

LegCo Panel on Housing

**List of follow-up actions arising from the discussion
at the special meeting on 10 September 2001**

- (a) the number, location and size of HOS flats to be affected by the moratorium on HOS sales.
- (b) the basis upon which the assumption that four-person families with household incomes of \$20,000 could afford to buy flats under \$1,800,000 was arrived at.
- (c) the minutes of the meeting of the Housing Authority in June 2001 during which the role of HOS was discussed.
- (d) the subsidy, including land premium, that the Government contributed to every HOS flat being built.
- (e) the time-table for consulting Members on the outcome of the review of HOS which should cover the impact of policy changes on the overall economic situation and the reduction in waiting time for public rental housing as a result of re-allocation of housing resources after the review.

政府總部房屋局的信頭

本局檔號 TC28/2001 to HB 9/2/1/113
來函檔號

電話 2509 0280
傳真 2509 9988

香港中環昃臣道八號
立法會房屋事務委員會
余麗瓊女士

余女士：

立法會房屋事務委員會：
跟進二零零一年九月十日的特別會議

本年九月十日的來信已經收到。對於來信第 2 段(a)至(e)各條問題，現謹提供資料如下：

- (a) 請參閱附件 A；
- (b) 請參閱附件 B；
- (c) 請參閱附件 C；
- (d) 政府以優惠地價的形式，向房屋委員會提供居屋單位補助金。政府批地予房屋委員會興建居屋時，房屋委員會向政府繳付的款項是居屋建築成本的 35%；及
- (e) 我們希望在二零零二年年中暫停銷售居屋期滿前，完成檢討與居屋有關的政策。現階段就諮詢立法會房屋事務委員會，提出比較確切的時間表，恐怕是言之過早。

房屋局局長
(華賢仕代行)

二零零一年十月三十一日

Letterhead of Government Secretariat Housing Bureau

Our Ref. TC28/2001 to HB 9/2/1/113

Tel. 2509 0280

Fax. 2509 9958

31 October 2001

Miss Becky Yu
LegCo Panel on Housing
The Legislative Council
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Yu,

**LegCo Panel on Housing:
follow-up to special meeting on 10 September 2001**

Thank you for your letter of 10 September 2001. Please find the following information in response to questions (a) to (e) in paragraph 2 of your letter -

- (a) please refer to **Annex A**;
- (b) please refer to **Annex B**;
- (c) please refer to **Annex C**;

- (d) the subsidy to Home Ownership Scheme flats from the Government to the Housing Authority takes the form of concessionary terms for the cost of the land involved. When the Government grants land to the Housing Authority for the construction of Home Ownership Scheme flats, the Housing Authority pays the Government 35% of the development cost of the flats; and
- (e) we hope to complete the review of Home Ownership Scheme related policy before the end of the current moratorium on HOS sales in mid 2002. It is too early at this stage to give a more precise timetable for consulting the Housing Panel of the Legislative Council.

Yours faithfully,

(Andrew R. Wells)
for Secretary for Housing

(c.user/letter/le0135)

**Units affected by the moratorium on sale of
Home Ownership Scheme flats**

<u>Location</u>	<u>Flat No.</u>	Flat Size (sq.m.)	
		<u>Saleable Area</u>	
		from	to
Kowloon			
East Kowloon	3,784	37	62
Central Kowloon	2,344	37	63
Sub-total	6,128	37	63
Shatin/Ma On Shan			
Sha Tin	2,882	38	63
Ma On Shan	1,892	40	62
Sub-total	4,774	38	63
Tin Shui Wai	1,510	47	60
Total	12,412	37	63

暫停銷售居屋措施所影響的單位

<u>地點</u>	<u>單位數目</u>	<u>單位的可出售面積 (平方米)</u>	
		最小	最大
九龍			
東九龍	3,784	37	62
九龍中部	2,344	37	63
小計	6,128	37	63
沙田／馬鞍山			
沙田	2,882	38	63
馬鞍山	1,892	40	62
小計	4,774	38	63
天水圍	1,510	47	60
合計	12,412	37	63

月入二萬元的四人家庭對樓價 180 萬的單位的負擔能力

家庭收入	二萬元
樓價	180 萬元
首期	樓價三成
利率（最優惠利率減 2.25 厘）	年利率 4.5 厘（二零零一年八月初時）
還款期	20 年
每月還款	7,971 元
按揭還款與收入的比例	40%
應付其他開支的可動用收入	12,029 元

**Affordability of a flat costing \$1,800,000 to a four-person family
with a household income of \$20,000**

Household income	\$20,000
Flat price	\$1,800,000
Downpayment	30% of flat price
Interest rate (P-2.25%)	4.5% p.a. (as at early August 2001)
Repayment period	20 years
Monthly repayment	\$7,971
Mortgage payment to income ratio	40%
Disposable income for other expenditure	\$12,029

(Translation)

Paper No.: HA 39/2001

Minutes of the Annual Special Open Meeting of the HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY held on Thursday, 28 June 2001

PRESENT

Dr CHENG Hon-kwan, GBS, JP	(Chairman)
Mr J A MILLER, JP (Director of Housing)	(Vice-chairman)
Mr Eddy FONG Ching, SBS, JP	
Ms SIU Yuen-sheung, JP	
Mr Walter CHAN Kar-lok, BBS, JP	
Mr WAN Man-yee, JP	
Mr CHAN Bing-woon, SBS, JP	
Dr LAU Kwok-yu, JP	
Mr Peter WONG Hong-yuen, GBS, JP	
Hon. NG Leung-sing	
Mr NG Shui-lai, JP	
Ms Iris TAM Siu-ying	
Mr WONG Kwun	
Prof Richard WONG Yue-chim, SBS, JP	
Mr Philip Trevor NUNN, JP	
Hon. CHUNG Shui-ming, GBS, JP	
Mr Michael CHOI Ngai-min	
Mr Alex CHOY Kan-pui, BBS, JP	
Mr HO Sai-chu, SBS, JP	
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP	
Mr George NG Sze-fuk, BBS, JP	
Mr CHENG Yan-kee, JP	
Prof Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS	
Hon CHAN Kam-lam	
Ms Teresa CHENG Yeuk-wah, SC	
Hon David CHU Yu-lin	
Dr Martin KWONG Hoi-chau	
Hon SIN Chung-kai	
Mr Dominic WONG, GBS, JP	(Secretary for Housing)
Mr N P BURLEY, JP	(Deputy Director of Lands (General))
Mr Wilson FUNG	(Director Corporate Services)
	(Secretary of the Authority)

ABSENT WITH APOLOGIES

Mr Raymond CHOW Wai-kam, JP	(Out of Hong Kong)
-----------------------------	--------------------

IN ATTENDANCE

Mr Peter CHAN Chi-kwan	(Member of Special Committee on Clearance of Kowloon Walled City)
Mr Stewart CHENG Kam-chiu	(Member of Complaints Committee)
Mr WONG Che-ngai	(Member of Complaints Committee)
Mr Andy LAI Siu-tong	(Member of Complaints Committee)
Mr Paul CHAN Mo-po	(Member of Finance Committee)
Mr Albert SO Chun-hin	(Member of Home Ownership Committee)
Mr Peter LEE Hoo-tim	(Member of Commercial Properties Committee)
Mrs Agnes MAK TANG Pik-ye	(Member of Finance Committee)
Miss WONG Lai-chun	(Member of Home Ownership Committee)
Ms KO Po-ling	(Member of Rental Housing Committee)
Ms LUI Lai-ping	(Member of Ad Hoc Committee on Review of Domestic Rent Policy)
Mr K K LAU	(Government Engineer (Infrastructure Co-ordination Office), Works Bureau)
Mr C K LI	(Assistant Director of Planning (Housing and Land Supply))
Mr T YUEN	(Principal Assistant Secretary for the Treasury (Investments) as alternate of the Secretary for the Treasury)
Mr Marco WU, JP	(Deputy Director of Housing)
Mr Vincent TONG, JP	(Business Director/Development)
Mr R AVON, JP	(Finance Director)
Mr Joseph LEE, JP	(Business Director/Management)
Mr Y K CHENG	(Business Director/Allocation & Marketing)(Acting)
Mr Joseph KONG	(Project Director/Central)
Mr John CHIU	(Project Director/East)
Mr Simon LEE	(Assistant Director/Legal Advice)
Mr Albert LEE	(Assistant Director/Business)
Mrs Doris MA	(Assistant Director/Sales)
Ms Ada FUNG	(Assistant Director/Quality Task Force)
Mr C P ROBERTS	(Assistant Director/Commercial Properties)
Mr Carlson CHAN	(Head, Corporate Strategy Unit)
Mr I C LAI	(Assistant Director/Management 1)(Acting)
Miss Joey LAM	(Principal Assistant Secretary for Housing (2), Public Housing Division)
Mr Lawrence CHOW	(Committees' Secretary)(Meeting Secretary)
Ms Fion LAI	(Assistant Committees' Secretary/3) (Assistant Meeting Secretary)

The Chairman opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m. He welcomed Members of the Housing Authority and its Committees to the meeting.

HA03901M/T2

Reports for the year 2000/2001 by Chairmen of HA Committees

2. The Chairman informed Members that the reports for the year 2000/2001 by Chairman of the Committee were issued to Members for information before the meeting.

AGENDA Item 1

Address by Dr CHENG Hon-kwan, Chairman of the Housing Authority

3. The Chairman delivered his speech as follows (English translation):

"Members and colleagues,

While the past year has been a difficult and challenging one for the Housing Authority (HA) in many aspects, I believe it will be regarded as a year of great significance for the HA since it set foot on its path of reform. It is because the HA has, in the year, embarked on two reform programmes that have far-reaching implication on its future.

Quality Housing Reform

One of the programmes is of course the quality reform for public housing. Needless to say, you are all well aware of the impact and pressure on the HA and (Housing Department) HD brought about by the spate of substandard piling works and jerry-building incidents uncovered in the past two years. Some may argue that these incidents were partly attributable to certain objective circumstances, such as the challenge of the production peak and the corruption problem prompted by the local economic downturn in the wake of the financial turmoil. Nonetheless, the incidents themselves have exposed some core and fundamental institutional problems. It is imperative that the HA embarks on a thorough and comprehensive reform to rebuild the confidence of the public, and indeed, of all sectors of the community, in public housing.

Members were briefed on the progress of the implementation of the 50 quality housing initiatives in the past year during the previous HA meeting in March. I am pleased to note that the results are very encouraging. Various initiatives, covering a very wide-ranging scope, have been taken forward. These include the tendering system and arrangements, work process at sites, as well as handover inspection procedures and benchmarks.

There is one thing I would like to stress in this meeting today, which is the importance of the monitoring mechanism in ensuring quality housing. Apart from strengthening on-site supervision by providing resident professionals, the HD has also introduced more stringent handover inspection specifications and enhanced the objectivity of the acceptance test. However, in an increasingly transparent and accountable society, it is necessary to put in place a monitoring mechanism that is independent, and it must be seen to be so by the public before they can have more confidence in the quality of our housing. I was very glad to see the setting up of the Independent Checking Unit under the Director's Office in October last year. It

serves as an objective third party checking mechanism for the construction works of the HD, making its checking standards comparable with those of the Buildings Department. In the long run, I would like to see that construction works of the HA could be brought under the regulatory ambit of the Buildings Ordinance.

Greater Private Sector Involvement in the HA's Services

The other important reform is the initiative to have greater private sector involvement (PSI) in the HA's services. In recent years, there has been wide public concern on how to further enhance the cost-effectiveness and quality of the services of the Government and public organizations. It is also a local, as well as a global, trend to draw on the private sector's expertise and resources. In face of such changes, the HA has in fact involved the private sector in our construction projects for quite some time. However, it was not until last year that we made a great step forward by extending PSI to the management and maintenance services of our existing estates.

Despite the objections and concern expressed by many of the staff of the HD since its introduction last year, the Phased Service Transfer (PST) Programme has been launched smoothly. As of May this year, we have already invited tenders for the provision of estate management and maintenance services for over 79 000 existing and 66 000 newly completed units. Moreover, the Voluntary Departure Scheme is well received by the staff of the HD, with over 3 300 applications received. The popularity of the management buy-out option (MBO) is also beyond expectation. Currently, there are 21 MBO companies on the list of the HA, of which six have been awarded service contracts.

The Housing Authority Task Force on Private Sector Involvement is reviewing the progress of the PST programme and will submit proposals on the way forward to the HA shortly. I am aware of the concern HD staff have over the review. In the past few months, I have met with different staff members on various occasions and, therefore, have a good picture of their worries about career prospect and their concern over staffing mismatch resulting from the Voluntary Departure Scheme. Notwithstanding the unavoidable trend towards increasing private sector involvement in HA's services, I believe that members of the Task Force, in drawing up their proposals, would give due consideration to the pace of the Scheme and would try all they can to minimize the impacts these changes would have on the staff.

Looking Ahead

As the saying goes, "Everything is hard in the beginning", and I dare say we have survived the hardest times of the reforms. Apart from implementing the remaining initiatives, the most important tasks lying ahead of us are to continue to work on the reforms we have already initiated and to handle properly the problems hence arisen, with a view to maximizing the effects of the reforms. I wish that the HA and all staff of the HD would continue to cooperate and reinforce the trust between us through communication and mutual respect, in the course of our concerted efforts to enhance building quality and improve management and maintenance services of public housing.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to express my thanks to all Members of the HA, the Director of Housing, Mr J A Miller and all colleagues of the Department for your hard work and commitment to serve last year. Your dedication has earned my heartfelt respect.

Thank you."

AGENDA Item 2

Address by Mr J A MILLER, Director of Housing

4. Mr J A MILLER, Director of Housing delivered his speech as follows:

"Chairman, Members,

The last 12 months have been a period of frenetic activity for Members of the Housing Authority and staff of the Housing Department. This will be obvious from the Committee Chairmen's reports tabled at this meeting. However, I have sought the Chairman's permission to speak first because I wanted to summarize for you in simple terms the quite extraordinary achievements of the past year.

I say the past year, although, as all of you are aware, last year was the culmination of work begun much earlier and effort sustained over a five or six year period before that.

Nevertheless, this milestone merits special mention, if only because last year we broke every record in the book:

- We allocated some 28 000 flats to families on the Waiting List, thereby reducing the Waiting List to a 20 year low.
- Waiting time has never been shorter. We have reduced the average to just under four-and-a-half years. We are on track to reduce it to three years by 2003.
- For elderly singletons the average is still lower, at just over two years, despite a pro-active registration campaign, which has pushed up the number of elderly applicants to 11 400 as of the end of last month.
- We have cleared the last of the old-style Temporary Housing Areas, in a series of exercises, which involved the re-housing of 3 700 people last year.
- We re-housed 800 people from the old Cottage Areas. Two were completely cleared last year and we will clear the last three this year.
- Last year we also re-housed nearly 2 600 people in development clearances covering a total of 92 hectares of land. This included Diamond Hill squatter area, a mammoth exercise involving not only families but a large number of commercial and industrial premises as

well.

- All of these clearances were conducted peacefully.
- Similarly, the clearance and demolition of 49 old rental blocks under the ongoing Comprehensive Redevelopment Scheme. Over 20 000 families were re-housed under this Scheme last year.
- 41 500 families became home-owners last year with the Housing Authority's assistance.
- Some 6 600 of these opted for loans under the Home Purchase Loan Scheme. Over 60% of them were previously public housing tenants. More than half used the loans to buy second-hand, or secondary market Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats.
- We offered another 26 400 tenants the chance to buy their flats under Phase IV of the Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS). As with previous phases, there has been a warm response. In fact, the average take-up rate for the first three phases of the Scheme is over 70%. It is obviously popular, and I note with some satisfaction the calls for an expansion of the Scheme in the recent Legislative Council Motion Debate.
- Another 10 300 families bought new HOS flats. Just over 40% of them were previously public housing tenants. Every phase has been over-subscribed. And in every phase, around 70% of applicants have incomes well below the reduced income limits now in force.
- On the Management side, a total of 74 Owners Corporations were formed for HOS Courts. Owners Corporations have also been successfully formed in all 18 estates sold under the first three phases of the TPS.
- Under the Phased Transfer of Management and Maintenance Services programme, a total of 12 new property services contracts, covering 24 rental and TPS estates, were awarded and are functioning well. The industry's response to this initiative has been very satisfactory.
- Still more satisfying from a personal point of view has been the initiative shown by our own staff in responding to the opportunity to form their own companies and bid for contracts. A total of 17 such Management Buy Out enterprises bid for the six contracts in the first exercise. These have now been awarded and the Companies will commence operation on the ground on 1 July.
- Another company formed by former HD staff bid successfully in the open market for a management contract awarded by the Owners Corporation of an estate sold under Phase One of the TPS.

- The Commercial Properties Division also broke all records, successfully letting some 92 000 square metres of commercial space, much of it in new shopping centres.
- At the same time and despite the economic doldrums, the vacancy rate in our commercial premises has been held at half that in the private sector.
- And, another significant milestone, we completed the outsourcing of all front line management of shopping centres.
- On construction quality, in the year since consulting on our proposed reforms, we have not stood still. We have already proceeded to implement 37 of the 50 initiatives, in whole or in part. The rest, most of which rely on joint effort with other partners, will follow.
- Most important, the message that we will insist on quality has got through. This is evident from the virtually trouble free hand-over and occupation of last year's record breaking production.

Mr. Chairman, these record breaking production - 89 000 flats, 107 000 square metres of commercial space and 9 300 parking spaces - lie at the heart of the achievements listed earlier. They provide a convenient summary, but they do not tell the full story. In particular they do not tell the story of the extraordinary pressures on staff at all levels, in all grades and disciplines, in all divisions and sections of the Department in preparing for this production peak, and in turning lines on a plan into homes for the needy.

I am happy to say that this has not gone unrecognized. Last year was a record year for prizes and awards, more than 30 in a wide range of endeavour; for quality service enhancement, architectural design, IT application and personal achievement. I will mention only three:

- The Hong Kong Institution of Engineers - Structural Division Special Award, for the shopping centre at Lam Tin;
- The Civil Service Excellence Awards for Quality Service Enhancement; and
- Third Prize in the Housing Authority's own Open Architectural Design Competition for Shui Chuen O.

All this in addition to a special commendation on our efforts in the housing field from the United Nations' Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights in reviewing the annual report on Hong Kong.

In closing, allow me to take this opportunity to salute all staff of the Department for their extraordinary achievements of the last 12 months, and to express my gratitude to all Members for your encouragement and support."

AGENDA Item 3
Address by Individual Members

5. Speech by Individual Members

Mr Eddy FONG Ching delivered his speech as follows (English translation):

"Chairman, Members,

Increase Sense of Responsibility and Implement Change amidst Stability

Last year can be regarded as the most challenging year in the history of the Housing Authority. The Authority was pressed hard by criticism from the community. Some of the better-known reasons for that are as follows:

- (1) The impact of global economic downturn: Last year the investment intention of Hong Kong people waned considerably. In particular, the demand for housing dwindled. Private developers exerted pressure by urging the Government and the Authority to cut down on the production of Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats. This has great implications on the Authority's established source of resources.
- (2) Cash flow of the Authority has dropped to the lowest level in years. This is mainly attributable to the decreased sales volume of HOS flats and the ever increasing demand for home purchase loans. Although the Authority has subsequently arranged the transfer of these non-revenue-generating loans to other financial institutions, it still has to bear the heavy interest burden of these mortgage loans, which has a profound impact on the financial position of the Authority.
- (3) Severe criticism concerning the building quality of the Authority, together with the short piling incidents, led to the establishment of an investigation panel by the Authority for the inquiry of the incidents. Currently, the submission of information to the Legislative Council Select Committee on Building Problems of Public Housing Units has aggravated the heavy work burden of our colleagues. The above incidents have shattered the morale of staff of the Authority.
- (4) Although the Authority has already implemented its Phased Service Transfer programme for estate management and maintenance services and its Voluntary Departure Scheme is well-received by staff, some of the existing staff still have worries regarding their career prospects in the midst of the weakened economy and the persistently high unemployment rate.

Today, the Housing Authority has a wide spectrum of duties and responsibilities. At its inception, the Authority, of a smaller size, faced problems that could be dealt with more easily. Over the past 20 years, the Authority has grown to be the largest public organization and its involvement has become very complex. With the public demand for increased transparency, problems surfaced gradually.

The long-awaited report of the Committee on Review of the Institutional Framework for Public Housing is yet to be published and we have no idea of the recommendations to be made by the Committee. I am of the opinion that it would not be sufficient just to make some more changes to the roles of the institutions. The development of public housing requires not just a substantive long-term policy. To discharge the day-to-day duties, it is essential that an effective executive arm, an appropriate monitoring mechanism and proper financial arrangements are in place.

Finally, in view of the fact that the long-term housing policy of Hong Kong is implemented through the combined efforts of a number of organizations, I hope that the Select Committee on Review of the Institutional Framework for Public Housing will not be dissolved after its report is released. Instead, it should consider carrying on with its monitoring tasks and conduct, on regular basis, reviews on the impacts of economic or social changes on housing matters."

Ms SIU Yuen-sheung delivered her speech as follows (English translation):

"Chairman, Members,

Rational Allocation of Public Housing Resources

The Housing Authority currently provides some 650 000 public rental flats for the citizens and has enabled some 350 000 families to own their own homes, helping the citizens of Hong Kong to solve their housing problems.

With the elapse of time, many families have seen their children grown up and had their family incomes improved during their residence in public housing estates. These sitting tenants should therefore be encouraged to purchase their own homes to give their flats to others with a greater need so as to speed up the waiting time for the 110 000 or so public housing applicants on the Waiting List.

To ensure rational allocation of public housing resources, the Authority requires both tenants and applicants for public housing to undergo a Comprehensive Means Test to ascertain their needs based on income and net assets. However, such an administrative procedure takes time and may lead to misunderstanding on the part of the tenants. In order to allocate the resources in a more effective way, I consider that the relevant policy should be updated.

In view of the above, I have the following suggestions to make:

1. When granting a public housing tenancy, we should fix the duration and the tenants should move out at expiry to make the flat available for people with a greater need. For tenants who cannot afford a better alternative accommodation or who are not so well off financially, they can apply to renew the tenancy. If their income and assets do not exceed the ceilings prescribed under the test, they will be granted a renewal. In addition, we should proactively help tenants with financial hardship to apply for rent reduction.

2. The Housing Department should increase its accounting transparency by stating clearly the various components of the rent of each flat, which include maintenance fee, management fee and rates. This will give the tenants a clear picture of what proportion the rent they pay constitutes in the total expenditure of the Housing Department in the provision of public housing and help avoid misunderstanding.
3. Both the landlord and tenants have the responsibility to maintain the buildings in a good condition. The Department and the property management agents should strengthen their communication with the tenants so that the three parties can work closely together for better handling of problems and improvement of building management. This will enable the tenants to live and work in peace and contentment."

Mr Peter WONG Hong-yuen delivered his speech as follows:

"Mr. Chairman,

As a member of the Authority and its Finance Committee, I would like to speak first of all to the Report of the Chairman of the Finance Committee and then to the environmental performance of the Authority.

Audit Committee

It would not surprise members that I have to speak yet again on the lack of an autonomous Audit Committee which deals with the audit of the statutory accounts of the Authority as well as ensuring that there is proper corporate governance of the Authority whether it deals with proper systems of control and their monitoring, and updating those systems to suit changes in circumstances. In this latter connection, it should also monitor the internal audit functions of the Authority.

In all my years as a member of the Finance Committee, we have never had a chance to meet the Director of Audit to discuss the statutory audit of the Authority. It is now best practice to have such regular meetings so that those ultimately responsible for the good order of the Authority, namely this Board, do have an opportunity to discuss the way the Director of Audit has discharged his duties and whether there are matters of interest or concern that both sides should be aware of and steps taken.

Instead, we only get reports tabled at the Legislative Council which are at the least, highly confrontational. Rarely do they point out the thousand and one small areas for improvement which give the audit value for money. We all need to discharge our duty to be accountable, but we also want value for our audit money, which is ultimately paid for out of public funds.

I repeat my call for an autonomous audit committee of the Authority and it has to be equipped with the necessary expertise to monitor all aspects of the Authority's work including the all pervasive IT.

Information Technology

As I mentioned, IT is all pervasive and its presence or absence, effectiveness or ineffectiveness, will hamper or promote the way the Authority does its work. At present, the monitoring of IT falls to the Finance Committee. I believe that this is inherently wrong because the Finance Committee is unlikely to have all the skills necessary to monitor corporate governance or understand all aspects of the Authority's work and gives IT a finance bias whereas IT should be for the benefit of the entire Authority.

I would strongly urge that this role be discharged by the Strategic Planning Committee or a totally separate committee drawing on the best IT brains in Hong Kong as well as representatives from all the other committees overseeing the operations of the Authority.

Environmental Affairs

I am pleased to say that at long last, the Authority is beginning to take its place as a responsible environment citizen of Hong Kong. We still have a long way to go. I wish to note the work of Raymond Bates for starting to chair the Environmental Steering Committee. This has now been taken over by Marco Wu and his position in the Department belies the importance of this work. I also like to thank Mr. David Lo for answering my many questions before I prepared this speech.

Much has been done to raise the awareness of all things environmental within the Department as well as that of the Authority's tenants. Much much more has to be done since the level of awareness or commitment is quite patchy. Some could hardly care less. This is not surprising because apart from just doing the right thing and feeling good, there is no inherent incentive to be green.

Apart from a pat on the back and the occasional award, what incentive is there? Certainly, there are almost no disincentives. If you are in the Department, so long as you do the absolute minimum, you are untouchable. If you are a tenant, short of throwing rubbish out of your window, you owe no duty to anyone. It certainly costs you no more whether you sort your rubbish or not.

I have asked many questions of Mr. Lo as to why it seems to take forever to get anything changed, even when we have general agreement that that is the right thing to do. There are always reasons why that is so (mostly external ones), but we must find ways to shorten the time frame for those changes to take place. We must not accept that bureaucracy is a valid excuse as to why things take so long to get better.

If Hong Kong is to be the World Class City of Asia, then we must find ways to cut that red tape. Let that be a challenge to all of us since our competitors are much quicker on their feet.

I know we do consult green groups and get their assistance to implement particular programmes. But there appears to be a lack of willingness or knowledge

to really engage them as partners in all matters environmental and I believe that they have a great deal to contribute both in the coming up of ideas, help shape and refine policy, and actually assist in their proper implementation.

By fully engaging them, then instead of just being critical (even misinformedly critical) they can become owners of the strategy and openly support the initiatives which they feel they have had a hand in shaping. We must get rid of the notion that they are always against us. We must think and act as one.

The Future

The Authority has been slow in starting on the environmental front, yet the elephant is now gathering momentum and the effort is beginning to tell. Certainly, I have it on good authority that the Department is one of the most enthusiastic if not the most enthusiastic participant in cooperation to arrive at a sustainable solution for Hong Kong.

We must remember that just over half of Hong Kong's population live in the Authority's rental accommodation and nearly two thirds live in accommodation built by the Authority. Decisions made by us have far reaching and profound repercussions on the lives of a majority of Hong Kong's people. We must be and be seen to be socially responsible in all our actions and in some respect, this large Board helps the Department to discharge that obligation and we do not entirely rely on the Department's hard earned experience.

In Europe, and to a lesser extent North America, corporations issue reports on how they have discharged their social responsibilities. I believe that this is one area that we as a Board, should start to explore and decide how we should discharge this important duty.

