

**Legislative Council
Panel on Development**

Review of Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme

Follow-up Actions to Meeting on 10 November 2015

The Administration provides the supplementary information as required by the Panel as follows, after consultation with the relevant bureau/departments:

(a) details/progress of the measures being planned/undertaken by the relevant government departments (including the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Tree Management Office, etc.) to maintain stonewall trees and trees located on slopes to ensure public safety.

- In view of the recent stonewall tree failure incidents, the government has adopted a more holistic approach to the tree risk assessment of stonewall trees, including encouraging other disciplines such as engineering, landscape architecture, architecture and arboriculture to develop a range of mitigation measures. We have also made improvements on our communication and notification mechanisms especially with Expert Panel on Tree Management, along with developing location-specific risk assessments to specifically address the unique typology of our stonewall trees.
- In accordance with the “Guidelines for Tree Risk Assessment and Management Arrangement” (TRAM Guidelines), tree management departments are required to conduct detailed tree risk assessment and provide appropriate mitigation measures by qualified personnel for the stonewall trees at least twice a year.
- Further to the recent stonewall tree failure incidents, tree management departments have immediately stepped up measures including re-inspection of the stonewall trees and their site conditions, conducted tree risk assessment and followed up with mitigation measures, such as crown reduction in accordance with good arboriculture practices to reduce the static load and wind load to avoid excessive loading on root anchorage so as to better protect public safety.
- For trees on slopes within high tree risk management priority areas (i.e. Category I Zones), tree management departments are required to undertake tree risk assessment and appropriate mitigation measures in accordance with the requirements as stipulated in the TRAM Guidelines at least once a year before onset of wet season to ensure public safety.
- Diagrams of different tree conditions on different types of slopes will be included in the revised TRAM Guidelines. The diagrams provide easy reference for tree inspection officer to pay particular attention to tree stability

and root anchorage when undertaking tree inspection.

(b) whether the Administration would take measures to provide/ensure sufficient lighting/illumination at slope areas (for example, the slopes near Fung Wah Estate in Chai Wan) to address the concerns of nearby residents/the public over law and order in these areas; if yes, the details; if no, the reasons.

- Provision of illumination on slopes is not a general good practice as slope is not intended to be used as access and slope maintenance works are normally carried out in the daytime. This also avoids a waste of energy and light pollution. Nevertheless, if there is high concern for any slope which is maintained by the government, the concerned party may contact the respective slope maintenance department to provide details for consideration.
- Regarding Fung Wah Estate, based on the records, there are over ten man-made slopes nearby and some of them are not maintained by the government. The concerned party may also have to contact those other private owners if their slopes are involved.
- For the maintenance responsibility of a slope, the public can check:
 - at the Slope Maintenance Responsibility Information Centre in Lands Department, 1/F., North Point Government Offices, 333 Java Road, North Point, Hong Kong. (Tel: 2231 3333);
 - from the Slope Maintenance Responsibility Information System website of the Lands Department (<http://www.slope.landsd.gov.hk/smris/>).

(c) given that up to end February 2015, the number of outstanding dangerous hillside orders ("DHO") for owners of private man-made slopes to comply with was 745, and of which, 91 had an overdue period of 10 years or more, whether the Administration would formulate policies/measures (such as through redeploying resources) to clear the backlog of outstanding DHOs in a more effective and efficient way; if yes, the details; if no, the reasons.

- The responsibility to upkeep the stability of private slopes rests with the owners. Where a dangerous hillside order (DHO) has not been complied with after a specified period, Buildings Department (BD) will issue a reminder and, if appropriate, warning letter to the slope owner to comply with the DHO before instigating prosecution. Prosecution will be initiated if the owner fails to comply with the DHO without a reasonable ground.
- BD may also consider engaging its consultants and contractors to carry out the required works in the owners' default, and recover the costs of works and supervision charge and surcharge from the owners afterwards. From January 2011 to August 2015, BD appointed its consultants and contractors to carry out

the required slope investigation and repair works in respect of 63 DHOs.

- BD will step up clearance of the backlog DHOs through taking vigorous prosecution actions, arranging more works by its consultants and contractors related to owner's default and more close monitoring of the progress of own investigation and repair works carried out by the owners.

(d) the number of cases in which the Administration had provided assistance to private slope owners in carrying out slope investigation/repair/upgrading works so as to help them comply with DHOs; and of which, the number of cases where the Administration could not subsequently recover the costs from the owners.

- To help private slope owners complying with the DHOs, the Government has been providing both financial assistance and technical advice. Of the schemes concerned, BD administers the Building Safety Loan Scheme (BSLS) to assist owners to improve the safety of their building and slopes. In the past five years, BD granted a total loan of about \$100,000 for slope repair works, for which repayment has already been settled. The Integrated Building Maintenance Assistance Scheme administered by Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) and Urban Renewal Authority (URA) currently also provides assistance to owners who are in need of financial assistance for carrying out maintenance or improvement works of slopes for which they are responsible. However, as the latter scheme covers works other than slope works, HKHS and URA do not have statistics on the number of cases involving slope works.
- Besides the financial assistance mentioned above, the Community Advisory Unit under Geotechnical Engineering Office of the Civil Engineering and Development Department offers free-of-charge technical advice and assistance in regard to the related geotechnical works. The Unit has also published a guide entitled "Simple Guide to "Dangerous Hillside Orders"" for private slope owners who were served a DHO. The guide provides a simple step by step approach for private slope owners to fulfill the requirements of the DHO promptly and effectively. The guide is available free of charge from the GEO and District Offices, or can be downloaded from Hong Kong Slope Safety web site (<http://hkss.cedd.gov.hk>).

**Development Bureau
November 2015**