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Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2016-17

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Development

Session No. : 15

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-DEVB(W)01

(Question Serial No. S0048)

Head: (159) Government Secretariat: Development Bureau
(Works Branch)

Subhead (No. & title): Not specified

Programme: (5) Intra-Governmental Services

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for Development (Works) (C K HON)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

The follow-up question below is raised pursuant to the information provided in reply no. DEVB(W)002:

Please provide the numbers of public works contracts commenced, the total costs of works, and the average costs of works in the past 3 years and those estimated for 2016/17. Among them, how many contracts require, or in which the contractor specify, the provision of allowances to workers attending the “Safety Training Course for Construction Workers of Specified Trade (silver card course)”? How many contracts require, or in which the contractor specify, the provision of labour relations officers? Also, what are the numbers of labour relations cases and the people involved? If no, please explain.

Asked by: Hon POON Siu-ping

Reply:

Based on available information on public works contracts under works departments, the number and total value of contracts, the average contract value as well as information relating to safety training and labour relations are as follows:

	Total for past three financial years (i.e. 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16)	Forecast for financial year 2016/17
No. of Public Works Contracts	465	164
Total contract value (\$ million)	163,000	74,000 ^(Note 2)
Average contract value (\$ million)	350	480 ^(Note 2)

No. of contracts requiring the provision of allowances to workers attending “silver card course”	201	69
No. of contracts requiring labour relations officers	256	132
No. of labour relations cases ^(Note 3)	46	N.A.
No. of workers involved in labour relations cases	1 935	N.A.

Note 1: Only contracts with a value more than \$4 million are included.

Note 2: Contracts with initial planning stage estimates only are excluded.

Note 3: Labour relations cases generally include cases of wage arrears and various complaints related to labour relations.

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CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY

S-DEVB(W)02

(Question Serial No. S0042)

Head: (194) Water Supplies Department

Subhead (No. & title): Not specified

Programme: (2) Water Quality Control

Controlling Officer: Director of Water Supplies (Enoch T.S. LAM)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Development

Question:

Q:0082/DEVB(W)100

1. "Public accessible consumer taps" are not residents' taps. The public usually takes water at home for cooking. Why does the Water Supplies Department (WSD) not try to take fresh water from residents' taps?

2. Will resources be allocated to recruit more water safety experts and conduct study on Drinking Water Safety Ordinance? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan

Reply:

1. Under Section 12 of the Waterworks Ordinance, WSD has no power to enter private premises to take water samples from household consumers' taps unless with their consent or by a magistrate's warrant. WSD takes water samples at public accessible consumer taps including shopping centres, community facilities, sports grounds, markets, government offices and estate management offices to monitor the general quality of water supplied to consumers for the compliance with the World Health Organization's "Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality". Samples taken at public accessible consumers' taps can serve as a surrogate for treated water quality at connection points as well as an indication of the cleanliness of the inside service of consumers' premises.

2. In 2016-17, WSD will create one senior and two professional chemist posts to strengthen the control and monitoring of the drinking water safety in Hong Kong. The estimated additional staff cost is \$3.1 million per annum.

The Government is open to the proposal for enacting a Drinking Water Safety Ordinance. We need to examine the issues in detail and study in depth the overseas experience, including the background and the unique circumstances of the relevant countries in enacting

similar legislations, the legislation focus, the water quality standard, the guideline values of the World Health Organization's "Guidelines for Drinking-water Quality" and the difficulties encountered in the implementation. The Development Bureau is leading an inter bureau and departmental working group to conduct a study to tap overseas experience on the water safety regime and related issues to determine the way forward for the legislation for safety of drinking water.

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