Construction and Development Waste

Lastly, Mr. Chairman, I would like to make a plea for the Authority's assistance. In Hong Kong, everyday we are generating some 38 000 tonnes of inert materials arising from construction, excavation, renovation, demolition and road works. This is what we call "Construction and Demolition Waste". Some 80% is presently used in reclamation projects and 20%, mostly of mixed materials is landfilled.

In a densely populated area like Hong Kong, we have built the state of the art landfills for decomposable materials like household waste. These landfills prevent pollution of the surrounding areas, but they are very expensive to build and maintain. In other places, much of this would be incinerated to reduce bulk, but in Hong Kong, there is still much opposition.

The problem is that we are running out of reclamation projects and based on current estimates, between mid-2002 and end 2005, we will have a surplus of some 69 million tonnes of inert Construction and Demolition materials which cannot be used in reclamations. A study has shown that the standard means of minimising these wastes:

Avoiding and minimising
Sorting for reuse
Maximising reuse
Recycling and
Establishing temporary fill banks

will best only scratch at the surface. To give you some idea of what this 69 million tonnes is, it will fill the Happy Valley Racecourse to a height of 91 storeys. Unless we find alternatives to landfilling, our precious landfills will be used up all too quickly by this inert Construction and Demolition Waste.

Hong Kong is facing a crisis on the disposal of Construction and Demolition Waste. I am not pointing the finger at the Authority, but we are one of the major producers of such waste and it behoves us to be on our best endeavours to tackle this problem. We must do our part to reduce the amount of Construction and Demolition Waste that our activities generate."

Mr NG Leung-sing delivered his speech as follows (English translation):

"Mr Chairman and Members,

Last year was an eventful year for the Housing Authority so far as its workforce and business were concerned. Building quality in particular is one major issue that lives on and continues to capture public concern. Much solid work has been done in this respect, including formulation and implementation of a series of reform measures on geotechnical survey, foundation layout, contract arrangements and specifications, site supervision and organizational structure of the Housing Department. With the course of time, I believe the public will realize that the Housing Authority is consolidating itself on the basis of experience and ever advancing to public expectations.

To make an objective evaluation of the work of the Housing Authority for that period, one has to have an idea of the acute anomaly in land supply for public housing before 1997. From my days with the Sino-British Land Commission before the handover, I know very well that provisions for public housing projects were approved in entirety every year. Nevertheless, land supply has long been uneven. According to the Hong Kong Housing Authority Annual Report 1998/99, public housing production was only around 20 000 flats two years ago, and 28 500 flats in the following year. It was boosted to around 58 000 flats in that particular year, and in any time during the following three years, the plan was to have around 200 000 flats under construction. The challenge of such a production scale is imaginable. The marked unevenness in production was to a large extent caused by unavailability of constant land supply for the Housing Authority, and to dig deeper, was a result of the gravely protracted process of land allocation before 1997 and the infrastructural constraints of the sites. Yet all these were beyond control of the Housing Authority and its executive arm. To draw a useful lesson from what has happened, one has to take the issue of public housing building quality in perspective. The above historical factors and the related responsibilities cannot be overlooked.

Forging ahead, I always think that the Housing Authority should go for streamlining and decentralization with a view to gradually turning away from the existing over-embracing role in public housing matters. The Housing Authority should not be operated like those mainland state enterprises of bygone days any more. It is absolutely outdated to aim at collectivist control. It will be an important task of the Housing Authority to devolve its powers and take up a simplified schedule within a well-defined organizational and legal framework. Besides, public housing should identify itself with a clear role on the market. The Housing Authority is not a private developer. It should not go beyond its realm to put subsidized housing to competition on the private property market. We are obliged to reiterate that "physical quality" should come first in all Housing Authority public housing projects so as to uphold our guarantee for safety. Moreover, we have got to review whether some expensive prime sites should be used by the Housing Authority for public housing development, bearing in mind the objectives of rational utilization of scarce public resources and greater opportunities for the huge numbers with urgent housing needs on the Waiting List.

The Housing Authority is an organization responsible for the practical work of monitoring and implementing policies on utilization of public housing resources. Its members who represent different social sectors and a wide spectrum of expertise or social experience have actively engaged themselves in services to the public. It is a valuable tradition of the Housing Authority that Members believe in action rather than empty words. With changing social circumstances and increasing concern over public housing issues, the Housing Authority naturally has to work on greater accountability. It is not at all surprising that there will be social criticisms or even political pressure. But as Mencius said, "There are cases of praise which could not be expected and of reproach when the parties have been seeking to be perfect." Members' enthusiasm for social service will not be affected by praise or criticism at any one point. I believe that both Members and departmental staff will keep up their good work to bring forth reform and progress in public housing development in the interest of the general public."

Ms Iris TAM Siu-ying delivered her speech as follows (English Translation):

"Mr Chairman and Members,

In the past few years, being up to my neck in work I often left the office after dark. With the downturn in economy, there has been a drop in consultancy jobs lately and I can leave the office, naturally, earlier. When for the first time I left at six, I had a pretty uneasy feeling on my way home. I was really not used to going home when the sun was still shining. However, on second thoughts, I came to realize that it was my previous practice of working till night reigned that was actually abnormal.

Relating this personal experience to the construction of housing units under the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS), I find they do have something in common. Land was in short supply in the past. Despite the sharp increase in housing demand, there was always a shortfall of land supply to meet the demand. This was one of the major factors contributing to the spiral of property prices. Moreover, the

Government has intervened, for over 20 years, in the free market by allocating land to the Housing Authority for the construction of HOS flats and the sale of these flats at discount prices. The community as a whole has already got used to the existence of HOS flats.

In recent years, the Government, in the development of its long-term planning and land sales programme, has demonstrated its determination to stabilise property prices to a level which is affordable to the public. However, as the economy has yet to recover sufficiently from the financial crisis, the aspirations of prospective home-buyers are greatly restrained and private property prices have plummeted to a level comparable to that of HOS flats. Furthermore, with the significant downward adjustments in interest rates, the affordability of the people to is now at a new high in ten years.

The coordinating and planning efforts of the Government have seen their long-term stabilization effects. The private sector market has been offering affordable housing to our citizens. This is what we require of a healthy market. Hence, the historical mission of building flats under the HOS has been accomplished. Instead, the focus should be turned to the provision of low-interest or interest-free loans and tax concessions to facilitate home-buying. The variety of housing choices and the greater freedom of transaction would certainly give our citizens a greater sense of satisfaction.

In a free and market - led economy, the Government should take care of essential livelihood matters which do not attract the participation of the private sector, such as waste disposal, sewage treatment and water supply. Elsewhere these services are even provided by the private sector. Why should we insist on having HOS flats provided by the Government? Although the sale of HOS flats is an important source of revenue for the Housing Authority, it is still possible to resolve the issue by negotiating with the Government for a new financial arrangement. Measures such as the provision of loans can be adopted to encourage well-off tenants to surrender their public housing units.

It has been suggested recently that the prices of HOS flats should be further lowered to increase their appeal to home-buyers. This suggestion, I should say, is putting the cart before the horse. In my opinion, we should have the courage to explore the possibility of calling a halt to the construction of HOS flats to enable a healthy development of the housing market."

Mr WONG Kwun delivered his speech as follows (English translation):

"Mr Chairman and Members,

With the record low oversubscription rate in the latest phase (phase 23A) of the Home Ownership Scheme (the HOS), the function of the HOS was once again in doubt. Some are of the view that since flats are already abundantly supplied in the private property market, the Government should increase the amount of direct subsidies for the public instead so as to assist them to buy flats in the private property market.

The HOS was introduced by the Housing Authority (HA) in 1976. It provides a chance for those better-off public rental housing (PRH) tenants to buy their own flats so that their public rental flats can be surrendered. As for the middle-income families who are neither eligible for the PRH nor well off enough to buy their flats in the private property market, the HOS also provides them with an opportunity to own their own flats.

HOS flats have their specific sales targets. The scheme not only provides the grass-roots with one more option, but helps regulate the property market and prevent private developers from monopolizing. I personally do not agree to trim down the overall supply of public housing and I do not believe that it is proper for us to stop the production of HOS flats, increase the home purchase loans or reduce the number of HOS flats for sale just for the sake of stimulating the purchasing demand and boosting the property market.

To the HA, the repayment expenditure of those HOS white form applicant households is an indicator of their affordability. If it is within 40% of their income, then the HOS flats are deemed affordable. This ratio has long been adopted by the HA. Since the income and asset limits for white form applicant households have been significantly reduced, the above-mentioned percentage should be lowered to 35%, and the selling price of the HOS flats should be reduced also for the benefit of the public. Besides, restrictions on those families who have sold back their HOS flats to the HA because of financial difficulties, unemployment and other mishaps in recent years should be lifted also, so that they might have another chance to apply for HOS flats.

The HA has set up this year an ad hoc committee. It planned to spend about a year to review the domestic rent policy. In 1990, the highest rent of the PRH in the urban area was \$31.8 per square metre and the operating deficit of PRH was \$741.22 million. Though the rents of the newly constructed estates in the past four years have been frozen, the prevailing highest rent has already reached \$63.4 per square metre, i.e. 2 times of the rent ten years before. The deficit has also increased to \$2.4 billion per year.

In view of the economic downturn in the past few years, both the HA and the Hong Kong Housing Society (HS) have frozen their rents for three years in order to relieve the burden of their tenants. Surprisingly, while the HA has a serious deficit, the HS has a surplus. For this reason, the HA should assess the affordability of its tenants, figure out whether the composition of the domestic rent is reasonable, find a way to reduce the operating costs without scarifying the quality of service and examine the relationship between the median rent of PRH and floor area allocated when renewing the domestic rent policy. We should not let the public have a misconception that reviewing the domestic rent policy is an excuse for rent increase.

In January 2000, the HA endorsed the initial round of the phased transfer programme for estate management and maintenance services and promised to review the programme within the first two years of its implementation before deciding on the pace of service transfer in the future. I believe the review should first take into account the interests and prospects of the staff who have decided to stay in the service,

while the pace of service transfer should depend on the actual number of staff who have joined the Voluntary Departure Scheme. In order to reflect truly the demand of the residents and perfect the monitoring mechanism, the HA should also expand the functions of the Estate Management Advisory Committee (EMAC) gradually. By so doing, the quality of the transferred management service can be guaranteed.

Hong Kong's achievements in public housing have been universally recognized in the past decades. Public housing has contributed much to our social stability, yet it has also generated a lot of problems. We have to deal with outstanding problems like reviewing the framework of public housing, accelerating the privatization pace of the services of Housing Department, retaining or abolishing the HOS, tightening up the public housing policy and many more. Since the interests of thousands of families are at stake, we should play safe in carrying out our reforms. It is unwise to make frequent changes in policy-making. We should not be too eager for quick success, otherwise, the so-called reforms may only end up in social instability."

Professor Richard WONG Yue-chim delivered his speech as follows:

"Mr Chairman and Members:

Public Housing Policy for Hong Kong Reconsidered

Ever since the onset of the Asian financial turmoil, Hong Kong's housing policy has come under considerable criticism. The large supply of publicly provided housing units in recent years has been opposed by a public languishing in negative net worth after the collapse of property prices. Following the public outcry at piling scandals of newly completed Housing Authority units, the government has initiated a review of the institutional framework for public housing.

What is really of concern to the community cannot be merely limited to the devising of a proper institutional framework for the conduct of public housing policies important as that issue may be. Rather it should be a review of government's overall housing policy. The design of institutions must be made in light of the policies it has to implement.

The Failures of Public Housing Policy

Government intervention into housing and property markets has a long history. The massive public housing programme that was started in the 1950s was an achievement of historic proportions, but is also the source of our many woes today.

Under existing arrangements, land is allocated to the Housing Authority for construction of the rental and owner occupied flats. Land provided to the Authority is almost never returned to the private market and can therefore never realize its full value on the open market. As a consequence, the land is permanently "locked-in" with little scope for redeployment towards higher alternative uses through the market. This imposes an enormous cost on society.

The current stock of public sector housing provided by the Housing Authority includes 645 000 rental and 300 000 home ownership units. The aims of our public sector housing policy are multiple and often conflicting in their consequences. These aims include the resettlement of displaced households, provision of assistance to low and middle income households to afford adequate and quality housing, and achieving a high level of home ownership. The combination of the last two objectives has led to the creation of a massive subsidized programme - the Home Ownership Scheme (HOS).

The growth of the HOS programme has greatly expanded the role, resources and independence of the Housing Authority. It has also provided the Authority with a convenient way to finance further expansion and to cover the deficits of the public rental housing programme. All this gives the Authority a strong financial incentive not to relinquish the HOS programme.

Inefficiency and Inequity

Public sector housing units, including both rental and owner occupied units, constitute half the entire housing stock in the community. The share of public sector housing units has averaged some 60 percent of the total annual supply of new units in the past decade. The massive transfer of resources has created the greatest source of economic inefficiency in the community. It had also resulted in the population consuming on average less housing services under the public housing programme than would otherwise had been if the subsidies were to be provided through direct financial subsidies. In previous studies I had estimated the efficiency loss to be between 0.5 - 1.0 percent of GDP.

Sadly this massive redistribution of housing resources have not materially created any significant impact towards achieving equity goals. The figures in the Appendices (**Appendices 6 and 7**) plot the income distribution of households of public vs. private sector tenants and public vs. private sector homeowners based on a random sample of the population in 2000Q2. As is apparent from these two figures the distributions are essentially similar. This is a serious indictment of the failure of our public sector housing policy in achieving equity goals.

The case for reducing the scale and scope of the activities of the Housing Authority is overwhelming. **Scarce public sector resources should be better targeted at the lowest income segments of our society and not spread to large segments of society with a more or less randomized outcome.**

From Direct Provision to Market Oriented Incentive Schemes

Fortunately in the recent past, there is increasing recognition of the problems with the public housing programme. We have seen a number of changes in public housing policies. The attempts to encourage well-off tenants to leave the public housing program have led to a number of initiatives, including, for example, raising public housing rents for well-off tenants, implementing means and assets tests, enhancing the incentives to purchase HOS units, relaxing some of the transfer restrictions on HOS units, and selling public housing units to the sitting tenant through the Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS).

Recent policy emphasis, for example, in the greater use of the Home Purchase Loan Scheme, Home Starter Loan Scheme, and Sandwich Class Loan Scheme represent a shift away from the direct provision of housing units towards the greater deployment of market based incentive schemes to meet housing demand. Public policy to help residents achieve home ownership is increasingly now expressed in terms of housing opportunities rather than the direct provision of housing units. The changes are in and of themselves commendable given that financial subsidies are less costly for society than the bricks and mortar approach.

Yet these changes have given rise to unintended consequences and increased market uncertainty. Under the bricks and mortar approach, the public housing programme affects the private housing market primarily on the supply side. Public sector housing units were essentially non-transferable, hence, there was only one housing market, i.e. the private housing market. The introduction of various financial subsidies and partial easing of transfer restrictions meant that the public housing sector was transformed into a separate market, the HOS secondary market. We have created two housing markets - one subsidized and the other not.

In the subsidized market, financial subsidies are provided on the demand side and there is a monopolist developer on the supply side. Even more intriguing is that the sales revenues collected on the supply side are used to provide financial subsidies on the demand side. Given such a set of awkward incentives what behaviour characterizes this monopolist bureaucracy? Does it seek to set sales prices to maximize profits? If not, how should prices be set? And what will be the consequences for society?

In this new situation, the public and private housing sectors are now linked together not only on the supply side, but also on the demand side. When linkages on the demand side are permitted then it will be very difficult to keep these two sectors separate. Take, for example, changes in macroeconomic conditions. When the economy moves into recession and private property prices start to fall then should the Housing Authority match falling prices; and to what extent? On what criteria should such decisions be based on? Clearly politics must matter in some manner? This clearly creates market uncertainty.

Let me now provide three concrete illustrations of these changes and how they have had substantive knock-on effects on the private market.

1. The Emergence of the HOS Secondary Market

The first example is the partial relaxation of the transfer restrictions of HOS units. In 1997, the secondary market for HOS units was permitted to operate for units that had been occupied for three years. Transfers on the open market after five years were allowed but any capital gains from the appreciation of land values attributable to the unsubsidized portion of the original purchase had to be returned to the Authority. With such restrictions occupants of HOS units rarely sold their units on the open market because there is little incentive to do so. However, the HOS secondary market provided them with an opportunity to change their units at an affordable cost to obtain a preferred unit. A fairly active HOS secondary market was

therefore created. This market will continue to grow in size as more and more HOS units are built and existing units become transferable.

In itself this was an entirely desirable initiative because it provided a means for a partial freeing up of "locked in" landed resources among eligible households. These households were therefore provided with an alternative to the private housing market. Units in the HOS secondary market and those in the private housing market were not necessarily good substitutes for each other because of quality differences and price differences due to the subsidized land premium. However, with the collapse of prices in the private property market since 1998, the HOS units in the secondary market became increasingly close substitutes and contributed to a dampening effect on the private housing market.

2. *The Introduction of the Tenants Purchase Scheme*

The second example is the Tenants Purchase Scheme introduced in 1998, which called for the sale of 250 000 public rental units over a ten-year period. The privatization of public housing is an act of wealth creation and should have led to an increase in the net demand for housing, including private housing. However, the conditions of the sale probably contributed **indirectly** to a further dampening effect on the demand for private housing.

First, the owners of TPS units were allowed to apply for HOS units within 10 years as a white form applicant. This provision implied that some 250 000 households were discouraged from applying for HOS units immediately. This is evidenced by the dramatic drop of successful green form applicants for HOS units in the ensuing years. In 1997 about two-thirds of the new HOS units were sold to green form applicants, but in 1999-2000 some 60 percent of these units were taken up by white form applicants. Given the large supply of new HOS units coming onto the market in recent years, the Housing Authority inadvertently was put in the position of competing with the private housing market for buyers. The effect was no doubt exacerbated by (a) the generous discounts on HOS units that were offered from earlier days when private property prices were hugely inflated; and (b) the high-income eligibility requirements established before the onset of the economic recession. It clearly puts pressure on prices in the private housing market.

The TPS was clearly a success as judged by the high take up rates, however, in failing to cut the production of HOS units at the same time, it created a serious indirect knock-on effect on the private housing market.

Second, the units could only be transferred on the open market after five years, but the owners must return to the Authority the excess land premium on the unsubsidized portion of the original purchase. As a consequence, like the HOS owners there is really no incentive to transfer the units onto the open market. The sale of TPS units did not provide any incentive for the purchase of private housing units.

Had the Housing Authority decided to sell all 250 000 units with immediate transferability on the open market and without requiring the purchasers to return the subsidized portion of the land premium then the effect would have been very different.

Instead of creating only a dampening effect it would also have generated a stimulating effect. The view that the sale of public rental housing had worsened the slump in property markets in the midst of the recent financial turmoil is therefore not entirely correct. The issue is not the sale of public rental units, but the conditions of the sale and what adjustments had to be made to the HOS programme.

3. Applicability of the Home Purchase Loan Scheme

The third example is the decision in 1998 by the Housing Authority to permit the Home Purchase Loan Scheme (HPLS) to be applied to the purchase of units in the HOS secondary market. This further dampened the demand for private housing units. Previously HPLS loans could only be used for the purchase of private housing units. The immediate effect is that the number of HPLS loans granted jumped from 2 742 in 1997/98 to 9 482 in the period 1 April 1998 - 31 July 1999. Moreover in the period from 1 August 1999 to 31 March 2001 some 55 percent of the HPLS loans among Green Form applicants were used to purchase units in the HOS secondary market scheme.

These reforms of the public housing programmes are in essence attempts to create a market for the transfer of housing units in the public sector among eligible households. The reforms created a new secondary market for public sector housing units that is separate from the existing private housing market. These changes led to unintended outcomes that should have been foreseen at the very beginning. In due course this secondary market will continue to grow in size as new HOS units are constructed, as more existing HOS units becomes transferable, and as more TPS units are sold and become transferable. An important consequence of this development is that HOS units will become increasingly attractive as an alternative to private housing units because of its transferability in the secondary market.

This creates a powerful disincentive for households to exit the public sector and enter the private sector. The trading up ladder that was previously present has now been severed to a considerable extent.

The creation of a separate market for public sector housing units made it possible for many public housing tenants and homeowners to resolve their most pressing housing desires to change their residential location within the territory. Therefore the demand for private housing units was immediately negatively impacted. While the objective of creating a market mechanism for facilitating the transfer of public housing units is an improvement over the earlier situation, it brings the curse of having created two separate markets with inevitable spillover effects. The current lack of activity in the secondary market for private housing is certainly a reflection of the breakdown of the trading up effect created by the secondary market of public sector housing units.

The reforms should have been designed to create a single housing market rather than two separate markets. It is an extremely important policy matter to unify the two markets as soon as possible. To do so would require a simple act. Allow HOS and TPS units to be transferred on the open market without having to repay the full-subsidized portion of the land premium. This fully unites the two markets.

Personally, I would prefer that the households be allowed to pocket the full amount of the subsidized premium. Given the considerable reserves that our government has today they can well afford to give up this income stream and allow some of our citizens to capitalize on it. Since the land has no alternative use, the net loss to the government may be very limited if the land can be redeveloped to a higher valued use in the future. The question that this is unfair to other citizens is beside the point given that the benefits of using the unit have already been transferred to the household. The household is merely provided with the freedom and opportunity to realize it at a time it chooses. Moreover, it would also allow society to realize as much as, if not more, \$100 billion in wealth for our society. This would go a long way to recapitalize our economy.

Policy Recommendations

There is a defensible case for continuing to provide subsidized public rental housing units to the genuinely poor. As these tenants become better off economically they should either be required to leave, to pay market rents, or provided with an option to purchase their existing units.

The proposed zero rent policy applicable to public rental housing units would allow existing public housing maintenance costs to be met through rentals. Whereas the construction cost for new public rental units can be met directly by subsidies from treasury transfers.

The Tenants Purchase Scheme should continue and be accelerated so as to reduce the huge stock of public housing units from the shackles of the public grip so that the wealth that is locked up in these units and the land on which they sit can be returned to the private market. Moving the selling cycle from 12 months to eight months is not adequate.

The HOS programme should be halted. Land made available for the development of new HOS units should be transferred to the private domain. Revenue derived from these land sales would be adequate to provide subsidies to help the population finance property purchases and can fully replace the construction of planned HOS units by the Housing Bureau and the Housing Authority. This is the best time to do it given the considerably deflated prices in the private housing market.

Existing TPS and HOS units that are sold on the open market should not be required to repay the land premium to the Housing Authority. This policy would allow large numbers of existing HOS owners to realize a capital gain. The lost revenues to the Housing Authority will no longer matter if the HOS programme is to be halted. Such an injection of wealth into the economy will be highly beneficial for revitalizing the economy and would be most timely. It would take place at no real cost to society given that the land has little alternative use. The secondary market for TPS and HOS units would then have the hope of becoming fully integrated with the private housing market.

With the changing economic and social landscape arising from economic integration of Hong Kong with the Pearl River Delta, the ensuing pattern for housing demand for both ownership and rental is likely to change over time. The policy of

maintaining a fixed targeted ratio of ownership to rental for the resident population will become increasingly irrelevant and should be abandoned.

Housing and urban development policy should be centrally coordinated at the highest level so as to meet overall economic and social objectives. They should not be compartmentalized and fragmented as is at present. The future role of public sector housing policy would be transformed to focus primarily on two matters:

- First, the provision of public rental units for eligible households.
- Second, the administration of various subsidized home loan schemes for the purchase of private housing after the phasing out of the HOS programme."

Mr Philip Trevor NUNN delivered his speech as follows:

"Mr Chairman and Members:

Enhancing Public Housing Quality

I would like to commend the Housing Department for its efforts in implementing the two-phased implementation plan for quality housing. The Director and senior executives of the Housing Department have been severely criticised for various incidents that have occurred particularly on piling projects and I think few people realised the efforts which have been undertaken by the Director and the Department in attempting to push forward reform.

The Housing Authority's initiatives are very much welcomed by the industry and a number of private sector construction professionals have remarked that they would like to see the Government and other public bodies follow the lead taken by the Authority and take similar action.

There are two particular issues I would like to comment upon regarding Phase 1 of the implementation plan, the first relates to Pillar 2 - "Revamping the Piling Process" and "Strengthening Risk Management by Taking a More Pragmatic Risk Sharing Approach with Contractors" and the second relates to Pillar 5 - "Establishing a Partnering Culture".

These two issues are very much inter-connected because from my experience, it is very difficult to promote a partnering culture where contract risks are not fairly distributed.

A series of measures has already been taken by the Department to lessen the risk to contractors of piling projects such as wider use of engineer's designs, reducing the level of liquidated damages and providing extensions of time for unanticipated ground conditions. However, these measures do not go far enough and should be extended. This task is becoming more urgent as a result of significant increases in tender prices for piling works over recent months. There have been discussions at

the Building Committee about further steps to equalise risk and I'm sure these discussions will continue.

In most Western European countries and also in Australia and the United States, the general overriding philosophy behind conditions of contract is that allocation of risk to the party best able to bear that risk will lead to much fewer problems and importantly will be more cost effective.

It is not correct to assume that imposing high risks on contractors will benefit the Authority by producing lower construction costs.

Where heavy risks are imposed on contractors, tender prices will generally be higher by a significant percentage. If the risks for which contractors are pricing do not eventuate which is probably the case for say, 80% to 90% of all projects then the Authority is paying more than it needs to do for 80% to 90% of its projects. For the other 15% to 20% of projects where the risks eventuate, the Authority will be working with contractors who, even though they might have priced for the risks, are likely to take an adversarial approach towards claims.

It has been said that this argument is incorrect because in fact contractors do not properly price for the risk and hence the Authority is not actually paying more for the 80% to 90% of projects where the risks do not eventuate. I do not believe this is correct (and this is borne out by recent piling tenders which are very high) but even if this hypothesis is correct it would generally be the case that those contractors who do not properly price the risks are the less reputable contractors who are keen to secure more work at any cost and hence this leads to the better quality contractors winning less work. Those contractors who gamble will end up succeeding in their gamble on maybe 80% to 90% of the projects they win. On the other occasions they will not succeed. In the projects where the gamble fails there will be an adversarial and claims conscious approach from the outset of the project and more likely than not a poorer quality product.

It is therefore false logic to believe that costs are saved by having tough conditions of contract. In my view, the converse is the case. More equitable sharing of risks will lead to less cost to the Authority and importantly, to better quality.

I would therefore like to see the equitable risk sharing arrangements being extended to cover not only extensions of time for unanticipated ground conditions and extensions of time for third party interference such as utility difficulties, but also to cover prolongation costs for any extended time due to adverse ground conditions or utility problems. Equally, changes in the law post contract and other unforeseeable events should be at the risk of the Authority and not the contractor.

The report of the Construction Industry Review Committee published in January 2001 appears to support the general philosophy of fair allocation of risk and I would like to see the Authority continue its review of the contract conditions to achieve this result.

This will set the framework for a real partnering culture to develop between

the Authority and its contractors. If a partnering contract is to be successfully put into operation equitable sharing of contract risks is essential. If the contract continues to impose too many risks on contractors, then the partnering approach in practice is unlikely to work because it produces no incentive to the contractors to ensure that the partnering approach works.

In summary, I would therefore congratulate the Department on the reforms that have been implemented so far, however, the Authority must not be complacent and must not assume that the reforms undertaken to date will necessarily be sufficient to produce the "building industry cultural revolution" which is seen as necessary by the Construction Industry Review Committee. Action needs to be taken to lower piling costs and fairer risk allocation is one means of achieving this goal."

