

LCQ13: Working environment of frontline cleansing workers of FEHD

Following is a question by the Hon Lam Chun-sing and a written reply by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, in the Legislative Council today (November 27):

Question:

Regarding the working environment of frontline cleansing workers of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD), will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the following information on each permanent off-street refuse collection point (RCP) currently managed by the FEHD: (a) the district in which it is located, (b) its name, (c) the name of the outsourced service contractor, (d) the staffing establishment and (e) strength (with a breakdown by post), and (f) the number of staff convenience facilities provided (including (i) individual rest room, (ii) table, (iii) chair, (iv) locker (the total number of compartments available for staff), (v) power socket, (vi) electric fan, (vii) air-conditioning device, (viii) cold and hot water dispenser, (ix) microwave oven, (x) electric steamer, (xi) refrigerator, (xii) individual changing room, (xiii) toilet facility, and (xiv) shower cubicle) (set out in the table below);

| (a) | (b) | (c) | (d) | (e) | (f) | | |
|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|-------|
| | | | | | (i) | | (xiv) |
| | | | | | | | |

(2) as it is learnt that some frontline cleansing workers of the FEHD responsible for street cleaning are required to report for duty at designated roll-call points before work every day, of the locations and floor areas of such roll-call points, the RCPs in which the report-for-duty workers are working, and the daily numbers of workers reporting for duty at such roll-call points (set out in a table by district across the territory);

(3) as there are views pointing out that the sweat-wicking and breathability properties of uniforms currently provided for and required to be worn by frontline cleansing workers responsible for street cleaning are inadequate, which increase the risk of heat stress faced by such workers while working in hot weather, whether the authorities will consider reviewing and improving the materials of the uniforms concerned, so as to enhance the protection of workers' occupational safety and health;

(4) as it is learnt that the FEHD has commenced an RCP refurbishment scheme since 2020 to upgrade or provide additional rest rooms and relevant

facilities for RCP staff, of the following information on the RCPs involved in the scheme: (i) the districts in which they are located, (ii) their names, (iii) the dates on which the works are expected to commence/have commenced, and (iv) the expected/actual completion dates of works, together with a breakdown by the progress of works (i.e. works completed, works in progress, detailed design underway and preliminary planning underway);

(5) of the following information on the 900 or so village-type RCPs or RCPs with temporary structures currently managed by the FEHD: the districts in which they are located and their locations, and the number of mobile cleansing teams responsible for such RCPs, as well as their respective staffing establishment and strength (set out by post);

(6) as it is learnt that in order to enhance the resting environment of frontline cleansing workers in rural areas, the FEHD has installed solar cooling kiosks (kiosks) at some locations and provided similar solar-powered facilities in staff resting places with no electricity supply in rural areas, of the following information on each of (i) the kiosks installed or planned to be installed, and (ii) the resting places with solar-powered facilities provided or planned to be provided: the district in which it is located, its location, the name of the nearest village-type RCP and the walking distance (if applicable), as well as the dates on which the works are expected to be completed or have been completed (set out in a table); and

(7) as it is learnt that fully enclosed on-board refuse bin cleaners (RBCs) are put on trial by the FEHD at designated rural locations, of the following information on such RBCs: the number of RBCs in operation so far, the number and locations of the designated rural locations with RBCs on trial, as well as the actual number of refuse bins cleaned per day by each RBC and its percentage in the total number of refuse bins at rural locations; whether the authorities have plans to extend the use of RBC to more rural locations; if so, of the details, including the proposed locations and timetable for the extended use of RBCs; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government attaches great importance to the working and resting environment of frontline cleansing workers, including civil servants and outsourced service contractor workers, who provide essential public services for the community. Since the inauguration of the incumbent Government, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has conducted a comprehensive review of the arrangements for accommodating the basic needs of frontline cleansing workers, including drinking water, areas for short breaks, water for cleansing tools and toilet facilities, and confirmed that the needs of all frontline cleansing workers had been accommodated. Subject to objective conditions, the FEHD will strive to further improve the working condition of workers and provide more convenient staff facilities through refurbishment or facelifting of refuse collection points (RCPs).

