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29 May 2017

Legislative Council,  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
Public Accounts Committee  
(Attention: Mr Anthony Chu)

Dear Mr. Chu

**Public Accounts Committee**  
**Consideration of Chapter 3 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 68**  
**Management of squatter and licensed structures**

I refer to your above referenced letter dated 17 May 2017.

Please find attached our responses to the issues under our purview. If the Committee has any further questions on our responses, please contact Mr. Choi Kwong Yin, Deputy Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office (Mainland) at telephone no. 2762 5014.

Yours sincerely

(W K Pun)

for Director of Civil Engineering and Development

Encl.

- c.c. Director of Lands (fax no. 2525 4960)
- Commissioner of Rating and Valuation (fax no. 2152 0188)
- Director of Buildings (fax no. 2868 3248)
- Secretary for Development (fax no. 2147 3691)
- Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (fax no. 2147 5239)
- Director of Audit (fax no. 2583 9063)

Public Accounts Committee  
Questions and Request for Information in respect of  
Chapter 3 of Director of Audit's Report No. 68  
Management of Squatter and Licensed Structures

**Responses from the Civil Engineering and Development Department**

**Part 4: Clearance of Squatter and Licensed Structures**

1. According to paragraphs 4.25 and 4.27, Audit found that as of February 2017, the Civil Engineering and Development Department ("CEDD") had not commenced upgrading works for 940 (59%) government man-made slopes posing landslide risks to S&L structures, and studies for 106 (7% of 1 582) government man-made slopes were still in progress. Moreover, as of January 2016, CEDD had not conducted related natural terrain hazard studies to identify required mitigation measures to 199 squatter structures which were prone to landslide risks posed by natural terrains. What were the reasons for CEDD's failure to take prompt remedial actions in both issues (e.g. technical problems, insufficient manpower, cost problems, etc)? What are the timeframe and latest progress of the situations and CEDD's plan to complete the outstanding upgrading works, natural terrain hazard studies and mitigation measures?

Reply :

The Landslip Prevention and Mitigation Programme (LPMit Programme) was launched by CEDD in 2010 to deal with the landslide risks associated with man-made slopes and vulnerable natural hillside catchments. The pledged annual output of the LPMit Programme is to upgrade 150 government man-made slopes, conduct safety-screening studies for 100 private man-made slopes and implement risk mitigation works for 30 vulnerable natural hillside catchments. In order to ensure that the most deserving man-made slopes and natural hillside catchments are selected for priority action under the LPMit Programme, risk-based priority ranking systems have been adopted. Apart from man-made slopes and natural hillside catchments affecting squatter structures, those affecting other facilities such as housing estates, hospitals, schools, main roads, etc. are also included in the priority ranking systems. CEDD has conducted a review of the LPMitP in 2015 and found that the current pledged annual delivery targets of the LPMitP are appropriate in balancing the need to contain landslide risk against public disturbance, and having regard to the capacity of the geotechnical engineering profession and workforce (LegCo Paper No. CB(1)105/15-16(04)).

The progress of implementing the upgrading works for the 1,582 government squatter slopes would therefore depend on their relative ranking, not only among themselves, but also among other man-made slopes in the priority ranking list. Based on this approach, which will enable the maximum reduction in landslide risk within the shortest possible time, upgrading works have been carried out or planned to be carried out for those squatter slopes with higher priority. The studies and upgrading works for the remaining squatter slopes would be carried out

progressively in accordance with their priority ranking in terms of landslide risk.

As regards the natural terrain affecting the 199 squatter structures, the potential landslide risk was identified in 2015 and 2016 based on preliminary assessments. It was necessary to carry out a review in order to determine whether the natural hillsides meet the “react-to-known-hazard” principle before the hillsides can be ranked for action under the LPMit Programme. The review was subsequently completed and it was found that only 26 of these squatter structures are affected by 21 vulnerable natural hillside catchments that meet the “react-to-known-hazard” principle. The remaining 173 squatter structures are not affected by natural hillsides where significant hazards are evident and therefore no study and mitigation works would be required under the LPMit Programme.

Of these 21 vulnerable hillside catchments affecting squatter structures, the mitigation works for one hillside catchment are in progress. Studies are being carried out for another 6 catchments. It is anticipated that the necessary mitigation works for these 6 catchments would be completed within the next five years. The remaining 14 catchments will be progressively selected for study and implementation of the necessary mitigation works under the LPMit Programme in accordance with the corresponding risk-based priority ranking system.

It is relevant to note that man-made slopes affecting squatters and deserving priority action under the LPMit Programme usually involve steeply sloping ground located in close proximity to the squatter structures, which pose significant constraints in terms access difficulties and limited working space during construction. In some cases, this may call for protracted attention to resolve objections or concerns from the squatters or other nearby residents. This process would take some time to complete and this may affect the programme of the upgrading works.

2. What are the Government’s executive plans and timetable to adopt Audit’s recommendations in paragraph 4.33?

Reply:

As reported in paragraph 4.35, CEDD has planned to report the progress of related upgrading works for slopes and natural terrains in the Controlling Officer’s Report of CEDD, which forms part of the annual Estimates submitted to LegCo. The reporting in the Controlling Officer’s Report will commence from the financial year of 2018 - 2019.

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