Mr Michael CHOI Ngai-min delivered his speech as follows (English translation):

"Chairman and Members,

Last year was presumably a difficult year for the Housing Authority (HA). With the occurrence of a series of sub-standard piling incidents, the time-honoured reputation and credibility of the HA were at stake. At the same time, excessive supply of flats in the private property market has resulted in a slump in property prices. Both the primary and secondary markets have undergone a slack period of business. There has been much pressure from developers and owners of negative assets. The HA's policy on the Home Ownership Scheme was being severely criticized also.

Since the role of the HA in providing public housing and our future movements are of everyone's major concern, I would like to probe into several major tasks of the HA, including public rental housing (PRH), Home Ownership Scheme, Home Purchase Loan Scheme and commercial property.

1. Public Rental Housing (PRH)

- 1.1 Over the past decades, the living standards of Hong Kong citizens have improved. Those who are less well-off can still enjoy adequate housing. This is attributable to the public housing policy of the Government and the hardwork of the HA. In the past, whether the property market was in a boom or in a slump, social stability could still be maintained. This was mainly due to the fact that the public had a safe and sound dwelling place to live in. Thus, one of the important tasks of the HA is to build more public rental housing to accommodate those in need.
- 1.2 Apart from quantity, the HA should also strive to improve the overall living conditions in public rental housing estates. By working on the average living area per tenant, the quality of the building, green environment, basic ancillary facilities provided in the estates and so on, the living conditions and living standards of the residents can be improved. Of course, when talking about improvement and enhancement, we do not mean to build luxurious public rental housing flats or provide clubhouse facilities. We

just want to focus on improving the living conditions of the residents so that they can have a healthy and comfortable home.

2. Sale of HOS Flats

- 2.1 Unlike PRH applicants, the buyers of HOS flats are usually better off. So as an essential prerequisite, buyers of HOS flats subsidized by the HA ought to be those lower income families who cannot afford to buy their own homes in the private property market. Otherwise, those who have to buy their own homes at their own expense will blame the Government for not being fair. Besides, the public would also think that the Government is not spending public money appropriately.
- 2.2 I, therefore, think that the supply of HOS flats should be flexible. The number of flats provided should depend on the affordability of the public in the private property market. As the property prices remain low at the moment and interest rates are going down, a lot of people can now afford to buy their own homes in the private property market. Comparatively speaking, the demand on HOS flats is diminishing. In view of this, I believe that the supply of HOS flats should be reduced in the coming year or so.
- 2.3 However, I do not agree that we should stop building HOS flats. Even though the functions of the HOS flats are less obvious today, it does not mean that they will have no role to play in the future. Since property prices fluctuate, no one can foretell the trend of the property prices and housing demand after a couple of years.

3. Home Purchase Loan Scheme

- 3.1 The Home Purchase Loan Scheme offers one more option to eligible citizens who need such a loan. This Scheme is not only effective but flexible also in that it allows people to choose their dream property. In view of this, I believe that it should stay in force.
- 3.2 The latest policy of the HA is to concentrate on processing Green Form applications while White Form applicants may turn to the Housing Society for loans under the Home Starter Loan Scheme. This practice may avoid duplication of applications received.

4. Commercial Properties

- 4.1 The commercial properties built by the HA should aim at serving the residents of its housing estates/courts.
- 4.2 Let us take the example of shopping centres. Admittedly, the introduction of greater private sector participation in the operation and management of commercial facilities can enhance both the income and efficiency, but we must be heedful of its effect on the interests of the residents. Private operator/management agents may aim only at making profits. Since

markets, food premises and the like are basic necessities of life, if shops of various trades are leased out on a monopoly or semi-monopoly basis simply for the sake of high rents, it is almost for sure that those commercial tenants will in turn mark up the prices of their goods. Eventually, the residents will have to suffer. It is thus essential to strike a balance between the operational benefits of commercial properties and the interests of residents.

But for the effort and hard work of the HA, the living environment of Hong Kong citizens would not have improved tremendously in the past twenty odd years. Although the HA is facing a handful of problems in its recent flat production works, I personally believe that those in need will still rely on the HA as the primary force to provide them with decent accommodation and better living condition in the future."

Mr Alex CHOY Kan-pui delivered his speech as follows (English translation):

"Mr Chairman, Members, Director of Housing,

As I browsed through the relevant data on the Housing Department from 1997 to date, I was glad to note that the average number of monthly complaints received by the Housing Department (HD) had been, basically, declining steadily. This is indeed encouraging, reflecting not only the concerted efforts within the Department but also the result of cooperation with the Housing Bureau as well. I hope that we could keep up our good work and see a continuous drop in the number of complaints, irrespective of whether they are lodged with the Department directly or referred to us by others.

Although the number of complaints has been decreasing steadily during the years, a series of incidents such as short-piling, site settlement and spalling have emerged one after another. nevertheless, problems such as building quality, corruption, supervision and accountability, though vexing, are driving forces which propel us to pursue timely reforms for the Housing Authority (HA).

The above topics were touched on here and there by 21 fellow members in their speeches in the Annual Special Open Meeting of the HA held on 1 June 2000. It was hoped that by initiating reforms for the future development of the HA, the confidence of the public in the Authority could be restored.

I actually have no intention to touch on these issues again today, one year after the Meeting, if it was not for the statements made by those summoned to the hearings of the Legislative Council Select Committee on Building Problems lately which really aroused my concern.

I do not intend to repeat the content of their statements but there is one thing in common in what they have said, and that is: "I knew what's wrong well in advance. However, it was not my fault. It was somebody else's wrongdoing." In short, both the HA and the government have tried to shift the blame on to each other and do not want to be held responsible.

I do not want to discuss the question of accountability today. My concern

is whether the accusations against the HA would lead to a government review on the structure and functions of the HA.

The Committee on Review of the Institutional Framework for Public Housing has been set up for almost a year now, yet not even the preliminary result is announced. Not only HA members, but the general public as well, are eager to know about the results. It is an undeniable fact that the review and studies concerned should be carried out with prudence, yet timely response is equally important. It cannot be delayed any longer or else the operations of the HA will be affected and its public status and image further weakened.

In the last decade of the 20th century, the achievement of the HA in flat production was highly commendable. The supply of Home Ownership Scheme flats has doubled from 129 000 in 1990/91 to 269 000 in 1999/2000. Our effort has made possible the dreams of potential purchasers and public housing tenants. It is something that we really should be proud of.

Nevertheless, it is high time we paid attention to the improvement of the living conditions of the residents. In 1990/91, there were a total of 269 000 families whose living conditions were unfavourable. By the end of March 2001, we still have 107 000 families whose living conditions have not yet been improved. Even though the number has greatly decreased in these 11 years, the figure 107 000 is still unacceptable for we are trying hard to improve the quality of life and the living conditions of our residents. If we are not able to improve the living conditions of these families in the coming 5 or 10 years, it will be a little disappointing to the public.

Speaking of disappointment, I have to mention something about the applications received for the latest phase of Home Ownership Scheme (HOS). The number of applications for HOS Phase 23A has slumped to a record low. It is reported that the Department has received less than 18 879 applications, some 5 000 applications less than the 25 659 applications received in HOS Phase 22B. This is the worst response we ever have since the introduction of HOS flats 20 odd years ago. This disastrous situation is a great contrast with our achievement in the 90's. As I have mentioned, at that time the Housing Authority had made possible the dreams of those who were craving for their own homes. Is there a reason for the downturn? Is it because we have lowered significantly the income limit of the white form applicants, or the public is still uncertain about the economy or they have not yet regained confidence in the HA? We should make a study to get to the bottom of this.

After discussing the historic low, it is high time we talked about the historic high. This year, the HA will provide a total of 59 000 public rental housing units, the number of which is the highest in all these years. This will satisfy greatly the demand of those on the Waiting List, as well as those in need. I believe we are all confident that the target of reducing the waiting time for PRH from 5 years at present to 3 years by 2003/04 can be achieved. This is quite encouraging.

Last year, drawing on collective wisdom we endorsed the idea of "Moving Towards a Flexible Housing Production Mix". This flexible arrangement will certainly help reduce the average waiting time to 3 years. However, the concern I

had expressed at that time has not yet been removed so far. My worry is if we turn the HOS units to public rental housing units at a time when the demand in the property market slows down or when our economy is not faring well, the occupants may be forced to pay a higher rent. I do not want the applicants to have a misconception about the Housing Authority and wrongly believe that they are being categorized, so that those with poor financial status and conditions are either not provided with a new flat or are forced to accept less favourable arrangements. This will make them feel that they are being discriminated.

Finally, I admit that no matter how hard the HA and the Department try to cooperate and work together, there is no way to please all the people all the time. However, we have to understand the public's growing demands and rising expectations. So, we not have only to face boldly the challenges brought about by the changes of the times and society, but also have to seek continuous self-improvement to equip ourselves for these tests and trials. I am prepared to join hands with you and work in concert to serve the community in the HA.

Thank you."

Mr HO Sai-chu delivered his speech as follows (English translation):

"Mr Chairman and Members,

It is a well-known fact that the Housing Authority (HA) has been making contributions to society over the years. However, in the past year or so, some unpleasant things had happened to the HA, which include the problems of housing quality and management. These make me cast my mind on the questions of: how should the HA position itself in the organization of the Government and what are the main duties of the HA.

I would like to share with all of you my views on these issues.

First, there is a need to clearly define the functions of the HA.

The HA is an agent of the Government which sets all policies. Once a policy on housing is formulated, the HA will implement it in the capacity of an agent. When unforeseen situations and new problems arise in the course of formulating and implementing a policy, the HA is welcomed to advise and comment. On the other hand, the Government can also take the initiative to consult the HA so that the formulation and implementation of the policy will be smooth through exchange of views and discussions.

However, the role of the HA is not clearly defined. The division of labour between the HA and the Housing Bureau is not clear enough, resulting in HA taking up too much work. So much so that it embraces the work of the Government, making itself too cumbersome to be effective. As a result, it cannot do its job properly in the field of housing production and management and this gives rise to criticisms from all quarters of society.

Second, what is the most important task of the HA?

The most important task of the HA is to provide low rent housing for those who cannot afford to buy or rent their home in the private property market. That is to say, we have to look after the poor and the less privileged.

According to information supplied by the HA, there were 144 600 applicants on the waiting list for public housing at the end of June 1997. To date, there are still 107 977 applicants on the waiting list. The demand for public housing will become more acute with the arrival of 55 000 new immigrants from the Mainland every year. At present, it still takes an applicant some four years eight months to be allocated a public housing flat despite the Government's promise that by the year 2003 the waiting time will be reduced to three years from seven years in 1997. I hope to see an even shorter waiting time in future. We members of the HA as well as staff members of the Department do sympathize those who are still waiting for their turn in the waiting list. Hence, there is a need to build more public housing and manage them properly. I am aware that a large portfolio of public housing entails large amounts of money in management costs. If the income cannot cover the expenditure, the Government has a duty to solve the problem. The HA now uses the revenue from Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) to cover the expenditure on public rental housing. Is it appropriate for the HA to do so? The HA has to build public rental housing on one hand and to build HOS flats on the other. It is difficult to do both jobs well at one and the same time. If the HA cannot handle these two jobs properly, it will not be able to build and manage public housing properly to meet the expectation of the citizens of Hong Kong.

Third, we should adopt a right approach towards HOS policy. As a matter of principle, the Government should not subsidize a small number of people in buying their home with taxpayers' money. However, the Government is just doing that right now under the HOS policy. Looking in retrospect, we understand that the Government introduced the policy due to the following three historical reasons:

1. Before the handover, the property prices were so inflated that the middle class (commonly referred to as the "sandwich class") could not afford to buy their home. To help them out, the Government put up more HOS flats for sale to appease them.
2. When the date of handover was announced, some Hong Kong people planned to emigrate overseas. In an attempt to keep them from leaving, the Government put up more HOS flats which were relatively cheaper in price as home ownership would instill a sense of belonging in them.
3. As the HA doesn't have to pay for the land for housing production, the profits from HOS are thus higher and can be used to finance the public rental housing.

The situations mentioned above have changed completely after the handover:

1. Due to slump in price after the financial turmoil, private properties are now more affordable to Hong Kong people.

2. Less and less people are emigrating overseas. On the other hand, more and more emigrants are returning to Hong Kong. It is therefore not necessary to adopt specific measures to keep people in Hong Kong.
3. The prices of HOS flats go down with the trend while construction costs rise steadily because the HA endeavours to raise the quality of housing. It becomes more difficult to use the income from HOS developments to finance the production of public rental housing. The potential to generate income from HOS developments is getting weaker.

In view of the above, HOS development should no longer be the focus of the HA. Some people worry that a smaller supply of HOS flats will encourage speculation in the property market. I don't think this is something to worry about because the Government is the largest owner of land. It, being in complete control of land supply, may put check and balance on the property market by regulating the supply of land.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize that the HA should focus on the production and management of public housing. I am confident that if we set out the working objectives clearly, Members of the HA and staff members of the Department will work closely together to achieve the goal."

Hon IP Kwok-him delivered his speech as follows (English translation):

"Mr Chairman,

Last year was an eventful year for the Housing Authority (HA). There were criticisms that the HA was just a rubber stamp, that the HA was useless and should be dissolved. While such comments may not represent the mainstream opinion, they do give me much food for thought. I cannot but ask myself whether I am performing my duties properly as an HA Member. Given the improving quality of public housing and our residents' life, I am sure that the efforts of everyone here have not been in vain. However, I am sorry to say that there are two areas which I think the HA has not done too well.

First, on the design of public housing. In recent years, there have been great improvements to the general appearance of our public housing; we have even been criticized for building Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) flats which are too "luxurious". However, as a member of the Building Committee, I have paid particular attention to the flaws in some of the designs. For instance, the metal gates in some harmony blocks do not provide much security, as they can easily be opened from the outside by thieves. In addition, the water pressure in certain estates is inadequate, and residents have to go without water from time to time. Furthermore, there were cases that aluminium window frames came loose and fell onto the ground because the screws for securing them were faulty. The above incidents have attracted wide media coverage. Public attention is then focused on the HA's faults rather than its contributions. The HA is then made a culprit.

To err is human, and the HA is no exception. However, it is the hope of every HA Member not just to be a receiver, but to really listen to and solve residents' problems. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to urge the Housing Department to be more responsive and handle residents' complaints with greater flexibility, so as not to tarnish the HA's reputation.

Second, on HA Members' right to know. There are 8 standing committees under the HA, each being responsible for specific areas of work. It can be said that an HA Member will not be fully posted on the latest decisions of a certain committee, if he or she is not a member of that committee, and will have to rely on second hand information provided by the media.

For instance, the HA approved this February the lowering of income and asset limits of applicants of PRH and HOS from 2000/01 onwards. The income limits for HOS were reduced by 20% from \$31,000 to \$25,000, and more than 30 000 families became ineligible for HOS overnight. However, as an HA Member, I did not know at all before the Committee's meeting that such an important topic would be discussed. It was only when I approached the Department upon hearing the news that I was told the details of this major change.

Do Members have sufficient right to know? At present, the Department will issue discussion papers of a committee to Members within one month after its meeting upon Members' request. If we want to know the most up-to-date information, we have to rely on the media. Is this fair to the HA Members? Members are not given enough information but are pressed for comments. This is not good for the HA, nor the Members. I hope the Department would consider informing Members of the salient points before a controversial subject is discussed so that Members may decide whether they will take part in the discussion or not and perform their role appropriately.

Thank you, Mr Chairman."

Mr George NG Sze-fuk delivered his speech as follows (English translation):

"Chairman, Members,

**Improving the Public Housing Policy -
A responsibility of the Housing Authority**

The government's housing policy is closely linked with the economy of Hong Kong. The quality and supply of public housing, being key elements of the government's housing policy, are presently issues of much public concern. As the principal agent for implementing the government's housing policy, the HA is responsible not only for ensuring the professional standards of each public housing block so as to safeguard the interests and safety of owners, but also for adjusting the supply of public housing to meet the needs of society and economic development.

Concerning the quality of public housing, to many grassroots residents in Hong Kong, their most important asset is the public housing flat they are living in.

However, the hard-earned money of the affected residents has become blood and tears because of the scandals involving shoddy workmanship and substandard materials that broke out repeatedly in recent years. More important, these scandals have undermined the more than 3 million public housing residents' confidence in the quality of public housing, the relevant policies and the monitoring system. I hope that the LegCo Select Committee which is now investigating the Tung Chung, Shek Yam Estate, Tin Chung Court, and Yuen Chau Kok incidents will come up with findings that echo and complement the reports compiled earlier by the government and the HA, and push the government to implement an in-depth and insightful reform of the public housing policy and framework, which will, inter alia, rectify the current situation of ill-defined responsibilities and multiple authorities drawing up different policies and step up supervision of construction sites by government departments.

On the question of public housing supply, some people think that the slack property market is mainly attributable to the over-production of HOS flats in recent years. This has a little over-simplified the issue. The real reasons, I think, are: the public are not yet able to benefit from the economic recovery; there is uncertainty about the prospect for employment; and people no longer assume that property prices will only go up and never go down. In 1996 and 1997 when an upsurge of property prices was experienced, the government acceded to the wishes of the public and decided to accelerate the production of HOS flats. The completion of projects one after another now gives people the impression of a deluge of HOS flats. We see an imbalance of supply and demand, and there is no cause for optimism in the coming few years. Thus it is an opportune decision to suspend the production of HOS flats. But that does not mean that the Government has hastily abolished the HOS policy altogether. After all, despite the considerable drop in private property prices, there are still many who do not need to live in public rental housing but cannot afford to purchase a home in the private sector. HOS flats exactly suit the needs of these sandwich-class people in terms of price and quality. The government's public housing policy should be oriented to the needs of the lower-middle class and the most needy. The aim should be to encourage people to work hard and seek improvement to their living condition.

All in all, the HA should redouble its efforts in the coming year to assist the government in improving the project monitoring system and the building quality of public housing as well as enhancing the effectiveness of the public housing policy by, for example, clearly defining the respective target clients for the public and private property markets so as to restore people's confidence in public housing."

Mr CHENG Yan-kee delivered his speech as follows:

"Chairman, Members,

I have noticed that in the last few months, the volume of news on public housing in the newspapers and on TV has very much reduced. I am not sure what the reasons are. I am not suggesting that we should create news for the sake of headlines. No news, of course, is good news. I should like to think that the worst besetting the Housing Authority is over, and that the Quality initiatives launched in early 2000 are beginning to bear fruit.

Quality

Quality is something that has to come from the 'heart'. Major initiatives of this kind demand the dedication and co-operation of all the relevant stakeholders of the construction industry. While I compliment those especially staff members of the Housing Department for making things happen, I should also like to impress upon those who are slow in lending their earnest effort to facilitate these changes. The art of progress is indeed to preserve order amidst change, and to preserve change amidst order.

Tin Chung Court and Yuen Chau Kok have raised awareness of structural safety and solid foundation to an unprecedented level. Safety and foundation are not new concepts; written appreciation for solid foundation can be found as early as the times of the Old Testament. The problem is that many people have either forgotten or chosen not to accord solid foundation with the importance it is due. With the gradual implementation of the relevant Quality initiatives in this regard, hopefully inadequate foundation will soon become a thing of the past.

Of all the Quality initiatives, I see partnering the most difficult to achieve. Partnering is easier said than done. The building of rapport and the instilment of trust among stakeholders often pose challenge far beyond those suggested by the technical or procedure aspects. Partnering brings out the very best of the persons involved, and if we all have the will, I am sure we will have the way to achieve it.

I note with interest the recommendations made by the Construction Industry Review Committee published earlier this year. Many of them harmonize with our Quality initiatives. These are useful measures to moving the construction industry into the 21st Century, and needless to say, we should all join hands to pursue them with vigour.

Consultants

While sufficient control has not been put in hand to monitor contractors' performance, I must record my concern over the quality and performance of some of the consultants who are working for the Authority. This is an area which if not properly addressed will continue to produce newspaper headlines and embarrassment to the Authority. The standard of some consultants are sharply on the decline - I was telling a colleague the other day that I am experiencing increasing difficulty comprehending the written English of some consultants whom I have been working with and these are the very same people who are now working on Authority Projects. Presumably, the written work was drafted by junior professionals of limited ability and exposure under virtually no supervision. I hate to say it but this is the way some of these offices operate. Consultant management underscores the importance of proper checking. I am pleased to see the speed with which the Independent Checking Unit is set up and set functioning, and I am sure it has a vital role to play in the times that lie ahead.

Procurement of professional services and selection of consultants demands attention no smaller than that for selection of contractors. The success of the Shui

Chuen O design competition ironically gives us a signal that there are many hidden talents in Hong Kong. Major lessons learned in the last few years have reinforced my belief that the "lead consultant and sub-consultant" arrangement is an out-dated mode of appointment as it has been the subject of abuse and exploitation especially when it comes to its commercial aspects. And when something does go wrong, the Authority is inundated with an abundance of the "not my business / not my responsibility" type of correspondence. I will not waste time to dwell on the other cancerous aspects but wish to make the point that if we do not press on with direct appointment forthwith, undesirable situations will continue to occur all to the disadvantage of the Authority.

Cost Effectiveness

With quality behind us, perhaps we should turn ourselves to cost, and the cost effectiveness of our construction. I am particularly attracted to two Building Committee papers that recently came to my attention. One paper relates to the study of ready-mixed concrete in housing projects and how the market can be better opened up. I am an advocate of site batching and mixing whenever possible and am happy to see this being looked at to reduce cost. This issue which has a long lasting effect on the construction industry in general merits the attention and joint effort of quite a number of policy bureaux.

The other paper concerns the review of the control of construction materials including building services materials to enhance quality assurance and to prevent as much as practicable collusive tendering. I should like to add that the cost of some of these materials contributes significantly to the overall building costs. I was Chairman of the ICAC Corruption Prevention Committee at the time the study was done and the Committee was very surprised to see the very restrictive number of suppliers for quite a number of what I would consider very common items. The ways some of the specifications are written are very conducive to collusive tendering. No employer wants to pay more than he ought to, and I suggest that exploring ways and means to secure prices that truly reflect a competitive commercial environment be made an on-going exercise.

Change

Lastly, I look forward with interest to the findings and recommendations of the committee to review the institutional framework for public housing chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration. Housing Authority committee work does attract an awesome workload as one would gather from the Chairman's and the various Committee Chairmen's reports. How to make things simpler, more streamlined, and more effective is a challenge. It goes without saying that we all look forward to change for the better."

Professor Patrick LAU Sau-shing delivered his speech as follows:

"Chairman and Members:

The 'P's for Quality Public Housing

Although this is my first time serving as a member of the Housing Authority (HA), the lessons I have learnt from the Building Committee and discussions with fellow architects have prompted me to speak today. I wish to offer my views whereby HA may be improved to raise the building quality of public housing. Before doing this, I must congratulate HA for consideration in abandoning the long tradition of using standard design to produce monotonous housing blocks. This move will allow architects to be creative in designing innovative and sustainable housing suited to the different local district character of Hong Kong.

Policy

This probably will be the first priority that members would wish to debate. Should we just concentrate to provide the much needed rental units, build less HOS? How much private developers should be involved in building public housing? It will be most important for us to set the target right. The target figures that have put us into serious trouble in the past need to be backed up by more thorough analysis and market research for the future.

Policies for building controls should be the same for private and public buildings. There is absolutely no reason why foundations are not tested thoroughly first in all buildings before superstructures can commence. HA projects should comply fully with the regulations and procedures of the Building Authority. In this respect, there should not be double standards.

HA tenders the works for consultants and construction on a cost assessment basis which leads to extremely low tenders no matter how many envelopes used. The consequences are for short cuts. Unless we have some policies for reasonable incentives, we will not get quality work.

Procedures

It is well known that HA has a massive and indigestible series of Quality Assurance Manuals and Procedures for administering projects. They are virtually impossible to follow and have exactly the reverse effect than their intentions. There is indication from our investigation panel on short piles that supervisors are more interested in filling forms than to understand design issues that are vital for proper construction. The quality control issues become impossible to achieve through administrative bureaucracy, and the aim of quality control is lost to cumbersome procedure.

On top of this, some HA project managers responsible for overseeing the projects and consultants are drawn from inappropriate disciplines lacking proper professional knowledge, training and experience. This results in inconsistency in instructions, lack of understanding in the work process and requirements.

Since approval of designs, costing and construction of projects is dealt with only by the Building Committee, the Committee has too large a remit and scope of work to fulfil its function. It may be necessary to reconsider the approval procedures in order for proper awareness of problems in connection with building works and to

resolve them in a timely manner.

Politics

As HA is accountable to the public, decisions of the Building Committee are often more political than professional. Public housing is a social need and should not allow politics to cloud our vision. For example, the punishments for the wrong doings of administrators, contractors and consultants are determined by what seem to be right for public acceptance rather than what they may deserve. I know I am treading on dangerous ground, but this has to be said. Otherwise, all of us involved will be demotivated, fearful of acting in our full professional capacity and fear to question the overwhelming political mechanism.

Partnering

HA has been on a high profiled campaign to remedy some of these problems by promoting the new partnership programme. Previously, I have compared HA as the Elephant and the private sector consultant as the Mouse. The Elephant is strong, powerful but lacks mobility while the Mouse moves quickly and with much more flexibility. A true partnership requires the combination of strengths in each party.

In this way, HA could focus on research and development, analysis of users needs and feedback to adopt new briefs and standards, urban design guidelines, social and community interaction, if the majority of the design and construction work is commissioned to private consultants. However, HA needs to retain control in project management and supervision to guarantee the delivery of the best possible quality public housing for the people of Hong Kong."

Hon SIN Chung-kai delivered his speech as follows (English Translation):

"Chairman and Members,

As the Housing Authority (HA) is the largest housing provider in Hong Kong, every single service it provided is closely related to the public. Any policy that it made will thus have far-reaching implications on us all.

Application of Information Technology (IT)

Firstly, I would like to talk about IT application within the HA. Currently, neither the HA nor the Housing Department (HD) has made full use of IT, especially the Internet. The information provided on their home page is both inadequate and incomprehensive, while some contents are out-dated. For example, one can only find on their home page the schedules of meetings of the HA and its committees, but not the relevant agenda or papers. Having read many papers of the HA and its committees over the past few months, I found that most of the papers are not highly confidential. Therefore, I suggest that the HA should make its agenda available to the public before every meeting and a press release be issued after the meetings to keep the public informed of its latest decisions. Relevant information and papers

should also be uploaded to the Internet as soon as possible, say, within 1 week, after each meeting. They should be made accessible to the public, except for some highly confidential papers, such as the tendering documents. The minutes of meetings should also be uploaded once confirmed.

HD's Home Page

Though more comprehensive and up-to-date information on the latest Home Ownership Scheme (HOS) sale programme can be found on the HD's home page, there is still much room for improvement in other aspects. For e.g., there is no background information on public rental housing (PRH) estates. I would like to suggest that the basic facts about the PRH estates, such as the number of flats, management staff of the estate offices, block types and the age of buildings, as well as the latest information on maintenance schedules and contractors appointed, be uploaded to the Internet. I am also disappointed to note that the details on the policies and services of the HA and HD are nowhere to be found on their home page. I think the HA should upload its policies and the estate management policy manual to the Internet for easy access by the public. Its development plans or consultative documents should be published via the Internet too. This will be an effective way to enable the public to monitor the work of the HA and HD. While the HD has published its tender notices via the Internet, it should consider further developing e-tendering and e-procurement services.

