

Transcript of remarks by SDEV at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, at a media session after attending a radio programme today (August 12):

Reporter: Can you talk about what kind of support is the government providing for the so-called "three-nil" buildings? Can you briefly introduce the figures and the timeline? The second question, is the government studying the possibility of working together or hiring people from institution or academy to carry out inspection work to ease the manpower shortage?

Secretary for Development: First, on the assistance for the so-called "three-nil" buildings, we have recently formed a tripartite institutional setup to have regular meetings involving the Buildings Department (BD), the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) and the Home Affairs Department (HAD). Why the Home Affairs Department? Because the department is the one responsible for helping the "three-nil" buildings form the owners' corporations. So we hope that by having this regular setup of a meeting, regular meetings within the government, we can share information, for example, the BD can pass on the list of buildings which have already received this mandatory building inspection notices but not yet complied with. We share the list with the HAD so they can target those buildings and help them form the owners' corporations and the URA can also approach the buildings to introduce to them the various funding schemes available to help their building maintenance work. So this is the first question.

On your second question about how we are going to engage the professional bodies to help with the building inspections, basically, we want to focus on the 900 buildings which we have mentioned before, for which the BD has issued notices but nothing have been done so far, not even appointment of a building inspector. And for such buildings, we would like to seek the help of the professional bodies to see whether they can join up their efforts with the BD to do some urgent inspections of the external walls and see whether some would require emergency repairs. So the discussion has only just started, we have to allow some time for the department to follow up with those professional bodies.

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