

LCQ7: Emergency response and recovery work in respect of super typhoon Mangkhut

Following is a question by the Hon Kenneth Lau and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee, in the Legislative Council today (October 24):

Question:

Quite a number of villagers have relayed to me that a number of villages were ravaged by super typhoon Mangkhut when it hit Hong Kong last month. For example, a number of houses in Kut O Village were devastated by strong winds or destroyed by fallen trees; a number of houses along the coasts of Tung Ping Chau and Sai Lau Kong were smashed to rubble; the nature trail and scenic spot of the white-flowered derris array at Lai Chi Wo were damaged; the water and electricity supply to Tap Mun was cut off for three days; quite a number of fishing boats sank or were destroyed; and large quantities of rubbish and other objects piled up in a number of villages. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it had, in advance, (i) assessed the damage that Mangkhut might cause to remote villages and (ii) formulated recovery plans; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the respective numbers of villagers who (i) had been evacuated before Tropical Cyclone (TC) Warning Signals of No. 8 or above in respect of Mangkhut were issued, and (ii) were provided emergency rescue during the time when such signals were in force, by the Government, with a tabular breakdown by village name;

(3) whether, after all the TC Warning Signals in respect of Mangkhut had been cancelled, it took the initiative to immediately contact the villagers of remote villages so as to get an understanding of how they had been affected by the typhoon and to render appropriate assistance; if so, set out in a table by village name the details of the assistance requested by the villagers and the assistance (including the dates) provided by the Government; if not, of the reasons for that;

(4) of the details of the interruptions of fresh water and electricity supply to villages caused by Mangkhut (set out in the table below);

| Village Name | District in which the village is located | No. of days for which fresh water supply was interrupted | No. of water tanks/water wagons/water vessels that provided temporary water supply, and total volume of water supplied | No. of days for which electricity supply was interrupted |
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(5) as some remote villages are inaccessible by public transport, and the villagers there are mainly elderly persons who are unable to clear on their own the fallen trees and other objects in their villages after the onslaught of the typhoon, whether the Government has plans to take the initiative, in future after severe typhoons hitting Hong Kong, to organise volunteers and transport them to such villages for assisting the villagers in carrying out clearance work; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(6) whether it knows the number of vessels damaged by Mangkhut; whether it will consider (i) constructing additional typhoon shelters, and (ii) enhancing the facilities of the existing typhoon shelters, so as to bolster their capability to withstand typhoons;

(7) as the houses of quite a number of villagers, together with the electrical appliances and furniture in such houses, as well as the fishing boats which were villagers' means of earning a living, were damaged during the onslaught of Mangkhut, whether the Government has provided emergency financial assistance to the villagers concerned; if so, of the details; and

(8) whether, with a view to bolstering villages' capability to withstand typhoons and facilitating recovery efforts in future, the Government will consider (i) reinforcing villagers' houses for free, (ii) helping villagers rebuild houses with better capability to withstand strong winds, (iii) constructing additional access roads to remote villages and improving such villages' infrastructure facilities, (iv) constructing for villages in coastal and low-lying locations breakwaters or other facilities for countering storm surges, and (v) implementing other disaster mitigation measures?

Reply:

President,

I have consulted the relevant bureaux and departments and my consolidated reply to the Hon Kenneth Lau's question is as follows:

(1) In order to provide an effective and efficient response to tropical cyclones and other natural disasters, the Government maintains a Contingency Plan for Natural Disaster (CPND) which sets out the Government's alert system and organisational framework for responding to such emergencies as well as

the functions and responsibilities of each government department and organisation. In addition to CPND, every relevant department has its own detailed operational plans/instructions guiding its decision making and operation.

Based on the assessment from the Hong Kong Observatory that Mangkhut would pose significant threats to the community, Security Bureau commenced co-ordination amongst departments when Mangkhut was still over 800 kilometres away from Hong Kong and no Tropical Cyclone (TC) Warning Signal was yet hoisted.

