

EPD responds to Advisory Council on the Environment's resolution on San Tin/Lok Ma Chau Development Node EIA report

In response to the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE)'s decision to endorse the environmental impact assessment (EIA) report on San Tin/Lok Ma Chau Development Node with conditions in accordance with the Environmental Impact Assessment Ordinance (EIAO) after discussion at its meeting today (April 22), an Environmental Protection Department (EPD) spokesman said:

"The statutory EIA process in Hong Kong is a professional, objective and open system. The Technical Memorandum on EIA Process (TM) and EIA Study Briefs lay down objective and clear principles, procedures, guidelines, requirements and criteria for various EIA matters. The EIAO aims to assess the environmental acceptability of the development proposal submitted by the project proponent.

"The Director of Environmental Protection will review in detail the EIA report with comprehensive and careful consideration of the requirements of the EIA Study Brief and the TM, as well as comments on the environment raised by the public and the ACE during the public inspection period, before making the decision on whether to approve the EIA report and the conditions to be imposed if the EIA report is approved."

Government completes second drill under "government-wide mobilisation" level to consolidate and enhance responsiveness (with photos)

The Civil Service Bureau (CSB) today (April 22) conducted the second drill under the "government-wide mobilisation" level, codenamed "Exercise Touchdown II", to test the ability of bureaux/departments (B/Ds) to mobilise their rostered staff and to provide transport and logistics support within a short period of time following the activation of the mobilisation protocol. The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, and the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, inspected the operation drill at the Cheung Wah Community Hall in Fanling.

Mr Chan said that the enhanced mobilisation protocol is an important initiative of the current-term Government to further improve governance, improve the systemic resilience and enhance the Government's emergency response capabilities, ensuring that the Government can mobilise government staff in a more organised, systematic and efficient manner in case of major incidents so as to achieve the objective of "early planning and early intervention". He instructed colleagues to make a proper deployment in response to major or unexpected incidents, and fully support the operation of the mobilisation protocol. He also urged them to uphold the spirit of "putting the people first and addressing people's pressing needs", stand united when facing different challenges and serve the public to their best abilities.

Mrs Yeung said that the "Exercise Touchdown II" helps to further familiarise the participating B/Ds with the process and arrangements for activating the mobilisation protocol. The CSB will continue to conduct drills at an appropriate time with a view to consolidating and enhancing the mobility and responsiveness of government staff, and cultivating flexibility and efficiency in the organisational culture. The Government will continue to strengthen the execution capabilities of all participating B/Ds under the mobilisation protocol, and remind the designated personnel on roster to remain vigilant and to form a quick response unit (QRU) promptly to provide responses decisively in the event of major incidents.

The drill simulated a scenario in which a super typhoon was approaching Hong Kong and its associated torrential rain might result in serious flooding in some low-lying areas. It was therefore necessary for the Government to promptly mobilise staff across departments to form a QRU to provide support. All B/Ds were notified by the CSB and around 10 000 designated personnel were put on standby. Among them, 46 B/Ds had to deploy a total of around 700 staff members to assemble at designated locations within a specified time as soon as possible. About 260 staff members were required to assemble at the Cheung Wah Community Hall in Fanling and the remaining staff were required to assemble at designated locations of their respective B/Ds for a briefing. The Government Logistics Department also participated in the drill and arranged vehicles and designated supplies to arrive at the Cheung Wah Community Hall. The whole drill lasted for about four hours.

The Chief Executive announced in the 2022 Policy Address the enhancement of the mobilisation protocol with B/Ds drawing up their lists of designated personnel in advance to ensure that manpower can be mobilised promptly to form a QRU to provide reinforcement in the event of major incidents requiring considerable manpower support. On February 16, 2023, the Government conducted the first drill. In September 2023, more than 600 government staff from 16 B/Ds participated in the mobilisation operations to assist in the recovery work at various districts following the passage of Super Typhoon Saola and the torrential rain.



[DH to adopt new growth charts in second half of 2024 \(with photo\)](#)

â€‹The Department of Health (DH) today (April 22) announced that a new set of growth charts, i.e. the Hong Kong 2020 Growth References (HK2020), with new references and definitions will be adopted by the DH starting from the second half of this year as a better tool to assess and monitor the growth of children and adolescents.

