

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).