

23 September 2010

## **First Drop in Mooncake Disposal**

### **Green Power Calls for a Low Carbon Mid-Autumn Festival**

The “**Consumption and Celebration Habits during Mid-Autumn Festival**” survey conducted by Green Power found major progress in waste reduction by the public when celebrating mid-Autumn festival. More people recycled mooncake boxes, fewer bought new plastic lanterns, and the amount of food wasted from barbecue activities as well as family reunion dinner for the festival reduced significantly. Besides, for the first time since the survey started in 2004, a decrease in the number of mooncakes discarded was recorded. However there is still room for improvement in mid-Autumn festival celebration habits and Green Power urges the public to be more aware of festival waste issues and celebrate a low carbon Mid-Autumn festival to help relieve global warming.

Concluding the survey results, **Dr Cheng Luk Ki, Division Head of Scientific Research and Conservation of Green Power** said significant improvements could be seen in mooncake disposal. The number of mooncakes discarded by surveyed households decreased by 35% compared to previous year, which is the first downward trend since the survey began in 2004. In addition, over 50% of surveyed households recycled mooncake boxes, up 17% compared to the previous year, and is record breaking since 2004. Regarding Mid-Autumn festival family reunion dinner and barbeque activities, food wastage has also reduced; the figure shows a 9% slight decrease and up to 50% of surveyed households wasted less than 10% of their food. The average amount of steak, meatballs and sausage wasted was decreased by 40% compared to last year as well.

“Although wastage situation has improved, there are still issues that call for special attention,” says Dr Cheng Luk Ki. “The estimated amount of mooncakes discarded by the public exceeded 1.87 million, totaling 78-times the height of Tai Mo Shan when piled up. Additionally the mass amount of steak, meatballs and sausages waste and the use of disposable cutlery during Mid-Autumn festival barbecue celebration produced a total of 1,410 tonnes of Carbon Dioxide Emission. The amount of emission can only be absorbed by over 110 thousand trees in a year.”

The public's Mid-Autumn festival celebration habits led to large amount of Carbon Dioxide emission, yet 60% of respondents do not agree / does not know the link between Mid-Autumn festival celebration habits and global warming. Moreover, 40% of respondents believe the greatest obstacle faced when implementing a green Mid-Autumn festival is traditional values. Dr Cheng indicated that more public education effort will target such aspect in future. He also suggested that everyone can help spare a huge amount of carbon dioxide emission and relieve global warming if we change the ways we celebrate the Mid-Autumn Festival. For example, accurately forecast the number of mooncakes required, precisely estimate food portions for festival family reunion dinner, and recycle mooncake boxes.

The survey results were released today at the 18th Clean-up the World in Hong Kong, organised by **Green Power** with sponsorship from HK Electric. Officiating guests include: **Mr Benny Wong Yiu-kam, Deputy Director of Environmental Protection; Mrs Rita Fan, Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the PRC; Ms Audrey Eu, Chairman of Panel on Environmental Affairs of Legislative Council; Mr Yee Tak-chow, General Manager (Corporate Development) of HK Electric, Dr Eric Tsang Po Keung, Chairman of Green Power and Professor Ho Kin Chung, President of Green Power.** Mrs. Fan and Ms. Eu have been supporters of the event for many years. This year, together with other guests, they too helped clean up the rubbish and wax left over from Mid-Autumn Festival at Aberdeen Country Park, and shared their tips on celebrating a "low-carbon festival".

"HK Electric has supported Clean-up the World in Hong Kong for 15 years, we are glad to see that wastage has reduced. We hope our continual support will help remind the public to further reduce waste and Carbon Dioxide emission during celebration, which echoes the 'Greener Festivals Campaign'." said **Mr Yee Tak-chow, General Manager (Corporate Development) of HK Electric.** He also advised the public to celebrate a low carbon Mid-Autumn festival by replacing non-rechargeable batteries with rechargeable batteries for plastic lanterns. Rechargeable batteries could be used over a thousand times and there is a "Rechargeable Battery Recycling Programme" in Hong Kong, whereas non-rechargeable batteries have a shorter lifespan and are non-recyclable, meaning rechargeable batteries are more environmentally friendly.

For Mid-Autumn festival family reunion dinner, **Ms Audrey Eu** suggested the public to prepare a “less meat and more vegetables” cuisine, as the Carbon Dioxide emissions in producing meat are 3 to 44 times more than that for producing vegetables. Eating more vegetables during Mid-Autumn festival family reunion dinner is also healthier without spoiling the joy.

**Mrs Rita Fan** encouraged the public to check the expiry date of leftover mooncakes, and donate excessive mooncakes to charitable organizations or the less fortunate before they are due.

More than 70 HK Electric volunteers attended the event this morning, together with other guests they helped clean up the rubbish and wax left over from Mid-Autumn Festival. After the ceremony, the volunteers made appeal to holiday-makers to celebrate the festival in a low carbon manner at Aberdeen Country Park, Stanley and Deep Water Bay. They also handed out containers for picnic goers to take away leftover food, and urged holiday-makers to separate all waste for recycling and reduce the use of disposable cutlery.

“**Clean Up the World in Hong Kong**” is an international activity organised by the United Nations. Green Power has been the official organiser in Hong Kong since 1993. This annual event is now held in more than 120 cities around the globe with more than 35 million people participating. Themed on “Reducing Festival Waste and Enjoying a Green Festival”, this annual campaign aimed at encouraging the public to minimise waste and harm to the environment and the Earth while celebrating a greener festival. A “Green Festival” website has been set up to provide information and tips on festival waste reduction. We have also included “10 Actions for Low Carbon Mid-Autumn Festival”, along with other festival waste reduction tips for the public to follow in upcoming festivals. For details, please visit: [http://www.greenpower.org.hk/new/cuw/index\\_e.html](http://www.greenpower.org.hk/new/cuw/index_e.html)

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