code after purchasing the ticket, and show it for ticket verification while boarding. On the 2023 New Year's Eve, the operator had also arranged passengers to go to the ticketing booths next to the terminus to purchase tickets by cash, Octopus Card or WeChat/Alipay. Passengers were also allowed to show their payment records instead of QR code to board the coach.

The Transport Department has all along been maintaining close liaison with the cross-boundary coach trade and urged the trade to further enhance the use of social media of the Mainland to disseminate information on the operation and ticketing in relation to cross-boundary coach services, including reminding passengers through its ticketing system on the points to note when using ticket QR code.

In addition, according to the OGCIO, free Wi-Fi service is currently provided for local residents and visitors near Arran Street in Mong Kok by a telecommunication operator under the public-private collaboration arrangement of Wi-Fi.HK. In view of the special needs at this location, the Government is setting up an additional Wi-Fi.HK hotspot at a government venue near the cross boundary coach terminus at Arran Street in Mong Kok to further strengthen the Wi-Fi service in the vicinity. Relevant installation works are in progress so that it could be launched before the Lunar New Year.

(3) In view of the resumption of normal travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong since early February last year, the HKSAR Government has been closely

monitoring the demand for clearance services at various land BCPs. On the basis of the 24-hour passenger clearance services currently provided in Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point and Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Hong Kong Port, the HKSAR Government will liaise with the Mainland authorities on extending the operating hours of the passenger clearance service at respective BCPs as and when necessary to further facilitate the flow of people between the two sides.

Lunar New Year will be the next peak travel periods for Hong Kong residents and Mainland visitors. To facilitate diversion of cross-boundary passenger and vehicular movements during the holidays, a consensus was reached between the HKSAR Government and the relevant departments of the Mainland to make the following special arrangements:

(i) Passenger and passenger vehicle clearance services at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point, which usually close at 12 midnight, will operate overnight, providing round-the-clock services, from February 9 to 13; and

(ii) Passenger clearance service at the Lo Wu Control Point, which usually closes at 12 midnight, will be extended on February 9 and 11 to 2am the next day. The operating hours of the MTR East Rail Line will also be extended correspondingly.

The round-the-clock services at the Shenzhen Bay Control Point can provide an option for cross-boundary passenger vehicles in the small hours, so as to avoid congestions caused by concentrated traffic at the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point. It is believed that the extension of operation hours of the Lo Wu Control Point can attract some of the cross-boundary visitors taking passenger vehicles to switch to taking trains, thereby relieving the pressure on land BCPs through the use of mass transit system.

Regarding the extension of operating hours of land BCPs during major festive periods in future, the HKSAR Government will continue to closely monitor visitors' demand for clearance services at various land BCPs and maintain close liaison with relevant Mainland authorities.

LCQ19: "M" Mark System

Following is a question by the Hon Ma Fung-kuok and a written reply by the Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, Mr Kevin Yeung, in the Legislative Council today (January 31):

Question:

The Government has launched the "M" Mark System to support the staging of major sports events in Hong Kong. According to the information from the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau, "M" Mark events received government

funding of more than \$200 million over the past 10-odd years, and the number of events increased from four at the beginning to 14 in 2019. With Hong Kong's resumption to normalcy from the epidemic, most of the "M" Mark events resumed to be held last year, and new items have been introduced. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information on the "M" Mark events held last year (including the events which received government funding and those which did not apply for government funding): the event titles, the amounts of funding received, the numbers of participants, and the numbers of spectators (set out in a table);

(2) whether it has put in place a monitoring mechanism or performance indicators for the "M" Mark events receiving government funding to serve as reference for assessing whether or not to continue to provide funding for the events concerned;

(3) whether it has set a cap on the number of years for which "M" Mark events may receive government funding; whether there are "M" Mark events which, due to special circumstances, have received funding in excess of the cap of \$15 million;

(4) for the "M" Mark events receiving government funding, whether the relevant government departments will be provided with a certain number of admission tickets or admission eligibility, etc, for publicity purposes;

(5) whether the organisers of the "M" Mark events receiving government funding have requested government departments for other assistance in addition to funding (e.g. road arrangements for off-road racing events), and whether the Government has set up an inter-departmental group to provide the relevant assistance, so as to enable the events to be held more smoothly and enhance their effectiveness; if so, of the details (with examples); if not, the reasons for that; and

(6) among the "M" Mark events receiving government funding, of the number of those which have received funding for five years or more, and the reasons for their continuous application for funding?

