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ACE Paper 18/2013

For discussion on 9 December 2013

**Council for Sustainable Development's
Public Engagement on Municipal Solid Waste Charging –
“Waste Reduction by Waste Charging · How to Implement?”**

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' views on the issues raised for the public engagement on municipal solid waste (MSW) charging launched by the Council for Sustainable Development (SDC) in September 2013, entitled “Waste Reduction by Waste Charging · How to Implement?”.

BACKGROUND

2. The Government conducted a public consultation in early 2012 to deliberate the issues pertaining to MSW charging with the community and relevant stakeholders. On the whole, there was majority support within the community for the introduction of quantity-based MSW charging as a policy tool to promote waste reduction and recovery. But views were fairly mixed when it came to the implementation details, including concerns about fly-tipping and other compliance and environmental hygiene issues. The specific level of the waste charge (though not being a subject of the public consultation) and the need of relief measures to help the needy were also areas of concern.

3. In this regard, the Government affirmed that a quantity-based MSW charging system should be the approach as the broad direction in pursuing the initiative. It also considered it necessary and invited the SDC to conduct a

second-stage public engagement to gauge the community's view and foster an in-depth, open and cross sector discussion on the proposed implementation details of the charging scheme. In May 2013, the Government published the "Hong Kong Blueprint for Sustainable Use of Resources 2013 – 2022" which also includes waste reduction at source as a key to the tackling of the waste problem.

SDC's PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

4. The SDC launched a public engagement process on 25 September 2013 which adopts a bottom-up and stakeholder-led approach to gauge the community's views on how best to implement quantity-based MSW charging in Hong Kong, as well as to raise public awareness about the importance of behavioural changes to achieve waste reduction at source. The SDC issued an Invitation for Response (IR) document entitled "Waste Reduction by Waste Charging · How to Implement?" at Annex, which serves as a discussion framework to impart information and initiate public dialogue. Four key considerations categorised under "Charging Mechanism", "Coverage of Charging Scheme", "Charging Level" and "Recycling" have been identified for soliciting public views, which are summarised as follows –

Charging Mechanism

- To explore different mechanisms in implementing quantity-based waste charging that are feasible in the unique settings of Hong Kong;

Coverage of Charging Scheme

- To consider the implementation of charging scheme to all sectors in one go or to different sectors by phases;

Charging Level

- To consider a charging level which can be widely accepted by the public and which can also be able to induce behavioural changes in achieving waste reduction; and

Recycling

- To seek views on how to support local waste recycling activities to meet the community demand.

5. The SDC's public engagement includes five regional public forums and a series of engagement events with stakeholders including domestic and residential; commercial and industrial; waste collection and recycling; green groups; public authorities; non-governmental organisations; medical and health; professional organizations; academics and educational institutes; District Councils and district personalities etc. The SDC also leverages on the synergy from over 90 supporting organizations to help promote the public engagement and mobilize wider participation among different sectors of the community through their network. The engagement will last for four months up to 24 January 2014. Views and responses collected during the public engagement process will be analysed and taken into account by the SDC in preparing a report with recommendations to the Government.

ADVICE SOUGHT

6. Members are invited to provide comments and views on the issues set out in the IR document at **Annex**.

Environment Bureau
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