

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2006-07
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

HPLB(PL)093

Question Serial No.

0917

Head: 91 Lands Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (2) Survey and Mapping

Controlling Officer: Director of Lands

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question: Lands Department is responsible for the survey and mapping work. However, there was slow progress in the updating of the land boundaries over the past years. The Administration has indicated that the updating of the territory-wide land boundaries will take ten years to complete and the expenses involved will amount to \$1.9 billion. Please advise this Council:

- (a) if consideration has been given for better allocation of resources, so that the land boundary updating work of the whole territory can be carried out as soon as possible; and
- (b) whether assessments have been made on the expenditure on payments required for settling land disputes (including land exchange compensations) and the expenditure incurred by the additional manpower support (including legal advisory etc.), if land boundaries are not updated as soon as possible, thus leading to deeper conflicts for which the Administration may have to pay heavily.

Asked by: Hon. LAU Sau-shing, Patrick

Reply:

- (a) Given the magnitude of and time required for a comprehensive land boundary updating exercise covering the whole territory and other priorities of Lands Department, we are unable to redeploy resources for an exercise of this nature. Lands Department will continue to resolve individual land boundary issues as and when they arise during the course of its normal work, such as land resumption for infrastructure projects. Under section 94 of the Land Titles Ordinance (LTO), the owner of land registered under the Ordinance may apply to the Director of Lands for determination of the land boundaries, and the Director of Lands shall cause the resultant plan prepared by an Authorised Land Surveyor (who may be a private practitioner engaged by the applicant), if it is acceptable to the Director, to be registered in the Land Registry. The Administration is prepared to introduce a similar provision into a suitable ordinance to deal with land not yet registered under the LTO.

(b) or the small number of land boundary dispute cases that involved Government, the Administration has not experienced much difficulty in resolving them. It is not possible to assess the expenditure on payment required for settling land boundary disputes and the expenditure incurred by additional manpower support in the absence of an appropriate basis for estimating the number of land boundary disputes involving Government, and information like location and size of the area under dispute, etc.

Signature _____

Name in block letters PATRICK L C LAU

Post Title Director of Lands

Date 10 March 2006

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