

**Confirmed Minutes of the 247th Meeting
of the Advisory Council on the Environment (ACE)
on 7 June 2021 at 2:30 p.m.**

Present:

Mr Stanley WONG, SBS, JP (Chairman)

Prof Nora TAM, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)

Ms Carmen CHAN, BBS, JP

Ms Sylvia CHAN, MH

Ir Samantha KONG

Ms LAM Chung-yan

Prof LAU Chi-pang, BBS, JP

Prof Alexis LAU, JP

Ms Julia LAU

Dr Winnie LAW

Mr Andrew LEE

Prof Kenneth LEUNG, JP

Dr MA Kwan-ki

Dr Jeanne NG

Dr SUNG Yik-hei

Ms Christina TANG

Mr Simon WONG, JP

Dr WONG Kwok-yan

Prof WONG Sze-chun, BBS, JP

Dr Raymond YAU

Mr Owin FUNG, JP (Secretary)

Absent with Apologies:

Ms Ada FUNG, BBS

In Attendance:

Mr Simon CHAN Assistant Director (Conservation), Agriculture,
Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD)

Ms Margaret CHAN Chief Town Planner/Technical Services, Planning
Department (PlanD)

Ms Fanny HUI Chief Information Officer, Environmental Protection
Department (EPD)

Ms Becky LAM Chief Executive Officer (CBD), EPD

Miss Sally SHEK Executive Officer (CBD) 1, EPD
Miss Ingrid SUEN Executive Officer (CBD) 2, EPD

In Attendance for Item 3:

Mr Raymond WU Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2), EPD
Mr Bruno LUK Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (Waste Reduction Policy), EPD
Mr Andy CHAN Assistant Director (Environmental Infrastructure), EPD
Mr CHENG Tak-kuen Assistant Director (Waste Infrastructure Planning), EPD
Mr FONG Kin-wa Assistant Director (Waste Reduction and Recycling), EPD
Mr WONG Chuen-fai Assistant Director (Waste Recycling Community Programme Review), EPD
Ms Fanny YEUNG Senior Administrative Officer (Waste Infrastructure Planning), EPD

Action

The Chairman welcomed Members attending the meeting in person or by Zoom and informed that apologies of absence had been received from Ms Ada Fung.

Item 1 : Confirmation of the draft minutes of the 246th meeting held on 10 May 2021 (Closed-door session)

2. The draft minutes were confirmed without amendments.

Item 2 : Matters arising (Closed-door session)

3. There were no matters arising from the minutes of the last meeting.

Item 3 : Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035
(ACE Papers 12/2021 and 13/2021)

4. The Chairman said that *ACE Paper 12/2021* briefed Members on the targets, strategies and key measures of the new “Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035” (the new Blueprint), which outlined the long-term strategies, goals and measures to tackle the challenge of waste management up to 2035. A background note on the subject matter (*ACE Paper 13/2021*), prepared by the secretariat had

been circulated to Members for reference before the meeting.

5. There was no declaration of interest by Members.

(The presentation team joined the meeting at this juncture.)

Presentation cum Question-and-Answer Session (Open session)

6. Mr Raymond Wu, with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation, briefed Members on the details of the Government's major achievements on waste management as well as the vision and targets of the "Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035" (the new Blueprint).

New Targets

7. In response to two Members' question on the targets in the new Blueprint, Mr Raymond Wu said that the Government aimed at achieving the medium-term target in around 2028 to 2029. The Government was committed to developing more waste-to-energy/resources infrastructure, including a new waste-to-energy facility for handling non-recyclable municipal solid waste (MSW) with advanced technology, with a view to achieving the goal of "Zero Landfill" under the new Blueprint. Mr Wu supplemented that the Government would review and update the strategies and targets of the new Blueprint roughly every five years to keep abreast of the latest situation.

8. Noting the increase in per capita MSW disposal rate from 2011 to 2020, the Chairman and two Members would like to know the effectiveness of measures set out in the "Hong Kong: Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013–2022" (2013 Blueprint) in reducing the per capital disposal rate.

