

Transcript of remarks by SEE at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Environment and Ecology, Mr Tse Chin-wan, at a media session after attending the launch event for the Blueprint for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Fisheries (December 14):

Reporter: About the urban farm, what is the aim or the purpose? Is the Government planning to open more farms in different districts later? And the second question is, what kind of support will the Government give to the agriculture and fisheries sector and what is their response?

The Secretary for Environment and Ecology: The purpose of the urban farm as explained by the Director (of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation) is that Hong Kong is basically a heavily developed city and therefore we are competing lands for different purposes and uses. Hence, we are experimenting a new concept, that is, in the urban area, in the new buildings, whether we can merge farming and development and we believe that is technically possible. If that can be done, it can enhance the agricultural development in the city a lot. Therefore, in Ma On Shan, next year, we will try to have a pilot project there. We believe this is a good concept. After gaining more experience from the Ma On Shan project, we will put up more projects and try to develop an urban farming direction.

As to your second question, you can see in the Blueprint that we are offering the sector a number of support. It covers land, finance, technology, training, etc. As I have explained, the process of developing this Blueprint is through a lot of discussions and working together with the trade. You can see in general, they all welcome the measures in the Blueprint. Of course, the next challenge is the implementation and that is another area. We will join hands with the trade to implement the measures and make sure it will actually benefit and help the long-term development of the agriculture and fisheries sector in Hong Kong.

Reporter: How is the Government's plan to attract young people to become farmers?

The Secretary for Environment and Ecology: Firstly, we are going to go for technology. When the young people see that agriculture and fisheries is actually high-tech and it is not something of the past generations, they will feel interested. And also, science and technology can improve the working environment for the sector and both will improve the attractiveness. And the last one, of course, is the reward. If we can increase the value of the product, that will increase the reward. That will also attract young people to join the trade.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)