

Special Finance Committee Meeting
on 22 March 2000
Opening Remarks by the Secretary for Works

Mr Chairman,

Before answering questions from Honourable Members, I would like to make some brief remarks.

Public Works Programme

2. In the coming financial year, Government will maintain the momentum in public works expenditure. The estimated expenditure on the Public Works Programme in the next financial year will be \$24.7 billion. Major projects to start will include the reclamation of Penny's Bay for the Hong Kong Disneyland and the Science Park at Pak Shek Kok.

3. As in previous years, we did our best to adhere to the Public Works Programme to ensure that underspending is kept below 5%. By the end of the current financial year, expenditure on PWP, excluding the purchase of properties, land acquisition and the former municipal services projects, is expected to be 2.3% less than the provision of \$22.7 billion in the 1999-2000 Estimates.

Creation of job opportunities

4. Expenditure on infrastructure will create employment opportunities. In the year 2000, we expect that some 24 000 new jobs will be created as a result of the commencement of 200 new public works contracts and consultancy agreements which are worth about \$33 billion.

Works Departments

5. I would now like to say a few words on the work of the Works Departments.

6. The ***Architectural Services Department*** completed several major cultural projects in 1999. In the coming year, it will continue to implement the full day primary school programme and provide architectural support to the initiatives on the ‘school village’ and the ‘high rise school’. To be consistent with the principle of sustainable development, appropriate construction methods will be specified in the design of building projects to help reduce construction waste.

7. The ***Civil Engineering Department*** will start to extend the accelerated Landslip Preventive Measures Programme for another 10 years, aiming to upgrade 250 government slopes and conduct safety screening on 300 private slopes per year. The Department will also continue to implement land production and infrastructure projects for housing, school and port developments, as well as for the Hong Kong Disneyland.

8. The ***Drainage Services Department*** will continue to implement extensive flood control and mitigation projects. Stage II of the Shenzhen River Regulation Project will be completed by the end of this year. River training works at River Indus, River Beas and Kam Tin River are expected to be completed by 2002. A programme to upgrade the drainage system in West Kowloon is underway.

9. Since its establishment in 1996, the ***Electrical and Mechanical Services Trading Fund*** has performed satisfactorily in terms of financial performance, service enhancement and productivity improvement. So far, it has made a cumulative productivity gain of 15% and become the first Government department that obtained ISO 9001 Corporate Certification. Since the commencement of the first phase of its untying programme in August 1999, it has remained competitive.

10. The **Highways Department** is bringing forward a number of major highway projects, including Route 10 - North Lantau to Yuen Long and route 9 – Tsing Yi to West Kowloon, which are under various design stages. At the same time, the Department is implementing the essential public infrastructure works for a number of new railway lines in the urban area and in the New Territories.

11. The **Territory Development Department** will continue with the formation of land and provision of infrastructure in Tseung Kwan O, Tung Chung and Tin Shui Wai which are in good progress. Works on the provision of infrastructure for the Cyberport at Telegraph Bay has commenced in September 1999.

12. The ***Water Supplies Department*** will continue to extend the water supply system to meet future demand arising from new developments. The commissioning of the new treatment works at Ngau Tam Mei and Tai Po are scheduled for this year and 2001 respectively. An advisory committee on water quality will be set up soon to strengthen the monitoring of water quality through public participation and dissemination of information to the public.

13. Mr Chairman, the Works Directors and I will be happy to answer questions from Honourable Members.

Works Bureau
20 March 2000