

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

DEVB(PL)088

Question Serial No.

0586

Head : 82 Buildings Department Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer : Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Development

Question :

- (a) According to the records of the Buildings Department, how many of the buildings erected between 1946 and 1958 still have unauthorised building works (UBWs) that require enforcement action? What is the scope of the UBWs involved? Why are the UBWs not removed till now? Is it common that the UBWs will be reconstructed after removal?
- (b) In 2008-09, what was the amount of resources deployed by the Buildings Department to deal with the UBWs in these buildings? In 2009-10, will there be any plans or resources available to expedite the tackling of the situation? Will there be any targets and plans specifying the time when all the UBWs in these buildings will be dealt with?

Asked by : Hon. TO Kun-sun, James

Reply :

- (a) In 2008, the Buildings Department (BD) continued to take enforcement action to require removal of unauthorised building works (UBWs) in buildings erected between 1946 and 1958. Out of the 2 500 buildings erected during this period, 1 500 buildings have been cleared of UBWs through the BD's annual blitz operation or the special operation conducted for these old buildings in 2006. For the remaining 1 000 buildings, the UBWs therein have been served with removal orders. These UBWs are mainly structures projecting from the external walls, shop-front projections and structures on yards, flat roofs and rooftops. The removal orders in respect of these 1 000 buildings are still outstanding due to various reasons, including owners' appeals against the orders yet to be considered by the Appeal Tribunal (Buildings), rehousing arrangement being made, technical difficulties encountered in removal works, and genuine personal problems of some owners. The BD is continuing to pursue such cases. It is expected that the proposed "Operation Building Bright", with the provision of enhanced financial assistance, will help resolve some of these cases. So far, the BD has not identified or received reports on cases of re-construction after removal of UBWs in these buildings.

- (b) Starting from 2006-07, the BD has been allocated a total of \$830 million over a period of five years for enhancing building safety, including the removal of 180 000 UBWs. From 2006 to 2008, a total of 147 384 UBWs were removed. The BD estimates that about 40 000 UBWs will be removed in 2009. In tackling the problem of UBWs, including those in buildings erected between 1946 and 1958, the BD will continue with the multi-pronged approach of removing dangerous and new UBWs, sustaining its large scale clearance operations against UBWs on external walls and reinforcing the building safety message through various public education and publicity programmes.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	<u> AU Choi-kai </u>
Post Title	<u> Director of Buildings </u>
Date	<u> 18 March 2009 </u>