

LEGCO PANEL ON PLANNING, LANDS & WORKS

INFORMATION PAPER ON SLOPE SAFETY

Supplementary Information on

Enhancing Public Information and Advisory Services

INTRODUCTION

1. Further to the Information Paper on Slope Safety submitted to the Panel on 31 March 1999, there have been some developments in our work to enhance public information and advisory services as described in paragraphs 7, 8, 13 and 14 of the Information Paper, on which we would like to update Members. This paper provides supplementary information on our current work in this area.

ANNUAL SURVEYS ON SLOPE SAFETY ISSUES

2. Since 1996, the Hong Kong University Social Sciences Research Centre has been conducting annual opinion surveys for the Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO) to measure the effectiveness of our public education and publicity efforts on slope safety. This year, in addition to these annual surveys, the Centre also assisted the GEO to conduct a survey on private owners' willingness to maintain their slopes and problems encountered in doing so. As with previous years, the GEO also conducted an annual survey on the state of maintenance of selected private slopes. The findings of these surveys are as follows:

- (a) public awareness on slope maintenance messages, e.g. "Keep Your Slopes Safe" and "Owners are Responsible to Maintain Their Own Slopes" remains fairly high at around 80%;
- (b) over 70% private owners interviewed are willing to arrange slope maintenance;
- (c) only 41% of the 300 private slopes inspected are in a satisfactory state of maintenance;
- (d) public education on slope maintenance and slope safety needs to be enhanced with respect to the standards to be achieved; and

- (e) Government assistance is needed to encourage community participation on slope safety matters and to assist owners to better understand the technical requirements.

NEW SLOPE SAFETY INITIATIVES FOR 1999/2000

3. To assist private owners to maintain their slopes, the GEO has launched the following initiatives since April 1999:

(a) Proactive Approach to Assist Private Slope Owners

The Community Advisory Unit newly set up in the GEO in April 1999 is taking a proactive approach to assist private slope owners to discharge their slope maintenance responsibility and to step up public education on slope maintenance and slope safety through seminars, talks and a meet-the-public service on slope safety matters.

(b) Enhance Public Information Services on Slope Safety

The GEO has set up the Hong Kong Slope Safety Website (<http://hkss.ced.gov.hk>) on the INTERNET to enhance free public access to information on all the 54 000 registered man-made slopes in the Government's Slope Catalogue.

4. As reported to the Panel in paragraph 13 of the Information Paper, the Lands Department will complete identification of maintenance responsibility of the 54 000 man-made slopes by December 1999. It is intended that private slope owners can inspect the SIMAR register to find out which slopes they are responsible for. From now on, the Hong Kong Slope Safety Website will allow owners to retrieve information on their slopes and the Community Advisory Unit will help them to discharge their slope maintenance responsibilities. In early next year, the public would be able to know the maintenance party of those slopes concerning them through a computerized information system now being developed by the Lands Department. Based on the most recent survey findings, we believe that these are the ways most likely to achieve a further improvement in private slope maintenance.

Works Bureau

4 June 1999