Two inter-departmental meetings chaired by the Secretary for Security were held on September 12 and 14, 2018 to review the preparedness of the government departments and agencies for Mangkhut. Representatives from over 30 bureaux/departments and public utilities attended. The meetings discussed issues on response plans, monitoring and co-ordination, preventive measures, information flow and early public warnings. The departments and agencies were urged to enhance the safety factor, prepare for the worst and be prepared to mobilise the maximum amount of resources for emergency response.

All relevant departments had taken prompt precautionary measures. For example, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) and Drainage Services Department (DSD) mobilised additional resources to step up cleansing services to check that roadside gullies, drains and channels are unobstructed and clear of debris, particularly at the flooding blackspots. DSD also implemented measures at the seven sites identified to be prone to serious inundation, including Luen On San Tsuen, Kar Wo Lei, Sham Tseng San Tsuen, Lei Yue Mun Praya Road, Sai Kung Nam Wai, Tai O and the coastal village areas at the northwest boundary of Yuen Long District. For examples, in Lei Yue Mun, demountable flood barriers had been installed at 14 designated locations to alleviate flooding before the predetermined alert sea level was reached. In Tai O, DSD commenced the installation of 350 metres demountable flood barriers on the top of riverwall to raise the protection level to +3.8mPD at Wing On Street and south of Tai Ping Street for advance completion before the approach of Mangkhut.

Before the onset of the typhoon, District Offices reminded villagers of the matters that required attention and preventive measures through rural committees and village representatives. Villagers of remote areas (particularly the underprivileged groups such as the elderly) were advised to seek refuge in a safe place before Mangkhut hit Hong Kong. Apart from opening temporary shelters, District Offices, having regard to their district needs, also assisted those people in need (such as the elderly) to evacuate when the strong wind signal no. 3 was issued.

(2) When super typhoon Mangkhut hit Hong Kong, the Police and the Fire Services Department evacuated or rescued residents in the villages, which are set out in the following table:

| Location | Number of residents evacuated or rescued |
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| Pok Fu Lam Village, Hong Kong | 3 |
| Tsang Tai Uk Village, Sha Tin | 103 |
| Luen On San Tsuen, Castle Peak | 3 |
| Fu Yung Shan Tsuen, Kwong Pan Tin Tsuen, Sham Tseng Village in Tsuen Wan | 46 |
| So Kwun Wat Tsuen, Castle Peak | 10 |
| Lei Yue Mun | 28 |
| Tai O | 129 |

(3) After the cancellation of all TC Warning Signals, the District Social Welfare Offices under the Social Welfare Department (SWD) liaised with the District Offices to, as far as practicable, mobilise staff members and volunteers to visit and render appropriate assistance to remote and hard-hit villages. Details are as follows:

