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(Translation)

5 January 2018

Secretary General
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong
(Attn.: Ms Sophie LAU)

By Email and Fax
(Fax. no.: 2840 0716)

Dear Ms Lau,

**Legislative Council Panel on Transport
Meeting on 17 November 2017
Universal Accessibility (UA) Programme**

Motions Passed at the Meeting on 17 November 2017

At the Legislative Council Panel on Transport meeting on 17 November 2017, two motions were passed under the “Universal Accessibility” (UA) Programme item. These two motions urged the Government (i) to continue to implement the “Next Phase” of the UA Programme in every District Council (DC) term so as to meet the aspirations of the local communities for installing additional barrier-free access facilities (moved by Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun); and (ii) to expand the funding scope of the UA Programme to cover Tenants Purchase Scheme (TPS) estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority and the Housing Department, where flats are available for purchases, as well as subsidized sale flats, so as to facilitate the mobility needs of elderly residents in view of an ageing population (moved by Hon CHAN Han-pan and seconded by Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT). Our reply to the two above-mentioned unbinding motions is set out below –

- **Urging the Government to continue to implement the “Next Phase” of the UA Programme in every DC term**

To facilitate access to public walkways by the public, the Government launched in August 2012 the UA Programme to retrofit barrier-free access facilities at existing public footbridges, elevated walkways and subways maintained by the Highways Department. Later in 2016, in response to the aspirations of the public and Council Members, and in consideration of the principle of prudent use of public funds, the Government announced in the Policy Address that year to revise the ambit of the UA Programme. The walkways eligible for selection by the DCs for implementation in the next phase of the UA Programme (referred to as the “Next Phase”) would no longer be confined to public walkways maintained by the Highways Department, provided that the following criteria are met and no land resumption should be involved, for the sake of proper use of public funds:

- (a) the walkways span across public roads maintained by the HyD;
- (b) they are open for public access from public roads at all times;
- (c) the walkways are not privately owned; and
- (d) the parties responsible for the management and maintenance of these walkways agree to such lift retrofitting proposals and are willing to cooperate with the Government during the implementation of the said lift retrofitting works as well as the subsequent management and maintenance works of the lifts.

Under the current ambit of the UA Programme, we still have over 100 items¹ under construction. As for the 48 items selected by the 18 DCs in the consultation exercise completed in September 2017 for implementation in the Next Phase, the Highways Department has engaged consultants to carry out the investigation and design work; the construction works are anticipated to commence progressively starting from the financial year 2019-20. We have all along been striving to overcome the difficulties and challenges encountered in delivering the retrofitting works with the aim of implementing the various items expeditiously.

¹ As of end October 2017, for the 145 items under the Original Programme, 64 have been completed and 71 are under construction. For the remaining 10 items, their design schemes and implementation programmes are to be formulated after settling issues related to planning, investigation, design and local consultation. For the 57 items under the Expanded Programme, three have been completed and 52 are under construction. For the remaining two items, their design schemes and implementation programmes are to be formulated after settling issues related to planning, investigation, design and local consultation.

As the Highways Department already has a considerable number of walkways in hand for implementation under the UA Programme, the Highways Department will first focus on dealing with those retrofitting items mentioned above. As regards the future mode and implementation arrangement for the UA Programme, the Government will conduct further review in due course subject to the progress of works, future resources of the department, market situation and opinions of the public and DCs, etc.

- **Urging the Government to expand the funding scope of the UA Programme to cover TPS estates under the Hong Kong Housing Authority and the Housing Department, where flats are available for purchases, as well as subsidized sale flats**

At the Legislative Council Panel on Transport meeting on 17 November 2017, the Government explained that the reasons for not including TPS estates and subsidised sale flats in the UA Programme were to ensure the proper use of public funds and to avoid the Government from taking over land and relevant responsibility from private owners. Regarding the review over the funding scope of the UA Programme, as mentioned above, since the Highways Department already has a considerable number of walkways in hand for implementation under the UA Programme, and in view of resources constraints, the Highways Department will first focus on dealing with those walkways which had already been nominated by the public and the DCs earlier. In the course of delivering the Next Phase, we will accumulate experience, and, depending on the actual circumstance in the future, explore if there are any need and scope for further expanding the ambit of the UA Programme.

Yours sincerely,

(Miss Sibyl WONG)
for Secretary for Transport and Housing

c.c.

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