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**for information**

## **BEACH WATER QUALITY IN HONG KONG FOR 1996**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of this paper is to brief Members on the water quality of gazetted beaches in Hong Kong in the 1996 bathing season.

### **BACKGROUND**

2. A comprehensive report on beach water quality is published by the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) annually. The report serves the following main purposes :

- (a) to enable the Director of Environmental Protection to judge whether the water quality of the beaches has reached the relevant water quality objectives and thus assess the effectiveness of existing pollution control programmes;
- (b) to enable the Urban Council and Regional Council, which are the beach management authorities, to decide whether gazetted beaches are suitable for swimming;
- (c) to provide a source of reference and an educational tool for academics and others who have a professional interest in the water quality of beaches; and
- (d) to inform the public of the state of our beaches and the health risks associated with swimming there.

### **STATUS OF HONG KONG BEACH WATER**

3. The water quality of 41 gazetted beaches in the territory is monitored under EPD's beach water quality monitoring programme. The 1996 annual report is now ready and enclosed with this paper.

4. The water quality status of a beach is assessed through a ranking system which links pollution level with swimming-associated health risks. According to the system, beaches are ranked as "good", "fair", "poor" or "very poor". Only those in the ranks of "good" and "fair" meet the relevant water quality objective.
5. The rankings of the gazetted beaches for the year 1996, which are shown in the annual report, are reproduced in Fig. 1 for easy reference. In the 1996 bathing season, 13 gazetted beaches were ranked "good", 14 "fair", 10 "poor" and 4 "very poor". The 4 beaches with "very poor" water quality were Anglers', Approach, and Ting Kau in Tsuen Wan District and Rocky Bay in South District, Hong Kong Island. They were closed to the public in the 1996 bathing season.
6. There was a general improvement in the water quality of most gazetted beaches in Hong Kong in the 1996 bathing season as compared with the position in 1995, as illustrated in Fig. 2. Significant improvement in water quality was observed at Deep Water Bay Beach and Silvermine Bay Beach, as illustrated in Figures 3 and 4. At Deep Water Bay Beach this was due to the completion of sewer connection works, whereas at Silvermine Bay Beach it was mainly due to the diversion of sewage from the beach toilet to proper treatment facilities. The overall water quality of all gazetted beaches in Tuen Mun District improved when compared to 1995, and this has been brought about by legislative enforcement and completion of the sewerage improvement works.
7. The report also highlights the sources of pollution of beaches in various districts and the remedial actions planned or being undertaken. The very poor water quality of Rocky Bay Beach and the beaches in Tsuen Wan will be greatly improved when the various sewerage improvement works are completed in the next few years and local domestic discharges are connected to the sewerage system.

## **CONCLUSION**

8. After a period of decline during which increasing pollution eroded early gains achieved through first aid pollution control measures, we are now beginning to see the results of the implementation of new sewerage and rigorous legislative control throughout the territory. The deteriorating trend has been reversed and we expect this to continue over the next few years, especially when new sewerage has been provided to the Tsuen Wan District.

**Environmental Protection Department**  
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