

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 15):

Chairman,

In the new financial year, we have several priority tasks under the Works portfolio.

Firstly, regarding studies on works projects, we obtained the Finance Committee's funding approval in December last year – thank you very much, and studies related to artificial islands in the Central Waters will commence in June this year. The studies will take about three and a half years to complete. The target is to have the first population intake in 2034. Separately, through the Lantau Conservation Fund, we will promote conservation and pursue local improvement works in Lantau, including cultural conservation and projects to improve hiking trails and cycle tracks.

Secondly, we will continue to invest in infrastructure to support economic development and create job opportunities. The Development Bureau is proactively implementing "Construction 2.0" to facilitate the professionalisation and revitalisation of the construction industry with a wider adoption of innovation and technology. Apart from promoting the use of Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) in public and private projects to accelerate work progress and enhance project effectiveness, we will implement an integrated digital platform in phases from this year onwards in order to enable the continuous monitoring of project performance and drive the digitalisation of public works. Moreover, to enhance the professional skills of mid-tier managers in the Government and raise their project delivery capabilities, we have earmarked \$6 million for providing systematic training to them in the next three years.

Thirdly, concerning the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, apart from constructing a community treatment facility at AsiaWorld-Expo, a temporary hospital and a number of quarantine camps to enhance Hong Kong's pandemic-combating capacity, we have joined hands with the construction industry to introduce a series of measures to support different stakeholders. These measures include launching a COVID-19 testing service scheme on construction sites, providing subsidies for small and medium-sized enterprises for meeting operating expenses, offering allowances to underemployed or temporarily unemployed construction workers attending training courses to upgrade their skills, and creating time-limited jobs in the public and private sectors for construction workers.

Fourthly, we will continue to develop Kowloon East into Hong Kong's second core business district. Currently, we are amending the outline zoning plan that covers the development at the Kwun Tong Action Area. We will also implement improvements to pedestrian connectivity in the Kwun Tong and Kowloon Bay business areas in stages, and undertake works to revitalise the Tsui Ping River and improve Lam Wah Street Playground. Moreover, under the principle of "single site, multiple use", we will take forward the transformation of the open space at Sze Mei Street and Choi Hung Road Playground, so as to better utilise land resources and meet the community's needs.

Fifthly, in taking forward various development projects, we will protect, conserve and revitalise historic and heritage buildings and sites through an appropriate and sustainable approach according to the actual situation for the public's benefit and enjoyment. In the coming year, we will continue to implement the Revitalising Historic Buildings Through Partnership Scheme; the revitalisation of three projects under Batch IV of the scheme will be completed for operation soon, and we will submit funding applications for projects under Batch V and assess applications under Batch VI.

In addition, concerning the promotion of construction and engineering professional services, we have formulated new initiatives with the Guangdong Provincial Government to enable architectural and engineering consultants on the Government's approved lists and the relevant professionals to directly provide services in nine Mainland cities in the Greater Bay Area (GBA) after going through simple registration processes. We will continue to explore more facilitation measures with the Mainland Government to enhance business opportunities in the GBA for Hong Kong's construction and engineering sectors.

Thank you, Chairman.