

(English translation prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for Members' reference only)

(Letterhead of Joint Office of the HKFTU's Legislative Councillors CHAN Yuen-han,
LEUNG Fu-wah and CHAN Kwok-keung)

17 November 2000

Hon CHAN Kam-lam
Chairman of the Legislative Council Panel on Housing
The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
c/o Ms YU, Clerk to Panel on Housing (sic)

Dear Mr CHAN,

Request for Housing Panel to discuss Interim Housing

All along, most residents affected by squatter clearances have been unwilling to accept interim housing (IH) offered by the Government. This has resulted in numerous disputes which have hindered the progress of clearance and caused unnecessary conflicts. I therefore propose that the Housing Panel (the Panel) should discuss the subject of changing the existing policy of the Housing Authority (HA) on the provision of IH.

According to HA's existing policy, residents affected by squatter clearances will be rehoused to new multi-storeyed IH. For example, the majority of residents affected by the Diamond Hill Squatter Clearance who are eligible for IH will have to move to Po Tin IH in Tuen Mun. However, affected residents are reluctant to move to such a remote area on account of living, education and employment problems. They request for rehousing within the same or nearby areas to minimize the impact of clearances on them.

While acknowledging the justification that the provision of IH in the New Territories was due to the lack of resources in the urban area for rehousing affected squatters, we note that there are quite a number of vacant public rental housing (PRH) units in the urban areas and extended urban areas. As such, the Panel may consider changing the way in which IH should be provided. For example, affected residents can be rehoused to "IH units", which are vacant PRH units in the urban areas or extended urban areas, as in the case of IH. Indeed, the definition, mode of implementation and relevant measures concerning "IH units" can be discussed in depth at Panel meetings.

I hope that the Government will change the existing IH policy and enhance the flexibility in the choice of reception flats to meet the housing needs of individual residents, thereby reducing the impact of clearances on squatters, speeding up the clearance process and improving the living conditions of residents concerned.

With best regards.

Yours sincerely,

(signed)

CHAN Yuen-han,
Member of the Legislative Council