

Opening remarks by SDEV on works policy areas at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the opening remarks (English translation) by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, on works policy areas at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 13):

Chairman,

In the 2022-23 financial year, the Development Bureau has several priority tasks for works as follows.

Regarding the fight against the epidemic, we are very grateful for the full support of the Central Government, enabling the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR and the designated contractor to establish a tripartite liaison mechanism, and works departments are organised to set up a task force. Through close communication and co-ordination among all parties, we are building eight community isolation and treatment facilities at full speed. Of these, six were completed and opened last month. The facilities at Penny's Bay and Kai Tak will be completed in batches shortly. The above facilities, providing about 40 000 beds in total, will significantly enhance Hong Kong's capability of fighting against the epidemic and isolation.

As for the Lantau Tomorrow Vision, the Government expects that, in the fourth quarter of 2022, preliminary proposals can be made on four aspects, namely the reclamation extent, transportation infrastructure and routing, land use and financing options, so as to listen to public views. We originally expect to commence the first phase of reclamation in 2027, with a view to having the first batch of population intake in 2034. We are considering streamlining the legal and relevant administrative procedures and will strive to further advance the above timetable.

To strengthen manpower development, we will also suggest to inject \$1.2 billion into the Construction Innovation and Technology Fund to continue to support the industry's application of advanced construction methods and new technologies, and earmark \$30 million to promote applied research and development in public works and the industry, with a view to enhancing the overall productivity and performance of the construction industry.

To enhance the capability of the coastal areas in responding to rising sea levels and extreme waves caused by climate change, the Government plans to take forward appropriate improvement works and management measures in the next five years for 26 coastal low-lying or windy residential areas that are prone to high potential risks.

Lastly, we will earmark an additional \$1 billion for the Built Heritage

Conservation Fund to continue implementing the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme, under which the Government funds conservation projects while non-profit-making partners revitalise and make good use of historic buildings in innovative ways. The funding will provide financial support for more private owners to maintain their historic buildings, and will further support public engagement activities and academic research on the theme of built heritage conservation.

Thank you, Chairman. I and my team will be happy to answer any questions that Members may wish to raise.