Development of E-commerce

Having such a great number of customers, the HA should consider feasible ways of partnering with other business establishments to explore commercial prospects on the Internet. The HD can openly invite companies to submit their proposals and provide the necessary business environment. However, in developing e-commerce or applying IT, the HA should avoid appointing big consultants to formulate any 5-year IT strategy or things like that. In my experience, some international consultants will only come up with strategies or plans which are high-sounding and unrealistic.

The Public's Right to Know, Access to Information and Meetings

The HA should open some of its committees' meetings to the public, or classify the meetings into open and private sessions, as was the practice of the former Regional Council. The existing spokesman system of the HA to convey messages of its meetings to the media is far from satisfactory because the public are denied the right to know what has actually happened. The media always have to resort to various channels to get hold of the information and papers. Before each meeting, journalists are all anxious to get relevant information, and, naturally, some would turn to me. While I will not, of course, disclose any information to them, I regret very much each time I have to refuse them. I just can't see why we do not let the public have access to the information of the HA. I suggest that apart from making the papers available for public access, the HA should also consider opening some of its meetings to the public and involve them in the discussion. This will help enhance the HA's accountability and transparency, as well as safeguard the public's right to know.

On the other hand, improvements should indeed be made regarding HA Members' right to know and decision-making. The existing arrangement of delegating so much power to the committees to make their own decisions is unhealthy, and an option for improvement is to put in place a practical mechanism under which the HA can veto the committees' decisions.

Complaints via the Internet

The public can now lodge their complaints via the home page of the HA and HD. However, owing to lack of publicity, most of the members of the public do not know that they can complain and enquire by e-mail. We should step up publicity and provide more information on the Internet to help the public understand the procedure of filing a complaint, ways to contact the subject officers, etc. Furthermore, estate residents should be able to lodge their complaints to their estate managers directly via the Internet.

Stabilizing Production

Over the past year, property developers have time and again imposed pressure on the Government to boost the property market. This has resulted in frequent and unpredictable policy changes. According to the latest figures, in the coming 2 to 3 years, particularly the year 2003/2004, the number of newly completed public housing flats will be far less than the annual target of 50 000 as pledged by the Government earlier. The Democratic Party is worried about whether the supply of public housing would be adequate. Besides, there have been serious problems with the quality of public housing in recent years. During their appearances at the hearings of the Select Committee of the Legislative Council, the former Chairman of the HA, the Director of Housing, Mr Tony MILLER and Mr Edward HO all emphasized the importance of a stable supply of land, because only with a stable production could the quality of housing be ensured. I hope that the HA can honour its pledge by building no less than 50 000 public housing flats, mainly PRH flats each year. These flats should not be substituted by other housing assistance opportunities until the difficulties of the applicants on the Waiting List and overcrowded household have been alleviated.

Monitoring Public Housing Quality

While the monitoring of the HA's buildings will be handed over to the Buildings Department (BD), the transition period should not be too long. The HA's buildings should be put under the control of the Buildings Ordinance as soon as possible, so that public housing quality can be monitored by the BD. The public have found the existing transition period too long to be acceptable.

Relief of Overcrowding

To solve the problem of overcrowding in PRH, I propose a "points system" so that priority can be set in providing relief to overcrowded households. The factors to be considered under this system include the degree of overcrowding, waiting time, household size, etc to ensure that the relief measures are reasonable and

fair. The HD should also make specific performance pledges in dealing with overcrowded households, such as completion of transfer within a specific period, and arrange local rehousing as far as possible. In areas where the units are mainly smaller ones, overcrowded households should be allocated an extra unit to address the problem of the lack of larger units.

Home Ownership Scheme

Turning to HOS, I, on behalf of the Democratic Party, would like to take this opportunity to reiterate our stance that HOS should aim at offering home ownership opportunities to lower-middle income families who are not able to afford private housing. Its importance should be duly recognised.

Tenants Purchase Scheme

As Phase 5 of the Tenants Purchase Scheme will be launched next year, I think it is now the right time to conduct a comprehensive review. The tenants should be consulted before an estate is offered for sale, and a longer period for consultation especially on the demarcation of estate boundary and deed of mutual covenant should be allowed. I suggest that the HA should allow a consultation period of not less than six months and three months respectively to gauge tenants' opinion before it starts to accept tenants' offer letters to buy. Moreover, the HA must assure that all maintenance works are completed before an estate is put for sale. For items that tenants have requested for repair before they buy their PRH flats, the HA should continue to bear the responsibility of maintenance for two years after sale in order to give tenants more confidence in buying PRH flats.

Rehousing Policy

On the issues of rooftop structures and squatters, I hope the HA would relax its rehousing policy. With the introduction of the comprehensive means test in September 1998, some residents of rooftop structures and squatters have become ineligible for PRH or Interim Housing. As we are all aware, in a clearance operation of either rooftop structures or squatter area, the residents will not have any choice and are all compelled to leave. The HD frontline staff also have to face great pressure in clearance operations. As a result of resistance from residents, clearance exercises are often delayed. It is hoped that the HD would relax its rehousing policy and at the same time review the comprehensive means test. Recently, the BD sought approval from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council for the creation of 13 posts at the rank of assistant director to step up and improve the clearance operation of rooftop structures and squatter area. If we do not relax the rehousing policy to align with the clearance operations of the BD, it is highly likely that scenes of confrontation between officials and residents with LPG cylinder will be seen on TV again. Mr Chairman, I hereby urge the HD to take up the matter with the BD as soon as possible.

Compassionate Rehousing

An annual quota of 2 000 will be offered under the Compassionate Rehousing category to families in urgent need of public housing on medical or social grounds. The quota for last year was not all consumed, not because it was too large,

but too small. The Social Welfare Department therefore has to lay down extremely rigid criteria and many families with great difficulties are not eligible for compassionate rehousing. I suggest that the HA should raise the quota for compassionate rehousing.

Outsourcing

As for outsourcing of the HD's services, I find that there are still many flaws in the existing monitoring system of the HD. Under the outsourcing system, salaries tend to be lower while workload is heavy with little job security. I suggest the HA/HD specify that tenderers must set out the minimum terms of employment and the standard working hours in their proposals. It is also necessary to develop a system to ensure compliance of tender specifications so that staff will have greater protection.

Intelligent Public Housing

The public housing units we plan to build today, be they HOS flats or PRH flats, will be completed four or five years later. As Hong Kong has entered into the age of information, the HA should contribute actively to the development of information technology in the territory. One of the things we can do is to develop intelligent buildings, which will be provided with broadband Internet access, coaxial cable and cable TV network etc all in the same framework. This may cost a bit more, but it is worthy to do so. The HD should think about this when designing public housing in the future.

Governance Framework

Lastly, I wish to make a few remarks on the governance framework of the HA and the HD. Their roles are clearly defined in the law - the HA formulates policies while the HD is responsible for their execution. In practice, policies are initiated by the upper echelon of the HD for approval by the HA. However, it is the HD staff who are responsible for explaining the policies to the public. The soul and body are hardly the same thing. This leaves much to be desired and it is necessary to take a close look at the arrangement.

Thank you, Mr Chairman."

Hon David CHU Yu-lin delivered his speech as follows (English translation):

"Chairman and members,

I am honoured for being appointed a member of the Housing Authority. As a newcomer, I have a lot of things to learn. I therefore paid visits to four public housing estates last month. I have been to the shopping centres and markets of the estates. I have also attended a meeting of an Estate Management Advisory Committee during which I had an enthusiastic discussion with the residents on issues relating to their estates. Our discussion extended late into the evening and did not end until 11 p.m.

During the visits, I have made a preliminary observation and the following points merit our attention:

- (1) There are mosaic tile debondings on the external walls of some buildings which are less than ten years old;
- (2) There are long standing problems of water seepage through windows;
- (3) Some shop spaces of the shopping centres have been vacant for over ten years; and
- (4) Some stall operators complain about the poor condition of the markets which are not air-conditioned.

I believe we are able to make improvements to the above areas.

In addition, the residents are concerned that the quality of the existing estate management and maintenance services will deteriorate after the Department out-sources the services. Therefore, the Department should take up the monitoring role effectively and liaise closely with the district boards and resident associations so as to keep abreast of the affairs in the estates.

Mr. Chairman, I hope to dedicate myself whole-heartedly to my job during my term of office and to work together with my colleagues to do our best for the well-being of the residents.

Thank you."

Hon CHAN Kam-lam delivered his speech as follows (English translation):

"Chairman and members,

In the past two years, housing quality scandals have dealt the Housing Authority (HA) heavy blows, cumulating in the resignation of our former Chairman Ms Rosanna WONG last June. It can be said that the HA and the Housing Department (HD) have since been in an identity crisis: what is the value of their existence? The fate of the HA and HD now hangs in the balance, pending the outcome of the report of the Committee on Review of the Institutional Framework for Public Housing. If people ask to abolish HA on no better grounds than poor housing quality, they may be too rash to do so, denying the contribution of the HA and HD in the provision of public housing. This is indeed unfair to the HA and HD.

There are some 640 000 flats of public rental housing under the management of the HA, providing accommodation for nearly one third of the total population of Hong Kong. HA is not an institution paying lip service only. Therefore, its workload will continue to be heavy for a long time to come, irrespective of the outcome of the report of the Committee on Review of the Institutional Framework for Public Housing headed by the Chief Secretary of Administration. We will still be required to provide public housing of reasonable quality to people in need.

The HA has frozen the rents of public housing for several years. This is beneficial to the tenants. However, we should not act like an ostrich, turning a blind eye to the problem of Median Rent-Income Ratio (MRIR) on the wrong belief the problem will disappear if we continue to freeze the rents. In this regard, the HA must now take the bull by the horns, solving the problem promptly by reducing the rents or by amending the law so as to raise the MRIR above 10%. As an alternative, we can also redefine the meaning of "rent" whereby rates and management fee are excluded from the rents. In another connection, I consider that we should try to further reduce the operation cost of public housing so as to take the pressure off the demand for rent reduction.

According to an existing policy, tenants who are worse off or who are relocated because of a comprehensive redevelopment programme can apply for rent assistance but only when there is a rent review. Otherwise, they will have to wait till a rent review comes up before they can apply.

I recently paid a visit to a group of elderly people. They are living in an estate undergoing a redevelopment programme. They are not receiving CSSA (Comprehensive Social Security Assistance) and are entitled to rent assistance. On hearing that they have to pay the new rent after relocation to the new estate, they are extremely worried because they are going to lose the benefit of 3 years' rent assistance. Worse still, the new rent is several times higher than the rent they are paying. This will surely be a burden too heavy for the elderly.

For families with a low income, the rent assistance policy is really a boon. However, the prolonged rent freeze has rendered them in the position of "a thirsty chicken in a boat". In order to benefit the people in need, the HA should abolish the rule that tenants can apply for the rent assistance only when there is a rent review. Until then, tenants in real financial difficulties cannot obtain the assistance at the time they need it most.

Lastly, I would like to mention about the communication between the HA and the Councils. At present, policies on housing are formulated by the HA. However, members of the Legislative Council and the various District Councils come across cases of different natures in their daily contacts with the electorates. In handling the cases, they often find that they cannot offer any help because the policies were not formulated by them. They therefore hope they are able to make improvement on housing policies. They have a duty to monitor the work of the Department but they have no way to influence the HD and HA due to their autonomous position. That is why some councillors have time and again lashed out at the housing policies with harsh remarks or radical actions. I am disappointed to see such a phenomenon between the Councils and the HA. Hence, I suggest the HA actively consider holding regular meetings with the Legislative Council, say once every 3 months, to exchange views on housing policies and to strengthen mutual understanding.

Thank you."

Dr Martin KWONG Hoi-chau delivered his speech as follows:

"Mr Chairman and Members,

After public consultation of the document "Quality Housing: Partnering for Change" published in January 2000, the Housing Authority began a dual-phased plan to implement the 50 recommendations on enhancing housing quality. I am pleased to note that about three quarters of these recommendations have now been successfully implemented or are being implemented. There is already a significant improvement in the assurance of quality in piling and foundation works as well as the overall provision of housing estates.

The ultimate success of this plan, however, depends more on the change in the mindset of all parties involved than on the change in the procedures. Housing projects in Hong Kong are becoming ever more complex, and increasing attention must be paid to meet not only time, budget and quality targets, but also other considerations such as public consultation, safety, whole-life costs, and sustainability.

The best way for housing projects to succeed is for the players involved to share common goals, build trust, and work together to achieve win-win-win situations. This symbiotic relationship, in which each receives a fair return for their work, is becoming a norm for progressive developers, consultants and contractors.

As a leading developer in Hong Kong, the Authority has a significant role to play to bring about this partnering relationship. We should be prepared to:

- attribute risks fairly in contracts,
- allow reasonable time to carry out the work,
- pay a fair price and reject unreasonably low bids,
- demand quality in outputs, and
- build long-term relationships.

The Authority's project teams should be proactively involved with other stakeholders during project implementation to help achieve project objectives and to resolve problems. It will also be constructive to instil a partnering spirit among the various players early in a project.

Customers of the Authority and members of the public also have a vital role to play in fostering a quality culture. It is only through their constant suggestions and feedback that the Authority will be able to continuously improve the quality of the building blocks as well as the whole housing process. We welcome and treasure these input.

Thank you."

6. The Chairman thanked Members for their valuable views and said that the HD would study their views carefully. He and the Director of Housing would give their responses at the next meeting.

AGENDA Item 4
Any Other Business

7. The Chairman informed Members that the following concern groups submitted their representations (**Annex 1 to 3**) to the HA before the meeting:

- (a) Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL)
- (b) Hong Kong Squatter Joint Committee
- (c) Concern Group of the Rights of Kowloon City Squatter Area and Action Group of the Rights of Shopowners of Kowloon City Squatter Area

8. Mr WONG Kwun noted the request from the residents and shopowners of the squatter area for relaxing the rehousing policy. He suggested that the committees concerned should take the views of these groups into account when considering the relevant policies. The Chairman and Members agreed with his suggestion.

(Post-meeting note:

- A. *The letter from ADPL was forwarded to the members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Review of Domestic Rent Policy for information. The Ad Hoc Committee held a meeting with the representatives of ADPL on 10 July to listen to their views.*
- B. *The HD wrote to Hong Kong Squatter Joint Committee, Concern Group of the Rights of Kowloon City Squatter Area and Action Group of the Rights of Shopowners of Kowloon City Squatter Area on 11 July. The replies are at **Annexes 4 and 5.**)*

Closure of Meeting

9. The meeting closed at 11:50 a.m.

Date of Next Meeting

10. The next meeting would be held at 9:30 a.m. on Thursday, 26 July 2001.

CONFIRMED on

(Dr CHENG Hon-kwan, GBS, JP)
Chairman

(Lawrence CHOW)
Meeting Secretary

File Ref. : HA/COM/2/2 VIII
Date : 21 July 2001

(Gist Translation)

Annex 1

To: The Housing Authority

June 28 2001

Dear Sir,

Rent Reduction in PRH in Compliance with the Housing Ordinance

The Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL) would like to call for an immediate rent reduction of PRH. The HA's reason of refusal that the 10% median-rent-to-income-ratio (MRIR) cap is only applicable during rent reviews is an arbitrary interpretation of the provision. We demand that rent reduction should be effected whenever the MRIR exceeds the statutory limit of 10%.

The HA is indifferent to the plights of the grassroots, as evidenced by the continuous drop of the median household income of PRH tenants from \$13,000 in the first quarter of 2000 to \$12,400 in the third quarter, according to the findings of the Census and Statistics Department.

It is also noted that the operating deficit of rental housing made up for 12% to 18% of the total expenditure in the past three years, with "maintenance and improvements" and "other expenditure" accounting for more than 40%. The HA should explore feasible ways of reducing the expenditure and consult tenants on the maintenance items so that the rental housing business can be more cost effective and transparent.

ADPL Spokespersons

(Gist Translation)

Annex 2

To: All Members of the Hong Kong Housing Authority

June 28 2001

Dear Sirs/Madams,

**Hong Kong Squatter Joint Committee
Requesting Exemption from the Comprehensive Means Test
for Squatter Clearerees**

With a membership of squatters from 14 squatter areas, the Committee aims to pursue a sensible and reasonable policy on squatter clearance through the joint efforts of all squatters in the territory.

The Housing Department (HD) conducted screening surveys of squatter areas and their population in 1982 and 1984/85 respectively in order to freeze the number of squatters to facilitate rehousing arrangements upon clearance. In the 1984/85 Squatter Occupancy Survey, the Government pledged that registered squatters would be rehoused to public rental housing (PRH) upon clearance if they did not own any domestic property. In September 1998, the Government, however, required all squatters affected by clearance operations to undergo the Comprehensive Means Test (CMT), an eligibility criterion very unfair to squatters who have been waiting for PRH over decades.

The CMT has been implemented under the pretext of rational allocation of PRH resources to those in genuine need. If this is really the case, all the applicants under the 6 categories of PRH allocation, i.e. Waiting List, PRH Redevelopment, Compassionate Rehousing, Clearance, Civil Servants and Others, should be subject to the CMT. The requirement, however, varies with different categories. For instance, the income limit for clearerees of a household size of 4 persons is \$16,400 while that for civil servants \$26,805. Households under redevelopment programmes are only subject to vetting of tenancy. PRH households are required to undergo the CMT but their income and asset limits are 3 times those for clearerees. **We reckon that the Government should handle each category on individual merits rather than compelling clearerees to undergo the CMT.**

Unlike PRH applicants on the Waiting List, clearerees are displaced by Government operations. They have no alternative but to accept transfer upon clearance. It is absolutely incumbent upon the Government to provide sufficient rehousing resources for clearerees before any operation is launched. As such, the HD should not curtail the opportunities of clearerees in taking up PRH through the CMT under the pretext of rational allocation of resources.

Take the clearance of Ho Kar Yuen Squatter Area in Kowloon City in July 2001 as an example, only one third or 160 out of the 477 registered households have been rehoused to PRH while the rest are either allocated interim housing units or yet to be rehoused.

Once again, we request the Housing Authority to stick to her previous pledge made in the 1984/85 Squatter Occupancy Survey that "registered squatters would be rehoused to PRH upon clearance if they did not own any domestic property."

We hope that you could support **the exemption from the CMT for squatter clearers** when you speak on the squatter policy at the HA meeting on 28 June 2001.

Yours faithfully,

Hong Kong Squatter Joint Committee

(Gist Translation)

Annex 3

To: The Housing Authority

June 28 2001

Dear Sir,

Request for a comprehensive review of the policies on
rehousing and compensation and suspension of clearance

We, residents and shopowners of the squatter area at Junction Road, Kowloon City, have repeatedly reflected to the Housing Department and the Housing Authority (HA) that the policies on rehousing and compensation for squatter are unfair and unreasonable. Much to our disappointment, our request seems to fall on deaf ears.

We request the HA to place on the agenda of the Special Meeting on June 28 a comprehensive review of the policies on rehousing and compensation for squatter and suspension of clearance pending the result of the review. Our position papers are attached for your necessary action.

Yours faithfully,

Concern Group of the Rights of
Kowloon City Squatter Area and
Action Group of the Rights of
Shopowners of Kowloon City Squatter Area

(Gist Translation)

File Ref.: 07-2001

To Senior Assistant Director of Housing

Position Paper of the Rights of Shopowners of Kowloon City Squatter Area

1. The ex-gratia payment must be sufficient to cover the severance payment for affected employees and to help shopowners re-establish their business.
2. A comprehensive review of the policy on ex-gratia payment must be conducted as soon as possible.
3. Shopowners should not be rigidly categorized and the rate of ex-gratia payment for shops should be applied to business undertakings which operated as a shop-cum-workshop.
4. The amount of ex-gratia payment should be calculated basing on the business operating area actually cleared.
5. All shopowners affected by the clearance including those who were not operating their trades temporarily should be deemed eligible for compensation.
6. We urge the Legislative Council to convene a meeting with senior officials of relevant departments and representatives of residents and shopowners in order to resolve the problem.
7. The clearance exercise should not be carried out before a consensus is reached in the above meeting.

19 June 2001

(Gist Translation)

File Ref.:17-2001

Position of the Concern Group of the Rights of Kowloon City Squatter Area

1. Residents who have lived in the squatter area before the endorsement of the policy for squatters to receive the comprehensive means test should be exempted from the new policy. The HA should conduct a comprehensive review on the existing squatter policy.
2. An additional interim housing option in the urban area should be provided and 1-person households should be allowed the same options.
3. Removal allowance should be offered to all squatter clearances.
4. All eligible 3-person or above households should also enjoy the right of choosing cash allowances instead of rehousing.
5. The requirement of not owning any properties in 24 months prior to the announcement of the clearance should be abolished.
6. Rehousing in urban area should be arranged for residents living in the squatter area before the announcement of the clearance.
7. Compensation should be paid for the superstructure.
8. The clearance date should be deferred until the end of July.
9. The clearance exercise should be suspended before the above problems are properly solved.

19 June 2001

(Gist Translation)

Annex 4

File Ref. :L/M (79) in HA/PRP/3/6

Tel. No. :2761 7394

Fax No. :2761 0019

Hong Kong Squatter Joint Committee

11 July 2001

Dear Sir,

Request for Exemption from the Comprehensive Means Test

I refer to your submissions on June 5 and June 28 which have been referred to me for reply.

The proposal for squatters affected by clearance exercises to undergo the comprehensive means test, which was generally supported by the public during the consultation period, was included in the White Paper on Long Term Housing Strategy published in February 1998. It was subsequently endorsed by the Rental Housing Committee of the Housing Authority.

As regards the eligibility criteria for public housing of other categories, I would also like to explain that:

1. The allocation of PRH flats to civil servants is included in their housing benefits and conditions of service and thus the means test is not applicable.
2. The HA has a duty as a landlord to offer proper rehousing for PRH tenants affected by redevelopment.
3. The Safeguarding Rational Allocation of Public Housing Resources Policy targets at existing PRH tenants and they cannot be compared with squatters as they have different backgrounds.

Since there was a full consultation on the policy on the means test which was generally supported by the public, your request for exemption cannot be acceded to. Subject to Government policies, the actual circumstances of the society and the need of the public, reviews will be conducted to ensure a rational allocation of public housing resources.

Amy KWONG
for Committees' Secretary

The Concern Group of the Rights of
Kowloon City Squatter Area
The Action Group of the Rights of
Shopowners of Kowloon City Squatter Area

11 July 2001

Dear Sirs,

**Request for a comprehensive review on policies of
rehousing and compensation and suspension of clearance**

Our reply to your requests is as follows:

Business undertakings

(1) Rates and eligibility criteria of ex-gratia allowance

According to the policy in force, different rates of the ex-gratia allowance apply to different kinds of undertakings. It is unfair to apply the rate for shops to all kinds of undertakings as you have requested. Having regard to the fact that some undertakings are operated as a shop-cum-workshop, we are now studying the calculation method of ex-gratia allowance for this kind of undertakings and a decision will be available soon.

Area that would be accounted for in calculation of the ex-gratia allowance shall be the business operating area surveyed in the 1982 squatter survey or the business operating area at the time of the pre-clearance survey, whichever is the smaller. We cannot accept your request for allowance based on the area actually cleared.

We will not consider your request for granting ex-gratia allowance to those operators who were not operating their trades when the clearance exercise was announced as it is against the clearance policy.

(2) Purpose of ex-gratia allowance

The Government aims at assisting operators to move and re-establish their business by granting the ex-gratia allowance but it does not put any restriction on the use of the allowance.

(3) Setting of rates of ex-gratia allowance

The basis for the rates of the ex-gratia allowance was approved by the LegCo Finance Committee in 1988 and the Secretary for the Treasury was authorised to adjust the rate every year. The current rate was put into effect on 1 September 2000. There is no need to revise the current basis for calculation as we find it fair.

(4) Pre-clearance meeting

Various meetings were held between the department and the clearerees. In order to ensure a smooth operation, we will keep in contact with operators before the clearance operation.

Residents

(1) Cancellation of income and assets tests

The comprehensive means test is an effective method to safeguard rational allocation of public housing resources.

As the announcement of the clearance operation of the squatter area concerned was made after the policy on income and assets test was in force, all clearerees are therefore subject to the income and assets test before they are allocated PRH.

(2) Local rehousing

The clearerees of this exercise will be rehoused according to the established policy. We will try to allocate PRH units in neighbouring areas to those eligible as far as possible. For those who are only eligible for IH, IH in extended urban areas or Po Tin IH in Tuen Mun will be allocated to them.

(3) Reasonable compensation for owners of superstructure

As the squatter huts are illegal structures, the Government will only grant a removal or ex-gratia allowance to clearerees to assist them to move or re-establish their business. No compensation will be given to owners of illegal structures.

(4) Removal allowance

Removal allowance is payable to the clearerees who are eligible for rehousing and fulfill the relevant criteria. We are not able to accede to your request for granting removal allowance to all clearerees.

(5) An option of cash allowance in lieu of rehousing for families of three or more

This option is offered to 1-p or 2-p households because of the shortage of 1-P/2-P flats. As there is abundant supply of flats for families of three or more, we have no intent to provide this option for these families.

(6) Lifting of the Domestic Property Ownership Rule

To be eligible for public housing, clearerees must observe the domestic property ownership rule, which applies to all applicants of public housing and it will continue to be in operation for the sake of fairness.

(7) Rehousing in PRH in urban area for squatters who were residents before the announcement of the clearance exercise

To be eligible for PRH, clearerees must be covered by the 1984/85 Squatter Occupancy Survey and fulfill other criteria. This policy aims at preventing people from jumping the queue for PRH flats by moving into squatter area. We cannot rehouse all clearerees who are residents of the squatter area at the time of the announcement of the clearance operation.

(8) Postponement of clearance operation

The date of the operation was originally scheduled in March this year and was postponed to 18 July. Having regard to the development timetable of the district as a whole, further delay is undesirable.