| Village Name | Assistance requested by villagers | Details of assistance provided by the Government |
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| <p>Kat 0</p> | <p>Resuming water and electricity supply as soon as possible;</p> <p>Clearing fallen trees; and</p> <p>Clearing debris and refuse caused by the typhoon.</p> | <p>North District Office coordinated with the electricity providers and Water Supplies Department to repair damaged electricity and water supply systems expeditiously. There was no suspension of electricity service as back up electricity system had been established in Kat 0. Water Supplies Department provided temporary fresh water supply service when the water supply system was under repair. Electricity and water supply resumed normal on September 20 and September 29 respectively.</p> <p>Social Welfare Department and North District Office arranged volunteers to visit the victims in Kat 0 on September 20 and 21, distributing aids (including dried ration and daily necessities etc.) and helping victims to apply for emergency relief fund.</p> <p>On September 20, 21, 24, 28, and October 4, North District Office deployed workers from contractor to Kat 0 to clean up the fallen trees and debris in obstructed roads. Food and Environmental Hygiene Department employed additional contractors to clear the rubbish and debris in the island. Marine Department re-deployed their ships for North District Office on September 28 and October 4, conveying waste electronic appliances from the island to the contractors of Environmental Protection Department for recycling. Civil Aid Service deployed manpower to Kat 0 for clearance works on October 6, 7, and 14. Clearance works have been largely completed.</p> |
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| <p>Ap Chau, Sai Lau Kong and Lai Chi Wo</p> | <p>Clearance of fallen trees and removal of dangerous trees;</p> <p>Clearance of debris that blocked pedestrian ways;</p> <p>Clearance of refuse in the sea and the coast;</p> <p>Repair of roads, village roads and public facilities;</p> <p>Resumption of water and electricity supply as soon as possible.</p> | <p>After the cancellation of TC Warning Signals in respect of Mangkhut, the North District Office took the initiative to contact representatives of remote villages, to understand the post-disaster situation of these villages and the needs of villagers on September 17.</p> |
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| <p>Tap Mun and Tap Mun Fishermen's Village</p> | <p>Resumption of water and electricity supply, and clearance of fallen trees and refuse along the coastline.</p> | <p>Tai Po District Office contacted relevant departments and CLP to follow up residents' requests. Tai Po District Office visited Tap Mun on September 19 to enquire the needs of villagers and distribute application forms of General Chinese Charities Fund to the victims. Later on September 23, Tai Po District Office and Heung Yee Kuk visited Tap Mun again, ordering contractors to assist the clearance of fallen trees, debris and repairing of damaged roads etc.</p> <p>Before the resumption of water supply on September 23, Tai Po District Office had made six deliveries of distilled water (1 120 bottles with a capacity of 4.5 litres each) to residents for consumption.</p> <p>Before the resumption of electricity supply on September 21, Tai Po District Office had been maintaining close contact with CLP, requesting for the resumption of electricity supply and provide adequate temporary electricity generators for residents.</p> |
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| <p>Tung Ping Chau</p> | <p>Clearance of fallen trees and re-opening of roads.</p> | <p>Tai Po District Office contacted relevant departments to follow up residents' requests. On September 19, Tai Po District Office visited Tung Ping Chau on September 19 to enquire the needs of villagers and distribute application forms of General Chinese Charities Fund to the victims. Later on September 23, Tai Po District Office and Heung Yee Kuk visited Tung Ping Chau again, ordering contractors to assist the clearance of fallen trees, debris and repairing of damaged roads etc.</p> <p>On September 21, Tai Po District Office re-opened 2 village roads from the Tung Ping Chau Pier to Sha Tau Village and Chau Tou Village and delivered mineral water to residents for consumption. Maintenance works of the village roads concerned commenced on October 2.</p> |
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| <p>Sai Wan and Tai Long Tsuen</p> | <p>Some pedestrian ways were devastated. Water and electricity supplies in the village were cut off.</p> <p>Village lights collapsed along the access to Sai Wan.</p> | <p>The issues of interrupted water and electricity supply had been referred to CLP and the Water Supplies Department for follow-up. The water and electricity supplies were gradually resumed on September 19.</p> <p>Sai Kung District Office, Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, Sai Kung District Community Centre and Sai Wan Tsuen representatives conducted on-site visit on September 26 and enquired on the needs of villagers. Sai Kung District Office commenced repair works of pedestrian roads in early October, scheduled to be completed in late October. Highways Department cleaned up the collapsed village lights in early October, pending further reconstruction after the completion of the abovementioned repair works.</p> <p>Sai Kung District Office have been in communication with the village representatives of Tai Long Tsuen. Sai Kung District Office will commence the repairing works of pedestrian pavements in mid-December, scheduled to be completed in late February 2019.</p> |
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| <p>Tung A, Pak A, and Yim Tin Tsai</p> | <p>Some pedestrian ways were damaged after the typhoon.</p> | <p>Sai Kung District Office have been in communication with the village representatives of Tung A, Pak A, and Yim Tin Tsai to enquire on the needs of villagers. Sai Kung District Office will commence the repairing works of pedestrian pavements in Yim Tin Tsai in mid-November, scheduled to be completed in late December. Repair works of pedestrian pavements in Tung A and Pak A will be started in mid-December, scheduled to be completed in late February 2019.</p> |
| <p>Nam Wai</p> | <p>Pedestrian ways and a breakwater were devastated by sea waves and sea water flooded some houses. Requests for repair were made.</p> <p>The Kowloon-bound minibuses and buses did not stop at the mini-bus stops/bus stops off Nam Wai public toilet after the typhoon.</p> <p>A large amount of refuse piled up at refuse collection points. Requests for clearing were made.</p> | <p>Sai Kung District Office referred the fallen trees near mini bus and bus stops to the Transport Department upon acknowledging the case from the village representatives on September 20. Transport Department arranged clearance operations which was completed on September 22, traffic resumed normal since then.</p> <p>Sai Kung District Office conducted several on-site visits for road repair and debris clearance. Repair works on pedestrian pavement will be started in mid-November, scheduled to be completed in late December.</p> <p>Sai Kung District Office has contacted FEHD for enhancement in clearance of pavements and debris collection and clearance. The situation has improved since early October.</p> |

