

**Legislative Council Question No. 12**  
**(Written Reply)**

Asked by : Hon Howard YOUNG

Date of Sitting : 15 May 2002

Replied by : Secretary for Economic Services

**Question :**

Ping Shan, situated in Yuen Long of the New Territories, is one of the popular tourist attractions promoted by the Hong Kong Tourism Board and the Yuen Long District Office. I recently discovered that refuse had piled up in the drains along the road leading to the Ping Shan Heritage Trail and works in progress on a construction site nearby had caused the emission of fugitive dust, leaving a bad impression on visitors. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the total number of complaints received last year concerning the poor environmental hygiene conditions of various tourist attractions promoted by the authorities concerned; and
- (b) how various government departments (including the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, the Home Affairs Department and the Lands Department) will work together to keep the promoted tourist attractions and their vicinity clean and pleasant?

**Reply :**

Madam President,

The Government works through different channels to ensure we have a clean, healthy and pleasant living environment in Hong Kong. Such efforts are in keeping with Hong Kong's position as an international business centre and a top tourist destination.

Government departments provide a wide range of environmental hygiene services including daily maintenance services such as street-sweeping, rubbish bin cleansing, upkeeping public toilets and hygiene facilities, as well as undertaking major cleansing operations throughout Hong Kong. These efforts are complemented by enforcement of relevant legislation and on-going public education programmes. In December 2000, the “Clean Hong Kong” programme was relaunched to spearhead efforts to raise environmental hygiene standards and promote public awareness of the importance of a clean environment. The programme consists of major clean-up operations and publicity activities, and will receive a further boost when a new fixed penalty system for minor public cleanliness offences is introduced in May 2002. In the long run, education and community involvement programmes will continue to ensure public support for efforts to maintain a clean environment.

### Complaints

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) received 48 complaints relating to environmental hygiene matters at tourist spots between April 2001 and April 2002. The Home Affairs Department (HAD) received 15 such complaints during the same period. The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) does not have specific complaints figures relating to the hygiene condition of tourist spots. The Department received 198 complaints about flytipping and 169 complaints relating to construction dust in Yuen Long District in 2001.

### Tourist Attractions

Work to ensure good environmental conditions at tourist spots involves a number of departments and organisations. Under the overall programme to

keep Hong Kong clean, there have been on-going joint as well as individual efforts by relevant departments to maintain our tourist spots in a clean and pleasant condition. Recently, such efforts have included a number of co-ordinated clean-up operations by relevant departments in support of the “Recommendation of the Month” 18-district promotion programme jointly organised by HAD and the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB). As the programme continues, the relevant departments will continue their efforts to ensure that tourist spots including those to be showcased as part of the programme are maintained in a clean and pleasant state for promotion to visitors.

HAD has been working closely with the departments concerned to co-ordinate their efforts to maintain the cleanliness of our tourist spots in a number of ways:

- (a) Referring comments and complaints about environmental hygiene to relevant departments for remedial action, liaising with relevant parties such as NGOs and local residents as and when necessary, and monitoring the progress of improvement work to ensure that problems are properly addressed.
- (b) Arranging site visits and inspections by relevant departments and co-ordinating joint improvement and clean-up operations by departments in identified areas.
- (c) Setting up committees under the District Councils, such as the “District Clean Hong Kong Committees”, to promote the message of “Clean Hong Kong” and raise public awareness of environmental and food hygiene.

As the government department responsible for providing hygiene and cleansing services in Hong Kong, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) plays an active role in joint clean-up operations at tourist spots, and will respond immediately when called upon to improve the environmental condition in and around these locations. Recently, the Department has strengthened its communication and contact with the HKTB at both the Headquarters and the district levels to facilitate the exchange of information and enhance collaboration. For instance, the Department has been fully supportive of the HKTB's two-year "City of Life: Hong Kong is it!" tourism promotion programme since its launch in April 2001. At its own initiative, the FEHD has taken steps to improve the cleanliness of the areas around tourist spots and has been working hard to upgrade toilets and other such amenities.

Lands Department (LD) is not responsible for cleansing. As such, it has no direct involvement in the environmental hygiene conditions of tourist areas. Nevertheless, over the past three years, the LD has provided funding of appropriately \$5 million to the FEHD to provide for the cleansing of government land. With effect from 1 April this year, the FEHD has formally taken on cleansing activities in these areas.

As the organisation responsible for tourism promotion and marketing Hong Kong internationally, the HKTB has an established mechanism to deal with reports of unhygienic conditions at tourist attractions and/or their surroundings. In respect of complaints involving public tourist sites, the HKTB will liaise with the departments concerned through the relevant district office to take appropriate remedial actions. Where private tourists sites are involved, the HKTB will negotiate with the owners concerned to encourage the latter to improve conditions. The HKTB maintains close liaison with the relevant government departments to monitor the condition of our tourist sites

and ensure that appropriate remedial actions are taken whenever required.

### Ping Shan Heritage Trail

The Ping Shan Heritage Trail in Yuen Long is inspected regularly by the departments concerned. It was part of the promotion of Yuen Long District in March 2002 under the Recommendation of the Month programme, and a number of measures have been taken to improve its condition.

In January this year, the Yuen Long District Office organised a site visit to the trail with representatives from the FEHD, the Antiquities and Monuments Office and local residents. Following the visit, the FEHD conducted five major cleansing operations along the trail and stepped up regular inspections of the area. According to the FEHD, some villagers living along the trail have stockpiled wood within the boundaries of their private land. As this might create a visual impact and give a negative impression of the area, the FEHD has sought the villagers' co-operation to tidy up their properties.

The Environmental Protection Department's (EPD) Local Control Office (Territory West) has no record of any complaints about dust emissions or flytipping along the road leading to the Ping Shan Heritage Trail over the last year. During EPD's most recent periodic inspection of the area on 10 May 2002, they saw no evidence of any flytipping or dust emissions from construction sites. The Department will continue to monitor the condition of the area and take action over any dust emissions or flytipping found.

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