Reply:

President,

At present, the Government's sports policy is to promote the development of sports through a five-pronged approach, namely, by promoting sports in the community, supporting elite sports, promoting Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events, enhancing professionalism and developing sports as an industry. In respect of promoting Hong Kong as a centre for major international sports events, the Government introduced the "M" Mark System in 2004 to support local "national sports associations" (NSAs) to host major sports events through provision of matching fund (i.e. a dollar-for-dollar matching grant provided for the event organiser in accordance with the cash

sponsorship solicited from the commercial or private sectors) and direct grant under the Arts and Sport Development Fund (Sports Portion). In addition to providing the public with the opportunity to enjoy top-level performance sports and promoting the overall development of sports, the "M" Mark System also attracts tourists to visit Hong Kong and enhance Hong Kong's status as a centre for major international events.

My reply to the Hon Ma Fung-kwok's question is as follows:

(1) The Government launched various measures in April 2023 to enhance the "M" Mark System. These measures include increasing the funding ceiling (i.e. matching grant plus direct grant) for each event to \$15 million (Note 1), lifting the quota of "M" Mark events to be organised by the same applicant each year, and relaxing the eligibility of the applicants for "M" Mark events to cover events organised by NSAs, private and non-government organisations. The enhancement measures have been effective since their implementation, with a record-high number of major international sports events supported by the "M" Mark System in 2023. Among these events are the Aramco Team Series Hong Kong, FIA World Rallycross Championship Season Finale, Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (Hong Kong Section) Half Marathon and the World DanceSport Federation (WDSF) Breaking for Gold World Series etc, which were staged in Hong Kong for the very first time. The details are as follows:

Item	Title of events	Approved funding support (\$ million)			No. of participants	Attendance
		Matching grant	Direct grant	Grants for venue/marketing		
1	25th Standard Chartered Hong Kong Marathon	10	0	0	34 783	43 000
2	World City Championship presented by Hong Kong Golf Club	10	0	1	132	12 665
3	Cathay/HSBC Hong Kong Sevens 2023	10	0	1	385	75 299
4	FIVB Volleyball Nations League Hong Kong 2023 presented by China Life (Overseas)	7	6	0*	112	55 313
5	2023 Hong Kong International Dragon Boat Races	No funding application from the "M" Mark System			5 034	44 812

6	VICTOR Hong Kong Open Badminton Championships 2023 part of HSBC BWF World Tour Super 500	7	0	0*	271	36 274
7	Aramco Team Series presented by PIF-Hong Kong	No funding application from the "M" Mark System			89	5 210
8	Prudential Hong Kong Tennis Open 2023	15	0	0*	55	52 519
9	Hong Kong Open 2023	15	0	1	422	27 774
10	FIA World Rallycross Championship Hong Kong, China – Season Finale 2023	15	0	2	10	16 000
11	New World Harbour Race 2023	7	0	0	2 850	8 000
12	The Bank of China (Hong Kong) Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (Hong Kong Section) Half Marathon 2023	7	6	2	6 591	7 147
13	FIBA 3x3 World Tour Hong Kong Masters 2023	8	6	0*	64	12 548
14	TTI Milwaukee Hong Kong Squash Open 2023	4	0	1	96	4 055
15	WDSF Breaking for Gold World Series – Hong Kong 2023	1	6	1*	135	9 622
Total:		116	24	9	51 029	410 238

* Permission was also granted to use venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department at notional venue charges.

Note 1: Excluding grants for venue and/or marketing.

(2) Under the existing practice, an "M" mark event organiser is required to enter into an agreement and undertake to organise the event as stated in its proposal submitted in the application process. Within six months after the completion of an event, the organiser has to submit an evaluation report and an audited statement of accounts to the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau (CSTB). The CSTB will carry out inspections (including on-site inspection) to monitor and assess the arrangements of the event in accordance with the terms and conditions of the agreement and the items listed in the evaluation

report. The relevant assessment report will then serve as a basis for reference when the organiser submits a fresh application in the future. Should the organiser fails to hold an event in accordance with its proposal, the CSTB may recover all or part of the funding, as the case may be.

(3) and (6) The "M" Mark System aims to encourage and help local NSAs, private and non-government organisations to organise more major international sports events and nurture them into sustainable undertakings. Therefore, we have not set a cap on the number of years for which an "M" mark event may receive Government funding. At present, among the "M" mark events receiving Government funding, two, namely the Hong Kong Open Badminton Championships and the Hong Kong Squash Open, have been receiving funding support from the "M" Mark System for more than five years. So far, no event has received funding in excess of the funding ceiling (excluding grants for venue and/or marketing).

(4) According to the terms and conditions for "M" Mark events, the organiser should, having regard to the scale and actual circumstances of each event, reserve a reasonable number of tickets for the disadvantaged groups to watch the competitions. The organiser should also invite members of the Major Sports Events Committee (MSEC) or Government officials as recommended by the MSEC Secretariat to attend the ceremony of the events in the capacity of VIPs.

