

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

**S-DEVB(PL)08**

Question Serial No.

S185

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

Programme:                      Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer:      Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau:      Secretary for Development

Question:

According to the reply under Serial No. DEVB(PL)095 and the oral reply from the Administration at the Special Meeting of the Finance Committee, there are currently about 190 000 unauthorised signboards in Hong Kong and about 1 600 signboards will be removed each year. However, there is no plan to increase the manpower for the task at this stage and no specific target is set on the timeframe for the removal work. Please advise:

- (a) Has consideration been given to formulating a plan to speed up the removal of unauthorised signboards? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
- (b) As it cannot be ruled out that new unauthorised signboards will continue to emerge in the future possibly leading to the scenario of "slow removal, quick erection" of signboards, has prior assessment been conducted and preparation been made accordingly? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by: Hon. LO Wai-kwok

Reply:

- (a) As mentioned in the reply under Serial No. DEVB(PL)095, for existing unauthorised signboards within stipulated dimensional requirements and meeting other specified criteria, the Administration plans to introduce legislative amendments to implement the Signboard Control System (SBCS) to allow the continued use of such existing unauthorised signboards after safety checks, strengthening (if necessary) and certification by registered building professionals or registered contractors. Unauthorised signboards not joining the SBCS will be subject to the Buildings Department (BD)'s enforcement action.

Apart from taking necessary action upon receiving reports on unauthorised signboards from the public, the BD will continue to launch its large scale operation on removal of large unauthorised signboards. In 2013-14, the BD plans to issue 250 removal orders against large unauthorised signboards and it is expected that 125 large unauthorised signboards will be removed either by the owners voluntarily

upon receipt of advisory letters, by the owners in compliance with removal orders, or by the BD's consultants and contractors in default of the signboard owners. The BD will also continue to take necessary enforcement action against dangerous or abandoned signboards. The target number of dangerous or abandoned signboards to be removed by the BD will increase from 1 200 in 2012-13 to 1 600 in 2013-14.

The BD is now conducting a stock taking exercise to record all unauthorised building works (UBWs) including unauthorised signboards erected on the exterior of private buildings. The stock taking exercise is expected to be completed in the second half of 2013. The results of the stock taking exercise will assist the BD in planning and taking enforcement action against unauthorised signboards.

The BD will keep under review the effectiveness of the SBCS, the enforcement action against unauthorised and dangerous or abandoned signboards, as well as the adequacy of the resources from time to time.

- (b) Apart from the abovementioned measures for removal of unauthorised and dangerous or abandoned signboards, the BD has also employed outsourced consultants for regular patrol inspection and investigation of reports on unauthorised signboards under construction. Immediate enforcement action will be taken against actionable unauthorised signboards under construction or unauthorised signboards constituting obvious hazard or imminent danger to life or property in accordance with the prevailing enforcement policy against UBWs.

Name in block letters: AU Choi-kai

Post Title: Director of Buildings

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