

Proposed enhancements to ex-gratia compensation and rehousing arrangements for Government's clearance exercises announced (with photo)

The Government announced today (May 10) proposed enhancements to the general ex-gratia compensation and rehousing arrangements for eligible domestic occupants in squatters and business undertakings affected by Government's development clearance exercises.

The Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, said that in the course of development clearance exercises, affected clearerees and local stakeholders had expressed their views about the compensation and rehousing arrangements. He remarked that the Government understood the concerns of affected clearerees and their worries over relocation, while also being mindful of societal expectations for the Government to uphold principles of fairness and proper use of resources to take care of the needs of different sectors, especially the grassroots, in taking forward development projects.

"In line with the people-oriented philosophy of the current-term Government, we hope the enhanced ex-gratia compensation and rehousing arrangements could pragmatically address the needs of different groups of people, while balancing the use of public money and public housing resources, principles of fairness, and expectations of affected clearerees as well as the wider community," he said.

The relevant arrangements comprise the following key directions:

- (1) From "project specific" packages to a unified as well as enhanced general ex-gratia compensation and rehousing package which will be applicable to all future Government's development clearance exercises (irrespective of project scale);
- (2) To offer non-means tested rehousing for affected eligible squatter households in dedicated rehousing estates (Dedicated Estates) to be developed and managed by the Hong Kong Housing Society;
- (3) To suitably relax the eligibility criteria and increase the amount of cash ex-gratia allowances;
- (4) To enable eligible households residing in 1982-surveyed/licenced non-domestic structures to benefit from non-means tested rehousing and ex-gratia compensation, subject to them meeting the specified prescribed requirements of the one-off voluntary registration exercise to be implemented by the Lands

Department; and

(5) To relax the eligibility criteria of applicable ex-gratia allowance for business undertakings on brownfields and in squatters.

Please refer to Annex for details.

"Our proposals aim to fairly and suitably respond to the expectations of the community and affected clearerees. We also hope that the proposal could help remove hurdles to land resumption and clearance exercises for timely increase in land supply to address housing and economic needs," Mr Wong said.

The Development Bureau and relevant departments will brief local stakeholders and affected clearerees on the relevant measures from mid-May to July. In end-May, the Government will brief the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Development. Thereafter, approval of the LegCo Finance Committee (FC) will be sought on the enhancements involving ex-gratia allowances with a view to addressing the needs of affected clearerees as soon as possible. The proposed enhancements to ex-gratia allowances and the enhanced rehousing arrangements will take effect at the same time. Subject to FC's approval, implementation of the enhanced general compensation and rehousing package for domestic occupants in squatters and cases of businesses operating from squatters will be backdated to the date of announcement (i.e. today, May 10, 2018), while for business undertakings on brownfields will be backdated to April 11, 2017 (i.e. the date on which the Government announced the introduction of an ex-gratia allowance arrangement for open-air/outdoor business undertakings last year).



[Secretary for Justice starts visit in Beijing \(with photos\)](#)

The Secretary for Justice, Ms Teresa Cheng, SC, started her visit in Beijing today (May 10).

Ms Cheng called on the Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs, Mr Le Yucheng, in the morning. She introduced Hong Kong's measures to enhance its competitiveness as the international legal and disputes resolution services centre, which was supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

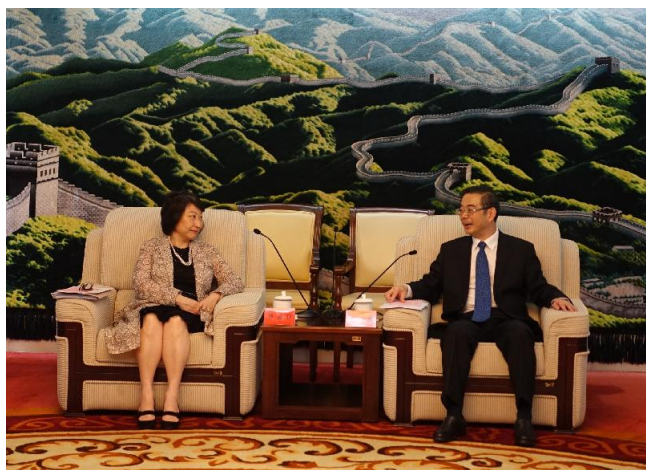
In the afternoon, Ms Cheng and the legal and disputes resolution practitioners from Hong Kong met with the Vice Chairman of the State-owned Assets Supervision and Administration Commission of the State Council, Mr Weng Jieming. During the meeting, the practitioners introduced Hong Kong's strengths in international legal and dispute resolution services which could complement the Belt and Road Initiative and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area development. They also suggested Mainland enterprises to fully use Hong Kong's international legal and dispute resolution services and recommended to explore to build a platform to further exchanges with Mainland enterprises.