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| <p>Ma Nam Wat</p> | <p>Metal frames and a large amount of refuse were found on the sea and the coast respectively. Requests for clearance were made.</p> <p>Pedestrian ways along the coast and a breakwater were damaged. Requests for repair were made.</p> | <p>Sai Kung District Office has been in close contact with the village representatives to understand the needs of the villagers, and referred to the Marine Department (MD) and FEHD for followed up actions MD will, in late October, arrange manpower to clear the marine refuse. FEHD had already removed the accumulated rubbish near the coast by phases, and will continue to arrange manpower to clean up the remaining large-sized debris.</p> <p>Sai Kung District Office will commence the repair works on the damaged pedestrian ways in mid-December. It is expected to be completed in late February 2019.</p> |
| <p>Tai O and Ma Wan Chung Village, Tung Chung</p> | <p>Houses were damaged by collapsed trees;</p> <p>Clearance of fallen trees and debris;</p> <p>Assistance in removal of furniture and electrical appliances;</p> <p>Replacement of electrical appliances damaged in flood; and</p> <p>Cleansing of houses.</p> | <p>Through co-ordination of SWD, two non-government organisations (NGOs) took the initiative to contact villagers of Tai O and Ma Wan Chung Village in Tung Chung after the typhoon, and provided the following assistance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Arranging for the residents in need to move to temporary shelters; – Arranging for volunteers to assist in clearing debris, removal of furniture and electrical appliances as well as cleansing houses; and – Assisting residents to replace damaged electrical appliances by applying for charitable funding or donations. |

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| <p>Tui Min Hoi Chuen, Woo Mei Village, Po Lo Che Tsuen and Tseng Lan Shue Village</p> | <p>Hit by floods and strong wind, some families suffered damage to the interior of their homes, furniture and electrical appliances;</p> <p>Houses were seriously damaged and no longer inhabitable; and</p> <p>Fallen tress blocked access roads to homes or damaged houses.</p> | <p>Social workers from SWD visited the affected families and assessed their situations. Grants under charitable funds were made in four cases for home repairs and replacement of furniture and electrical appliances.</p> <p>SWD also made payment from charitable funds for those cases with badly damaged homes to help them cover the urgent living expenditure arising from temporary accommodation elsewhere. Meanwhile, SWD will keep in contact with the Lands Department to follow up the long-term housing arrangement for cases of destroyed homes, and both departments will jointly follow up the grants under the Emergency Relief Fund/ charitable funds, so as to help families whose houses were damaged repair the rooftops destroyed by strong wind, make good their homes and replace furniture.</p> <p>With the assistance of social workers from SWD, some families were evacuated to stay in private residential care homes for the elderly temporarily prior to the typhoon. Thereafter, through liaison by SWD, volunteers helped with speedy clearance of fallen trees, and the families concerned moved back to their homes. Besides, SWD co-ordinated with District Offices to make payment to them from charitable funds to cover the accommodation fee for their stay in such elderly homes.</p> |
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| <p>To Tau Wan Village and Tsang Tai Uk Village</p> | <p>Financial assistance for repairing damaged homes or/and replacing damaged electrical appliances/furniture.</p> | <p>Social workers from SWD and the Integrated Family Service Centres operated by NGOs visited some affected residents to understand their plights and help those in need apply for financial assistance under charitable funds for home repairs.</p> |
| <p>Kat O, Tap Mun, Sai Lau Kong and Tung Ping Chau</p> | <p>Application for emergency financial assistance; Replacement of electrical appliances damaged in floods; and Removal of debris and clearance of pedestrian ways after the disastrous typhoon.</p> | <p>SWD proactively liaised with the District Offices and NGOs to provide the following assistance to villagers in Kat O, Tap Mun, Sai Lau Kong and Tung Ping Chau after the typhoon:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Distributing emergency supplies packs to the affected villagers; – Assisting the affected villagers to apply for emergency financial assistance for home repair or replacement of damaged furniture and electrical appliances, so as to help them rebuild their homes; – Arranging for volunteers to help the affected villagers remove debris and clear the pedestrian ways; and – Distributing rice cookers and fridges donated by institutions to some of the affected villagers. |
| <p>Mai Po, Shek Wu Wai, Fung Kat Heung and Ko Po Tsuen</p> | <p>Financial assistance for replacing damaged electrical appliances and furniture.</p> | <p>After the typhoon, SWD proactively liaised with five village offices in Yuen Long to understand the post-typhoon situation in various villages, and help residents in need replace damaged electrical appliances and furniture through application for grants under charitable funds or referral to NGOs.</p> |

