

SCS visits Environmental Protection Department (with photos)

The Secretary for the Civil Service, Mrs Ingrid Yeung, visited the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) this afternoon (March 7) to learn more about the department's work in monitoring environmental quality and the application of innovative technologies in its work. She also exchanged views with staff representatives from various grades in the department.

Accompanied by the Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Clement Leung, Mrs Yeung first met with the Director of Environmental Protection, Dr Samuel Chui, and the directorate staff to receive an update on the department's latest developments in various areas of work.

In recent years, the EPD has introduced or developed innovative technological devices to meet its operational needs, one of which is the Artificial Intelligence (AI) Environmental Air Nuisance Investigation Robot Dog (AI Dog). Unlike traditional investigative methods that rely on the sense of smell and experience of the investigators, the AI Dog enhances its accuracy and efficiency through continuous AI machine learning. It effectively identifies and locates sources of pollution by connecting with the Internet of Things to search the big data of the Hong Kong Air Pollutant Emission Inventory, and is now on trial in various districts. The Ground Penetrating Radar enables the EPD to track the routes and leakage of underground sewage pipes without road openings.

The EPD staff gave Mrs Yeung a demonstration of the use of the AI Dog to identify and locate sources of pollution. They also demonstrated the operation of the Ground Penetrating Radar.

At the Smart Command and Control Centre, Mrs Yeung received a briefing from the EPD staff on the use of the Unmanned Submarine instead of divers to conduct monitoring and sampling in the Shing Mun River through remote control and real-time images. In addition, EPD staff also introduced the use of the Mesh Network Sampling Robot Squad for water-quality sampling and investigations in remote or dangerous areas in a more efficient manner.

Mrs Yeung said that the department's AI Dog and AI Unmanned Submarine are similar to AI civil servants. They improve work efficiency and enable better follow-up proposals for pollution problems that were difficult to handle in the past. By resolving the problems in a shorter time, it gives the public a greater sense of fulfilment and serves as an example of making good use of technology.

Mrs Yeung said that the 2025-26 Budget reinforced the fiscal consolidation programme. Bureaux and departments are required to further review their resource allocation and work priorities, and provide public services in a more cost-effective manner through streamlining procedures. She encouraged the departments to step up their efforts to apply technology in

their work to enhance efficiency and manpower utilisation in the civil service.

Before concluding her visit, Mrs Yeung met with staff representatives of various grades in the department to exchange views on matters that concerned them.