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Lam Chun-sing is as follows:

(1) At present, the FEHD manages 163 off-street RCPs which refuse collection vehicles can enter, instead of on the roadside, to collect refuse. Different facilities are provided in these RCPs for workers' use. The number of facilities provided at off-street RCPs as at November 2024 are set out at Annex 1. The FEHD has, in collaboration with the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD), progressively conducted comprehensive refurbishment and facelifting works for older off-street RCPs. Resting rooms and relevant facilities will be provided as far as possible, subject to the actual circumstances of the venues. The FEHD will continue to review and improve the facilities to cater for the actual needs of frontline staff.

The manpower of RCPs, depending on their actual opening hours, is provided on one to three work shifts, with one RCP attendant deployed on each shift.

(2) All frontline cleansing workers of the FEHD, including civil servants and outsourced service contractor workers (about 9 900 in number), need to sign-in and sign-off at roll-call points. Apart from off-street RCPs, roll-call points are also set up at suitable places near the working sites, such as offices at Municipal Services Buildings, market offices and attendant rooms of public toilets. Locations of roll-call points for the staff responsible for street cleansing services are provided at Annex 2. The FEHD does not keep a breakdown for other items inquired about at sub-question (2).

(3) In 2019, the FEHD, in collaboration with local academic institutions, developed and designed new working uniforms made from materials with the functions of moisture management, aeration and light reflection. At present, all frontline civil servants and outsourced service contractor workers responsible for street cleansing are provided with such working uniforms. In future, the FEHD will keep an eye on the availability of materials of better performance in the market.

(4) Starting from 2020-2021, the FEHD has been, in co-operation with the ArchSD, proactively taking forward the full refurbishment/facelifting programme for RCPs. So far, the full refurbishment/facelifting works for 18 off-street RCPs have been completed, the works for three RCPs have been/will be commenced, while the works for 30 RCPs are under detailed design and the works for another 10 RCPs are under active planning. The relevant information is provided at Annex 3.

(5) Generally speaking, for village-type RCPs/RCPs with temporary structures, their daily cleansing is carried out by street cleansing workers of the beats concerned. Street cleansing of village beat is generally performed by one worker each on day shift only. The village-type RCPs/RCPs with temporary structures in various districts are listed at Annex 4.

(6) At present, the FEHD has installed 63 solar cooling kiosks (locations at Annex 5) and provided similar solar-powered facilities in 15 existing staff resting places in rural areas (locations at Annex 6). In planning the

provision of the staff resting places or solar cooling kiosks, the FEHD has taken into account the working areas and arrangements for the relevant cleansing workers in order to facilitate their use.

The FEHD plans to install 64 more solar cooling kiosks (locations at Annex 7) and provide staff resting facilities at 13 appropriate village-type RCPs (locations at Annex 8) in early 2025. It will continue to review and enhance these facilities to meet the actual needs of frontline staff.

(7) The FEHD is putting on trial a fully enclosed on-board refuse bin cleaner, which is capable of washing about five 660-litre waste containers per hour, in the Islands District. If the trial result is satisfactory and subject to the ground situation of different rural locations, the FEHD may incorporate the use of such cleaners into the terms of street cleansing service contracts upon their renewal.

LCQ3: Expediting urban redevelopment

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Wendy Hong and a reply by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, in the Legislative Council today (November 27):

Question:

Regarding expediting urban redevelopment, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that at present, when acquiring an owner-occupied property in an old district, the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) will calculate the compensation on the basis of the price of a seven-year-old building in the same locality, and it is learnt that while some owners are willing to accept the compensation calculated based on the prices of buildings aged over seven years in exchange for early redevelopment, the URA does not have a mechanism to handle such requests, whether the Government will consider reviewing the relevant mechanism jointly with the URA to provide room for exploring suitable compensation proposals with interested owners, thereby expediting redevelopment;