(5) In considering an "M" Mark event application, members of the MSEC will advise on the organisation, sponsorship and promotion strategies of the event. In addition, the CSTB will co-ordinate with relevant Government departments in supporting the planning and organisation of the events according to their individual needs. For instance, the CSTB has assisted the relevant organisers in planning the Hong Kong Marathon, the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (Hong Kong Section) Half Marathon and the FIA World Rallycross Championship, among others. The CSTB has co-ordinated with relevant Government departments (including the Hong Kong Police Force, the Fire Services Department, the Transport Department and the Home Affairs Department) and rendered advice and logistics support on racetrack design, temporary road closure, traffic diversions, crowd control, medical emergency services, etc, with a view to facilitating the organisation of the events.

FEHD expands scope of “Professional Certification System” to cover general restaurant licence applications

A spokesman for the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) announced today (January 31) that the scope of the "Professional

Certification System" (PCS) will be expanded to cover general restaurant licence applications starting from tomorrow (February 1). Applicants can choose between the current system (i.e. to issue a full licence upon the completion of the final on-site check by an FEHD officer) or the PCS which adopts an approach of "licence first, inspection later" for the issue of full licences.

According to the Food Business Regulation (Cap. 132X), any person who intends to carry on a food business is required to obtain a relevant food business licence issued by the FEHD. With a view to streamlining application procedures and shortening processing times, as well as facilitating compliance with the licensing requirements, the FEHD has introduced the PCS in March 2023 as an additional option for applicants of light refreshment restaurant and food factory licences to obtain full licences. Under the PCS, the FEHD accepts a Certificate of Compliance and final layout plans provided by an authorised person or a registered structural engineer as the certification for compliance with all health requirements for the issue of a full licence. After issuing the full licence, the FEHD staff will conduct on-site audit checks to confirm premises' compliance with all health requirements.

If any information in the relevant documents is found to be incorrect, false or misleading, or if the declaration made is found to be false after on-site audit checks, the FEHD will carry out follow-up action, such as consideration of instigating prosecution, cancellation of the licence issued or referring the case to other departments concerned for follow-up.

The spokesman said, "The PCS measure will be applicable to full licence application of general restaurant, light refreshment restaurant and food factory starting from tomorrow. Subject to the smooth implementation and support from the trade, the FEHD will consider further extending the new measure to other food business licences."

For details of the PCS, please visit the FEHD website (www.fehd.gov.hk).

Inspection of aquatic products imported from Japan

In response to the Japanese Government's plan to discharge nuclear-contaminated water at the Fukushima Nuclear Power Station, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene issued a Food Safety Order which prohibits all aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds originating from the 10 metropolis/prefectures, namely Tokyo, Fukushima, Ibaraki, Miyagi, Chiba, Gunma, Tochigi, Niigata, Nagano and Saitama, from being imported into and supplied in Hong Kong.

For other Japanese aquatic products, sea salt and seaweeds that are not prohibited from being imported into Hong Kong, the Centre for Food Safety (CFS) of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will conduct comprehensive radiological tests to verify that the radiation levels of these products do not exceed the guideline levels before they are allowed to be supplied in the market.

As the discharge of nuclear-contaminated water is unprecedented and will continue for 30 years or more, the Government will closely monitor and step up the testing arrangements. Should anomalies be detected, the Government does not preclude further tightening the scope of the import ban.

From noon on January 30 to noon today (January 31), the CFS conducted tests on the radiological levels of 189 food samples imported from Japan, which were of the "aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt" category. No sample was found to have exceeded the safety limit. Details can be found on the CFS's thematic website titled "Control Measures on Foods Imported from Japan" (www.cfs.gov.hk/english/programme/programme_rafs/programme_rafs_fc_01_30_Nuclear_Event_and_Food_Safety.html).

In parallel, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD) has also tested 50 samples of local catch for radiological levels. All the samples passed the tests. Details can be found on the AFCD's website (www.afcd.gov.hk/english/fisheries/Radiological_testing/Radiological_Test.html).

The Hong Kong Observatory (HKO) has also enhanced the environmental monitoring of the local waters. No anomaly has been detected so far. For details, please refer to the HKO's website (www.hko.gov.hk/en/radiation/monitoring/seawater.html).

From August 24 to noon today, the CFS and the AFCD have conducted tests on the radiological levels of 28 011 samples of food imported from Japan (including 18 748 samples of aquatic and related products, seaweeds and sea salt) and 7 970 samples of local catch respectively. All the samples passed the tests.