

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 82 Buildings Department Subhead (No. & title) : 000 –
Operational
expenses

Programme : Buildings and Building Works

Controlling Officer : Director of Buildings

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question :

- (a) The estimate for the Hire of Services and Professional Fees under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* in 2004-05 is \$86.021 million, much higher than the revised estimate of \$36.174 million for last year. Please state the reasons why.
- (b) The estimate for the General Departmental Expenses under *Subhead 000 Operational expenses* in 2004-05 is \$215.513 million, a 25% increase over the revised estimate of \$171.406 million for last year. Please state the reasons why.

Asked by : Hon. LI Ka-cheung, Eric

Reply :

- (a) Compared with the revised estimate in 2003-04, there will be an increase of \$49.8 million in 2004-05 on the hire of services and professional fees. The main reasons for the increase are:
 - (i) increased outsourcing in the investigation and removal of unauthorized building works (UBW) in progress, large scale clearance of UBW and investigation and monitoring of building repairs, amounting to \$24.2 million;
 - (ii) outsourcing part of the enforcement actions to the Housing Authority in respect of backlog removal orders, drainage defects in private buildings and UBW in rear lanes and blackspots, amounting to \$16.3 million; and
 - (iii) carrying out consultancy studies on standards of building design and conditions of existing buildings, amounting to \$9.3 million.

- (b) The increase of \$44.1 million in the estimated financial provision in 2004-05 (i.e. \$215.5 million less \$171.4 million) for general departmental expenses over the revised estimate in 2003-04 will be used for the following purposes :-
- (i) \$9.1 million for stepping up action on drainage defects in private buildings and unauthorised building works (UBW) clearance in rear lanes and blackspots, as part of government's initiative to improve environmental hygiene;
 - (ii) \$31.3 million for clearing outstanding removal orders;
 - (iii) \$3.0 million for promotion of building safety and publicising the proposed minor works control regime; and
 - (iv) \$0.7 million for enhancement of computer systems.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Marco WU
Post Title	Director of Buildings
Date	26.3.2004