Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2012-13

Reply Serial No.

DEVB(PL)128

Ouestion Serial No.

2207

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

<u>Head</u>: 82 Buildings Department <u>Subhead</u> (No. & title):

Programme: Buildings and Building Works

<u>Controlling Officer</u>: Director of Buildings

<u>Director of Bureau</u>: Secretary for Development

Question:

It is mentioned under Matters Requiring Special Attention that a large scale operation will be launched for removal of unauthorised building works in New Territories Exempted Houses (NTEHs) that constitute serious contravention of the law and pose higher potential risks to building safety. Will the Government inform this Committee:

- (a) When will the operation be expected to commence in 2012-13? Before commencing the operation, will there be thorough communication with the parties concerned and Heung Yee Kuk New Territories so that the operation can be smoothly implemented?
- (b) What is the estimated number of NTEHs targeted for inspection under the operation? How much manpower will be involved in the operation and inspections?
- (c) What is the estimated number of NTEHs in the New Territories currently? What is the expected time for completing all the inspections and demolition work?
- (d) Regarding the operation, is there any training provided by the Department for frontline staff? Are there discussions held with the staff and staff associations so that arrangement can be made to safeguard the staff during the operation?

Asked by: Hon. PAN Pey-chyou

Reply:

The Buildings Department will implement an enhanced enforcement strategy against unauthorised building works (UBWs) in New Territories Exempted Houses (NTEHs) from 1 April 2012. The enhanced enforcement strategy includes a large scale operation (LSO) for removal of existing UBWs in NTEHs that constitute serious contravention of the law and pose higher potential risks to building safety which are the first round target for priority enforcement action, a Reporting Scheme for existing UBWs in NTEHs that constitute less serious contravention and pose lower potential risks to building safety, and immediate enforcement actions against other UBWs in NTEHs which constitute imminent danger, or are newly erected or found under construction.

In formulating the enhanced enforcement strategy, the Administration has consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Development and has also taken into consideration the views from members of the public and Heung Yee Kuk. We will continue to maintain communication with the parties concerned to smoothen implementation.

The Buildings Department will set up a dedicated section with 41 professional, technical and clerical staff to implement the strategy. The staff concerned will be given training and guidelines on operation and on dealing with special circumstances.

The number of NTEHs is large. Hence, the work involved in inspection and enforcement will be substantial. However, since we do not have statistics on the actual numbers of NTEHs and UBWs therein, we are unable at this stage to advise on the expected time for completing the tasks.

Signature	
Name in block letters	AU Choi-kai
Post Title	Director of Buildings
Date	29.2.2012