(2) given that while the URA's Flat-for-Flat Scheme allows owners affected by redevelopment projects to opt to purchase the Flat-for-Flat units reserved by the authorities as an option other than cash compensation, it is learnt that some owners have been forced to switch from buying to renting as the amount of the compensation they receive is insufficient to purchase the reserved units or private residential units, whether the Government will consider, when the supply of Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats increases in the future, extending the flat options under the Scheme to cover HOS flats,

so as to enable the affected owners to maintain their status as owners at affordable property prices; and

(3) given that this year's Policy Address has proposed to study the cross-district transfer of plot ratios, whether the Government will consider implementing the transfer between two districts on a pilot basis and gradually extending it to multiple exchanges for one district, i.e. allowing concurrent exchanges of plot ratios between one particular district and multiple districts across the territory, and study allowing developers to convert the unutilised plot ratios of development projects into plot ratio credit that can be traded and circulated in the market to be usable in any project where transfer of plot ratios is permissible, thereby increasing the potential profitability of redevelopment projects, and increasing the incentives for market participation in redevelopment?

Reply:

President,

My reply to various parts of the question raised by Dr the Hon Wendy Hong is as follows:

(1) The Urban Renewal Authority (URA)'s acquisition policy of seven-year old flat in the same locality (Seven-year Rule), which has been in place since its passage by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council (LegCo) in 2001, is in line with the current compensation criteria for owner-occupiers of residential properties affected by land resumption by the Government.

In fact, majority of the acquired buildings are relatively old, many of them reaching 50 years or above. In comparison, the compensation policy of Seven-year Rule is indeed relatively generous. Nevertheless, this would facilitate the URA to take forward its redevelopment projects and thereby take the lead in enlivening other private redevelopment projects in the area. The relevant acquisition arrangement would also encourage private developers to make similar acquisition offers when acquiring properties for redevelopment.

Furthermore, the Government has been actively implementing various measures to expedite the redevelopment of old districts, such as the passage of the proposed legislative amendments to the Land (Compulsory Sale for Redevelopment) Ordinance by the LegCo in July this year to lower the application thresholds for compulsory sale and facilitate the redevelopment of adjoining lots. Subject to negative vetting by the LegCo, the amended Ordinance will soon come into effect on December 6 this year. Any proposal to tighten the URA's compensation criteria for property acquisition during this critical period may likely backfire. We will closely monitor the situation of urban renewal after the commencement of the amended Ordinance and consider whether there is a need to adjust the compensation criteria adopted by the URA. If necessary, we will conduct extensive consultations and hold in-depth discussions with stakeholders during the process.

The question suggests that if there were property owners willing to

accept compensation with an amount lower than that offered according to the Seven-year Rule, the URA might consider proceeding with the project. Nevertheless, apart from financial viability, the URA has to take into account a number of other factors, such as the current building conditions, technical assessments, community benefits, etc, in prioritising the implementation of redevelopment projects. The URA will not advance individual redevelopment projects based on one single factor.

(2) The URA's Flat-for-Flat (FFF) arrangement enables owner-occupiers, who have received cash compensation under the Seven-year Rule, to choose to purchase replacement flats in the market, or residential flats provided by the URA at the redevelopment sites or at its Kai Tak Development in Kai Tak. According to previous surveys conducted by the URA, over 80 per cent of owner-occupiers, after accepting the URA's compensation under the Seven-year Rule, have purchased replacement flats in the market which suit their needs. Separately, the URA's records show that thus far, owner-occupiers of over 50 units have joined the FFF Scheme.

The Housing Bureau (HB) indicates that the subsidised sale flats (SSFs) put up for sale by the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HKHA) aim to assist the low-to middle-income families who cannot afford private residential flats to achieve home ownership. Applicants are required to meet the income and asset limit requirements as well as the restrictions on residential property ownership. The SSFs are also subject to alienation restrictions.

