

Land Development Projects Affecting Residents' Access

14. **MR ALBERT CHAN** (in Chinese): *Madam President, it is learned that in carrying out property developments in rural areas in the New Territories, some private developers closed the pedestrian links on their land. These links have been used by the residents nearby for many years, and the closure has denied them access to their homes. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:*

- (a) of the number of complaints received over the past three years concerning land development projects affecting residents' access and the outcome of each complaint handled;*
- (b) whether, in vetting and approving land development projects in rural areas in the New Territories, it has considered the issue of access for the residents nearby as well as the impact of such development projects on their daily life; and*
- (c) of the criteria adopted for vetting and approving land development projects in rural areas in the New Territories?*

SECRETARY FOR PLANNING AND LANDS (in Chinese): Madam President,

- (a) Over the past three years, we received five complaints on development projects affecting local residents' access. The relevant District Lands Offices mediated between the developers or the lease holders concerned and the affected residents in resolving the problems. With the District Lands Offices' involvement, all the complaints were resolved with the provision of pedestrian links or alternative access arrangements for the affected residents.
- (b) The District Lands Offices are conscious of the need to ensure that land development proposals will not bring about adverse effects to the local residents. If the existing access is likely to be affected by the development plan, the developer or the lease holder will be asked to make alternative access arrangements. In the New

Territories rural areas, before any land grant for development is approved, notices are posted in the villages concerned advising local residents of the development proposal. Copies of these notices are also forwarded to the relevant Village Representatives and Rural Committees. Through these arrangements, local residents are informed of the development proposals and are given the opportunity to raise comments and objections. The District Lands Offices will take these comments or objections into account when processing the development proposals, and will ask the developers or the lease holders to consider appropriate measures to address the concerns of the local residents.

- (c) Like other development proposals, developments in the New Territories are required to comply with the relevant planning, building and lease requirements.