9. Mr Raymond Wu explained that the Government had been meeting the challenges in waste management and implementing various measures since the 2013 Blueprint with good progress. The increase in per capita MSW disposal rate since 2011 was the result of the economic growth and development as well as the new challenges we were facing in recent years such as the reduction of MSW recycled in Hong Kong due to the downturn in global recycling market. Mr Wu remarked that MSW charging would be the major driving force behind waste reduction and recycling and played an important role in achieving the targets set out

in the new Blueprint. In this connection, the Government would work closely with the Legislative Council (LegCo) to facilitate the early passage of the Waste Disposal (Charging for Municipal Solid Waste) (Amendment) Bill 2018.

10. Apart from MSW charging which would provide financial disincentives to encourage waste reduction and recycling, the Chairman suggested that the Government should step up the efforts on other measures, in particular education, with a view to achieving the goals in the new Blueprint. A Member echoed that education, publicity, and MSW charging were equally important in driving behavioural changes. Mr Raymond Wu added that in addition to MSW charging, multi-pronged waste reduction and recycling initiatives under the six major areas of action in the new Blueprint would be adopted to achieve the goals.

11. In response to the Chairman's question on any new and improved measures under the new Blueprint, Mr Raymond Wu advised that there were various new initiatives under the new Blueprint, including the proposed phased regulation of the use of disposable plastic tableware, Producer Responsibility Scheme on Plastic Beverage Containers, and development of more new waste-to-energy/resources infrastructure which would help achieve the goals under the new Blueprint.

Municipal Solid Waste Charging

12. In response to a Member's question on the major challenges of implementing MSW charging scheme, Mr Bruno Luk said that one of the challenges was to establish an extensive community recycling network to provide the public with easy access to recycling outlets. In this connection, the Government would continue to expand the community recycling network comprising Recycling Stations, Recycling Stores and Recycling Spots. Another major challenge would be tackling non-compliance behaviour such as illegal dumping upon the implementation of MSW charging. As it would take time to instil behavioural change, sufficient time would be provided for the community to get prepared for the implementation of MSW charging after the passage of the Bill. He added that the Government would spare no efforts in promoting and enhancing public education to raise public's awareness of the charging regime. As MSW charging was the key of the overall waste reduction strategy, another Member opined that there should be a contingency plan in case the MSW Charging Bill could not be passed on time.

13. In response to a Member's question on MSW charging policies in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) cities, Mr Bruno Luk advised that the Mainland managed waste separation through regulation.

Waste Reduction

14. A Member opined and another Member concurred that the regulation on the use of disposable plastic tableware should be implemented as soon as possible. Mr Raymond Wu said that the Government would kick start a public consultation on the implementation schedule and detailed arrangements for the regulation of disposable plastic tableware shortly. He highlighted that the interests of different stakeholders including the catering trade would be considered when deciding the timeframe for the implementation schedule for the disposable plastic tableware.

15. The Chairman suggested that the Government should also devise policies or measures to promote waste reduction in schools such as encouraging students to bring their own reusable tableware, and a Member went on to suggest providing schools with additional resources to assist them to practise waste reduction at source with measures such as the procurement of food steamers and dish washers with a view to encouraging students to bring their own meals and reusable tableware. Mr Cheng Tak-kuen replied that a voluntary scheme under the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign had been carried out to encourage schools to provide "on-site meal portioning" to students and adopt the use of reusable tableware. He supplemented that subsidies were also provided to local schools under the Environment and Conservation Fund (ECF) for the procurement of "Four Treasures" comprising refrigerators, steam cabinets, dishwashers and disinfection machines, with a view to encouraging students to bring their own lunchbox.

16. In response to a Member's question regarding the progress of the review of the Plastic Shopping Bag Charging Scheme, Mr Bruno Luk advised that the review had been completed and relevant public consultation would be conducted later this year. To further reduce the use of plastic shopping bags, tightening the scope of exemptions and adjusting the levy under the scheme were two options that could be considered.

