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Report on the 45th Waste Management Subcommittee Meeting

INTRODUCTION

At the meeting on 10 July 2024, the Waste Management Subcommittee discussed the “Report on the Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Charging Demonstration Scheme”. For details of the subject, please refer to ACE-WM Paper 2/2024 at *Annex*.

KEY DISCUSSIONS

2. While respecting the Government’s decision to suspend MSW charging, Members were worried about the loss of momentum in promoting green practices such as recycling and waste reduction in society. Apart from raising questions on the work plan, timetable and pre-requisites for the subsequent implementation of MSW charging, Members also offered extensive views and comments for improving the charging scheme and sustainable waste management in the long term.

3. In particular, Members highlighted the importance of the Government’s continuous efforts for the preparation of MSW charging through strengthening publicity and public education, expanding the coverage of community recycling facilities, increasing incentives for waste reduction at source and recycling practices etc. Members’ key suggestions are summarised as follows –

Recycling Facilities

- expand the coverage of community recycling facilities by further increasing mobile / fixed recycling points at convenient locations, facilitating the provision of smart recycling bins for food waste in private premises;
- enhance the accessibility of recycling facilities and services, such as through partnering with supermarkets or department stores for the collection of recyclables and in return arranging for the rewards collected by the public from recycling to be consumed in the stores concerned;
- ensure proper handling of collected recyclables by cleansing contractors and the availability of adequate downstream recycling infrastructure to instill public confidence in practising and maintaining green habits;

Publicity and Public Education

- promote the concepts of “civic responsibility”, “polluters-pay” and “waste reduction at source” to tie in with the national target of carbon neutrality in publicity campaigns;
- illustrate the life cycle and carbon reduction of collected recyclables in particular the end-products to impress upon the public their contribution in recycling;
- deploy more on-trend and creative publicity campaigns with a view to maximising the impact on the public and inducing “buy-in” of green behaviours;
- engage public participation in sharing creative waste-management solutions such as through competitions;
- strengthen inter-departmental collaboration such as with the Education Bureau for stepping up green education from kindergarten to university levels;
- incentivise those “top recyclers” at GREEN@COMMUNITY through the provision of gifts / awards / recognitions with appropriate promotion to the society;

Others

- liaise with the relevant stakeholders including the property management companies, owners committees as well as cleansing contractors to smooth out their difficulties in implementing MSW charging; and
- expedite the implementation of producer-responsibility schemes.

4. Members aspired that MSW charging could be implemented as early as possible and suggested that the Government could consider implementation in phases for selected sectors in society after reviewing and refining the existing scheme, starting with the Government as a whole, public bodies and other sectors with higher readiness such as shopping malls, tertiary institutions and other Government-subsidised organisations.

5. The above key discussions are reported to the ACE for information.

WMSC Secretariat
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