As property owners affected by the URA's redevelopment projects have already been provided with reasonable cash compensation and ex-gratia payments according to policy, after consulting the HB, we consider it inappropriate to offer SSFs as an option to owners of private properties affected by the URA's projects under the principle of optimising the use of public housing resources to cater for the most needy families. Nevertheless, if these property owners are eligible to apply for the HKHA's SSFs, they may make relevant applications on their own according to the existing mechanism.

(3) In view of the rapid ageing of buildings in Hong Kong, we fully recognise the need to expedite redevelopment. The Government will continue to support the redevelopment work of the URA and will further encourage private developers to take forward redevelopment projects. The amendments to the Ordinance which I have just mentioned and which will soon come into effect are some examples. The URA will also enhance its joint sale service at the same time, so as to assist owners of old buildings to consolidate property interests for joint sale and strive for early redevelopment.

Moreover, the Government has embarked on a policy study to explore the use of newly developed land to create more favourable conditions for future URA and private redevelopment projects of old buildings. Among other things, we will consider allocating land in the New Development Areas (NDAs) for the construction of Dedicated Rehousing Estates for tenants primarily and also offer owners with buildings under the FFF Scheme, to provide decanting space for redevelopment of old districts. We will also study the feasibility of cross-district transfer of plot ratios, with the objective of transferring the residual plot ratios of redevelopment projects in old districts for use

in the NDAs.

We have taken note of Member's proposals of multiple exchanges for one district and the trading of plot ratio credit freely in the market. Nonetheless, in order to achieve the objective of relocating the urban population to the NDAs for the purpose of implementing large-scale urban renewal and improving the living conditions in the urban areas, our preliminary view is that there is a need to specify the location of NDAs for the purpose of receiving the plot ratios. In addition, the transfer mechanism should be simple and easy to implement, and should avoid giving rise to speculative activities which will affect normal market operation. We will formulate preliminary proposals for consultation with stakeholders in the first half of next year.

Thank you, President.

[Government appoints new Chairman and five members to HKU Council](#)

The Government today (November 27) announced that the Chief Executive, in his capacity as the Chancellor of the University of Hong Kong (HKU), appointed Mr Peter Wong Tung-shun as the Chairman of the HKU Council for a term of three years with effect from January 1, 2025.

The Chief Executive has also appointed five new members to the HKU Council: Mr Simon Li Tin-chui and Mr Irons Sze for a term of three years with effect from December 1, 2024; and Mr Rock Chen Chung-nin, Mr Wilfred Wong Kam-pui and Dr Samuel Yung Wing-ki for a term of three years with effect from January 1, 2025.

The HKU is a long-established and internationally renowned higher education institution in Hong Kong. As one of the world's top 100 universities, the HKU is an esteemed Hong Kong institution and commands high expectations from both the Government and the public. With the terms of six members of the HKU Council expiring at the end of this year, the Chief Executive has decided to fill all six positions with new appointees to bring in a new outlook. The newly appointed members are all elites in the community, possessing outstanding capabilities and rich experience. The Chief Executive hopes that the new appointments will provide the HKU's governance with a new outlook and new impetus, begin a new chapter in governance, steer the HKU towards striving for excellence and provide fresh momentum to the university.

This June, the Government established a group composed of the Permanent Secretary for Education and the Chairman of the University Grants Committee

to conduct investigations into and studies on the HKU's internal operational affairs, and to recommend improvement measures and good practices. The Chief Executive thanked the group for its unremitting efforts in co-ordinating the HKU's internal operations, enhancing communication, assisting in resolving issues, reaching a consensus, and achieving a positive outcome. The group will continue its work to facilitate collaboration between the new Council and the management for the continuous enhancement of the HKU's governance effectiveness.

Over the past few years, the incumbent Council Chairman and members have made consistent efforts in advancing the HKU's continuous development, as evidenced by the university's outstanding achievements in academic research. The HKU has reached a historical high in the global rankings by climbing nine places to 17th in the 2025 QS World University Rankings published by Quacquarelli Symonds, an international higher education organisation. It has excelled in nurturing social elites and future leaders for Hong Kong, the country and the world, and contributed significantly to Hong Kong's development into an international post-secondary education hub.