Waste Separation

17. The Chairman and a Member were supportive of the community recycling network and were of the view that the Recycling Stores could better encourage the public to recycle given their convenient locations. Another Member reminded that the Government should ensure fairness in supporting organisations with public money to operate Recycling Stations or Recycling Stores. In response to a Member's question on the future plan for the community recycling network, Mr Bruno Luk advised that it would be a long-term measure supported by recurrent funding of the Government through engagement of non-profit making organisations to provide a territory-wide recycling network. He considered that the current operation mode of the Recycling Stores was effective in motivating recycling in the community as positive progress had been witnessed.

18. A Member was concerned that the promotion of community recycling network might encourage unnecessary consumption and suggested that emphasis should be placed on the priority of waste reduction through promotional campaigns. Mr Bruno Luk echoed the importance of waste reduction at source, and shared that EPD was also promoting the message of waste reduction through various publicity campaigns such as the "Reduce and Recycle 2.0" Campaign.

19. In response to a Member's concern about the downstream treatment of recyclables collected by the Government's recycling collection network, and how fairness was ensured by the Government during the tender invitation process to identify suitable contractors for relevant recycling services, Mr Raymond Wu advised that the contractor engaged through open tender would be required under the contractual terms to ensure that the collected recyclables would be properly handled and turned into resources.

20. A Member also suggested increasing the space allocated for waste separation and temporary storage of recyclables collected in new development projects through granting gross floor area concessions or reviewing prevailing regulations. Mr Raymond Wu advised that the Government would liaise with relevant bureaux/departments (B/Ds) to explore the provision of additional space for waste separation facilities in future development projects.

Food Waste

21. To provide incentives for the catering trade to participate in food waste separation, a Member suggested that the Government should designate more food waste collection points. Another Member shared that the pilot scheme on food waste separation was well received by the tenants of his company and suggested that the Government should provide incentives for the catering trade by offering free collection services of food waste. A Member observed that the amount of food waste collected and processed in the food waste recycling facilities was currently on the low side and echoed the suggestions to strengthen food waste separation and collection with a view to fully utilising the capacity of such facilities. In response, Mr Raymond Wu said that the Government would take into account the experiences gained from the pilot scheme on the central collection of food waste to devise a cost-effective approach to handle food waste. Mr Bruno Luk supplemented that food waste separated by and collected from the catering trade would not be subject to MSW charges, which would serve as an incentive to encourage food waste separation by the trade.

22. A Member observed that the public was generally supportive of practising domestic food waste separation and suggested the Government expand the collection of domestic food waste and devise concrete targets on food waste collection. Acknowledging the huge difficulty in collecting food waste due to the high logistics costs and the need of timely collection, the Chairman suggested that the Government should explore the possibility of processing food waste within each public housing estate and in remote rural areas to help reduce the logistics costs.

23. Mr Raymond Wu advised that the Government was exploring different options including innovative technologies in food waste collection and processing through various pilot schemes. He shared that some advanced technologies could help reduce the odour generated by food waste collected, which could extend the timeframe before transporting the food waste to waste recycling facilities, thus reducing the logistics costs. EPD was working closely with the Housing Society to conduct a pilot project on food waste collection in public housing estates with smart technologies, with a view to identifying a cost-effective approach for wider application in future. He added that the Government would be prudent in expanding food waste collection and recycling in a cost-effective manner.

24. Considering the limited outlet for compost produced from food waste in

Hong Kong, a Member was of the view that regional cooperation with GBA cities might help to absorb the additional compost produced. Another Member further suggested the Government draw references from overseas economies in the collection of food waste. Mr Raymond Wu said that the Government had been maintaining close collaborations with the GBA cities to facilitate the exchange of experiences and technologies relating to waste reduction and recycling.

