

Government releases and responds to Final Report of Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project

The Government released today (May 12) the Final Report of Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link (SCL) Project (the Final Report), which was submitted by the Commission to the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, on March 27.

The Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, expressed his deep appreciation to the Chairman and Commissioner of the Commission, Mr Michael Hartmann, and the Commissioner of the Commission, Professor Peter Hansford, for completing the inquiry under its extended terms of reference and preparing the Final Report.

After considering the views of all the independent engineering experts, the Commission was fully satisfied with the consensus that with the "suitable measures" proposed in the Final Report on Holistic Assessment Strategy for the Hung Hom Station Extension and the Final Verification Study Report on As-constructed Conditions of the North Approach Tunnels (NAT), South Approach Tunnels (SAT) and Hung Hom Stabling Sidings (HHS) in place, the station box structure and NAT, SAT and HHS structures will be safe and also fit for purpose.

The Government welcomes the Commission's conclusion on structural safety. The "suitable measures" were accepted by the Government upon scrutiny by the Expert Adviser Team for the SCL Project of the Transport and Housing Bureau, the Highways Department and the Buildings Department. The MTR Corporation Limited (MTRCL) has been implementing the "suitable measures" in parallel with the inquiry and the works are expected to complete by mid-2020.

On project management systems, the Commission recognised that there were unacceptable incidents in a number of respects of the construction works, including poor workmanship on-site compounded by lax supervision, and that management of the construction endeavour fell below the standards of reasonable competence. On this, the Commission has put forward a series of recommendations.

The Government attaches great importance to the Commission's recommendations on project management systems. The majority of those

recommendations to be followed up by the Government have been implemented through its enhancement measures since the discovery of the issues at the Hung Hom Station Extension and follow-up actions in response to the Interim Report. This includes closer monitoring of the MTRCL's project management processes, deploying in-house inspectorate staff members of the Government to be stationed on sites, conducting surprise checks, and engaging audit sampling for the progress, procedures and quality of the works.

For future railway projects, the Commission recommended the establishment of a dedicated department on railway matters. The Government agrees with the recommendation and is studying the roles, responsibilities, staffing and structure of the new department in depth, with a view to enhancing the Government's ability in monitoring and controlling the planning and delivery of new railway projects.

The Government will pay close attention to the progress of the above measures to ensure that the new monitoring strategy will be implemented when the new railway projects under the Railway Development Strategy 2014 enter the construction stage, so as to enhance the public's confidence on the quality of railway projects.

The Government's redaction of parts of the Final Report is based on legal considerations to avoid any prejudice (actual or perceived) to relevant criminal investigations and any potential prosecutions of any criminal offences in the future (if so decided to be justified after the relevant investigations). The Government understands that the public would like to see the Final Report in full, and the redactions to the Final Report have been kept to a minimum as permitted by law. The Government will release the Final Report in full after the relevant criminal investigations and criminal prosecutions (if any) have been concluded. This is to safeguard the fairness of the criminal justice system, in accordance with the public interest.

The Final Report in redacted form has been uploaded to the GovHK website (www.gov.hk/en/theme/coi-hh/).