(4) Interruptions of fresh water and electricity supply to villages caused by Mangkhut are tabulated as follows:

| Village name | District where the village is located | Number of days affected by power interruption (Notes 1,2,3) |
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| Kai Kuk Shue Ha | North District, NT | 4 |
| Lai Chi Wo | North District, NT | 4 |
| Sam A Tsuen | North District, NT | 4 |
| Kuk Po | North District, NT | 4 |
| Fung Hang | North District, NT | 4 |
| Kat O | North District, NT (Islands) | 4 |
| Tap Mun and Tap Mun Fishermen's Village | Tai Po | 4 |
| Chau Tau | Yuen Long | 3 |
| Tung Shing Lei | Yuen Long | 3 |
| Hadden Hill | Yuen Long | 3 |
| Pak Sha Tsuen | Yuen Long | 3 |
| Wong Nai Tun | Yuen Long | 3 |
| Shek Tong Tsuen | Yuen Long | 3 |
| Yeung Uk Tsuen | Yuen Long | 3 |
| Tin Fu Tsai | Tuen Mun | 6 |
| Tseng Tau Village | Tuen Mun | 3 |
| Lung Ha Wan | Tuen Mun | 3 |
| Wong Chuk Yeung | Tuen Mun | 3 |
| Ko Lau Wan | Tuen Mun | 3 |
| Mau Tso Ngam | Kowloon Peak | 3 |
| Fu Yung Pit | Kowloon Peak | 3 |

Note 1: CLP service teams commenced power supply restoration work for customers while Mangkhut gradually moved away from Hong Kong. Power supply was resumed for most affected customers within 3 days. However, for areas more severely damaged and with blocked roads, or remote areas where service teams and equipment could only be transported thereto by sea, as well as for those cases in which the customers' equipment was damaged, it took more time to restore their power supply.

Note 2: As power can be supplied to the villages from multiple electricity supply sources, for some customers with access to alternate sources, power

supply was restored in a time shorter than those tabulated above.

Note 3: The above data was manually compiled on the basis of the data of CLP's outage management system. Some customers might experience a longer power supply interruption due to network client problems.

| Village name | District in which the village is located | No. of days for which fresh water supply was interrupted | Temporary water supply | | | | Total volume of water supplied (in cubic metre) |
|--|--|--|------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|---------------------------|---|
| | | | No. of water tanks | No. of water wagons | No. of water vessels | No. of public stand-pipes | |
| Scenic Garden# | Cheung Chau | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 5 |
| Tap Mun*#, Ko Lau Wan*# and Sai Wan*# | Sai Kung | 6 | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | About 100 |
| Kat O# and Sai Lau Kong # | North District | 6 | 9 | 0 | 1 | 0 | About 200 |
| Ap Chau# | North District | 10 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Along Route Twisk * (including Kwong Pan Tin Tsuen, Route Twisk Villa, Sun Hoi Tin Village, Chuen Lun, etc.) | Tsuen Wan | 3-4 | 14 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Sheung Tsuen (part)* | Yuen Long | 3 | 6 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 155 |
| Ta Shek Wu (part)* | Yuen Long | 4 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 48 |
| Ki Lun Shan Village (part)* | Yuen Long | 3 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Wo Shang Wai# | Yuen Long | 1 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6 |

* Water supply suspension caused by the suspension of electricity supply.
Water pipes were damaged by fallen trees and strong waves, some of the damaged pipes are located in remote areas, longer time is needed to ascertain the location of the concerned pipes for repair works.