A spokesman for the DH said that growth charts serve as an important reference tool for clinical assessment of an individual child, and facilitate

the monitoring of growth trends of the entire population of children and the timely adjustment of public health measures and strategies on enhancing children's health. To study the growth of contemporary Hong Kong children and review the existing growth charts developed in 1993 (HK1993), the DH, the Department of Paediatrics of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, and the Department of Paediatrics and Adolescent Medicine of the University of Hong Kong jointly conducted the Hong Kong Growth Study (HKGS) which was funded by the Health and Medical Research Fund (HMRF) of the Health Bureau. The research team also reviewed whether the Child Growth Standards developed by the World Health Organization for children 0 to 5 years old in 2006 (WH02006) was suitable to be adopted for use in Hong Kong.

The key characteristics of the HKGS and the development of the HK2020 include the following:

1. The study was funded by the HMRF of the Health Bureau. The HMRF has been supporting various health and medical research to inform health policies and improve population health through evidence-based scientific knowledge;
2. Apart from the funding from the HMRF, the HKGS reviewed and analysed the growth data of over two million local children collected by the DH's Family Health Service and Student Health Service. In addition, a population-based growth survey was conducted from 2019 to 2022, with growth data collected from over 21 300 infants, children and adolescents at hospitals, health centres and education institutes; and
3. The HKGS results revealed a clear secular trend in height for children and adolescents in Hong Kong. Thus a new set of growth charts for child-growth monitoring is required in Hong Kong.

Based on the data collected in the growth survey and advice from local and overseas experts, four sets of gender-specific growth charts for children 0 to 18 years are developed in the HK2020, namely (1) Weight-for-age charts; (2) Length/height-for-age charts; (3) Body Mass Index (BMI)-for-age charts; and (4) Head circumference-for-age charts. Comparing the new and old growth charts, the weight and height in HK2020 were higher than that in HK1993, particularly at pubertal ages. Notably, an increase of about 2 centimetres in median height was found for boys and girls at the age of 18.

Moreover, the data of Hong Kong children 0-5 years in the survey also fitted the WH02006 reasonably well. The HKGS concluded that HK2020 for 0 to 18 years and WH02006 for 0 to 5 years are suitable for use for Hong Kong children. Also, as the distribution of body fat for children changes with age, the study recommended an updated definition and assessment for overweight/obesity by using BMI-for-age instead of weight-for-height. The growth assessment in many places (including the Mainland, the United Kingdom and the United States) are also using BMI as a reference. The DH will continue its healthy lifestyle promotion among children and parents and various health promotion programmes (such as the Whole School Health Programme) in order to better prevent and improve the overweight situation of the children.

To provide an updated reference tool to assess and monitor the growth of

children and adolescents, the DH will adopt the HK2020 at its Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs) and Student Health Service Centres (SHSCs) for growth monitoring of children aged 0 to 5 years and 6 to 18 years respectively. The new growth charts are expected to be deployed in July this year for MCHCs and in September this year for SHSCs. Starting from September this year, the Hospital Authority will implement the new growth charts in its hospitals in phases, with a view to rolling out to all its hospitals by end of 2024. The District Health Centres currently providing services targeted at children, including group classes and outreach health risk assessment, will also support the launching of the new growth charts. In addition, the DH will also send letters to healthcare professional bodies and stakeholders to inform them of the study and the new growth charts. Moreover, the new growth chart shall also be made available in the eHealth app for use and viewing.

Relevant information of the study will be made available at the HKGS website as well as the website of DH for reference and use by professionals. For more information on the updated set of growth charts, please visit www.dh.gov.hk/english/useful/useful_PP_Growth_Chart/useful_PP_Growth_Chart.html and www.dh.gov.hk/english/useful/useful_HP_Growth_Chart/useful_HP_Growth_Chart.html.



[CHP investigates case of severe paediatric influenza A infection](#)

The Centre for Health Protection (CHP) of the Department of Health is today (April 22) investigating a case of severe paediatric influenza A infection and reminded the community to heighten vigilance against influenza. The CHP appealed to members of the public to receive seasonal influenza vaccination (SIV) in a timely manner to better protect themselves during the influenza season.

The case involves a 6-year-old girl with good past health. She developed a fever and cough since April 19 and sought medical attention at Union

Hospital on April 20. She was taken to the Accident and Emergency Department of Prince of Wales Hospital on April 20 due to worsening of symptoms and was admitted to the paediatric intensive care unit of the hospital on the same day. She was subsequently transferred to the intensive care unit of Hong Kong Children's Hospital for treatment on April 20 evening. Her respiratory specimen was positive for influenza A (H1) virus upon laboratory testing. The clinical diagnosis was influenza A infection complicated with encephalopathy. She is now in critical condition.

