

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

EEB(F)069

(Question Serial No. 2236)

Head: (49) Food and Environmental Hygiene Department

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

Programme: (4) Public Education and Community Involvement

Controlling Officer: Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene (Donald NG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Environment and Ecology

Question:

Over the past decade, the prevalence of green burial has significantly increased, showing that the efforts the Government made in recent years to promote green burial are bearing fruit. In this connection, please advise this Committee of:

- (a) whether the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has earmarked resources for the promotion of green burial in 2025-26; if yes, the allocation and specific uses of the resources; if no, the reasons;
- (b) the numbers of green burial cases and their percentages in the total number of deaths in Hong Kong in the past 5 years;
- (c) the number of registrants of the Green Burial Central Register in the past 5 years, as well as the changes and the reasons thereof; and
- (d) the expenditure of the Government on promotion of green burial in the past 5 years, and the specific uses of the expenditure.

Asked by: Hon CHAN Wing-yan, JoePHY (LegCo internal reference no.: 34)

Reply:

- (a)&(d) The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department has been promoting green burial through different channels in recent years, including organising exhibitions and talks, producing and broadcasting promotion videos, distributing publications, putting up posters and banners, collaborating with relevant non-governmental organisations such as tertiary institutions, secondary schools, religious bodies, District Councils and district organisations to enlarge its network with various sectors of society, as well as collaborating with non-governmental organisations to organise talks and guided tours and carry out promotional activities at exhibitions for seniors. As a standing arrangement, the Health Education Exhibition and Resource Centre of the Department located in the Kowloon Park in Tsim Sha Tsui provides an exhibition area with multi-media display equipment for the promotion of green burial.

Since October 2023, the Department has been further promoting green burial on three fronts, namely broadening the coverage of promotion, enhancing understanding and discussion on green burial and pre-life planning, and liaising with different partners

in the community to promote life and death education. The Department has been making use of a wide range of contents and channels to promote green burial to a wider audience. Activities targeting students of secondary schools and tertiary institutions have been organised to promote life and death education and green burial. Expos targeting at the middle-aged and the elderly, online publicity programmes, after-death arrangement information seminars and guided tours, etc. have been organised as well.

The Department will continue to optimise its facilities and services of green burial and strengthen the publicity and promotion work, so as to change the disposition of the public. As it takes time to bring about the change of social norms and conventions, the Government will continue, through providing and enhancing green burial facilities and services, public education and publicity, to gradually make green burial the mainstream arrangement of handling ashes, so as to achieve the policy objectives of being more environmental friendly and sustainable development.

In the past 5 years, i.e. the 2020-21, 2021-22, 2022-23, 2023-24 and 2024-25 financial years, the expenditures on promoting green burial were about \$14 million, \$13 million, \$13 million, \$19 million, and \$17 million respectively. The estimated amount of provision earmarked for promoting green burial in 2025-26 is about \$18 million.

- (b) The numbers of green burial cases and their percentages of the total number of deaths in the past 5 years are provided as follows:

Number of cases Year	Scattering of ashes			Percentage of the total number of deaths
	In Gardens of Remembrance*	At sea	Total	
2020	6 822	854	7 676	15.2%
2021	7 112	906	8 018	15.6%
2022	8 437	1 012	9 449	15.4%
2023	8 237	1 144	9 381	16.5%
2024	8 522	1 032	9 554	18.2%

* Including cases handled by private cemeteries.

- (c) The Department set up the Green Burial Central Register in January 2019 as a means for members of the public to indicate their wishes for choosing green burial. As at 31 December 2024, over 15 000 members of the public had registered their wishes in the central register. As the Department has adopted new promotional strategies to encourage the public to enhance understanding and discussion on green burial and pre-life planning, the number of registrants of the Green Burial Central Register increased to 3 250 in 2024. Even if there is no prior registration, the bereaved may still adopt green burial for the deceased. The Department will continue providing and enhancing green burial facilities and services, as well as strengthening public

education and publicity, so as to encourage the public to plan in advance their after-death arrangements, including registration in the Green Burial Central Register. The number of registrants of the Green Burial Central Register in each of the past 5 years is provided as follows:

Year	Number of Registrants
2020	2 333
2021	2 346
2022	1 492
2023	2 266
2024	3 250

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