The Chief Executive expressed his gratitude to the outgoing Chairman of the HKU Council, Ms Priscilla Wong Pui-sze, and members Mr Jason Chiu, Ms Winnie Chiu Wing-kwan, Mr Ian Grenville Cross, Mr Abraham Shek Lai-him and Mr John Zhao for their work and efforts during their terms.

[Hong Kong Customs seizes Part 1 Poison worth about \\$17 million in anti-“space oil” operations \(with photo\)](#)

Hong Kong Customs launched a series of anti-"space oil" operations in November and detected nine cases of possession of etomidate (the main ingredient of "space oil"), a kind of Part 1 poison under the Pharmacy and Poisons Regulations. A total of 191 "space oil" infused capsules, and 16 kilograms of etomidate powder that can be used to produce about 48 000 "space oil" infused capsules, with a total estimated market value of about \$17 million, were seized. Seven persons suspected to be connected with the cases were arrested.

Based on risk assessment, Customs inspected eight express parcels, arriving from India to Hong Kong and declared as carrying Carbomer, at Hong Kong International Airport. After examination, 16kg of etomidate powder was seized from the parcels. Upon follow-up investigations, Customs conducted controlled delivery operations and arrested three parcel consignees. Also, two etomidate storage centres were shut down.

Furthermore, Customs dismantled a "space oil" distribution and storage centre in Sham Shui Po, seizing 178 "space oil" infused capsules there. Later, two persons-in-charge, a courier involved in the case, and a "space oil" buyer were arrested. Thirteen "space oil" infused capsules were also found from the arrested buyer.

All arrested persons have been released on bail pending further investigation. Investigations are ongoing, and the likelihood of further arrests is not ruled out.

Customs will continue to step up enforcement against "space oil" through intelligence analysis and maintain close contact with the logistics industry. The department reminds logistics companies to remain vigilant and report to Customs any suspicious activities.

Under the Pharmacy and Poisons Ordinance, any person who possesses any poison included in Part 1 of the Poisons List other than in accordance with provisions commits an offence. The maximum penalty upon conviction is a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for two years.

Members of the public may report any suspected drug trafficking activities to Customs' 24-hour report hotline 182 8080 or its dedicated crime reporting email account (crimereport@customs.gov.hk) or online form (eform.cefs.gov.hk/form/ced002/).



[WSD to host Water Save Carnival at HarbourChill, Wan Chai](#)

The Water Supplies Department (WSD) will hold the Water Save Carnival from December 5 to 15 at HarbourChill, Wan Chai. Under the theme "Save Water Today for a Sustainable Future", the carnival aims to raise public awareness about water conservation through a series of engaging and fun activities, working together to create a sustainable future without water shortages. The carnival features a variety of activities, including water conservation

workshops, interactive games, and a Water Save Dave Mascot Meet-and-Greet. A Giant Crystal Droplet will be set up on-site, allowing the public to step inside for photos and pledge their commitment to the vision of "Cherish Every Drop, Sustain a Better Life".

At the workshops, participants can create their own tools or decorations, including water filters, droplet wind chimes, and Water Save Dave key holders, using their creativity. Water Save Dave will also meet and greet the public at specific times and take photos with them.

The interactive games at the carnival, including Detect Water-Saving Acts!, Repair the Pipe!, Hydro-Personality Test, Water-Saving Drum Master, Every Habit Counts, and Water-Saving Battle, aim to deepen public understanding of the importance of water conservation. Participants who complete designated activities will also receive Water Save Dave-themed souvenirs.

All activities at the Water Save Carnival are free of charge. Some of the activities require pre-registration. Details are available on the thematic webpage (waterconservation.gov.hk/en/carnival/index.html) or Water Save Dave's Facebook page (www.facebook.com/share/p/15EG8zPJ3J). Members of the public are most welcome to join.