Amy KWONG
for Committees' Secretary

香港房屋委員會

2001年6月28日(星期四)周年特別公開會議紀錄

出席者

鄭漢鈞博士，GBS, JP (主席)
苗學禮先生，JP (房屋署署長)(副主席)
方正先生，SBS, JP
蕭婉嫦女士，JP
陳家樂先生，BBS, JP
溫文儀先生，JP
陳炳煥先生，SBS, JP
劉國裕博士，JP
黃匡源先生，GBS, JP
吳亮星議員
吳水麗先生，JP
譚小瑩女士
王坤先生
王于漸教授，SBS, JP
林菲臘先生，JP
鍾瑞明議員，GBS, JP
蔡涯棉先生
蔡根培先生，BBS, JP
何世柱先生，SBS, JP
葉國謙議員，JP
吳仕福先生，BBS, JP
鄭恩基先生，JP
劉秀成教授，SBS
陳鑑林議員
鄭若驊女士，SC
朱幼麟議員
鄺海疇博士
單仲偕議員
黃星華先生，GBS, JP (房屋局局長)
佰利先生，JP (地政總署副署長)(一般事務))
馮永業先生 (機構事務總監) (房委會秘書)

缺席者

周偉淦先生，JP (因事離港)

列席者

陳子鈞先生	(九龍城寨清拆事宜特別委員會委員)
鄭錦超先生	(投訴小組委員會委員)
黃志毅先生	(投訴小組委員會委員)
黎少棠先生	(投訴小組委員會委員)
陳茂波先生	(財務小組委員會委員)
蘇振顯先生	(居者有其屋小組委員會委員)
李浩添先生	(商業樓宇小組委員會委員)
麥鄧碧儀女士	(財務小組委員會委員)
王麗珍女士	(居者有其屋小組委員會委員)
高寶齡女士	(租住房屋小組委員會委員)
呂麗冰女士	(檢討公屋租金政策專責小組委員會委員)
劉家強先生	(工務局基建工程統籌處政府工程師)
李志光先生	(規劃署助理署長(房屋及土地供應))
袁民忠先生	(庫務局首席助理局長(投資))(代表庫務局局長出席)
鄔滿海先生, JP	(房屋署副署長)
湯永成先生, JP	(發展總監)
區永賢先生, JP	(財務總監)
李敬志先生, JP	(物業管理總監)
鄭耀剛先生	(署理編配及銷售總監)
江焯勳先生	(助理署長(中部))
趙逸寧先生	(助理署長(東部))
李伯誠先生	(助理署長(法律顧問))
李國榮先生	(助理署長(業務發展))
馬亢思雲女士	(助理署長(銷售))
馮宜萱女士	(助理署長(優質居所))
駱品善先生	(助理署長(商業樓宇))
陳嘉信先生	(機構策略組主任)
黎業祥先生	(署理助理署長(物業管理)(一))
林錦平女士	(房屋局首席助理局長二(公營房屋))
周炎林先生	(會議事務秘書) (會議秘書)
黎婉儀女士	(助理會議事務秘書(三))(助理會議事務秘書)

主席於上午九時三十分宣佈會議開始。他歡迎房屋委員會及各小組委員會委員出席會議。

小組委員會主席 2000/2001 年度報告

2. 主席告知委員，各小組委員會主席提交的 2000/2001 年度報告已於會前提交供委員參閱。

議程第一項

房屋委員會主席鄭漢鈞博士致詞

3. 主席的講詞

『各位委員、各位同事：

回顧過去一年，雖然房委會仍然在多方面遇到困難和考驗，不過我相信 2000/01 年度將會是房委會踏上改革路上極為重要的一年，因為在這一個人頭裡，我們開展了兩項對房委會未來有極深遠影響的改革工作。

房屋質素改革

其中一項當然就是提升公營房屋建屋質素的改革工作。我相信不用我在這裏多談，大家也深切明白在過去兩年發生的連串短樁及偷工減料事故，對房委會及房署所造成的衝擊和壓力。雖然這些事故的成因部份是出於一些客觀環境因素，例如我們在這段期間所面對的建屋高期，以及金融風暴使本地經濟滑落所造成貪污舞弊的誘因，不過事件本身亦同時反映一些核心和根本的制度問題。因此房委會必須作出徹底及全面的改革，好讓我們挽回市民及各界人士對公營房屋的信心。

房署的同事已在本年 3 月房委會會議上，向各位 報了 50 項建屋質素改革建議在過去一年的推行情況。我認為房署在這方面取得十分令人鼓舞的成績，落實推行了多項措施，所涉及的層面十分廣泛，包括投標的制度及安排、地盤工作流程、以至驗收的程序及基準等。

我希望在這裡特別一提的是監管制度對提升建屋質素的重要性。為加強這方面的工作，房署除了增派了專業人員參與駐地盤的監督工作外，還收緊了驗收的規格及提升了驗收測試的客觀性。不過，在透明度和問責日益提高的社會環境中，我們的監管制度還需具獨立性，而這種獨立性更須獲得公眾的認同，這才能增加公眾對我們樓宇質素的信心。因此，我十分高興看到房署於去年 10 月成立了一個直屬房屋署署長

的獨立審查組，對房署的建築工程作客觀的第三者獨立審查，務求與屋宇署的審查工作看齊。就長遠而言，我更希望能將房委會的建築工程納入建築物條例的規管範圍內。

私營機構更多參與房委會工作

我所指的第二項重要改革工作是讓私營機構更多參與房委會的工作。近年社會各界廣泛關注，如何進一步提升政府及公營機構的成本效益及服務質素；借助私人機構的人才及資源提供服務，亦是香港以至世界的大勢所趨。面對這些變化，房委會其實早已開始讓私營機構參與我們的建築工程。不過將這個營運模式伸延至現有屋邨的管理及維修服務上，我們在去年才踏出了重要的第一步。

逐步移交服務計劃由去年落實至今，雖然曾引起不少房署員工的反對及疑慮，但計劃的推行可算十分順利。截至今年 5 月，我們已將 79 000 多個現有及 66 000 多個新落成單位的屋邨管理及維修服務合約招標；而自願離職計劃也得到房署員工的支持，已接獲的自願離職申請有 3 300 多份；至於員工自組公司方案的受歡迎程度也比預期為佳，至今已有 21 間員工自組公司被納入房委會的名冊內，其中 6 間更已成功投得服務合約。

房委會逐步移交服務計劃專責小組現正檢討該計劃的進度，並打算在短期內向房委會，就計劃的未來發展提交建議。我知道有關的檢討工作已引起了房署員工的關注。在過去幾個月中，我曾多次與不同員工見面，因此亦了解到同事對前景的憂慮，以及自願離職計劃所引致的人手錯配問題。雖然更多私營機構參與房委會服務是大勢所趨，但我深信專責小組的委員在制定建議時，必定會充份考慮到員工自願離職的速度，並會盡一切努力，將改革對員工帶來的影響減至最低。

展望將來

所謂「萬事起頭難」，因此我相信我們已經經歷了上述改革最艱難的階段。擺在前面的，除了是要推行餘下的工作外，我認為最重要的是要將各項已推行的改革措施深化，並去好好處理改革所衍生的各種問題，以確保改革的效益能得到最大的發揮。此外，我亦期望房委會能與房署全體員工繼續通力合作，透過溝通及互重，加強彼此間的互信，共同努力提升本港公營房屋的建屋質素及改善屋邨的管理及維修服務。

最後，我想藉此機會，感謝所有委員、苗學禮署長，以及房署各位同事在過去一年的努力。對於各位的盡心盡力，我表示深切的敬意。

謝謝大家。』

議程第二項

房屋署署長苗學禮先生致詞

4. 房屋署署長苗學禮先生的講詞（中譯本）

『主席、各位委員：

對房委會委員和房署職員來說，過去 12 個月極其忙碌。今早提交大會的各個小組委員會主席報告，便清楚說明這點。不過，我想扼要向各位綜合報道去年的成績，所以已徵得主席同意，先跟各位說幾句話。

去年的成績頗為不俗，但各位都知道，所謂「去年的成績」，是早前的準備和過去五六年來努力耕耘的成果。

去年的工作，無一不刷新紀錄。單為這原因，便值得我向各位特別提述這些發展的里程碑：

- 我們為輪候冊上的家庭編配了大約 28 000 個單位，使輪候冊上的申請人數目，創 20 年來新低。
- 申請公屋的輪候時間，也縮短至歷史新低，平均只接近 4 年半。我們正穩步邁向目標，準備在 2003 年年底，把平均輪候時間縮短至 3 年。
- 單身長者的平均輪候時間，現時就更短至 2 年多一點。我們曾積極展開行動，鼓勵長者登記申請公屋。去月底，長者申請人的總數，便推高至 11 400 人，但這無礙我們縮短輪候時間的工作目標。
- 經過一連串行動，我們已清拆最後一個舊式臨時房屋區，去年共遷置了 3 700 人。
- 我們從舊平房區遷置了 800 人。去年，我們已完成 2 個平房區的清拆工作，今年便會清拆最後的 3 個。
- 去年，我們為總計 92 公頃土地的發展清拆計劃遷置了接近 2 600 人。這包括規模龐大的鑽石山寮屋區清拆計劃，不單涉及住戶，還有為數不少的商業和工業單位。
- 上述清拆計劃都順利完成。
- 整體重建計劃持續推行。年內拆卸了 49 幢舊式公屋，超過 2 萬

個家庭獲得遷置。一切同樣順利。

- 在房委會協助下，去年共有 41 500 個家庭晉身成為業主。
- 其中大約 6 600 個家庭參加自置居所貸款計劃，選擇貸款置業。在這些庭當中，有六成多是公屋租戶，過半數利用貸款購買二手或居屋第二市場的單位。
- 我們推出租者置其屋計劃第四期，讓另外 26 400 名公屋住客有機會購買現居的單位。與先前各期一樣，居民反應良好。事實上，首三期租置計劃的平均認購率在 70% 以上。這計劃顯然備受歡迎。最近立法會動議辯論要求擴大這計劃，令我頗感快慰。
- 另有 10 300 個家庭購買居者有其屋計劃的新單位，其中稍過 40% 是公屋居民。一直以來，這計劃每期都出現超額認購，而且每期大約 70% 申請人的入息，都遠低於現時已經調低的入息限額。
- 在屋邨管理方面，一共為居屋苑成立了 74 個業主立案法團，而租置計劃首 3 期所出售的 18 個屋邨，亦已成立業主立案法團。
- 根據逐步移交屋邨管理和維修保養服務計劃，年內共批出 12 份新的物業服務合約，為 24 個租住屋邨及租置計劃屋邨，提供妥善的管理。對於這項新猷，業界的反應非常良好。
- 不過，從個人的觀點來看，房署員工主動把握機會，自組公司承投這些管理合約，我尤其感到滿意。首輪共有 17 間員工自組公司承投 6 份合約。這些合約現已批出，而有關公司亦會由 7 月 1 日起開始在屋邨工作。
- 另有一間由房署前職員成立的公司，在公開市場投得租置計劃首期一個屋邨的管理合約。這份合約由該屋邨的業主立案法團批出。
- 商業樓宇科則打破歷來的紀錄，租出大約 92 000 平方米的商用地方，當中不少位於新建商場內。
- 儘管經濟低迷，房委會商業樓宇的空置率，一直只是私人商業樓宇的一半。
- 此外，我們已完成外判所有商場的物業管理工作，這是另一個重要的里程碑。
- 在建屋素質方面，自房委會就改革建議進行諮詢後，我們不曾停

頓下來。在 50 項改革措施中，已全面或局部推行其中的 37 項。餘下的措施，大部分須與其他業務伙伴合作推行。但我相信我們很快便會陸續推出這些措施。

- 最重要的是，我們堅持品質至上，而業界亦清楚明白我們的要求。去年建屋量創出新高，但「交樓」和入伙期間，並沒有出現任何問題，可見我們的信息已經成功送達合作伙伴。

主席先生，去年建成了 89 000 個單位、107 000 平方米商用地方和 9 300 個停車位，數字是歷年之冠，也是先前所列舉的各項成績的核心。不過，這些數字只是簡便的撮要，未能反映全部事實，尤其是署內各科各組不同職系和職級的人員，他們為完成上述高峰目標，為推行計劃幫助有需要的人士獲得居所，一直默默承受巨大的壓力。

我很高興告訴各位，他們的努力已獲得認同。去年，我們在提升服務素質、建築設計、資訊科技應用和個人成就各方面，獲得超過 30 個獎項和獎勵，數量之多，前所未見。我只舉出其中 3 項：

- 香港工程師學會「卓越結構大獎」，得獎項目為啓田商場；
- 公務員事務局「提升優質服務獎」；以及
- 房屋委員會舉辦的水泉澳公開建築設計比賽第三名。

除此之外，聯合國經濟、社會及文化權利委員會在審閱香港的周年報告時，特別嘉獎我們在房屋方面所作的努力。

最後，容我藉此機會向房署全體員工致意，多謝他們在過去 12 個月為房署創造卓越的成績，並多謝各位委員給予鼓勵和支持。』

議程第三項

個別房屋委員會委員致詞

5. 各委員的致詞

方正委員的講詞

『主席、各位委員：

加強問責 穩中求變

剛過去一年裏，可算是房委會歷史上最受挑戰的一年。社會各

界的批評，使房委會備受壓力，其中幾個較為人熟悉的原因有：

- (1) 世界經濟不景氣的影響：過去的一年，香港市民投資意欲銳減，尤其是對房屋的需求正不斷萎縮。私營發展商又不斷向政府及房委會施壓，要求減建居者有其屋，這對房委會以往資源的基礎來源，造成莫大衝擊。
- (2) 房委會的現金流量已跌至多年來最低水平，這主要歸咎於居屋出售量減少，以及市民對自置居所貸款的需求不斷增加所致。雖然房委會後期安排把這些沒有收入的貸款出售給其他金融機構，但房委會仍然要為這筆龐大的按揭貸款支付沉重的利息，影響非常深遠。
- (3) 房委會的建屋素質屢受抨擊，加上地基短樁事件，房委會需要成立調查專責小組，徹底調查事件。目前更要為立法會「公營房屋建築問題專責委員會」提供資料，使房委會同事疲於奔命。這些事件對房委會上下的士氣，造成嚴重打擊。
- (4) 雖然房委會已落實推行屋邨管理及維修逐步移交計劃，自願離職計劃也得到員工支持，但由於經濟疲弱，失業率持續高企，部份現職員工擔心他們的前途。

今天我們所看到的房委會，它的工作範圍是非常廣泛的。房委會成立早期放在中央，規模較小，問題較容易處理。但過去二十多年來，房委會不斷壯大，已成為最大的公營機構，涉及面非常複雜，在市民大眾要求增加透明度的現實環境下，問題逐漸浮現。

大家期待已久的《公營房屋架構檢討委員會報告》始終姍姍來遲。將來發表的報告裡有什麼實際建議，目前尚未清楚。我認為：如果祇是再在機構角色方面作出修改，那是並不足夠的，因為公營房屋發展需要有一套長遠具體政策，同時也需要一個完善的執行單位及適當的監察機制，配以一個穩妥的財政安排，去落實日常工作。

最後，由於現時本港長遠房屋政策由多個機構負責執行，我認為公營房屋架構檢討委員會不要在作出報告後就宣佈解散，它應考慮繼續執行監督工作，定時檢討一些經濟或社會情況改變而對房屋產生的影響。』

蕭婉嫦委員的講詞

『主席、各位委員：

合理分配公屋資源

現時香港房屋委員會為市民提供約 65 萬個公屋單位及為約 35 萬個家庭提供自置居所，為他們解決住屋問題。

隨着時間過去，許多公屋住戶的兒女已長大，家庭入息增加了，我們應鼓勵他們自置物業，騰出公屋單位給更有住屋需要的人士入住，使正在輪候公屋的 11 萬人能早些獲得分配單位。

為了能合理分配公屋資源，房委會對公屋住戶和申請公屋人士進行全面的入息和資產淨值審查，但行政費時，也令一些公屋住戶產生誤解。為了更有效使公屋資源合理分配，我們應該重新制訂合時的政策，使公屋政策與時並進。

我有下列的建議：

- (一) 公屋住戶入住公屋時，應訂明租用年期，在期滿後應搬出單位，讓更需要的人士入住。但居住環境未完全獲得改善和經濟方面有困難的人士可申請續約租住，經審批後如未超入息和資產限額則可獲重新批出租約。此外，我們要主動地協助經濟有困難的住戶申請租金減免。
- (二) 增加房屋署帳目的透明度。我們要把每個單位的租金、維修費、管理費、差餉等分列清楚，使住戶瞭解所繳交的租金在房屋署為他們提供居所支出中所佔的比重，避免誤解。
- (三) 業主和住戶都有責任把物業管理好。房屋署和物業管理公司應加強與住戶溝通，三方面攜手合作，解決各項大廈管理問題，共同搞好大廈管理，使公屋住戶安居樂業。』

黃匡源委員的講詞（中譯本）

『主席：

作為房委會及其下財務小組委員會的一份子，首先我想談談財務小組委員會主席提交的報告，然後再講有關房委會環保工作的成效。

審計小組委員會

對於我再次談及審計小組委員會這個問題，委員大概亦不會感到意外。房委會目前仍無一個自主的審計小組委員會，負責處理審核房委會法定帳目的事宜，以及確保房委會有良好的機構管治，能夠妥善運用和監察各項管制系統，而且能夠因時制宜地更新系統。就後者而言，審計小組委員會亦應監察房委會內部的稽核工作。

我擔任財務小組委員會委員這麼多年以來，我們從未有機會與審計署署長會面，討論房委會帳目的法定審計事宜。我認為最好可以定期與審計署署長開會，讓最終要對房委會的運作成效負責的人，亦即是我們，可以有機會討論審計署署長執行職務的方法，提出一些雙方應該留意的事情，並商討對策。

可惜的是，審計報告只會提交予立法會。這些報告往往會提出一些尖銳的批評，但卻鮮有指出有甚麼細節需要加以改善，令審計工作更有價值。當然，我們有責任公開交代，但我們亦希望花在審計工作上的錢用得其所，物有所值，畢竟，這些錢是由公帑支付的。

我再次呼籲房委會成立一個自主的審計小組委員會，而該委員會應具備所需的專才，可以監察房委會工作的每一層面，包括現時普及的資訊科技。

資訊科技

資訊科技的應用無處不在，資訊科技應用與否，和是否有效應用，與房委會的工作成效直接掛鈎。目前，資訊科技方面的監察屬於財務小組委員會的職責範圍，但我認為這是個本質上錯誤的安排。第一，財務小組委員會未必有足夠的專才，可以監察房委會的機構管治和了解房委會工作的每一個層面。第二，可能會偏重財政方面的考慮，而忽略了應從房委會的整體利益出發。

我強烈希望這方面的職能可以改由策劃小組委員會，或一個由本港資訊科技界頂尖人材及其他所有負責監察房委會運作的小組委員會派代表組成的獨立委員會負責執行。

環保工作

我很高興房委會終於也開始在環保方面下工夫，為保護本港環境盡上公民的責任，但在這方面，我們還有漫漫長路要走。貝德思先生是環保工作督導委員會的首任主席，這個崗位目前已由鄔滿海先生接任，以鄔先生在房屋署的職級，由他擔任主席，希望可以反映這項工作的重要性。我亦想在此多謝羅國綱先生，在我預備這篇講辭之前，他為我解答了很多問題。

為了提高房屋署人員和房委會租戶對環保的認識，我們已花了很多工夫，但大家對環保的認知和承擔仍然不夠全面，所以我們還要加倍努力。有些人對環保問題漠不關心，這並不令人驚訝，因為除了做應該做的事而感到心安理得外，便沒有其他原動力驅使人們著重環保。

除了一點點的讚賞和偶然的獎勵，還有甚麼動力推動人們環保？我看是幾乎沒有了。你若在房屋署工作，只要不違反最基本的要求，便可以自保。若是租戶的話，除了不要把垃圾拋出窗外，你便不用對任何人負上其他責任。沒有把垃圾分類，對你並不會造成什麼損失。

我已多次問羅先生，既然已決定了大方向，何以遲遲仍未見到任何改變？總有很多理由，而且大多是外在的理由。無論如何，我們必須設法加速改變。我們不能以官僚主義作為工作進度緩慢的合理解釋。

假如香港要成為亞洲的世界級都會，我們便要想辦法摒除官僚主義。讓我們一起接受這個挑戰，因為其他競爭對手都迎頭趕上，比我們發展得更快。

我知道房委會也有諮詢環保團體，並邀請他們協助推行若干計劃，但卻好像不十分願意或曉得邀請他們成為房委會的合作伙伴，實際參與各項環保工作。我認為這些團體一定可以有所貢獻，除了擔任智囊團，協助我們草擬及完善政策，還可實際協助推行有關政策。

如果我們邀請這些環保團體全面參與我們的環保工作，他們本身就是制訂策略的人，自然會公開支持自己有份參與制訂的措施，而不會只顧批評（甚至是沒有根據的批評）。事實上，我們必須摒除成見，不要以為他們總是跟我們作對。我們必須建立團隊精神，有一致的思想和行動。

展望未來

房委會在環保方面雖然起步緩慢，但這頭大象也正在發力，而且開始有點成績。要為香港探索一個可持續的解決環保問題的方案，需要各方面衷誠合作，我有理由相信，房屋署是眾多參與者之中最熱心的機構之一。

我們不要忘記，房委會的公屋租戶佔本港人口一半以上，而住在房委會所興建的房屋的人，更差不多達總人口的三分之二。我們所作的決定，對本港民生有着深遠而重大的影響。因此，我們採取任何行動時，都必須對社會負責，而且要讓市民看到我們確實是負責任的。有時候，房屋署要在房委會的協助下履行職務，我們不會完全倚賴署方艱辛累積的經驗。

歐洲國家的機構會發表報告，交代他們如何履行其社會責任，北美國家的機構亦有此習慣，但情況不及歐洲的普遍。我認為房委會亦應該就這方面加以探索，並決定如何履行這項重責。

搭建廢料

主席，最後我懇請房委會在處置搭建廢料方面幫一幫忙。香港時刻都進行大量的建築、挖掘、裝修、拆卸和道路工程，所產生的惰性廢料，就是所謂的搭建廢料，每日多達 38 000 公噸，其中大約 80% 會作填海之用，餘下以混合物料為主的 20%，則會運送至堆填區處理。

香港人口稠密，為處理家居廢物等可分解物料，我們建有最新式的堆填區。堆填區能防止鄰近地區受到污染，但本身的建造及保養費卻極之高昂。在其他地方，大部分這些廢料都會送入焚化爐，以減少廢物的體積，但這種做法在香港仍然受到強烈反對。

問題是，本港的填海計劃已所餘無幾。據估計，在 2002 年中至 2005 年底，因填海工程用不着而多出的惰性搭建廢物約有 6 900 萬公噸。有研究指出，減少搭建廢物的標準方法，例如避免及減少製造廢料、垃圾分類、廢物利用、循環再造、設立臨時廢料儲存庫等，充其量只是治標不治本。大家可知道 6 900 萬噸廢物究竟是多少？若全部堆在快活谷馬場，足可堆至 91 層樓那麼高！香港的堆填區資源這麼珍貴，如果我們

想不出其他辦法來取代堆填，現存的堆填區瞬間就要被惰性拆建廢料填滿。

處置拆建廢料對香港而言是一個難題，甚至是一個危機。我不是要把矛頭指向房委會，但房委會既然是這些廢料的主要製造者之一，對於協助解決這個問題，實在責無旁貸。我們必須盡本分，設法減少房委會各項工程所製造出來的廢料。』

吳亮星委員的講詞

『主席、各位委員：

在過去的一年，房委會在人事與工作方面經歷了一些重大的事件，尤其在涉及建屋素質的問題方面，公眾有持續的關注，而房委會在這方面也做了大量的實際工作，包括制訂和落實一系列改革措施，針對土地勘測、地基設計、合約安排與規格、監督工地操作，以及房屋署內的組織架構等問題作出改善。假以時日，相信公眾會看到房委會的工作是能夠總結經驗、回應社會期望和不斷向前發展的。

要客觀評價房委會在過去一段時期的工作，就需要了解在九七年前公營房屋土地供應嚴重不正常的情況。回歸前本人曾經參與中英土地委員會的工作，清楚了解每年所有公共房屋用地都獲得批准，但縱使如此，房委會 98/99 年的年報資料卻顯示，由於土地供應量一直不很平均，兩年前只能建成大約 20 000 個單位，緊接的一年也只有 28 500 個，而當年則會增加到大約 58 000 個單位，而在接下來的三年內任何時間都有大約 200 000 個單位正在動工。這樣龐大的建屋量，其艱巨程度可想而知。建屋量嚴重不平衡，很大程度上是由於九七前土地劃撥過程嚴重延誤，以及基建配套設施限制等，令房委會未能獲得穩定的土地供應。這些情況已經超出了房委會及其執行部門所能夠控制的範圍。如果要切實總結經驗，吸取教訓，那麼對整個公營房屋素質問題就要有較為全面的視野，不能忽略以上這些歷史因素以及相關的責任。

展望未來的工作，本人一直認為房委會需要採取簡政放權的方針，逐步改變各項公營房屋職能過分集中的情況，不能再將房委會經營成一個類似過去內地國營企業的模式，無所不包，無所不管，這絕對是不符合潮流的做法。透過明確架構與法律化規範，將權責下放，簡化職能，是未來房委會的一項重要工作。此外，公營房屋在市場上的定位也必須有清晰的界定，房委會不是私人發展商，不應越俎代庖，更不可以公帑津貼的房屋參與私人物業市場的競爭。因此在保證安全標準的前提下，我們應該再三強調房委會所提供的公營房屋要著重“實而不華”。此外，我們也有必要檢討一些優質而市價偏高的土地是否應該由房委會用

作公營房屋發展，以便能夠更合理地運用有限的公共資源，創造更多機會，協助大量輪候當中而又迫切需要公屋的市民。

房委會是一個監督與落實公共房屋資源運用政策的實務性機構，各位委員也是來自不同社會界別，以各自擁有的專業知識或社會經驗積極參與公共服務，基本上是埋頭實幹，不尚空言，這是房委會一項寶貴的工作傳統。當然，社會不斷變化，市民對公共房屋事務的關注程度不斷增加，房委會的問責性也需要提高。面對社會批評甚至一些頗為政治化的反映，實在並不出奇，但正如孟子所說，“有不虞之譽”，有求全之毀”。一時的毀譽，決不會影響委員積極服務社會的熱誠，相信各位委員與署方同事將會一如既往，努力實幹，不斷改革，不斷推動各項公共房屋工作向前發展，繼續服務社群，造福社群。」

譚小瑩委員的講詞

『主席、各位委員：

以往幾年，因為工作繁忙，下班時已是漆黑時分。最近顧問工作隨着經濟低落而減少，自然也可以早下班。第一次六時離開辦公室，回家途中，有一種很不自在的感覺，實在不習慣有陽光陪伴着回家。細心一想，以往做得天昏地暗，才是不正常的規律。

把我這個個人的感受，放諸於居者有其屋的興建，我覺得也有相似的地方。以前土地供應偏低，即使住屋需求激增，土地供應永遠追不上，成為樓價不斷上升的其中一個主因。政府再進一步干預自由市場，撥地給房委會興建及以折扣價出售居屋，一做便 20 多年，整個社會都習慣了居屋的存在。

過去幾年，無論從長遠規劃至土地出售計劃，都表現政府有決心平穩物業價格至普羅大眾的負擔能力之內。金融風暴之後，經濟還未顯著復甦，市民置業意欲大減，私人樓宇價格已跌至非常接近居屋。加上利率大幅下降，現在市民的負擔能力，是過去十年來最高的。

政府的協調、規劃等功能已發揮長遠穩定的作用，而私人市場亦已能提供市民可以負擔的樓宇，這才是健康的市場規律，居屋已完成它的歷史責任。取而代之，低息或免息貸款、稅務優惠等可以幫助置業，市民還可以有更多樓宇選擇，買賣更自由，滿足感也自然更大。

在自由市場主導的經濟下，政府應該處理一些私人市場沒有意欲參與，但對民生重要的事項，例如廢物和污水處理，食水供應等等。其實，有些地方連這些項目都是私營的，我們為什麼對政府必須興建居屋那麼執著？對房委會而言，居屋固然是重要收入來源，但財務安排，可與政府重新訂定。鼓勵富戶遷離公屋，也可以用貸款等方法。

近日有些人提議把居屋樓價再調低以增加其吸引力，我覺得這些言論簡直是本末倒置。我個人覺得我們應該有勇氣去探討停建居屋的方案，使房屋市場有一個健康的發展。』

王坤委員的講辭

『主席、各位委員：

由於最近的一期 23A 居者有其屋超額認購再創新低，有些言論又再質疑居屋的存在價值，並認為私人樓宇供應已經充裕，政府應增加直接資助市民購私樓。

1976 年房委會推出居屋計劃，目的是鼓勵經濟條件較佳的公屋戶自置居所，以騰空公屋單位及讓不符入住公屋資格但又沒能力買私人樓宇的中等入息家庭有機會置業安居。

居屋有特定的銷售對象，讓基層市民置業有多一個選擇，避免私樓壟斷市場，對樓市起調節作用。本人反對減少公營房屋的整體供應量，反對停建居屋及用增加自置居所貸款辦法刺激置業需求，更不應為托市而減售居屋。

