

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 on enhanced arrangements on promoting municipal solid waste charging at the lobby of West Wing, Central Government Offices, today (January 19):

Reporter: Would you or anyone from the relevant Government departments need to be held responsible for the postponement of this municipal (solid) waste charging scheme? Would this affect the Government's credibility and the waste charging scheme's future rollout? The second question, by postponing the plan until August, what does the Government hope to address specifically, such as the implementation of the scheme with the support of some communities affected by the scheme? Are you confident that you can solve these issues before August? The last question, what is the logic and rationale of allowing the Government to implement the waste charging scheme first? Wouldn't the same problem exist in the scheme when you launch it later? Would pushing the implementation period and the six-month transition period into the holidays and beyond affect the trash collection efficiency?

Secretary for Environment and Ecology: As I have explained, in this week, I noted many discussions and questions raised by various sectors and the community about waste charging. Many people expressed their concern to me that the general public do not understand how waste charging will be implemented and the related details. I think as a responsible Government, we would like to implement waste charging successfully and smoothly and therefore I believe it is just a responsible act for us to put more time into education so that when we implement waste charging it will be implemented successfully and smoothly. I must also emphasise that we will not only just put more time into publicity and education, but also put forward a new approach, that is, we will put forward demonstrations so that different people, different sectors and the public can actually see how waste charging will be in operation, how it is operated and if you have some minor problems, how they will be resolved, etc. I think it is the best way.

You have asked about (the rationale of) the Government doing it first, will it actually help? I think the answer is certainly. When the Government is going to do it, then we will have real operation cases for people to observe. It is not only for people to observe, we will make use of those demonstrations to take movie (video) and bring the media and the public to look at it so that people can see the real thing and how it operates. People will ease their mind and know the details. I think that will help the implementation of the scheme in the future.

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