Initial enquiries by the CHP revealed that the patient had no travel history during the incubation period. Her home contacts are currently asymptomatic. The CHP's investigations are ongoing.

A spokesman for the CHP said, "Influenza can cause serious illnesses in high-risk individuals and even healthy persons. SIV is one of the most effective means to prevent seasonal influenza and its complications, as well as reducing influenza-related hospitalisation and death. SIV is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or above except those with known contraindications. Persons at higher risk of getting influenza and its complications, including the elderly and children, should receive SIV early. As it takes about two weeks to develop antibodies, members of the public are advised to receive SIV early for protection against seasonal influenza. Please see details of the vaccination schemes on the [CHP's website](#)."

A person who gets influenza and COVID-19 at the same time may be more seriously ill and would have a higher risk of death. It is important to receive both SIV and COVID-19 vaccination as soon as possible, in particular for children and elderly persons residing in the community or residential care homes. The public should also maintain good personal and environmental hygiene against influenza and other respiratory illnesses, and note the following:

- Surgical masks can prevent transmission of respiratory viruses from ill persons. It is essential for persons who are symptomatic (even if having mild symptoms) to wear a surgical mask;
- For high-risk persons (e.g. persons with underlying medical conditions or persons who are immunocompromised), wear a surgical mask when visiting public places. The public should also wear a surgical mask when taking public transport or staying in crowded places. It is important to wear a mask properly, including performing hand hygiene before wearing and after removing a mask;
- Avoid touching one's eyes, mouth and nose;
- Wash hands with liquid soap and water properly whenever possibly contaminated;
- When hands are not visibly soiled, clean them with 70 to 80 per cent alcohol-based handrub;
- Cover the mouth and nose with tissue paper when sneezing or coughing. Dispose of soiled tissue paper properly into a lidded rubbish bin, and wash hands thoroughly afterwards;
- Maintain good indoor ventilation;
- When having respiratory symptoms, wear a surgical mask, refrain from

work or attending classes at school, avoid going to crowded places and seek medical advice promptly; and

- Maintain a balanced diet, perform physical activity regularly, take adequate rest, do not smoke and avoid overstress.

The public may visit the CHP's [influenza page](#) and weekly [COVID-19 & Flu Express](#) for more information.

[Hong Kong presents innovative projects at International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva \(with photo\)](#)

The Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office, Berlin (HKETO Berlin) hosted a reception on the occasion of Hong Kong's participation in the 49th International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva on April 19 (Geneva time).

A Hong Kong delegation of close to 700 participants from 40 institutions, including universities, research and development (R&D) centres, laboratories, technology companies, government departments, and primary and secondary schools, exhibited more than 360 projects at the exhibition. Among over 1 000 inventions this year, the Hong Kong delegation won 28 Gold Medals with Congratulations of Jury and 114 Gold Medals, totalling a record high of over 350 prizes.

The Government accords top priority to promoting innovation and technology (I&T) development and establishing Hong Kong as an international I&T centre. Speaking at the reception, the Director of the HKETO Berlin, Ms Jenny Szeto, highlighted the Government's commitment and recent policies to foster an innovation-friendly environment in Hong Kong, in particular supporting R&D activities and commercialisation of their outcomes.

"In this year's Budget, we have doubled the maximum funding to the Technology Transfer Office of each specified university, and will also be providing annual subsidies to nurture start-up development within the universities. And just last year, we have launched the Research, Academic and Industry Sectors One-plus Scheme to promote the '1 to N' transformation. The scheme aims to encourage the commercialisation and technology transfer of universities' R&D outcomes, and will fund at least 100 research teams from local universities which have good potential to become successful start-ups," Ms Szeto explained.

In addition, the Government has also been spearheading efforts to attract I&T talent. To accelerate the expansion of the talent pool, the Government has launched the Technology Talent Admission Scheme, providing a fast-track arrangement for companies to admit young tech talent from abroad

to undertake R&D work in Hong Kong.

Founded in 1972, the International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva is the largest global exhibition exclusively devoted to inventions. This year's event showcased a record high of more than 1 000 inventions from about 40 countries and regions.

About HKETO Berlin

HKETO Berlin is the official representative of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government in commercial relations and other economic and trade matters in Switzerland as well as Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia.