一直以來，房委會以白表家庭收入 40% 以下作居屋供款開支，作為可承擔能力；隨着白表家庭的入息及資產限額大幅調低，應將可承擔能力調低至 35%，實際減低售價，使市民得益。此外，亦應放寬限制，讓近幾年因經濟困境、失業或其他變故而將居屋回售房委會的家庭有機會再次申請居屋單位。

今年房委會成立專責小組，約用一年時間檢討公屋的租金政策。在 1990 年，當時最高的市區公屋租金為每平方米 31.80 元，當年的租住公屋營運赤字是 7.4122 億元。而近四年新落成公屋雖已凍租，但最高租金較十年前上升一倍，達每平方米 63.40 元，赤字亦上升至每年 24 億元。

近幾年來，因經濟不景，房委會及香港房屋協會同樣體察民情凍租三年，但結果不同的是房委會出現大幅赤字，而房協則有盈餘。因此，房委會檢討租金政策時，除應研究住戶的負擔能力外，還應研究公屋租金的組成是否合理、如何減低運作成本又不影響服務素質、公屋租金中位數與編配面積的關係等問題，不應讓市民認為檢討租金政策變成加租的藉口。

去年一月，房委會通過移交屋邨管理及維修保養服務的第一期計劃，並承諾推行首二年內檢討，然後才決定未來移交服務的步伐。本人

認為，檢討應首先考慮決心留下的員工的利益及出路問題，而外判速度應以自願離職的實際人數為依據。房委會亦應逐步擴大屋邨管理諮詢委員會的職能，充份反映居民的訴求，完善監察機制，使外判的管理素質得到保證。

數十年來，香港公營房屋建設的成就獲得舉世認同，主要是公屋對社會起了穩定作用，不過，我們積累了不少等待解決的問題。公營房屋架構的改革、房署服務私營化的加速進行、居屋的存廢、公屋政策的收緊等等，由於涉及千家萬戶的利益，任何改革都應穩妥進行，切忌朝令夕改，急於求成；否則所謂改革，可能成為製造社會不穩定的因素。』

王于漸教授的講詞（中譯本）

『主席、各位委員：

重新審議香港公營房屋政策

自亞洲爆發金融風暴以來，香港的房屋政策便一直備受批評。政府近年興建大量公營房屋，更受到因樓價大跌而身負負資產的市民所詬病。繼房屋委員會（房委會）新落成的樓宇接連出現打樁醜聞，引起市民強烈指責後，政府於是提出進行公營房屋架構檢討。

其實，市民真正關注的，並非只是設立一個適當的機構以統籌房屋政策，雖然這可能是很重要的課題。目前的當務之急，是檢討政府整體的房屋政策，而有關機構的設立，必須因應所要推行的政策而定。

公營房屋政策的缺失

政府介入房屋及物業市場，已有一段長時間。早於二十世紀 50 年代，政府已展開大型的公營房屋計劃，成就確實驕人，但也成為我們今天所面對的苦惱的根源。

根據現行安排，房委會獲政府撥給土地，供興建租住或自置單位。土地一經撥歸房委會，幾乎從此便不會再轉回私人物業市場，因此，這些土地將永遠不能從公開市場上套取全值。結果，有關土地便從此被「封鎖」，難以回流市場上作更有效益的用途。這令社會負上沉重的代價。

目前，房委會轄下的公營房屋包括 645 000 個租住單位和 30 萬個自置單位。公營房屋政策具有多重目標，因而往往出現自相矛盾的效果。這些目標包括安置受影響的家庭、幫助中等至低收入的家庭獲得合適而優質的居所，以及提高市民自置居所的比率。最後提及的兩個目標，

令「居者有其屋計劃」（居屋計劃）這個大型資助計劃應運而生。

居屋計劃蓬勃發展，大大擴展了房委會的角色、資源及獨立性。它不但讓房委會容易取得資金供進一步擴充，更可補貼租住公屋計劃的虧損。這都是財政上的強大誘因，令房委會不肯取消居屋計劃。

效率欠佳及不公平現象

公營房屋單位包括租住單位和自置單位，佔全港住屋單位的五成。在過去十年內，每年落成的單位平均約有六成是公營房屋。資源大規模轉移，成為本港經濟效率欠佳的主要原因。而市民在現行公營房屋計劃下的房屋事務消費，平均較採用直接資助的辦法為低。我在過往的研究中曾作出估計，效率損失約佔本地生產總值的0.5至1個百分比。

可惜的是，如此大規模地重新分配房屋資源，卻沒有造成任何實質影響，使達致公平的目標。附錄（附錄 6 及 7）所載的圖，顯示本港公屋住戶相對於私人物業租戶，以及公營房屋業主相對於私人物業業主（全屬人口隨機抽樣樣本）在 2000 年第 2 季的入息分布。兩個圖表都明顯反映出，這兩組人的入息分布情況基本上十分相似。本港公營房屋政策未能達致公平的目標，是一項嚴重缺失。

要求縮小房委會的規模及工作範圍的聲音愈來愈大。政府資源有限，較佳做法是以社會最低收入的一群為服務對象，而非將資源分散在一大群人身上而不去預計後果。

由直接供應住屋轉為推行以市場為本的鼓勵置業計劃

可幸的是，政府近年已逐漸認識到公屋計劃存在的問題，而我們亦見到公營房屋政策有更改。政府為鼓勵富戶放棄公屋而推行的措施包括：向富戶收取較高租金、實施入息及資產審查、加強鼓勵市民購買居屋單位、放寬轉讓居屋單位的一些限制，以及透過「租者置其屋計劃」讓租戶購買所租住的公屋單位。

政府近年較著重的政策，包括加強推行「自置居所貸款計劃」、「首次置業貸款計劃」及「夾心階層住屋貸款計劃」，反映政府政策的重點已從直接供應住屋轉為推行以市場為本的鼓勵置業計劃，以滿足市民的房屋需求。政府致力協助居民置業的方針愈來愈明確，這從它著重提供置業機會而非直接供應住屋可見一斑。這些轉變十分值得稱許，因為財政資助相對於供應實物的方法，前者對社會構成的負擔較輕。

然而，上述的轉變卻又帶來另一些出乎意料的後果，並增加了市場上的不明朗因素。就提供實物的方法而言，公屋計劃主要是對私人物業市場的供應構成影響。公屋單位基本上不能轉讓，因此，物業市場實

際上只有一個，就是私人物業市場。但政府現在推出多種資助計劃，並放寬轉讓居屋單位的一些限制，這意味着公營房屋已演變成另一個獨立的市場，這就是居屋第二市場。這樣，我們便出現了兩個物業市場：一個是資助性質物業，另一個則不是。

就資助性質物業的市場而言，需求一方可以獲得資助，而供應一方則只有一個發展商壟斷市場。更有趣的是，供應者所得到的收入會用作資助在需求一方的人士。從這些互相牴觸的鼓勵措施看，這個壟斷市場的官僚機構的行為特徵是怎樣的？為樓宇定價時是否旨在獲取最高利潤？若否，樓價又應如何釐定？而有關做法又會對社會造成什麼後果？

在目前這個新局面之下，公營房屋與私人物業兩個市場不僅在供應方面有連接之處，在需求方面也有。如二者在需求方面也容許連接，公營房屋與私人物業兩個市場便難以劃清界線。就以宏觀經濟情況出現轉變為例，當出現經濟衰退及私人物業價格開始滑落時，房委會應否亦隨之削減樓價？減幅如何？作出決定時應以什麼作準？很明顯，政治因素亦必會牽涉在內。這無疑會對市場造成不明朗的因素。

我現舉出三個事例說明上述的轉變，以及這些轉變對私人樓市的重大影響。

1. 居屋第二市場的出現

第一個例子是局部放寬居屋單位的轉讓限制。1997年，入伙滿三年的居屋單位可以在居屋第二市場轉讓，而入伙滿五年的則可在公開市場轉讓，但原樓價中未受補助的部分若因地價升值而有資本上的得益，必須退還房委會。由於有此限制，居屋業主甚少在公開市場出售其單位，因為根本沒有誘因促使他們這樣做。然而，居屋第二市場使他們有機會以負擔得起的價錢換購所屬意的單位，因而造就了一個頗為活躍的居屋第二市場。隨著居屋單位陸續建成，而可以轉讓的現成單位數量日多，這個市場會不斷擴大。

居屋第二市場這措施本身實在可取，因為部分「封鎖」的房產可因此而獲得釋放，讓合資格的家庭有另一途徑進入私人物業市場。居屋第二市場的單位與私人物業市場的單位，未必可互相取代，因為兩者的素質不同，而居屋的價錢亦因其地價有補貼而與私人樓宇的有別。然而，私人物業市場的樓價自從1998年起大跌後，居屋第二市場的單位已逐漸能夠取代私人樓宇單位，因而遏抑了私人物業市場的需求。

2. 推行租者置其屋計劃

第二個例子是1998年推行的租者置其屋計劃（租置計劃），該計劃擬於10年內出售25萬個公屋單位。公營房屋私有化是一項創造財富

的行動，理應會刺激市民對房屋（包括私人樓宇）的淨需求。然而，售樓條件卻可能起着**間接**作用，進一步遏抑私人樓宇的需求。

首先，已納入租置計劃的單位的業主可以在十年內以白表資格申請居屋。這項條文向大約 25 萬個家庭默示，他們無須即時申請居屋。關於這點，可從其後數年以綠表資格認購居屋單位的人數銳減，便可見一斑。1997 年，大約三分之二的新建居屋單位是售給綠表申請人的，但在 1999 至 2000 年，約有六成單位是由白表申請人認購的。由於近年新建居屋的供應量大，因此房委會處於一個無可奈何的位置，要與私人物業市場競爭。這個趨勢無疑受到以下因素影響而變得激烈：(a)以往在私人物業價格飆升時居屋單位享有的大幅折扣優惠；以及(b)在經濟衰退前所訂定的頗高入息限額。在此情況下，私人物業市場的樓價定會受壓。

租置計劃的認購率高，證明計劃是成功的，但居屋單位並未同時減建，以致私人物業市場間接受到嚴重的打擊。

其次，這些單位在五年後方可在公開市場轉讓，但原樓價中未受補助的部分若因地價上升而增值，超出原地價的增值須退還房委會，結果一如居屋業主，這些業主亦缺乏在公開市場轉讓單位的意欲。因此，透過租置計劃出售公屋單位，並未能刺激市民購買私人樓宇的意欲。

假如房委會決定出售全數 25 萬個單位，並讓這些單位可以即時在公開市場轉讓，而買家無須退還曾獲補助的地價，則效果將會截然不同，不單是只會遏抑樓市，亦同時會產生刺激作用。因此，關於出售公屋加快了樓市近年在金融風暴中的下降速度，這個觀點並不完全正確。問題並非出於出售公屋，而是在於售樓條件，以及居屋計劃要作出怎樣的調整。

3. 實施自置居所貸款計劃

第三個例子是房委會於 1998 年作出的決定，就是容許自置居所貸款計劃的申請人可利用貸款，在居屋第二市場中購買單位。這措施進一步遏抑對私人樓宇的需求。在此之前，自置居所貸款計劃的申請人只可利用貸款購買私人樓宇。而立竿見影的效果是，批出自置居所貸款的數目由 1997/98 年度的 2 742 份大幅攀升至 1998 年 4 月 1 日至 1999 年 7 月 31 日期間的 9 482 份。此外，由 1999 年 8 月 1 日至 2001 年 3 月 31 日期間，自置居所貸款計劃的綠表申請者約用了他們所得貸款的 55%，在居屋第二市場購買單位。

這些公營房屋計劃的改革，實際上是刻意建立一個市場，讓合資格的住戶轉讓他們的公屋單位。這些改革成功建立了一個新的二手市場，供轉讓公屋單位，但卻有別於既有的私人物業市場。這些改變帶來一些意料不到的後果，但都應該是在推行之初便可預見的。由於陸續有

新居屋落成、有更多的現有居屋單位到期可供轉讓，以及有更多的租置計劃單位可供出售，這個二手市場會隨著時間而日益擴大。這個發展所造成的一個重大影響，就是居屋單位作為私人樓宇以外的另一選擇而言，吸引力會愈來愈大，因為這些單位在第二市場的自由轉讓程度提高。

這情況的出現，大大遏抑了公營房屋業主脫離本身行列的意欲，不願進入私人物業市場。以往存在的業主遞升階梯，現已在某程度上被分割了。

一個公營房屋獨立市場的建立，令許多公營房屋的租戶和業主可以達成他們在居住方面的一大願望，就是在本港轉換居住地點。因此，私人樓宇的需求即時受到打擊。儘管建立一個有利公營房屋轉讓的市場機制，目的是藉此改善以前的情況，然而卻造成了兩個獨立市場的不受歡迎情況，這無可避免地產生供應過多的效應。現時私人樓宇二手市場淡靜，確實反映出公營房屋二手市場破壞了市民換購更佳物業的意欲。

制定有關改革時，目標應為建立一個單一房屋市場，而不是兩個獨立市場。盡快把兩個市場合而為一，是當前要務。要達致這目的，做法很簡單，就是准許居屋和租置計劃的單位在公開市場轉讓，而業主無須退還曾獲補助的地價，這樣便可把兩個市場完全合併。

以我個人而言，我贊成讓住戶全取曾獲補助的地價。由於政府現時坐擁可觀的儲備，實在大可放棄這個收入來源，讓部分市民得到一些利益。由於有關土地已不可作別的使用途，如果該等土地日後可重新發展作較高價值的用途，政府的淨虧損可能會十分有限。如果說這樣做會對其他市民不公平，這只是題外話，因為使用有關單位的權益早已由政府轉給有關住戶。政府只是給予該住戶自由和機會，讓他隨時將權益套現。此外，這樣亦可讓本港市民把財富套現，所涉及的數字即使不超過 1,000 億元，也相去不遠，這對本港經濟的資本重定有莫大幫助。

政策上的建議

繼續為真正貧困人士提供資助租住公屋是合理的。而當這些租戶在經濟上有改善而變得富裕後，便應要求他們遷出或支付市值租金，或向他們提供選擇，讓他們購買所租住的單位。

適用於租住公屋的建議零租金政策，可使現時公屋的維修保養費用由租金支付；而新建公屋的建築費用，則可由庫房轉撥的資助直接支付。

租置計劃應該繼續並加快進行，以減少政府所持有的大量公屋單位，讓這些單位所封鎖的財富和這些單位座落的土地能夠返回私人物業市場。另外，把售賣周期由 12 個月加快至 8 個月並不足夠。

居屋計劃應停止進行，而撥作發展新居屋用的土地應轉往私人物業市場。售賣這些土地得到的收入，將可提供足夠資金，協助市民購買物業，並可完全取代計劃中由房屋局和房委會興建的居屋單位。採取這做法，現在是最適當的時候，因為私人物業市場的價格已大幅下降。

現有租置計劃和居屋單位在公開市場出售後，應無須向房委會退還地價。這項政策可讓數目眾多的居屋業主在套現後有資本得益。如果居屋計劃停止進行，那麼房委會的收入損失便不再成問題了。這樣把財富注入本港經濟體系，將對經濟復蘇大有裨益，而且現在亦是最適切的時候。由於有關土地已沒有其他用途，這樣做不會令社會付出任何實質的代價。租置計劃和居屋單位的二手市場繼而有望與私人物業市場完全融合。

隨着香港和珠江三角洲經濟一體化所帶來的經濟和社會面貌的轉變，繼後在置業和租住物業方面的房屋需求模式，亦很可能會隨着時間而有所改變。因此，為市民維持一個固定的置業和租住物業目標比例這項政策，會逐漸變得不合時宜，應予廢除。

房屋及市區發展的政策，應由最高層作中央統籌，以達到整體的經濟及社會目標，而不應像目前一樣，各自分開處理。日後公營房屋政策的角色，將會轉為專注於兩個重點：

- 為合資格的家庭提供租住公屋單位。
- 在居屋計劃淡出後，推行各項資助房屋貸款計劃，協助市民購買私人樓宇。』

林菲臘委員的講詞（中譯本）

『主席、各位委員：

提高公營房屋的素質

我首先表揚房屋署，他們在推行兩期優質房屋措施的推行計劃時，不遺餘力。房屋署署長及署方的高層行政人員，因為所發生的多宗事故，特別是在打樁工程方面，而備受嚴厲批評。不過，我相信很少人會知道，房署及署長為推行房屋改革所付出的努力。

房屋委員會（房委會）所推行的措施，甚受業界歡迎，而多位在私營機構工作的建築界專業人士均表示，他們喜見政府及其他公共機構順應房委會所開的先河，採取同樣的做法。

關於第一期推行計劃，我想就其中兩點提出一些意見。第一點是

關於第二支柱：「改良打樁工作流程」及「以務實的做法與承建商共同分擔風險，從而加強風險管理」；至於第二點，則與第五支柱「建立伙伴合作文化」有關。

這兩點有著非常密切的關係，因為根據我過往的經驗，若合約的風險不公平分擔，要建立伙伴合作文化將會十分困難。

房署已採取一系列措施，以減低打樁工程承建商的風險，例如更多採用工程師的設計、減低算定損害賠償的金額，以及對巖土情況難以預見的打樁工程合約，給予可延期的機會。不過，這些措施仍未達足夠程度，應予以加強，而加強的工作現已變得更為迫切，因為在過去數月所招標的打樁工程的價格，都有很大的增幅。在建築小組委員會的會議上，我們曾多次討論應該進一步採取什麼步驟，令立約雙方平分風險。我相信這些討論會繼續進行。

在西歐大多數國家、澳洲和美國，訂立合約條件所持的最重要理念，是把風險側重於最能抵受有關風險的一方，因為這樣做會有較少問題出現，而更重要的是，這做法更具成本效益。

如果認為讓承建商承擔高風險，會令建屋成本下降，因而令房委會得益，則這種想法並不正確。

若把重大風險推給承建商，投標價一般會大幅提高。如承建商為要承擔的風險而提高價格而該等風險最終又不出現，這情況的普遍程度可能佔全部工程項目的八至九成，可是房委會卻是為這八至九成工程項目多付出金錢。至於最終有事故發生的成半至二成工程項目，這些與房委會並肩合作的承建商，即使可能已為風險提高合約價格，但很可能會為索償事宜採取對抗態度。

有人認為這個論調不正確，因為事實上承建商通常沒有為工程的風險適當地提高價格，故房委會並沒有為該等八至九成最終沒有出現風險的工程項目多付出金錢。我不認為這想法正確（最近的打樁工程標價高昂正好支持這點看法）。即使這個假設成立，但一般的情況是，這些沒有為工程風險適當地提高價格的承建商，均具較低知名度，他們為求取得多些工程合約，會不惜以低價標投，以致較優秀的承建商取得較少工程合約。對採取賭博態度的承建商來說，他們最後僥倖成功的比率，可能是其投得工程合約中的八至九成。但在其餘的情況下，他們便不能完成合約。對於他們最後賭博失利的工程合約，他們在投得合約之初，便已警覺到索償的可能性，並準備在必要時採取對抗態度。在這情況下，他們的產品素質，有很大機會是低劣的。

因此，認為訂立嚴厲的合約條件可節省成本，這種想法實屬錯誤。依我的看法，情況剛好相反。我們愈是能夠公平地分擔風險，房委

會所須付出的代價就愈輕，而更重要的是，對產品素質更有保證。

故此，我希望能夠擴闊公平分擔風險的範圍，除了包括因巖土情況難以預見，或工程受到第三者的干擾（例如地底公用設施線路所引致的困難）而准予延長合約期之外，並應涵蓋工程延誤（因巖土情況或地底公用設施線路所導致的困難）所引致的額外費用。同樣地，如簽訂合約後出現法例上的更改，或發生其他不能預見的事情，有關風險應由房委會而非承建商承擔。

建造業檢討委員會於 2001 年 1 月發表的報告書，似乎亦贊同公平分擔風險的基本理念，我希望房委會能夠繼續檢討其轄下合約的條件，務求達致公平分擔風險的目標。

上述的做法，是房委會與承建商建立真正伙伴合作文化的基礎。一份由雙方合作的工程合約要取得成果，公平分擔合約風險是十分重要的。假如合約繼續將太多風險側向承建商，則伙伴合作便不能發揮效用，因為這樣的合約不能誘使承建商確保伙伴合作這個方式取得成果。

最後，我對房署實施改革以來取得的成績感到高興，不過，房委會決不能因此而自滿，更切勿以為推行至今的改革已經足夠，能如建造業檢討委員會所願發起了「建造業文化革命」。我們必須採取實際行動，以減低打樁工程的成本，而更公平地分擔風險的做法，是達到這目標的其中一個辦法。』

蔡涯棉委員的講詞

『主席、各位委員：

去年相信是房委會因難的一年。連串短樁事件令房委會多年建立的聲譽和公信力受到公眾質疑。同時，私人房地產市場供過於求，價格回落，新盤及二手物業均銷售困難，來自發展商及負資產的小業主的壓力很大，房委會的居者有其屋政策亦受到猛烈抨擊。

房委會在公營房屋的角色及未來方向相信是社會各界關心的焦點。我希望就房委會的幾項重大房屋工作，包括公屋、居屋、自置居所貸款及商業樓宇作出探討。

1. 公屋

- 1.1 過往數十年來，香港市民的居住素質能夠提升，經濟能力不足的市民能夠擁有一個較為合適的居所，這都是歸功於香港政府的公屋政策和房委會的成功推行。過去無論是市旺樓價狂升或市淡經

濟蕭條，社會仍能保持安定，主要因為港人能有一個安穩的居所。所以興建更多的出租公屋給予有需要的市民是房委會的一個重要工作。

- 1.2 除數量外，房委會未來亦應致力於改善出租公屋整體居住環境，包括住客每人平均的居住面積，樓宇的素質，環境的綠化，屋苑的基本配套設施等，以提升市民的居住環境和素質。當然這些改善及提升並不是要將公屋豪華化，亦不是要提供什麼會所設施，我們只是要著眼於提高市民的居住環境，令市民有一個健康、舒適的家。

2. 出售居屋

- 2.1 有別於公屋，居屋的買家的經濟能力一般較公屋的申請者高。而房委會資助居屋買家的前題必然是這類較低收入的市民沒有能力在私人物業市場置業，不然的話，其他需要以自己能力置業的市民就會有怨言，埋怨政府不公平。同時，市民亦會認為納稅人的公帑運用得不恰當。
- 2.2 所以我認為居屋的數量應具彈性，應視乎市民能否負擔私人物業的價格而定。我支持未來一、二年減少居屋供應，因為在現今樓價低企及利率下調的情況下，不少市民都有能力在私人物業市場置業，居屋的作用相對下降。
- 2.3 但我不贊成停建居屋。我認為今天居屋的作用不大，但並不代表居屋將來沒有作用，因為樓價可升可跌，誰知道三、五、七年後樓價是高是低，居屋需求是多是少。

3. 自置居所貸款計劃

- 3.1 自置居所貸款計劃是為有需要而又合符資格的市民提供多一種選擇，計劃不但具效益，並且令市民可更靈活地選擇心目中的物業。所以自置居所貸款計劃應繼續推行。
- 3.2 房委會最新的政策是集中處理綠表的申請，而白表申請者則改為向香港房屋協會申請首次置業貸款，這做法可避免兩個貸款計劃重疊。

4. 商業樓宇

4.1 房委會所興建的商業物業應以服務住宅屋苑內居民為目標。

4.2 以商場為例，若引入私人經營管理者固然可提高收益和效率，但同時要留意會否影響居民的權益。私人經營管理者以賺取利潤為目標；街市食肆等都是市民生活所需的，假若私人經營者以「獨市」或「半獨市」式把各行各業的店舖限量出租，收取昂貴租金，將來這些店舖所售商品的價格必然高，受影響的最終是居民。所以商業物業的經營效益與居民權益的平衡是很重要的。

從過去二十多年香港市民的居住環境得到很大改善，正好說明房委會多年來為市民工作所做出的成績和成果。雖然近期建屋工程方面出了一些問題，但我個人認為房委會未來仍將會是為有需要的市民提供合適居所和改善居住環境的主要力量。」

蔡根培委員的講詞

『主席、各位委員、署長：

當我翻看自 1997 年至今的資料時，我發現房屋署平均每月接獲的投訴數目，基本上是逐步下降，這是一個可喜現象，正好反映出署方上下一心，及與房屋局共同努力的成果，希望大家繼續努力，令到日後無論是直接向署方提出的，或是經轉介的投訴，將會持續下降。

雖然在此期間的投訴數字穩步下降，但是，一連串的短樁、沉降和鋼筋外露等事件，卻又是在同期湧現。建屋素質、貪污、監管和責任等問題雖然困擾着大家，但亦不失為促使大家為房委會作出改革的原動力。

去年 6 月 1 日的周年特別會議中，發言的 21 位委員，多多少少都有提及有關問題，希望在挽回公眾對房委會的信心之同時，並為房委會未來的發展作出改革。

一年後的今天，本來已沒有打算再舊事重提，可是，早前召開的立法會公營房屋建築問題專責委員會會議中，被傳召的多名人士所作的供詞，又令我不能不加以關注。

他們的說話內容，我無意重覆，但我只覺得他們所說的，都有一個共通點，就是「問題我早就知道，不過我沒有做錯，是別人做得不好。」。簡單來說，房委會把責任推給政府，政府又說是房委會的責任。

今天，我不打算在此討論有關的責任問題，不過，令我擔心的是，有關對房委會的指責，會否影響到政府對房委會架構及功能之檢討？

政府檢討房屋架構專責小組成立至今已差不多一年，可惜，連初步的檢討結果也未見公佈，熱切期待着的不僅是各位委員，更是廣大的群眾。我不得不承認，有關的檢討和研究必須審慎地進行，不過，時間上的掌握也相當重要，不能拖得太久，以免影響房委會的運作，和進一步削弱房委會在公眾心目中的地位和形象。

在 20 世紀 90 年代的十年之中，房委會的確在建屋方面作出了獲得社會人士肯定的貢獻，居者有其屋單位的供應數量，由 90/91 年度的 129 000 個增加至 99/2000 年度的 269 000 個，增幅超過一倍，令不少有意置業的人士和公屋住戶夢想成真，這點我們應該感到自豪。

與此同時，另一項值得關注的，就是改善住戶的居住環境問題。在 90/91 年度時，共有 269 000 個住戶居於環境欠佳的地方，到 2001 年 3 月底，尚有 107 000 個住戶的環境未獲改善。雖然在這十一年間，居住環境欠佳的地方確實是大量減少了，但是，在強調提高生活素質和改善居住環境的同時，107 000 仍是一個難以接受的數字，不要說未來十年，若是未來的五年，我們仍未能為這些住戶改善欠佳的居住環境，確實有點令公眾失望。

談到失望，不得不說到最新一期的居屋申請情況。第 23 期甲居屋的申請，創了歷史性新低，據悉署方收到的申請不足 18 879 份，較上一期 22 期乙的 25 659 份，少了五千多份，成為居屋推出二十多年以來，反應最差的一次。此種江河日下的情況，與我剛才所說，房委會在 90 年代令很多人夢想成真的情況，成了強烈的對比。究竟是我們大幅調低白表申請者入息限額所致？還是市民對經濟前景仍感不明朗？還是對房委會的信心仍未恢復有關？我們仍需深入探討。

講完歷史性新低，也應該談談歷史性新高，今年房委會推出可作出租公屋分配的單位數目，是歷年之冠，將有 59 000 個，大大滿足了公屋輪候冊上和有需要人士的需求，我相信大家都有信心，在 2003/04 年度，將輪候時間由現時的 5 年縮短至 3 年的理想，將可以得到實現。這一點是相當令人鼓舞的。

