

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

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

**Reply Serial No.**

**HPLB(PL)077**

**Question Serial No.**

**0572**

Head: 91 Lands Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Land Administration

Controlling Officer: Director of Lands

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Housing, Planning and Lands

Question: With respect to squatter control and clearance, 338 unauthorised structures were demolished in 2006, marking a decrease of about 30% as compared to 489 in 2005. In 2006, the number of cases under freezing action and the number of structures cleared in programmed squatter clearances or emergency clearances also mark a decrease of about 40% as compared to the respective figures in 2005. What are the reasons for the decreases? At present, how many vacant squatter structures have not yet been demolished? How much provision will be reserved by the Lands Department for the clearance of such vacant squatter structures and when will this clearance be fully completed?

Asked by: Hon LEE Wing-tat

Reply :

The drop in the number of unauthorized structures demolished in 2006 when compared with that in 2005 was mainly due to strengthened patrol work and effective prevention of squatting activities by the Lands Department (Lands D) after taking over the squatter control duties for the whole territory from the Housing Department (HD) with effect from 1 April 2006.

When squatters' applications for public rental housing are accepted by HD, the Squatter Control Unit of Lands D will conduct a freezing survey of the squatter structures concerned and take over these structures as soon as the squatters move out. The decrease of Lands D's cases under freezing action in 2006 tallied with the same decrease in the number of cases referred to Lands D by HD.

The number of structures cleared in programmed squatter clearances and emergency clearances in 2006 marked a decrease of about 40% as compared to the respective figures in 2005. This was mainly because fewer natural disasters occurred during the year, and some major clearance programmes were postponed or rescheduled at the request of the client departments.

At present, there are approximately 900 vacant squatter structures due for demolition. However, most of them are structurally linked up with other occupied structures and cannot be demolished for safety reasons. All these vacant structures are boarded up upon taking over to prevent trespassing. Demolition of these structures depends on how soon the connected structures will be vacated. Resources will be made available for this purpose in 2007-08.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters PATRICK L C LAU

Post Title Director of Lands

Date 15 March 2007

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