# Advisory Committee on the Quality of Water Supplies
# Minutes of the 2nd Meeting

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| Date: | 19 July 2000 (Wednesday) | |
| Time: | 2:30 p.m. | |
| Venue: | 12/F Conference Room, Murray Building, Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong | |
| Present: | Mr. Kenneth FANG Hung | (Chairman) |
| | Mr. Hugh Phillipson | (Vice-Chairman) |
| | Dr. Richard CHEUNG Yun-hing | |
| | Mr. Hugh WU Sai-him | |
| | Dr. SO Kai-ming | |
| | Mr. WONG Kwok-keung | |
| | Prof. LAM Kin-che | |
| | Dr. HO Kin-chung | |
| | Ms. Lister CHEUNG Lai-ping | |
| | Ms. Nancy POON Siu-ping | |
| | Mr. Patrick KWONG Hing-ip | |
| | Dr. TSE Lai-yin | |
| | Mr. WONG Bay | |
| | Mr. KWAN Ka-lun | |
| | Dr. Michael CHIU | |
| | Mr. Stephen LAU Chi-ming | (Secretary) |
| In attendance: | Mr. KO Chan-gock | |
| | Mr. KU Chi-chung | |
| | Mr. CHAN Kwong-wei | |
| | Mr. CHEUNG Tze-leung | |
| | Ms. HO Suet-mei | |
| Absent with apologies: | Prof. David Dudgeon | |
| | Mr. Ronnie WONG Man-chiu | |

**1.** The Chairman welcomed Dr. Richard CHEUNG Yun-hing, Mr. Hugh WU Sai-him and Dr. Michael CHIU for attending the meeting of this Committee for the first time. He then extended his welcome to all other members for joining the second meeting.

**2.** The Chairman extended a welcome to Mr. KO Chan-gock, Mr. KU Chi-chung, Mr. CHAN Kwong-wei, Mr. CHEUNG Tze-leung and Ms. HO Suet-mei from the Water Supplies Department (WSD).

**3.** The Chairman advised that a short briefing session would be held at the conclusion of the meeting for members of the media present.

**4. Confirmation of minutes of the first meeting held on 26 April 2000**

The minutes were confirmed with the following amendment:-

Item 5.3 – 3rd line: "the building management offices or the building owners" should read "the building owners or the building maintenance/management agents as they are responsible for the maintenance of the water supply systems inside the buildings".

**5. Matters arising**

5.1 ***Water quality monitoring programme***

The Chairman advised that two papers would be presented later on this item.

5.2 ***ACQWS Paper No. 3 - World Health Organization Guidelines and International Standards for Drinking-water Quality***

5.2.1 In response to members' comments on ACQWS Paper No. 1 on the subject, this paper was prepared to present a more detailed comparison of the three most well-known drinking water quality guidelines/standards and the cost implication of Hong Kong's drinking water meeting all three guidelines/standards.

5.2.2 Members' attention was drawn to the fact that, within the limits of existing instrument capabilities and requirements of the current quality assurance

protocol, not all data could be compared with EC and/or USEPA standards. Where comparison could be made, Hong Kong's drinking water complied with all three guidelines/standards.

5.2.3 Members were also advised that to upgrade all existing treatment works to meet all three guidelines/standards would cost over HK$30 billion. As agreed at the last meeting, the current practice of adopting the WHO guidelines as the standard for drinking water quality in Hong Kong was considered appropriate in the interest of public health. It did not seem worthwhile to spend a large amount of money simply to achieve additional sets of standards without any significant improvement in water quality.

5.3 ***ACQWS Paper No. 4 – Publication of Water Quality Data***

5.3.1 Further to ACQWS Paper No. 2 on the same subject, this paper was prepared to present a detailed proposal on the format and frequency of publication of water quality data on the Internet and in the form of a pamphlet.

5.3.2 The proposed publication on the Internet in August 2000 for Dongjiang water quality data as monitored at Muk Wu Pumping Station and for treated water quality data for 1999/2000 were briefly introduced to the members. The data indicated that the quality of Dongjiang water received at Muk Wu Pumping Station was largely satisfactory despite some minor non-compliance and that the treated water quality in Hong Kong complied with the WHO guidelines. Members made some suggestions on fine tuning the format for WSD's consideration.