去年，我們經過集思廣益通過了《邁向靈活建屋組合》的構思，此一彈性安排，為平均輪候時間縮短至 3 年的確起了極大的支持作用，不過，我當時所提出的憂慮，至今似乎仍無法消除；我擔心的是「當物業市場需求放緩或經濟不太理想的時候，居屋變成出租公屋時，入住者可能變相被逼負擔較昂貴的租金」，而且我更不希望居民誤以為房委會硬要為輪候者分類，令經濟環境及條件較差的，不是無法入住新的單位，

便是被逼接受較差的安排，令他們覺得房委會有歧視的成份。

最後，我承認無論房委會與署方如何合作和努力，都無法令每一個人百分百滿意，不過，我們亦需明白，市民對我們的要求和期望也是越來越高的，所以，我們不單需要勇於面對，還需要不斷自我提升，來接受時代和社會變遷所帶來的種種考驗，我願意和各位衷誠合作，為房委會繼續作出承擔。

多謝主席，多謝各位。』

何世柱委員的講詞

『主席、各位委員：

眾所周知，多年來房委會做了不少工作，對社會有了貢獻。但是過去一兩年，房委會發生過一些風風雨雨，出現了房屋素質、管理不善等問題。我不禁想一想：房委會在政府架構中，應該如何定位？房委會的主要工作是甚麼？

對這個問題，我想談一下我的看法。

第一、 要明確界定房委會的職能。

房委會應該是政府的代理人。政府負責釐定政策。政策一經制定，房委會就要以代理人的身份去執行。當然，在制定政策的過程中和執行政策時出現了新情況、新問題，房委會可以提出意見，政府也可以主動諮詢房委會，以期通過交換意見，共同商討，使到政策的制定和貫徹更能切合實際。

可是，目前房委會的定位不夠清晰，與房屋局的分工不夠明確，因而包攬過多，管事過繁，把政府自己應該做的事也接過來做，變成尾大不掉，沒有辦法把房屋的建設和管理搞得好的，惹來社會上不少非議。

第二、 房委會最重要的工作是甚麼？

房委會最重要的工作是提供廉租房屋給無力購買或租住私人住所的人。那就是說，要照顧那些需要得到照顧的貧困戶和弱勢社群。

據房委會提供的資料，1997年6月底等候入住公屋者有144 600人，現在仍然有107 977人輪候。加上每年有55 000名內地新移民來港，要求租住公屋的人很多，使到現在輪候上樓的時間，仍然需要約4年8個月。而政府承諾到2003年輪候上樓的時間由1997年的7年縮短為3

年。我希望輪候時間能再縮短一些。我們房委會的委員和部門的工作人員，對久久輪候上樓者要感同身受，深表同情和關懷。因此，要多建公屋，而且要管理好公屋。我明白管理公屋支出龐大，如果收入不夠支付管理費用，政府有責任解決。現在房委會把興建居屋的收入用來補貼租住公屋的開支，這樣做是否恰當呢？又要建租住公屋，又要建居者有其屋，很難兩者兼顧。租住公屋和居屋兩方面都處理不好，就很難建好管好公屋以適應市民需要。

第三、要正確處理居屋問題。原則上，政府是不應拿納稅人的錢去補助少數置業者。但是，政府的居者有其屋政策實質上是補助少數置業者的政策。政府所以施行這個政策，是在特定的歷史條件下提出來的，是基於以下三方面的考慮：

- 一、 回歸前，香港的地產價格上升太高，中產階級（即俗稱的“夾心階層”）負擔不起，政府爲了紓解他們的困難，推出多期的居屋銷售計劃，穩定中產階級的情緒，讓他們安居樂業。
- 二、 香港回歸日期公布以後，部分港人打算移民海外。政府有見及此，便推出價格相對廉宜的居屋來挽留他們，建立歸屬感。
- 三、 房委會建居屋不用支付地價，售屋的利潤較高，可以用來補貼租住公屋的支出。

這些情況，在香港回歸後發生了很大的變化：

- 一、 金融風暴後，私營房屋的價格劇降，市民購買私人樓宇的能力比以前高了。
- 二、 港人移民外地減少，反而回港的港人增多，不需要作出特別處理來挽留港人了。
- 三、 居屋售價越來越低，成本因爲要堅持素質而不斷提高，靠建居屋來補貼公屋越來越困難，出售居屋的賺錢能力正在弱化。

因此，現在建居屋不應是房委會工作的重點。有人擔心房委會少建居屋會助長地產炒風。我認爲不必過慮。因爲政府有地在手，掌握了主動權，可以通過調節土地供應來制約地產市場。

最後，我要強調的是：房委會一定要把工作重點放在建造和管理公屋上面。我有信心，如果我們定出明確工作重點，房委會和房署上上下下，同心協力，一定能將這個重點工作做得更好。』

葉國謙議員的講詞

『主席：

過去一年，我可以形容是房委會風雨飄搖的日子。在這段期間，外間有人批評房委會委員是一塊橡皮圖章，房委會沒有存在價值，應該拆掉。這些聲音雖然並非主流意見，但我亦會撫心自問，有否真正履行作為房委會委員的職責。我可以肯定一句，在座的委員付出的心血沒有白費，現時公營房屋的素質是不斷進步的，居民的生活素質亦不斷提高。不過，在我心目中房委會仍有兩項不足之處，令我感到遺憾。

第一，公屋的設計問題。近年來，公營房屋的外觀設計可以說是美侖美奐，甚至有人批評我們的居屋豪華。可是，作為建築小組委員會的委員，我特別關注到有部分設計存有漏洞。舉些例子來說，有些和諧式公屋的鐵閘猶如虛設，歹徒可以從門外托起鐵閘；有個別屋苑水壓不足，令到居民間中過著『冇水用』的日子；鋁窗支撐的穩定螺絲出現問題，令到窗框飛墜地下。於是乎，上述的真人真事成為了傳媒大事報導的新聞，過蓋於功，房委會成為了大罪人。

房委會並非聖人，犯錯並不出奇；房委會委員不單是一具接收器，只聽而不聞，我們都希望可以真正解決居民的問題。我希望藉著今日的機會，要求署方能更靈活及積極回應居民的投訴，不要玷污了房委會的聲譽。

第二，房委會委員的知情權。房委會轄下有 8 個常設小組委員會，處理不同範疇的工作。可以說，若委員不是身在某個小組委員會，就不能緊貼在該個小組委員會通過的最新決策，反而要依靠傳媒的二手資料。

舉例來說，今年二月房委會通過將 2000/01 年度公屋、居屋申請人的入息及資產限額調低，居屋申請人的入息限額由 31 000 元減至 25 000 元，減幅達兩成，霎時間有 30 000 多個家庭喪失了申請居屋的資格。可是我作為一個房委會委員，在小組委員會開會前根本不知道將會討論如斯重大的題目。我得悉消息後，主動聯絡署方官員，才知道這大變動的詳情。

究竟委員是否擁有足夠的知情權？現時在委員要求下，署方會在小組委員會會後的一個月內才分發討論文件給委員。若果要掌握最新的資料，委員只好依靠傳媒的報道。這是否對房委會委員公平呢？委員在資料不足的情況下，又被迫要發表個人意見，結果是對房委會和委員兩方都不利。我希望署方可考慮在討論具爭議性的事項之前，將內容重點告知委員，讓委員去決定是否參與有關會議的討論，使委員可以真正履行房委會委員的職責。

謝謝主席。』

吳仕福委員的講詞

『主席、各位委員：

改善公營房屋政策房委會責無旁貸

政府房屋政策與香港經濟息息相關，而公營房屋素質和供應量則是政府房屋政策的主要環節，也是公眾目前比較關注的問題。房委會作為政府房屋政策的主要執行者，不僅有責任確保每一座公營房屋符合專業水平，以保障業主的權益和安全，也有責任因時制宜，讓公營房屋的供應量能切合民生和經濟發展的需要。

就公營房屋素質而言，對眾多基層市民來說，所住的公營房屋其實就是他們最重要的資產，但近幾年一而再、再而三爆發公營房屋偷工減料的醜聞，不僅令受影響居民的血汗錢化為血淚，更嚴重的是動搖了超過三百萬公營房屋居民對公營房屋的素質以及有關政策和監管架構的信心。本人期望，立法會專責委員會目前就有關東涌、石蔭邨、天頌苑和圓洲角事件的調查，與政府和房委會先前類似的調查報告，能達至互相補充和互相呼應的效果，以推動政府開展一套具有深度和視野的公營房屋政策及架構的改革，包括糾正政出多門、責任不清的架構、加強政府有關部門和人手配置對地盤的監管等等。

就公營房屋供應量而言，有意見認為，房委會近年興建大量居屋，乃現時樓市低迷的主因。這樣未免把問題簡單化。本人認為，香港經濟復甦仍未惠及普羅大眾；就業前景不明朗；市民不再期望樓市有升無跌等等，才是樓市低迷的關鍵。回想 96 及 97 年，當樓價飆升的時候，特區政府順應民情，決定加快興建居屋，如今相繼落成，才予人有居屋泛濫的印象。當然，鑑於現時市場供應失調，未來數年也不容樂觀，房委會暫停興建居屋，也屬切合時宜之舉。但這並不等於政府貿然取消居屋政策。畢竟，儘管私人住宅價格已下調不少，社會上仍有一大批不必住公屋卻又買不起私人樓宇的夾心階層，而居屋的價格及素質正切合這批人士的需要。政府的公營房屋政策，應充分照顧社會中下層以至最貧困市民的需要，其宗旨應是鼓勵市民不斷努力達至安居樂業後，再爭取更好的居住環境。

概括而言，未來一年，房委會應加強協助政府改善公營房屋的工程監管制度和基本的建屋素質，並提高公營房屋政策的效益，包括區分清楚公營與私營房屋市場的銷售對象，以重振市民對公營房屋的信心。』

鄭恩基委員的講詞（中譯本）

『主席、各位委員：

過去數月，報章和電視的公屋新聞大幅減少。我不肯定箇中原因。這並非說我們應該製造新聞來引人注意。正常無事才是好事。我只是想到，房屋委員會最惡劣的時刻已經過去，2000年年初的優質房屋措施，已漸見成效。

品質

品質是「心」的課題。各項主要的品質措施，均有賴建造業的參與者衷誠合作，方可成事。因此，我要向這些人士，尤其是房屋署的職員，表示謝意。在他們努力推動下，才有今天的成績。與此同時，也想呼籲那些尚未參與改革的人士，請他們莫再遲疑。其實，進步之道在於推動改革而不影響秩序，維持秩序而不影響改革。

天頌苑和圓洲角事件，已令人深深體會到結構安全和地基穩固的重要。安全和地基不是什麼新概念，早在聖經的舊約時代，便已有文獻指出地基穩固如何重要。問題只是很多人一時忘記或故意忽視而已。隨著有關的優質房屋措施逐步推行，希望地基事件很快便成為歷史陳蹟。

環顧各項優質房屋措施，我認為最難做到的是伙伴合作關係。這關係知易而行難。參與業務者要做到和睦互信，往往比解決技術或程序問題困難得多。伙伴合作是共事者最難能可貴的情操，但我相信有志者事竟成，大家必須有此決心。

我看過建造業檢討委員會在今年年初發表的建議，大部分與房委會的優質房屋措施不謀而合。這些都是協助建造業在 21 世紀前進的好方法。不用多說，我們應該攜手合作，致力推行這些措施。

顧問公司

現時監察承建商工作表現的措施仍未足夠，而一些房委會顧問公司的素質和工作表現也同樣值得關注。如果這方面的問題未能妥善處理，頭條新聞會接踵而來，令房委會尷尬不已。部分顧問公司的水準大不如前。日前我告訴一位同事，一些合作多時的顧問公司的英文文件，已越來越費解，而這些公司現正替房委會工作。大抵這些文件是由一些能力有限、經驗不足的初級專業人員自行草擬，根本沒有人從旁督導。我不想這樣說，但在這些公司，實情如此。所謂顧問管理，重點在於適當的審查。我很高興獨立審查股可以迅速成立，並且全面運作。日後，獨立審查股肯定會擔當非常重要的角色。

採購專業服務和甄選顧問公司的工作，實在不容忽視，重要之處，與甄選承建商無異。水泉澳設計比賽非常成功，但對我們來說，卻有一點諷刺的味道：在香港，深藏未露的人才多的是。過去數年的風雨，加強了我一個信念，就是「主要顧問公司和分判顧問公司」的委聘模式已經過時，特別是涉及商業活動的時候，濫用和剝削的例子，層出不窮。每當出事的時候，房委會便會收到很多解釋，說明「事情與我無關／這並非我的責任」等等。我不準備花時間再詳談其他弊病，但想提出一點，如果我們不即時改用直接委聘的模式，一些不理想情況將繼續發生，全部都會對房委會不利。

成本效益

討論過品質問題後，也許應談談成本，以及房委會建造工程的成本效益等問題。最近看到建築小組委員會兩份文件，很感興趣。其中一份是有關建屋工程使用預拌混凝土的問題。該文件並探討如何更有效地開發這方面的市場。我一向提倡盡可能在地盤進行混凝土配料和拌合的工作，所以樂見房署正研究這點，以減省成本。這問題對整個建造業影響深遠，值得多個決策局合作研究和處理。

另一份文件則是有關工料管制的檢討。所指的工料，包括屋宇裝備物料，而檢討的目的，在於加強品質保證，並盡可能杜絕串謀投標的情況。我想補充一點，有些工料的成本不菲，佔整體建築費用的比重頗大。上述研究期間，我正擔任廉政公署防止貪污諮詢委員會主席。對於多種工料只限極少數供應商投標的情況，委員會感到十分驚訝，而且在我看來，這些工料都只是一些非常普通的材料。部分規格的編寫方式實在助長串謀投標。由於沒有僱主願意多付費用，所以我建議當局應不斷探討方法，務求把價格穩定於真正反映商業競爭的水平。

改革

由政務司司長擔任主席的委員會現正檢討公營房屋制度的架構，我熱切期待他們的研究結果和建議。聽過主席和各個小組委員會主席的報告，大家都會覺得房屋委員會的工作確實繁重。如何令工作更簡易、更暢順、更有成效，是我們要努力的目標。毫無疑問，我們展望改革會帶來未來美好的明天。』

劉秀成教授的講詞（中譯本）

『主席、各位委員：

提升公營房屋建屋素質的 4P

雖然這是我第一次出任房屋委員會委員，但這些年來我參與建築小組委員會工作所汲取的經驗，以及與其他建築師同業進行的討論，都令我對如何提升公營房屋建屋素質有一些體會。今日我想藉此機會與大家分享我的看法，希望這一己之見，對於房委會提高公營房屋建屋素質，也有一點點的幫助。在此之前，我須先恭賀房委會，因為房委會考慮放棄長久以來使用標準設計建造一式一樣大廈的做法。此舉令建築師可以發揮創意，設計新穎質優的房屋，配合香港不同地區的特色。

政策(Policy)

這個可能是委員最想討論的議題。我們是否應該只集中興建需求量甚大的租住單位，而減少興建居屋？私人發展商在公屋興建過程中應有何種程度的參與？最重要的是我們能訂定正確的目標。至於以往曾令我們深受困擾的建屋目標數字，我們日後應該先進行更全面的分析和市場研究，才釐定有關數字。

我們應該採取相同的建屋監管政策，規管私人樓宇和公營房屋。任何樓宇在未徹底測試地基結構前，絕對不應該展開上蓋工程。房委會的工程必須嚴格遵守建築事務監督訂立的規例與程序。在這方面不應該存有雙重標準。

房委會在批出顧問工程及建築工程的投標時，往往以成本作為評審基準，以致投標通常以極低價格批出，即使採用多軌投標制度，情況也不會有所改變，結果導致偷工減料的情況出現。除非我們採納一些合理的鼓勵性措施，否則難以確保優良的工程素質。

程序(Procedures)

眾所周知，房委會備有大量品質保證手冊和程序指引，以便在施工時使用。這些手冊和指引複雜艱澀，難以遵循，令效果適得其反。短樁問題調查小組的調查結果顯示，督導人員對填寫表格的興趣，竟然比對了解與建築安全息息相關的設計事宜的興趣更為濃厚。行政官僚架構令品質監控措施無用武之地，而繁複的程序也使品質監控失去原有的目的。

除此之外，部分負責監督建築項目、建屋工程和顧問公司的房委會工程策劃總經理來自不合適的專業範疇，他們缺乏適切的專業知識、

訓練和經驗，以致出現指示前後不一致、對工作程序和要求缺乏了解等情況。

由於工程的設計、成本預算和建築事宜一概由建築小組委員會審批，因此小組委員會所涉及的職權及工作範圍過於廣泛，令其難以充分發揮功能。我們或許有必要重新考慮審批程序，以便能盡早發現建築工程所出現的問題，及時予以解決。

政治(Politics)

由於房委會須向公眾負責，因此，建築小組委員會的決定往往較為政治化，而並非單純的專業決定。公營房屋屬社會需求，我們不應給政治問題蒙蔽了眼睛。舉例來說，當合約監管人、承建商及顧問公司犯錯而須要處分時，我們似乎傾向採用公眾會接納的方式來處分他們，而並非按照他們應得的懲罰作出處分。雖然我知道這樣說相當危險，就像隨時會觸發地雷一樣，但我不能不說，否則，我們這群參與者便會失去推動力，害怕以我們的專業身分行事，亦不敢對根深蒂固的政治制度提出質疑。

伙伴合作(Partnering)

房委會正積極推廣伙伴合作計劃，以期能補救部分問題。以往，我曾將房委會比喻為大笨象，而將私人顧問公司比喻為老鼠，大笨象雖然強而有力，但動作遲緩，老鼠則行動敏捷，身手靈活。真正的伙伴關係正是要捨短取長、互相補足。

這樣，如果大部分的設計及建築工作均外判予私人顧問公司，房委會便可集中進行研究與發展、分析用家的需要和回應以制訂新的工程大綱、制定新的市區設計指引，並努力改進與社會和社群的溝通和認識。不過，房委會仍然需要繼續肩負監管工程策劃及監督事宜的重責，以確保能為香港市民提供最高素質的公營房屋。』

單仲偕議員的講詞

『主席、各位委員：

房屋委員會作為全港最大的房屋供應機構，所提供的每一項服務，都與市民息息相關，所以每次政策的釐定，對市民都有十分深遠的影響。

資訊科技應用

首先，我想談談房委會在應用資訊科技這方面。現時房委會及房屋署並沒有全面應用資訊科技，特別是在互聯網方面。房委會及房屋署網頁上的資料不但不足夠，亦不全面，而部份的內容亦已經過時；例如網頁只有房委會及小組委員會的會議日期表，但沒有會議的議程及文件。我在過去數月，閱讀了很多房委會及其他小組委員會的文件，我認為大部份的文件都並非高度機密，只有部份的資料需要保密，所以房委會應該在會議前，將議程公開給公眾查閱。每次會議後，應該向公眾發放新聞稿，令公眾在短時間內知道房委會作出的最新決策，並且在會議完結後短時間內，例如在一星期內，將資料及文件上網。如果是屬於高度機密的文件，例如投標文件，可以不公開，其他非敏感的資料，可以公開，而會議紀錄就可以留待至確認後，才擺放上網。

房屋署網頁

此外，現時房屋署網頁上的資料，較為豐富及較新較快的只有最近一期的居者有其屋資料，不過亦有許多改善的空間，例如缺少租住屋邨的背景資料等。所以我認為必須將基本的資料上網，例如公共屋邨單位的數目、屋邨辦事處的管理人員、大廈類型及入伙年期等等，同時亦可以將維修計劃的時間表，及所委託的承辦商等最新的資訊上網。我在網頁上亦找不到房委會及房屋署的房屋政策及服務詳情，我認為房委會的政策及屋邨管理指南都應該全部上網，給市民查閱。將來房委會的發展計劃及諮詢文件等，亦應該擺放在網上。此舉必定能夠有效地讓公眾監察房委會及房屋署的服務。雖然房屋署亦有將投標通告在網上發放，但亦應考慮全面發展電子投標(e-tendering)及電子採購(e-procurement)。

發展電子商貿

房委會擁有龐大的客戶，在合理可行的情況下，應考慮夥拍其他商業機構發展網上商機。房屋署可公開邀請公司提出計劃及提供營商環境。不過，在發展電子商貿或應用資訊科技時，應避免聘用龐大的顧問公司提供甚麼五年資訊策略，從過去我所得的經驗當中，部分國際性的顧問公司只有提出高大空的策略計劃。

公眾知情權、公開資料及會議

房委會應公開一些小組委員會的會議或將會議分為公開及機密部份，以前區域市政局亦是如此。現時房委會，是以發言人的制度，向傳媒傳遞委員會會議的訊息，但這個制度，並不能夠產生良好的效用，公眾始終無權知悉房委會所發生的事，所以傳媒唯有透過不同的途徑去取得房委會的資料和文件。每次會議前，記者都很著急，因為想得到有關的資料。所以平時都有記者朋友向我索取資料，但當我每次婉拒他們的要求時，都覺得有點兒不安。當然，我不會透露房委會的資料，但我認為讓公眾取得房委會的資訊並無不妥，所以我建議除了公開文件之外，亦應該考慮將部份會議公開給公眾參與討論，以提高房委會的問責性及透明度，保障公眾的知情權。

房委會委員的知情權及決策權實也應改善，房委會目前過份授權各小組委員會作出決策的安排並不健康，房委會應加以改善，而其中一個可能性是房委會設立切實可行的機制，否決小組委員會的決定。

網上投訴

現時房委會及房屋署的網頁已設有網上投訴，但因為缺乏宣傳的關係，大部份市民都不知道可以透過電子郵件投訴及查詢。我們應該加強這方面的宣傳，同時亦要在網上提供更詳細的資料，令市民明白投訴的程序，以及聯絡負責人的方法等等。同時，屋邨居民亦應可以透過互聯網直接向屋邨經理作出投訴。

穩定建屋量

過去一年，地產商多番向政府施壓，要求政府挽救樓市，導致房屋政策朝令夕改。最近的資料顯示，未來兩、三年，落成的公屋單位，遠遠低於政府早前所承諾的每年五萬個單位，特別在 2003/2004 年度。民主黨對於公屋供應是否足夠表示憂慮。而近年公營房屋更出現了嚴重的質素問題。在立法會專責委員會的聆訊上，前房委會主席、苗學禮署長及何承天先生，都異口同聲說穩定的土地供應是十分重要，因為有穩定的樓宇興建量，才能確保房屋的質素。因此我希望房委會履行承諾，每年興建不少於五萬個以出租為主要用途的公營房屋單位，此不能以資助名額來代替，直至紓緩了公屋輪候冊及擠迫戶的困難為止。

監察公屋質素

監管公營房屋的工作將交由屋宇署負責，但不應該有太長的過渡期，應盡快將公屋納入《建築物條例》，交由屋宇署監管公營房屋的質素。現時所定的過渡期，實在是太長，令公眾難以接受。

紓緩擠迫環境

對於解決公屋擠迫戶的問題，我建議制訂「計分」制度，以釐定紓緩擠迫戶的先後次序，包括擠迫的程度、輪候的時間、家庭的人數等，以確保紓緩的措施，能夠合理及公平地執行。而房屋署亦應該為被列入公屋擠迫戶的人士，制定具體的服務承諾，例如在指定的年期內，完成調遷工作。當然，署方亦應該盡量安排原區安置，而在部份以小型單位為主的地區，應容許擠迫戶編配多一個單位，以解決原區缺乏較大單位的問題。

居者有其屋計劃

在居者有其屋計劃方面，我代表民主黨重申我們的立場，居屋是為沒有能力購買私人樓宇的中下階層人士，提供一個置業機會，其重要性是應該獲得肯定的。

租者置其屋計劃

房委會在明年將會推出第五期租者置其屋計劃，我認為現在是適當時候全面檢討。房委會在出售屋邨前，應先全面諮詢居民，尤其是關於地界劃分及公契內容，應該有更充分的時間收集居民的意見。我建議在接受居民遞交買樓意向書前，房委會定出分別不少於六個月及三個月的諮詢期，以收集居民的意見。此外，房委會必須要確保在出售公屋前，完成所有維修及保養工作。居民在購買公屋前要求維修的項目，房委會亦應該在該單位出售兩年之內，繼續承擔有關的維修及保養責任，以增加居民購買公屋的信心。

安置政策

在天台屋和寮屋問題上，我希望房委會可以放寬安置政策，因為自從在1998年9月實施全面的入息及資產審查後，部份不符合安置入

住租住公屋或中轉房屋資格的居民，都無法上樓，但我們要知道，不論是清拆天台屋或寮屋，居民都是在非自願的情況下被逼遷出，完全沒有選擇權。房屋署負責清拆的前線人員，亦面對巨大的壓力，居民的抗爭亦往往拖慢清拆計劃。因此，我希望房委會放寬安置政策，同時檢討入息及資產審查。最近，屋宇署曾向立法會的財務委員會表示，增加十三個助理署長的職位，以加強和改善清拆天台屋及僭建物的工作。但若安置政策未能配合屋宇署的清拆計劃，我恐怕將會出現衝突的情況，石油氣罐、官民衝突的場面，很有可能又會出現在電視鏡頭前。主席，我促請署方盡快與屋宇署商討。

恩恤編配

現時房委會及房屋署，每年有二千個恩恤編配的名額，給基於社會因素或醫療因素，而有逼切住屋需要的人士上樓。雖然去年的名額並沒有盡用，但並非因名額過剩，剛剛相反，是因為名額太少，故此社會福利署訂下嚴苛的資格，很多面對極大困難的人士，仍未能獲得恩恤的機會，因此，我建議增加恩恤編配的名額。

外判問題

在外判工作給私人承辦商方面，房屋署在監管時，仍存在相當多的流弊。在外判制度下，工人的薪酬偏低，工作量大，員工保障十分不足，因此，我建議房委會及房屋署在招標時，規定投標者必須在標書內訂明員工的最低聘用條件及標準工作時間，並設立機制確保承辦商遵守標書的條文，令員工獲得較合理的保障。

智能公屋

主席，我們今天籌劃興建的公營房屋，不論是居屋或出租公屋，落成日期將會是四至五年後。香港已踏進資訊年代，房委會在設計未來公屋，實應擔起推動資訊科技的發展，其中一方面是發展家居智能大廈，提供一個能以寬頻接駁互聯網、同軸電纜(Coaxial Cable)、有線電視網絡等的智能骨架，這可能輕微加重成本，但亦值得推行。房屋署在設計未來公屋時亦應考慮這個因素。

管治架構

最後，我想談房委會及房屋署的管治架構。雖然在法例上，房委會和房屋署的角色是明確的；房委會制定政策，房屋署執行政策。實際上，房屋署高層是構思及將政策遞交房委會通過，但向公眾解釋政策是房屋署職員，靈魂不等如肉體，這個安排實應有檢討的必要。

謝謝主席。』

朱幼麟議員的講詞

『主席、各位委員：

我很榮幸能夠被委任為房委會委員。作為一個新的委員，我有很多地方需要學習，所以在上一個月我訪問了四個屋邨，到過商場、街市，又出席了屋邨管理諮詢委員會的會議，與居民討論屋邨的問題至晚上十一時半。

在幾次探訪中，我初步觀察到幾個值得我們重視的問題：

- (一) 一些落成不足十年的樓宇外牆紙皮石剝落；
- (二) 住戶屋內窗邊長期滲水；
- (三) 商場內有一些鋪位空置超過十年；及
- (四) 街市沒有空調設備，檔主投訴經營環境惡劣。

