

Transcript of remarks by SDEV and Director of Buildings on application for renewal of registration of contractor at media session (with video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, and the Director of Buildings, Ms Clarice Yu, at a media session today (October 18) on the application for renewal of registration of a contractor:

Reporter: First of all, can you just talk about what is the criteria to deny the renewal of Aggressive Construction's registration? You mentioned they cannot convince you that they can provide sufficient monitoring and safety measures on sites. Can you just elaborate further on what do you mean by that? What do you mean by sufficient monitoring and safety measures? And also before delisting the contractor, what else can the department do to suspend their registration before the whole review is completed? Is there a plan to review the whole mechanism, seems like it takes almost a year to review the registration or renewal. So do you think it takes too long? Finally, how do you ensure smooth handover of the affected construction sites while the handover is ongoing?

Secretary for Development: Quite a number of questions. Perhaps I take the one on the various enforcement actions taken first. As I have mentioned just now, the Government has a multi-pronged approach in enforcing against mishaps in construction sites. And this multi-pronged approach will involve prosecution under the relevant laws; disciplinary action against the relevant contractors or professionals, again, also under the relevant laws; and also this process of considering whether an existing registration should be removed; and finally we have another measure for contractors which are listed in our tendering list for public works projects, we may consider suspending or removing their status as a potential tenderer altogether. So this is a multi-pronged approach. And I have to say that the various approaches under all the regimes involve very serious investigation, prosecution and other follow-up actions. So inevitably, it may take some time because when we talk about investigations, particularly investigations involving possible criminal liability, we have to be very careful. But I have to emphasise that justice will be done and must be done. So we do not worry that justice will at the end be left undone. We are pretty confident about that. So it is a matter of time and we will expedite our work as much as possible. On your other questions, I would like to invite the Director of Buildings.

Director of Buildings: The authorised signatories representing the contractor needed to attend interviews with the Contractors Registration Committee

(CRC). The interviews focused on the authorised signatories' abilities and their competence in site supervision and also in safety management matters. The CRC asked them questions surrounding and related to these subjects and they needed to demonstrate that they had the knowledge and abilities to implement effective measures. During the interviews, the authorised signatories had not been able to demonstrate their abilities and competence in these areas. So, the application was refused.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)