

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

(Question Serial No. 2619)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not specified

Programme: (2) Environmental Hygiene and Related Services

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Ms Irene YOUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department obtained an allocation of \$600 million under the 2019-20 Budget to refurbish and enhance 240 public toilets under its management by batches within 5 years, the average refurbishment cost per public toilet is \$2.5 million. In this connection, please advise this Committee of the following:

- (1) Please provide the actual expenditure in the past year, the numbers of public toilets refurbished and public toilets yet to be refurbished, and the target number of public toilets to be refurbished this year.
- (2) There are cases of fainting or sudden death of public toilet users from time to time in recent years and it is difficult to detect such cases in time solely through regular inspections by cleansing workers. Will the Department review the facilities under the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme, including introducing a new technology to the existing smart toilet system to activate the alarm upon detection of a fainting user so that rescue can be conducted in a timely manner?

Asked by: Hon KONG Yuk-foon, Doreen (LegCo internal reference no.: 37)

Reply:

- (1) The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has actively promoted the Enhanced Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme since 2019-20. As at 31 December 2023, full refurbishment or facelifting projects for over 250 public toilets have been rolled out as planned. 136 projects have been completed, of which 41 were completed in 2023. In 2023-24, the estimated expenditure for the projects was about \$90 million. As at February 2024, the actual expenditure was \$87.51 million.

FEHD has planned ahead for the next stage of work by streamlining and compressing the preliminary workflow where feasible. Besides, technologies such as Modular Integrated Construction and Design for Manufacture and Assembly that can shorten the project time have been adopted as far as practicable, with an aim to progressively commence the relevant works for the remaining 430 or so public toilets yet to be fully refurbished or facelifted in the territory in 2024-28. FEHD plans to commence the full refurbishment or facelifting works for 108 public toilets in 2024-25.

- (2) FEHD is exploring, in collaboration with the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, the use of motion sensors to help detect unusual movements of public toilet users and issue alerts immediately for timely action. The relevant system is being tested at the accessible toilet of a smart public toilet. Depending on the test results, FEHD will study the feasibility of introducing the system to the public toilets under its management.

- End -