WSD

5.3.3 As for the pamphlet on water quality, it was considered more meaningful to publish an overall compliance indicator of the wellness of the quality of our drinking water than to repeat the huge amount of water quality data. Some other interesting information would also be included in the pamphlet. As soon as the design of the pamphlet was completed, a sample would be distributed to members for comments before publication and distribution around October/November this year. WSD

5.3.4 It was proposed to update annually the data on the Internet and in hard copy form. Members agreed to the proposal taking into consideration international practice, the consistent compliance of monitoring data with WHO guidelines for drinking water quality presented, and striking a balance between resources input and the need to publish the quality data.

**Action**

5.4 ***Site Visits***

5.4.1 A list of proposed site visits on both Hong Kong and Guangdong sides had already been distributed to members for consideration. Two sketches showing the locations of the installations included in the visits had also been tabled at the meeting for members' reference.

5.4.2 Regarding site visits in Hong Kong, it was proposed to arrange a visit in August 2000 to the Sha Tin Treatment Works and the Mainland East Laboratory. The relevant pamphlets were tabled at the meeting for reference. The proposal was generally acceptable to members and the details would be worked out shortly for members' consideration. WSD

5.4.3 As regards the site visit in Guangdong, WSD was liasing with the Guangdong authorities on the arrangement of the proposed visit in the coming autumn. The timing and locations of the visit were yet to be finalised. WSD

**6. ACQWS Paper No. 5 - Raw Water Quality Monitoring in Hong Kong**

6.1 The purpose of this paper was to introduce the raw water quality monitoring strategy adopted by WSD. The two main sources of raw water in Hong Kong were the supply from the Dongjiang and rainfall collected in local gathering grounds and storage reservoirs, contributing respectively about 80% and 20% of the water we needed. The quality of Dongjiang water was closely monitored in Hong Kong at the reception point of Muk Wu Pumping Station and at all treatment works receiving Dongjiang water. There was also close liaison between the Guangdong and Hong Kong authorities on matters relating to the quality of Dongjiang water. On completion of the closed aqueduct bringing water from Dongjiang to Hong Kong, the quality of supply could be better assured.

6.2 There was some widespread misunderstanding by the general public that the deterioration in the quality of Dongjiang water had led to problems of drinking water quality in Hong Kong. Members were assured that the quality of Dongjiang water received at Muk Wu Pumping Station was satisfactory, as demonstrated by the monitoring data. Dongjiang water taken from the intake of Taiyuan Pumping Station at Qiaotou was delivered by successive pumping to Shenzhen Reservoir, where it received initial treatment at the Bionitrification Plant before being supplied to Muk Wu Pumping Station by gravity. On the way from Qiaotou to Shenzhen, it was unavoidably polluted as the aqueduct

was of open type. However, with the combined effect of dilution by the pumped flow, natural purification along the route and bionitrification at Shenzhen Reservoir, the quality of Dongjiang water supplied to Muk Wu Pumping Station was acceptable. After the forthcoming site visit on the Guangdong side, members should have a clearer picture of the real situation.

**7. ACQWS Paper No. 6 – Treated Water Quality Monitoring**

7.1 An amendment sheet for Appendix II to this paper had been tabled at this meeting. The purpose of this paper was to introduce the treated water quality monitoring strategy adopted by WSD, which was comparable to the recommendations and practices of international organizations or national authorities. WSD' s monitoring was more than adequate to ensure that the drinking water in Hong Kong was safe for consumption. The competence of WSD' s water analyses had achieved recognition when her Mainland East Laboratory was accepted as an accredited laboratory under the Hong Kong Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (HOKLAS) in 1996, a status which had since been maintained. WSD had been able to analyse for all 94 health related parameters described in the WHO guidelines (1993).

7.2 Although the demarcation of responsibilities for water quality of WSD and the building owners or the building maintenance/management agents was understood, some members expressed much concern on the issue of discoloured water and considered that some measures should be taken to ensure a safe tap water supply to the consumers. A paper should therefore be prepared to review the situation and to make recommendations accordingly. WSD

**8. Any Other Business**

8.1 In response to the question on issuing ACQWS information papers to the media, the Chairman opined and members agreed that they could be released to the media after discussion at meetings.

**9.** There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:00 p.m.