25. In response to a Member's enquiry about the use of black soldier fly for processing food waste, Mr Raymond Wu advised that arrangements were under preparation to engage recycling operators through a pilot project.

26. A Member suggested the provision of food waste collection services at public refuse collection points operated by the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD). Mr Bruno Luk replied that EPD would explore the feasibility with FEHD as the proposed operation would require the use of additional space at the refuse collection points.

27. Regarding food waste reduction, a Member shared his experience in donating fresh vegetables to the needy. He went on to suggest that the Government should explore different options, such as through regulation or cooperation with voluntary organisations, to fully utilise as well as reducing the amount of food waste at source.

Recycling Industry

28. A Member pointed out that many local recycling operators, in particular the small to medium enterprises, could not sustain their businesses even with the support of the Recycling Fund, and thus the support for the recycling industry should be strengthened. A Member enquired about any new measures under the new Blueprint to enhance the support for the recycling industry. With reference to the practice of some large corporations in recycling and procuring recycled products, the Member further suggested, with the support of the Chairman that the Government should promote the best practices on resources circulation and provide incentives to encourage small to medium businesses in contributing to the development of a circular economy. The Chairman further suggested that the Government should prioritise the use of locally recycled products in Government's procurement contracts with a view to boosting local market demand for recyclables.

29. Mr Fong Kin-wa said that the Government attached great importance to the support of the recycling industry. He advised that an additional funding of \$1 billion had been injected to the Recycling Fund and the Fund application period would be extended to 2027 so as to render continuous support to the trade. He added that the Government took proactive actions to help the industry such as providing one-off subsidy, putting up central collection services for waste paper and waste plastics to reduce their costs of collection, providing land support for recycling facilities at affordable price and enhancing green procurement within the Government to boost the market demand of green products.

Education and Publicity

30. A Member suggested, with the support of the Chairman and another Member, that EPD should collaborate with the Education Bureau (EDB) in enhancing environmental education through mainstreaming in the school curriculum. The Member considered that environmental education in Hong Kong was knowledge-based and outdoor learning was insufficient for inducing behavioural and attitudinal changes in students. Sharing her experiences in child care education, another Member highlighted the importance of learning through real-life experiences and suggested that research should be conducted on the effectiveness of environmental education in nurturing environmentally-friendly habits.

31. Mr Raymond Wu agreed that education was of paramount importance and the Government had launched various educational and promotional campaigns on waste reduction and recycling such as the Food Wise Hong Kong Campaign. Mr Wu also shared that EPD had devised plans with EDB in promoting the use of reusable tableware in schools, and funding was available under the ECF to support research on the effectiveness of education programmes. Mr Wu assured Members that the Government would spare no efforts on education and encourage members of the public to practise green living.

Innovation and Cooperation

32. Drawing experiences from the smart bin system adopted by his company which provided real-time data on waste generation, a Member suggested that the Government should explore innovative technologies to enhance efficiency of recycling and offer new solutions to tackle waste management. Another Member

suggested that the Government should take the lead in raising the waste recycling performance within Government premises. Mr Raymond Wu cited an example that funding support was provided under the Recycling Fund to develop innovative technologies on food waste collection with a view to tackling hygiene and odour problems. He added that the Government would continue to explore innovative and advance technologies to tackle waste problems.

Waste-to-energy Infrastructure

33. With reference to the experiences of other countries in the use of incineration facilities, a Member suggested the Government explore the possibility for a shared-use of incinerator with GBA cities. He further enquired about the upcoming plans for building integrated waste management facility in Hong Kong. Mr Raymond Wu advised that the detailed plans for the new waste-to-energy/resources infrastructure facility were still under consideration and the Government would draw references from the Mainland as appropriate.

Conclusion

34. The Chairman thanked the representatives of EPD for their presentation and detailed explanations, and summarised the views made by Members and concluded that Members were in general supportive of the new Blueprint and the Government's various waste management measures.

