

**Audit Report on Planning, Construction and Redevelopment of Public Rental Housing Flats**

**Opening Remarks by Secretary for Development at the Public Accounts Committee on 5 May 2014**

(Translation)

It is the Government's top priority to provide sufficient land to achieve the new housing supply target, especially to facilitate the grassroots to move into public rental housing (PRH). This is a challenge for us and the community as a whole. As explained at the Legislative Council and on other occasions, the Government is taking forward various land use planning and developments, including the Kwu Tong North and Fanling North New Development Areas, Hung Shui Kiu New Development Area, Tung Chung New Town Extension, reclamations outside Victoria Harbour, development of the New Territories North and Lantau, to name a few. These medium to long term measures however require time to materialise, and there are not many easy options to increase and expedite housing land supply in the short to medium run. The fastest and most effective way is to make optimal use of the developed areas in the existing urban areas and new towns, as well as the nearby land in the vicinity of existing infrastructures.

2. As already mentioned by the Secretary for Transport and Housing in his opening speech just now, with the joint efforts by the Planning Department (PlanD), Housing Department and other relevant departments, the Government has already identified sufficient land to construct the 179 000 PRH and 17 000 Home Ownership Scheme flats as previously pledged. We are working closely with the Transport and Housing Bureau to identify more sites suitable for housing development so as to achieve the new housing supply target, namely, to provide 470 000 housing units in ten years' time, with subsidised housing accounting for 60%. Various on-going land use reviews of the Government have begun to bear fruits, and the Government has reported so in the Policy Address this year. We estimate that some 150 sites could be made available in the coming five years (i.e. from 2014/15 to 2018/19) for providing over 210 000 public and private housing units, subject to timely completion of town planning procedures to convert their land use and/or increase the development intensity as well as completion of such works as infrastructure and land clearance to be expeditiously carried out by various departments. Our preliminary estimate shows that among these 150 or so sites, about 60% are for public housing development, and in terms of flat number to be constructed thereat, over 70% are public housing units.

3. We have commenced our consultation with District Councils (DCs) on the said housing sites. The Government appreciates that it is not an easy task for each and every one in our society to accept the proposed housing developments. For example, when we earlier consulted a few DCs and local communities, some DC members and residents were worried that the proposals would have adverse traffic, infrastructure, environment and visual impacts, or community facilities and open space would not be sufficient to cater for additional population intake.

4. We fully understand the concerns of the local residents about the impacts brought by the proposed housing developments. Nevertheless, as reiterated on various occasions, before making the relevant proposals, PlanD and other professional departments have already assessed all aspects in accordance with our well-established mechanism and criteria, e.g., whether the relevant infrastructure and community facilities are capable of meeting the needs of the proposed developments and the local community nearby. This effectively ensures that the proposals will not cause unacceptable impacts. If necessary, departments will conduct detailed technical assessments and propose and implement appropriate mitigation measures. The Government will endeavour to minimise any impacts brought about while converting sites for housing development, but in reality some impacts are inevitable and I hope the DCs and local communities will show their understanding.

5. In face of the urgent housing needs of Hong Kong people, especially the pressing needs of the grassroots waiting to move into PRH or to improve their living environment, the community as a whole would need to put the overall housing needs of Hong Kong above interests of individuals. Thinking of the tens of thousands of families who are living in “sub-divided units” and waiting for allocation of a PRH flat as a decent place to live, I could not accept procrastination in our rezoning work. All relevant Government departments will continue to work closely to secure community support and complete the necessary assessments and procedures in a timely manner, so that we could further increase our land supply and achieve the new housing target.

**Development Bureau**  
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