我相信在這幾方面的工作我們可以做得好一些。

此外，屋邨居民亦關心到房署推行屋邨管理及維修保養服務私營化之後會否降低現時的服務素質。為此房署應該做好監管者的角色，更加要與地區的議員和居民團體代表保持緊密溝通，清楚屋邨發生的問題。

主席，我希望在我的任內能與各位同事一起努力，為公屋居民做多些工作。

謝謝各位。』

陳鑑林議員的講詞

『主席、各位委員：

近兩年來，房委會遭受建屋素質醜聞的打擊。去年 6 月前，房委會主席王葛鳴更因此而黯然下台，可以說，從那一刻開始，房委會、房屋署跌進一個身份危機：究竟他們的存在價值為何？房委會、房屋署的命運，有待公營房屋架構檢討委員會的報告完成，才会有清晰的定案。如果有人只基於公營房屋建築素質差，而不問情由地歸咎房屋署，或要求拆掉房委會，這說法未必是太輕率，無疑是完全抹殺房委會和房屋署對房屋建設的貢獻，對房委會和房屋署並不公平。

房委會現時管理 64 萬個出租公屋單位，照顧了全港接近三分之一人口的需要，並不是紙上談兵的機構，所以，不管日後政務司長領導的房屋架構檢討委員會的結論為何，相信在中未來的一段時間，房委會的職責依然沉重，我們仍須要為社會上有需要的人士提供合理素質的房屋設施。

由於房委會已經連續多年凍結公屋的租金，這個決定對於公屋居民而言，固然是一個喜訊，但是我們卻不能像鴛鴦一樣，以為不調整租金，就可以把現時住戶入息與租金比例已經超過法定的百分之十的問題凍結。因此，房委會必須立即設法解決這個問題，一是全面減租，一是修訂法例，提高百分之十的規定，要不就重新為「租金」作出定義，把差餉及管理費撇除於租金之外。另一方面，本人認為應進一步設法降低房屋營運的成本，從而紓緩要求調整租金的壓力。

此外，根據現行的政策，有困難的租戶或者因整體重建計劃而調遷至其他單位的居民，必須等房委會下次租金檢討時，才可以申請租金援助，導致不少有困難的居民，都無法申請。

最近我接見了一班公公婆婆，他們都是居住在即將重建的屋邨，他們沒有領取綜援金，但就受惠於專為困難戶而設的租援政策，他們聽聞搬入新屋邨後，將要繳交新租金，異常擔憂，因為將會失去三年租金援助，而且新租金比舊租金高出數倍，這都是長者們難以承擔的。

對於一些低收入的家庭而言，租援政策是他們非常難得的旱天甘露，長期凍租令租援政策變成「蛋家雞見水」。因此，為了使到真正有需要的人士得到確切的援助，房委會應撤銷在租金調整時才可申請租援的規定，讓經濟有困難的租戶，可以盡快得到援助。

最後，我想談談房委會與議會的溝通問題。由於現時有關房屋的政策是由房委會制訂的，但立法會和區議會的議員，每日都接觸到形形

式式的居民個案，議員希望可以改善房屋政策，但他們往往感到愛莫能助，因為制訂政策的權力並不在他們的手上，縱使他們有監察政府部門的責任，亦無法影響房屋署及房委會的獨立運作，導致經常出現議員以偏激的言論和行爲去表達對房屋政策的不滿。議會與房委會之間久不久就有針對性衝突，實在令人遺憾。所以，我建議房委會積極考慮每三個月與立法會議員會面一次，交換對房屋政策的意見，加強雙方的溝通。

謝謝各位。』

鄭海嘯博士的講詞（中譯本）

『主席、各位委員：

房屋委員會於 2000 年 1 月發表《優質居所 攜手共建》公眾諮詢文件。在完成徵詢意見後，即展開一個分兩期推行的改革計劃，以落實提高建屋素質的 50 項建議。我得悉目前大約有四分之三的建議已成功推行或在推行中，感到十分高興。目前，無論是打樁及地基工程的品質保證，還是屋邨的整體建設，均已見重大改善。

不過，改革計劃最終要取得成功，還須取決於參與各方在思想上的改變，這較工序上的改革來得更重要。香港的建屋計劃愈來愈複雜，我們不僅要達致時間、財政預算及素質方面的目標，更要顧及其他問題，例如公眾的意見、施工安全、樓宇在使用期內的成本效益，以及可持續發展。

建屋計劃成功之道，莫如各參與者懷着共同目標，建立互信，同心協力，達致三贏局面。這種按付出取回合理報酬的共生關係，已成為進步的發展商、顧問公司和承建商的基本條件。

房委會身為本港一個主要的土地發展機構，對於促成這種伙伴合作關係，實在責無旁貸。因此，我們應時常願意：

- 在合約中訂明公平分擔風險，
- 給予承建商合理的施工時間，
- 接受合理的價格，拒絕過低的投標價，
- 要求產品素質高，以及
- 建立長期的伙伴合作關係。

在進行工程期間，房委會各工程策劃小組應積極投入，與各參與業務者緊密合作，協助他們在工程上達致各個目標，以及解決任何會出現的問題。在展開工程時向各參與者灌輸伙伴合作精神，亦有利工程的進行。

要培養講求素質的文化，房委會的顧客及公眾人士亦應採取積極態度。他們應經常提出建議和意見，房委會方能持續改進，以提高樓宇的素質，以及令整個建屋流程更臻完善。我們歡迎他們的參與，並樂於聽取他們的意見。

謝謝各位。』

6. 主席對委員發表寶貴的意見表示感謝。他說部門會小心研究委員的意見，他和房屋署署長會在下一次會議作出回應。

議程第四項 其他事項

7. 主席告知委員，以下團體在開會前向房委會遞交了意見書（見附件 1 至 3）：

- （甲） 香港民主民生協進會
- （乙） 香港寮屋聯會
- （丙） 九龍城寮屋區權益關注組和九龍城寮屋商戶權益行動組

8. 王坤先生指出，寮屋區的居民和商戶均認為應放寬安置受清拆影響人士的政策，他建議當有關的小組委員會研究相關的政策時，應考慮以上團體提出的意見。主席和委員贊成他的建議。

（會後紀錄：

- 甲· 部門已把香港民主民生協進會（民協）的意見書交與檢討公屋租金政策專責小組委員會的委員參考，該小組委員會並於 7 月 10 日接見民協的代表，聆聽他們的意見。
- 乙· 部門已於 7 月 11 日覆信給香港寮屋聯會及九龍城寮屋區權益關注組和九龍城寮屋商戶權益行動組，見附件 4 及 5。）

散會時間

9. 會議於上午 11 時 50 分結束。

下次會議日期

10. 下次會議定於 2001 年 7 月 26 日（星期四）上午 9 時 30 分舉行。

本會議紀錄於 2001 年 月 日獲大會通過。

主席鄭漢鈞

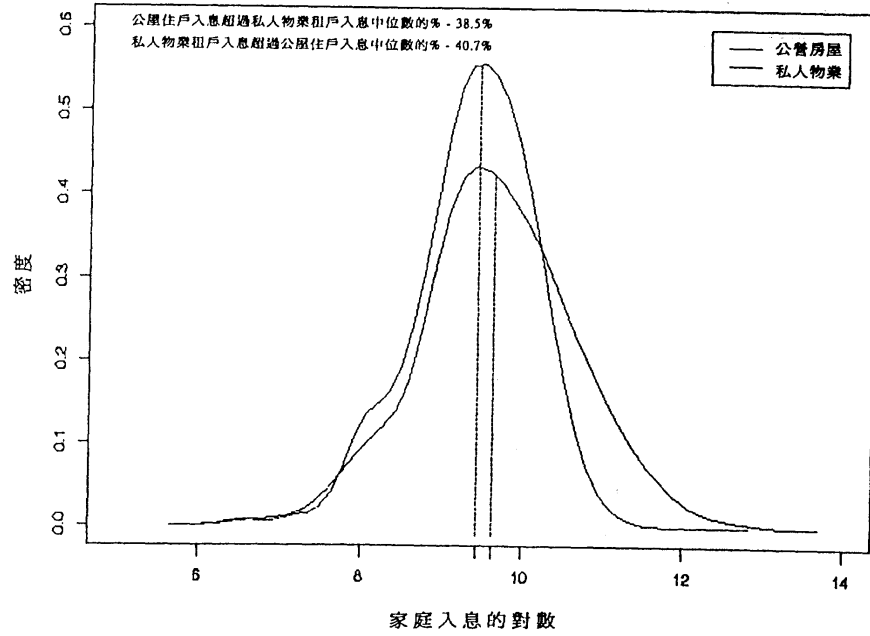
會議秘書周炎林

檔號：HA/COM/2/2 VIII

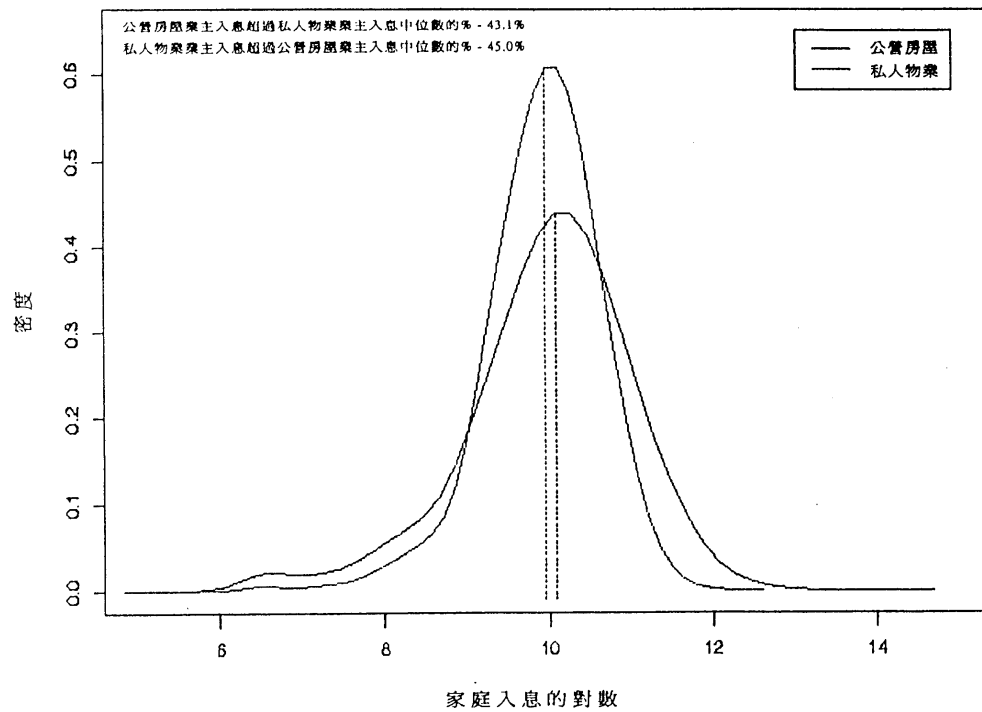
日期：2001 年 7 月 21 日

附錄 A

入息分布：公屋住戶相對於私人物業租戶
2000 年第 2 季



入息分布：公營房屋業主相對於私人物業業主
2000年第2季



致房委會：

要求符合法例 爭取公屋減租

民協不滿政府違反公屋租金與住戶入息比例中位數百分之十的法例規定，要求房委會立即減租。

房委會以法例只限制調整租金時不可超過百分之十為理由，拒絕立即減租。民協認為房委會扭曲法例原意，自行解釋房署如不調整租金便不需減租；但立法精神是規限租金中位數不能超逾 10%，房委會縱然不作租金調整，若租金中位數超逾 10%，實應減租。

為堵塞法例漏洞，民協主席馮檢基向立法會提交要求當租金超過入息比例上限時，房委會要減租的私人草案，但政府以影響政府收入為由而反對。民協強烈不滿政府輸打贏要的做法，因房委會收入是自負盈虧，減租根本不會影響政府支出。

房委會毫無良心，用盡方法為逃避減租，完全漠視租金對低下階層造成的生活壓力。根據統計署數字，公屋住戶入息中位數由 2000 年第一季的 13000 元，持續下跌至第三季的 12400 元，低下階層生活日見困難，所以房委會應盡快減租以紓解民困。

此外，房署需要增加出租公屋營運的效率及透明度以減低營運赤字。房委會年報顯示過去 3 年出租公屋的營運赤字約佔總支出的 12% 至 18%，而「維修」及「其他開支」部份則佔四成多。因此，房委會應研究「其他開支」的性質及項目；並鼓勵居民就屋邨應進行維修的項目提供意見，確保進行之維修項目是居民所需，減少浪費，以減低營運支出。

民協發言人 莫嘉嫻 76355825
衛煥南 71011568
二〇〇一年六月二十八日

致：香港房屋委員會各委員

香港寮屋聯會
要求房委會對受清拆影響的寮屋居民豁免「入息及資產審查」

本會是由鯉魚門、茶果嶺、牛潭尾、薄扶林、何家園、荔枝園、侯王廟新村、老圍村、新村、芙蓉山、石湖新村、馬屎埔村、靈山村及芬園村等寮屋區居民所組成，目的是團結香港寮屋區居民，爭取制訂情理兼備的寮屋政策。

房屋署於 1982 年及 1984 至 1985 年度分別就寮屋及寮屋人口作登記，用意是凍結寮屋及其人口數目，以便在日後清拆時作安置的安排。而按照 84/85 年寮屋政策，政府在為居民登記時承諾「登記居民在清拆時只要不擁有任何住宅物業，即獲公屋安置處理。」寮屋居民對房屋署沿用十多年的清拆安置及承諾一向無懷疑，一心等待清拆時便有安置。可惜，政府的房屋政策倒行逆施，朝令夕改，在 98 年 9 月，政府突然實施「入息及資產審查」政策，受寮屋清拆影響的居民也要接受入息及資產審查。這對寮屋居民是十分不公平的，因為我們在寮屋已住了幾十年，即有幾十年時間輪候公屋，但我們相信政府將來清拆時必有公屋安置，故一直沒有如政府所言與「真正有需要人士」爭輪候公屋。

政府對清拆寮屋時實行入息及資產審查的藉口是「確保公屋資源公平分配」，集中幫助真正有需要的人士」。其實，房委會資料透露，2000 至 2001 年度公屋分配量約有 56000 個，分配給公屋輪候冊、公屋重建、體恤安置、清拆、公務員及其他，這幾類人士均有獨特的入住條件，大家互不抵觸，套用政府的說話「確保公屋資源公平分配」為原則，而將入息及資產審查強加於「清拆」類別上，則所有分類理應接受審查，可事實並非如此，其中預留 1700 個公務員單位給總薪級表第 21 點（即 26805 元，但清拆戶四人家庭入息限額是 16400 元）的公務員家庭，而公務員家庭其他成員入息更不計算在內；而受公屋重建影響的 18900 個亦只作戶籍審核。房署強調公屋住戶也需接受入息及資產審查，但限額是寮屋清拆的三倍。**我們認為政府應根據各類情況制定處理方法，而不應把寮屋居民強行劃入入息及資產審查。**

致 房委會台端

《要求全面檢討安置及賠償政策暫停清拆寮屋》

我們是九龍城聯合道的寮屋居民及商戶，房屋署將於七月十八日強行清拆本區，在過去一年多的日子。我們不斷透過多種溝道，向房屋署及房委會反映寮屋安置及賠償政策的不公平、不合理之處，但房委會對我們的寮屋民意可謂毫無反應、漠不關心，對此我們極表失望和不滿！

我們懇請 房委會在本月廿八日的特別大會上提出全面檢討寮屋安置及賠償政策的議程，在未有檢討結果前，暫停清拆本寮屋區以免造成社會衝突。

請審閱我等居民及商戶的附件立場書，回信請傳真致 23371412。

歡迎賜電聯絡〔商戶〕黃錦球先生 92163983 或〔居民〕黃寶琪先生 26354004，
祝身體健康、諸事順利！

九龍城寮屋區權益關注組
九龍城寮屋商戶權益行動組
二零一年六月廿八日

九龍城寮屋區權益關注組九大立場

1. 要求在對寮屋居民（及所有準公屋租戶）通過入息及資產審查政策前（98年9月10日），已入住寮屋區的居民，不受新政策影響，並要求房委會全面檢討應否對受清拆寮屋影響的居民，實施上述政策。
2. 除石籬及葵盛的擴展市區中轉房外，為受清拆影響的本寮屋區居民提供多一個市區中轉房作合理選擇。同時，一人家庭並應享有同等的選擇權利。
3. 要求為所有受清拆影響而要搬離寮屋區的居民，提供「搬遷津貼」。
4. 依現行政策，符合安置資格但不接受安置的一、二人家庭，可選擇現金津貼。我們要求一視同仁地對待三人或以上家庭，同享平等權利。
5. 取消宣佈清拆前「廿四個月內擁有物業」而不獲安置的過時及僵化政策。
6. 「拆我市區屋，還我市區屋」，要求以市區公屋安置在宣佈清拆前已入住本寮屋區的居民。
7. 要求為上蓋物業作出合理賠償。
8. 要求將本寮屋區的清拆日期延期至本年七月底之後，以便子女轉校及適應等安排。
9. 要求在上述政策及問題未得到妥善解決前，不可強行清拆本寮屋區，否則居民會堅持以「和平抗爭」方式爭取到底。

二零零壹年六月十九日

香港房屋委員會的信頭

附件 4

本函檔號 : L/M (79) in HA/PRP/3/6
電話 : 2761 7394
傳真 : 2761 0019

九龍城聯合道
何家園、荔枝園、侯王廟新村互委會
香港寮屋聯會
聯絡人：黃寶琪先生

黃先生：

要求豁免入息及資產審查事宜

貴會於本年 6 月 5 日向租住房屋小組委員會遞交的意見書已經收閱，而你們於 6 月 28 日遞交的意見書亦已於當日的房屋委員會周年特別會議分發給各委員參閱。就你們提出的意見，我們現回覆如下。

有關受清拆影響寮屋居民的入息及資產審查建議，最先見於房屋局在 1997 年 1 月公佈的長遠房屋策略評議諮詢文件。在為期 5 個月的公眾諮詢期內，房屋局得到公眾的普遍支持，向受清拆影響的寮屋居民實施入息及資產審查。經充分考慮公眾的意見後，房屋局於 1998 年 2 月公佈「長遠房屋策略白皮書」，建議房委會向受清拆影響的寮屋居民進行入息及資產評審，再經由房委會租住房屋小組委員會通過執行。

至於貴會於信中提及其他類別人士入住公屋的條件，本人欲藉此機會作以下解釋：

- 1) 分配公屋單位給公務員是屬於他們的房屋福利和服務條件之一，故資產審查政策對公務員公屋申請並不適用。
- 2) 受公屋重建影響的家庭是房委會現時的公屋租戶，作為負責任的業主，房委會有必要為他們作出妥善安置。
- 3) 現行的「維護公屋資源合理分配政策」的對象為已入住公屋的租戶，他們與寮屋區居民的背景不同，因此，兩者不能相提並論。

鑑於政府已就入息及資產審查政策充分諮詢公眾，而該政策亦得到廣泛社會人士認同，因此我們未能接納你們要求豁免受清拆影響的寮屋居民的入息及資產審查建議。然而，我們會因應政府政策、社會實際情況及市民需要在適當時間作檢討，以確保公屋資源得到合理分配。

謝謝你們的來信。

會議事務秘書

(代行)

副本送：

黃帶先生

張維英女士

溫全先生

助理署長（編配及行動）（正本無此註）

2001 年 7 月 11 日

本函檔號 : L/M (79) in HA/PRP/3/6
電話 : 2761 7394
傳真 : 2761 0019

九龍城聯合道
侯王廟新村 1 號 B
九龍城寮屋區商戶權益行動組代表黃錦球先生
九龍城寮屋區權益關注組代表黃寶琪先生
(傳真號碼: 2337 1412)

黃先生:

要求全面檢討安置及賠償政策、暫停清拆寮屋事宜

你們於本年 6 月 5 日向租住房屋小組委員會遞交的意見書已經收閱，而你們於 6 月 28 日遞交的意見書亦已於當日的房屋委員會周年特別會議分發給各委員參閱。就你們提出的各項要求，我們現回覆如下。

有關商戶方面

(1) 特惠津貼的計算方法及準則

房屋署於 1999 年 8 月 27 日宣布清拆九龍城寮屋區（何家園、荔枝園及侯王廟新村），清拆日期已定於本年 7 月 18 日。根據現行清拆政策，受清拆影響的廠商戶，若其佔用的搭建物在 1982 年寮屋登記中登記作營業用途，並於「清拆前登記」時正用以經營該業務，則經營人可獲發特惠津貼，數額按其所經營的類別及面積而定。按現時的計算方法，不同的經營類別，如商舖、工場、貨倉、船排、學校及教堂，各有不同的特惠津貼計算率。如按你們要求，不論任何經營類別，一律以商舖的計算率來計算特惠津貼，則既未能反映現實情況，亦有欠公平。然而，鑑於上述寮屋區個別廠商戶以商舖和工場混合形式經營的特殊情況，房屋署現正考慮檢討這類經營方式的特惠津貼計算方法，相信在短期內會有結果。

至於廠商戶可獲計算特惠津貼的面積，是以有關搭建物於 1982 年寮屋登記中所記錄的作業面積和「清拆前登記」時正用以經營業務的面積作比較，以較小者為準。基於這個準則，房屋署無法接納你們希望以「拆一呎，賠一呎」方式來計算特惠津貼的要求。

此外，你們要求房屋署發放特惠津貼予部份於宣佈清拆時沒有經營業務的廠商戶，是有違現行的清拆政策，房屋署亦不會考慮。

(2) 特惠津貼的用途

政府發放特惠津貼的用意是協助受清拆影響的廠商戶搬遷和復業，但政府並無限制該筆特惠津貼的用途，例如用特惠津貼作補償受影響員工的遣散費。事實上，僱主無論是否受清拆影響，皆有責任支付員工的長期服務金和遣散費。

(3) 特惠津貼的釐定和基準

用作計算發放予受清拆影響的合資格商業經營者的特惠津貼率的有關計算基準，在 1988 年獲立法局財務委員會通過，並授權庫務局局長每年調整。最近一次特惠津貼率調整的生效日期是 2000 年 9 月 1 日。我們認為用以計算特惠津貼額的現行基準是公平的，並未有作出修改的需要。

(4) 清拆前會議

有關你們要求召開會議事宜，根據紀錄，除了負責今次清拆計劃的房屋署高級房屋事務經理及其下屬職員曾於本年 2 月 27 日及 3 月 20 日與你們舉行實務會議外，立法會秘書處亦於 4 月 20 日及 5 月 9 日，安排多位立法會議員與以總房屋事務經理(行動)為首的房屋署代表商討及跟進廠商戶的要求。另外，在立法會陳婉嫻議員的要求下，房屋署助理署長(編配及行動)亦於 5 月 23 日晚上會見各廠商戶及住戶，聽取你們的意見。

在執行清拆行動前，房署將繼續與各廠商戶保持溝通，聽取你們的寶貴意見，務求令清拆行動順利完成。

有關住戶方面

(1) 取消入息及資產審查

由於公共房屋獲社會的大幅資助，我們必須確保寶貴的房屋資源是編配給真正需要住屋協助的人士，否則，整體社會便要承受不公平的負擔，而我們亦無法有效地幫助那些真正需要房屋資助的人士。在現行的安排下，全面經濟狀況審查是一個有效的途徑以確保公共房屋資源合理分配。

入住租住公屋及中轉房屋的入息及資產審查政策是分別在 1998 年 9 月 11 日及 1999 年 4 月 15 日由香港房屋委員會租住房屋小組委員會通過而實施。由於何家園寮屋區清拆計劃是在 1999 年 8 月 27 日（該政策公布之後）才宣布的，所以受清拆影響的住戶須通過入息及資產審查，才可獲配公營房屋。這項政策適用於全港所有寮屋區，故並無對何家園寮屋區居民不公平。

(2) 要求原區安置

房屋署是按照既定的安置政策，為受何家園寮屋區清拆影響的居民作出安置安排。在資源許可的情況下，我們會盡量編配就近區域的公屋單位予符合入住租住公屋資格者。至於只符合入住中轉房屋資格的居民，我們會安排他們入住擴展市區的中轉房屋，例如石籬（二）邨、葵盛（東）邨或屯門的寶田中轉房屋。

(3) 要求合理賠償予擁有上蓋物業人士

從法律和公共政策的觀點來看，收地補償和清拆安置是兩回事。如屬政府收回土地，政府有責任確保有關土地和物業的合法業權人獲得適當補償。一般在政府土地或私人農地上的寮屋的佔用者（居民或商戶），多以「非法佔用人」身份在政府土地或私人農地上居住或從事商業用途。政府只是暫時容忍在 1982 年 6 月 1 日前建成的非法搭建物繼續存在。當有關土地需要發展時，這些已被登記的非法搭建物是一概需要清拆的。由於這些搭建物都是非法的，所以政府在收地清拆時對擁有這類非法搭建物的人士不會作出任何賠償，而只給予適量的搬遷／特惠津貼以協助受清拆影響居民／廠商戶搬遷／復業。

(4) 搬遷津貼

如受清拆影響的寮屋居民符合安置資格及有關準則，可獲發特惠搬遷津貼，其數額乃按家庭成員數目而計算。未能符合安置資格（入息及資產審查除外）的家庭將不會獲發搬遷津貼。因此，我們未能接納你們的要求，發放搬遷津貼給所有受清拆影響而要搬離寮屋區的居民。

(5) 三人或以上家庭也可選擇現金津貼代替公屋安置

由於一、二人的公屋單位短缺，因此本署特別為符合安置資格的受清拆影人士提供多一個選擇，即選擇現金津貼代替公屋安置，目的是減輕對一、二人公屋的需求。但三人及以上的公屋單位十分充裕，故本署無意為三人或以上受清拆影響的家庭

提供現金津貼。

(6) 取消「宣佈清拆前 24 個月內不得擁有物業」的限制

根據現行清拆政策，受清拆影響人士須在進行清拆前登記當日之前 24 個月起計至接受安置前，並無擁有任何住宅樓宇，方可獲考慮安置入住公營房屋（包括中轉房屋）。這個限制亦適用於所有申請公屋的人士。為了公平起見，房屋署仍會繼續執行這項政策。

(7) 要求以市區公屋安置在宣佈清拆前已入住的寮屋居民

根據現行寮屋清拆政策，受清拆影響的居民須於 1984/85 年度的寮屋居民登記中已記錄在案，同時符合其他資格準則，方可入住租住公屋。是項政策的目的是防止居民藉著搬進寮屋區居住以達到提前入住公屋的目的。為免對公屋輪候登記冊上的申請人不公平，該政策是有需要繼續執行的。因此，房屋署實無法接納你們要求，編配公屋安置所有在 1999 年 8 月 27 日宣佈清拆九龍城何家園寮屋區時，已入住的寮屋居民。至於在公佈清拆前已真正住在九龍城何家園寮屋區，並已登記其住宅搭建物的人士，我們會按資格安置他們入住租住公屋或中轉房屋單位。

(8) 要求延期清拆

九龍城寮屋區原定於本年 3 月清拆，但經房屋署與其他政府部門磋商及審慎考慮居民和各方面的意見後，已將清拆行動延期至本年 7 月 18 日執行。為了兼顧有關地區整體發展的時間表，清拆日期實不宜再作延期。

謝謝你們的來信。

會議事務秘書

（ 代行）

副本送：
助理署長（編配及行動）（正本無此註）

2001 年 7 月 11 日