Ms Cheng and the practitioners from Hong Kong then met with the Chief Justice of the People's Republic of China and President of the Supreme People's Court (SPC), Mr Zhou Qiang. SPC actively supported Hong Kong's efforts to promote mutual legal assistance between the two jurisdictions. The practitioners also discussed with SPC on their needs and suggestions on legal co-operation, as well as ways to enhance the existing mechanism.

Ms Cheng and the Executive Vice President of SPC, Mr Shen Deyong, also signed a minutes of meeting in respect of strengthening mutual legal assistance between the Mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Ms Cheng will continue her visit tomorrow by calling on the Ministry of Commerce and the National Development and Reform Commission. She will also join the practitioners from Hong Kong to attend two roundtable meetings host by representatives of the Mainland arbitration and business sector.





Appeal for information on missing woman in Tsing Yi (with photo)

Police today (May 10) appealed to the public for information on a woman who went missing in Tsing Yi.

Poon Wai-ying, aged 79, went missing after she left her residence in Cheung Hong Estate on May 8 afternoon. Her friend made a report to Police on the next day (May 9).

She is about 1.5 metres tall, 54 kilograms in weight and of thin build. She has a long face with yellow complexion and short straight greyish white hair. She was last seen wearing a greyish white T-shirt, dark-coloured trousers and dark-coloured shoes.

Anyone who knows the whereabouts of the missing woman or may have seen her is urged to contact the Regional Missing Person Unit of New Territories South on 3661 1173 or 5313 7486, or email to rmpu-nts-1@police.gov.hk, or contact any police station.



[Transcript of remarks by FS \(with video\)](#)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan, at a media session at the Legislative Council Complex this evening (May 10):

Reporter: Mr Chan, are you satisfied that a few pro-democracy lawmakers actually voted in support of the Budget?

Financial Secretary: I sincerely thank each and every LegCo member who supported the Budget. We will do our best to implement the various measures as early as possible so that these measures can benefit the community earlier.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

[Opening remarks by SDEV at press conference on proposed enhancements to](#)

ex-gratia compensation and rehousing arrangements for govt development clearance exercises (with video)

Following are the opening remarks by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, at a press conference today (May 10) on the proposed enhancements to general ex-gratia compensation and rehousing arrangements for the Government's development clearance exercises:

In line with the "people-oriented" philosophy of the current-term Government, we propose enhancements to the existing ex-gratia compensation and rehousing arrangements for the Government's development clearance exercises to address the needs of affected clearerees. We believe that our proposal fairly and pragmatically balances the use of public money, public housing resources and community and stakeholders' expectations.

Our proposal comprises the following key features:

- (a) replacing "project-specific" packages with a unified as well as enhanced general ex-gratia compensation and rehousing package applicable to all future government development clearance exercises;
- (b) offering non-means tested rehousing for eligible households in dedicated rehousing estates to be developed and managed by the Hong Kong Housing Society;
- (c) suitably relaxing the eligibility criteria and increasing the amount of cash ex-gratia allowances;
- (d) offering appropriate ex-gratia compensation and rehousing arrangements for eligible households residing in surveyed/licensed non-domestic structures; and
- (e) relaxing the eligibility criteria of applicable ex-gratia allowances for business undertakings on brownfields and in squatters.

Subject to the Legislative Council Finance Committee's approval of the parts involving ex-gratia allowances, the proposed enhancements, including the enhanced rehousing arrangements, will take effect at the same time. The unified as well as enhanced general package will be applicable to all eligible persons who have not yet received government compensation or rehousing as of the respective announcement date in respect of any on-going or future land resumption and clearance exercises. The announcement date of the proposal for domestic occupants and business undertakings in squatters is today (i.e. May 10, 2018), while that of the proposal for business undertakings on brownfields is April 11, 2017 (i.e. the date when the Government announced the extended ex-gratia allowance arrangement last

year).