

Co-ordinating meeting on dengue fever held to follow up on Government's anti-mosquito work (with photo)

The Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, today (September 18) chaired a co-ordinating meeting on dengue fever to review the latest situation on dengue fever, conduct risk assessment and follow up on the Government's mosquito prevention and control work.

Professor Chan said, "A total of 29 confirmed local dengue fever cases have been recorded so far this year. No additional case has been confirmed in Hong Kong since September 4. It is believed that the situation has been put under control. The Government will remain vigilant and review the impact of Typhoon Mangkhut on mosquito control measures. Government departments will strengthen the anti-mosquito work under their purview in the hope of preventing the occurrence of further dengue fever cases.

"Co-operation and support from all sectors of the community are crucial to curb the spread of dengue fever. Members of the public should maintain personal hygiene and take anti-mosquito measures at home. Owing to the heavy rain that accompanied the typhoon, the public should clear up stagnant water, rubbish and disused articles as soon as possible to thoroughly remove mosquito breeding grounds."

In the wake of the passage of the typhoon, the Government will assess mosquito infestation in Lion Rock Park and the follow-up work before deciding on the date for re-opening the park.

Since the occurrence of several local confirmed dengue fever cases from mid-August, the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) and the relevant departments conducted several co-ordinating meetings. The Government's interdepartmental Pest Control Steering Committee also held two special meetings to strengthen the departments' co-ordination and co-operation on mosquito control work, and continued their efforts to implement the territory-wide All-out Anti-mosquito Operation.

Starting this month, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has released additional results for the Area Ovitrap Index for *Aedes albopictus* (AOI) in two more stages to keep the public abreast of the latest situation of mosquito infestation and enhance the function of the ovitrap indices in enabling people to stay alert. The FEHD will also continue to announce the monthly AOI of various areas in Hong Kong to give the public a monthly overview of the infestation level of mosquitoes to facilitate timely implementation of corresponding mosquito prevention and control measures. As the typhoon affected the survey of the ovitrap index, only one stage of the ovitrap index will be available in September.

In view of the implementation of the All-out Anti-mosquito Operation by the FEHD in all districts, the FHB allocated extra funding of \$4 million to the FEHD to facilitate the additional anti-mosquito work to be carried out by the District Environmental Hygiene Offices, as well as to strengthen the co-operation with the environmental hygiene committees of the District Councils to eradicate the black spots of mosquito breeding grounds in the districts immediately.

The FEHD conducted fogging operations at a total of 4 752 locations over the territory and cleared 39 558 existing and potential mosquito breeding places between August 15 and September 17. With regard to the situation in Wong Tai Sin and on Cheung Chau, the FEHD and relevant departments have reported the progress of the anti-mosquito work in response to this outbreak of dengue fever to the Wong Tai Sin and Islands District Councils on August 24 and September 3 respectively.

The public should call 1823 in case of mosquito problems and may visit the dengue fever pages of the Centre for Health Protection (CHP) and its Travel Health Service, the latest Travel Health News, tips for using insect repellents, the CHP Facebook Page and YouTube Channel, and the FEHD's Guidebook on Control and Prevention of Mosquito Breeding for more information.

Government bureaux, departments and organisations attending the meeting were the FHB, the Department of Health, the FEHD, the Hospital Authority and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