Internal Discussion Session (Closed-door session)

New Targets

35. A Member concurred with another Member that EPD should review the effectiveness of the measures under the 2013 Blueprint and devise revised or updated measures after learning from the experiences gained. A Member opined that the timeframe of the initiatives in the new Blueprint such as regulating the use of disposable plastic tableware in 2025 should be expedited. Mr Raymond Wu advised that the effectiveness of the major campaigns and initiatives under the 2013 Blueprint, such as the Producer Responsibility Schemes and Plastic Shopping Bag Charging Scheme, had been reviewed and updated to keep abreast of the latest situation. The new Blueprint was formulated after consulting relevant stakeholders and building on the 2013 Blueprint and the momentum of previous

efforts in waste reduction and recycling.

Municipal Solid Waste Charging

36. Considering that the new Blueprint largely hinged on the implementation of the MSW charging, a Member was concerned about whether the MSW Charging Bill could be passed in the current term of the LegCo and asked if there was any contingency plan should MSW charging could not be implemented on time. Mr Bruno Luk said that the Government was working closely with the LegCo Bills Committee and would address some LegCo Members' suggestion to provide free designated garbage bags during early stage of implementation of MSW charging.

37. A Member supported the provision of free designated garbage bags at the early stage of implementation of MSW charging so that tenants/residents could become more receptive to it. He suggested distributing free designated garbage bags through refuse collection contractors of shopping malls or property management companies to their tenants. However, the Chairman opined and another Member agreed that giving out free designated garbage bags would defeat the purpose of creating financial disincentives to drive behavioural changes in waste reduction. The Member suggested that increasing the rates of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme might be more effective in providing assistance for the needy to meet their additional expense arising from MSW charging.

Industry Support

38. A Member emphasised the importance to work closely with the recycling industry to address their need and provide the necessary support to facilitate sustainable development of the recycling industry and a circular economy. Another Member supplemented that regional cooperation with the GBA cities as well as collaboration with relevant B/Ds such as Development Bureau and Commerce and Economic Development Bureau would be crucial to further support waste reduction and recycling.

39. Mr Raymond Wu advised that the Government had provided financial support under the Recycling Fund to the recycling industry and affordable rental in EcoPark and other short-term tenancy sites were offered to recycling operators, facilitating local recycling activities. He said that the Government targeted to

create a circular economy and build a sustainable recycling chain in Hong Kong by supporting the collection of recyclables in the upstream operation and facilitating the development of downstream waste-to-resources infrastructure.

Education and Publicity

40. A Member suggested, with the support of two Members, that EPD should collaborate with EDB to review the school curriculum with a view to enhancing environmental education and cultivating green living habits in schools. Drawing references from the environmental education in Taiwan, the Member pointed out that the Government should enhance and conduct research on environmental education. Another Member agreed that research on the effectiveness of environmental education was important to identify rooms for improvement. Mr Raymond Wu agreed that education was of paramount importance and the Government would spare no efforts in this respect.

41. Having regard to the important role of education in various environmental issues, a Member suggested and the Chairman agreed that representatives from relevant B/Ds, such as EDB, might be invited to attend ACE meetings in future where appropriate to facilitate the exchange of views.

42. To solicit the support of the public on waste reduction and recycling, the Chairman suggested, with the support of a Member that the Government should inform the public of various waste policies/initiatives and their outcomes through publicity efforts. Mr Raymond Wu thanked Members for their valuable suggestions and would take them into consideration where appropriate.

43. The Chairman concluded the discussion and invited EPD to consider taking on board the views and suggestions made by Members during the discussion.

(The presentation team left the meeting at this juncture.)

Item 4 : Any other business (Closed-door session)

44. There was no other business for discussion at the meeting.

Item 5 : Date of next meeting (Closed-door session)

45. As there was no proposed item for discussion at the next two ACE meetings, the Chairman said that there would be a summer break in July and August. The next ACE meeting was scheduled for 6 September 2021 (Monday). Members would be advised on the agenda in due course.

ACE Secretariat

August 2021