

**Speaking Note for Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands
Special Finance Committee Meeting on 11 April 2005**

Madam Chairman,

I wish to take this opportunity to brief Members on our work in the Buildings, Lands and Planning policy area in the coming year and our main focus on priority tasks.

Land Supply

2. On land policy, our objective is to provide sufficient land to meet the development needs of our society.

Planning for Hong Kong

3. Comprehensive town planning is an important component to the development of a city. To this end, we completed public consultation on Stage 3 of the “Hong Kong 2030” Study last year. Taking into account public views received, we shall formulate a long-term planning framework for the future development of Hong Kong.

Building Safety and Maintenance

4. Promoting building maintenance, removing unauthorized building works and ensuring building safety have all along been the focus of Government's work. With a view to further improving the safety and outlook of old buildings, the Financial Secretary, in his budget speech delivered recently, indicated that he would allocate \$830 million for a period of five years starting from 2006-07 for BD to remove some 180,000 unauthorized building works. This fully demonstrates our determination in improving building maintenance.

5. In order to address the long-standing building neglect problem, we have earlier conducted a public consultation on building management and maintenance. We are encouraged by the public consensus on owners' responsibility to upkeep their buildings and their preference for mandatory building inspection as a practicable and effective long-term measure to ensure proper maintenance by owners. We are now working on implementation details and support measures for inclusion in the second stage consultation later this year.

Urban Renewal

6. The Urban Renewal Authority (URA) continues to pursue its holistic approach to urban renewal by integrating actions to redevelop dilapidated buildings, rehabilitate poorly maintained buildings, revitalize older districts and preserve buildings with architectural or historical significance within its project areas. To further expedite the pace of urban renewal, we are working closely with the URA to review the Urban Renewal Strategy (URS). We intend to consult the public on the revised URS towards the end of this year.

Expenditure on Buildings, Lands and Planning

7. To implement the policies on Buildings, Lands and Planning, we estimate that the public expenditure for this policy area in 2005-06 will be \$8,404 million, representing 3.1% of the total public expenditure. Compared with 2004-05, the allocation from my Operating Expenditure Envelope to the policy areas of Building, Lands and Planning in 2005-06 has been reduced by \$123 million from \$3,077 million to \$2,954 million, i.e. a decrease of 4%.

8. In the coming year, our group of departments will continue to adopt various measures including re-organisation, re-engineering and re-prioritising so as to enhance the value of our services to the community. We shall review our overall enforcement policy against unauthorized works and examine possible ways to centralize the inspection and

enforcement functions of our departments, with a view to further enhancing service delivery.

9. My colleagues and I will be happy to answer any questions that Members may wish to raise. Thank you, Madam Chairman.