(5) When the typhoon was over, the Government mobilised considerable manpower to carry out clearance operations each day and invited a number of contractors to provide temporary manpower and equipment for speedy clearance of fallen trees and their removal from road surface so that road traffic could resume normal. Community organisations and volunteer groups from different districts helped clear debris and tree branches on roads and beaches. In the aftermath of the typhoon, the Civil Aid Service has been assisting other government departments in recovery and restoration work, including clearing obstruction caused by fallen trees. Such operations are still on-going.

Individual District Offices took consideration of the actual situation and needs, and collaborated with NGOs and district bodies to organise volunteers for assisting villagers with necessary clear-ups in remote villages.

(6) As on October 14, MD received 555 reports of vessel accidents in relation to Mangkhut, and handled 125 stranded, listed and capsized vessels. MD conducts periodic assessment of the demand and supply of sheltered space in Hong Kong to ensure sufficient supply of sheltered space for local vessels. According to MD, there is adequate sheltered space in Hong Kong waters for local vessels to take refuge during typhoons or inclement weather to safeguard vessels and their crew members.

(7) The Government provides cash assistance programmes, including the General Chinese Charities Fund and special aid fund which make grants under the administration of the Home Affairs Department, to help people facing economic difficulties caused by Mangkhut. Under the existing mechanism, applications for cash assistance from both funds must be submitted to District Offices for approval by the respective District Officers.

The Emergency Relief Fund (ERF) aims to provide prompt assistance for persons who are in need of urgent relief as a result of fire, flooding, tempest, landslide, typhoon or other natural disasters. Grants from ERF are intended for relief rather than compensation. According to the Emergency Relief Fund Ordinance (Cap. 1103), ERF is vested in the Director of Social Welfare Incorporated as Trustee. The responsibility for approving grants and making payments is vested in the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department (AFCD), MD, SWD and LandsD.

(8) In respect of construction of breakwaters or other facilities at villages in low-lying areas to counter storm surges, the Government will make assessment with regard to the situation of different villages and implement measures, taking into account their practical effectiveness, technical feasibility, site restrictions, and cost effectiveness. For instance, in Tai

0, the Civil Engineering and Development Department (CEDD) completed a series of works to tackle tidal back flow during improvement works in Tai O (Phase 1) in 2013, including the construction of a river wall about 220 metres long, a floodwater pumping station, and a demountable flood barrier some 350 metres in length, to reduce the impact of tidal back flow. To reinforce certain coastal areas in Tai O against wave impact, the CEDD completed the restoration of the old pier at Shek Tsai Po near Tai O Heritage Hotel in Tai O. On the other hand, DSD is raising the flood discharge capacity of the Tai O Wing On Street Stormwater Pumping Station. The project is expected to be completed by 2019/20.

Furthermore, CEDD will thoroughly examine the situation of coastal and low-lying areas or exposed places, and conduct studies on storm surge, and wind and wave to evaluate the effects of inclement weather on those locations arising from climatic changes. Based on the findings of studies, it will formulate measures, including improvement works and management measures, to cope with and withstand such weather.

The Home Affairs Department has always been undergoing projects within the scope of minor works for improving access to remote villages and rural infrastructure (such as installation of drainage facilities on both sides of village access roads). It will also carry out works for necessary follow-ups in the wake of typhoons.

The review of the mechanism of emergency response and recovery in respect of the super typhoon co-ordinated by Security Bureau has commenced. The Government will take into account the Mangkhut experience in conducting the review, including considering ways to bolster the capability of rural and low-lying areas to withstand and recover from typhoons.