

**Progress Report on the Government's Follow-up Action
on the Equal Opportunities Commission's Formal Investigation
Report on Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises
Position as at 31 December 2011**

Purpose

This paper reports on the progress of the Government's follow-up action as at 31 December 2011 on the Equal Opportunities Commission's Formal Investigation Report on Accessibility in Publicly Accessible Premises (EOC Report).

The Retrofitting Programme

2. The major retrofitting programme covers about 3,700 Government premises and facilities, amongst which nearly 90% will be retrofitted by 30 June 2012 (Class A) and the remaining by 30 June 2014 (Class B). A breakdown of all the premises and facilities to be retrofitted by type and the respective managing departments is at **Annex A**.

3. Upon availability of additional funding starting from 2011 – 12 and the appointment of additional works contractors in October 2011, the works departments including the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD), the Highways Department (HyD) and the Civil Engineering and Development Department, in collaboration with the managing departments of these premises and facilities, have stepped up their efforts in taking forward the retrofitting programme. In brief, as at 31 December 2011, among all Class A items, we have completed site survey at 3,235 premises/facilities (100%) and completed both site survey and feasibility study at 3,208 premises/facilities (99%), while works at 1,434 premises/facilities (44%) have commenced. For Class B items, we have completed site survey at 183 premises/facilities (47%) and completed both site survey and feasibility study at 126 premises/facilities (33%). Having regard to the complexity and extent of upgrading works, and the site and operational constraints, ArchSD has broadly categorised their improvement works into three groups –

(a) High Level of Complexity

The “High Complexity Premises” include multi-user complexes and high security premises. The improvement works usually involve major structural alterations and additions;

(b) Medium Level of Complexity

The “Medium Complexity Premises” are highly utilised complexes where improvement works may cause disturbance to the public and operation of the premises. Necessary phasing of works and segregation of working areas will be required; and

(c) Low Level of Complexity

The “Low Complexity Premises” require only minor improvement works.

4. A full list of the venues covered by the retrofitting programme under Class A and Class B, their respective progress (with details on the scope of works and completion dates for projects where works have commenced and relevant information are available¹) and level of complexity can be found at **Annex B** and **Annex C** respectively.

5. For the retrofitting programme devised by HA to improve accessibility of 235² premises/facilities under its management (which covers public housing estates, commercial centres, carparks and factory buildings), most of the improvement works will be implemented by 30 June 2012. To strike a balance between the progress of improvement works and service interruption and nuisances to tenants, HA will schedule some of the improvement works for completion by 30 June 2014. To tie in with HA’s lift modernisation programme, a small proportion of the improvement works will be completed by 2016-17. Progress of HA’s

¹ Details of scope of works and completion dates for individual venues will be incorporated into subsequent progress reports once the relevant information is available.

² In these 235 premises/facilities, HA will carry out a total of 364 works items, among which 166 are in domestic blocks and external areas; 44 in public transport interchanges; 31 in commercial centres; 93 in carparks; 6 in factory buildings and 24 in other venues.

retrofitting programme is at **Annex D**. In brief, site preparation for all premises/facilities have been completed, while works have commenced at 185 premises/facilities.

6. Meanwhile, HyD will continue to accelerate its retrofitting programme for the provision of barrier-free access (lift or ramp) at public footbridges, subways or elevated walkway structures without such access or alternative at-grade crossings, where technically feasible. Up to now, out of a total of 295 such facilities, HyD has completed investigation of 123 facilities, of which 67 were found feasible for lift/ramp retrofitting works. Amongst these 67 facilities, the retrofitting works for 25 have already been completed and the retrofitting works for 9 are in progress or under active planning. As regards the remaining footbridges, subways or elevated walkway structures, HyD has already commenced planning and investigation for retrofitting works. In order to further shorten the time of project delivery, retrofitting works for all remaining feasible items would be taken forward in phases with the majority of works scheduled for completion by around 2016-17 and the rest (e.g. those involving public objections or are technically complex) by around 2017-18. Progress of the relevant retrofitting works is at **Annex E**. The Administration has already obtained funding approval of about \$292 million from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council for the design of barrier-free facilities at about 180 public pedestrian footbridges and subways, as well as the first phase of retrofitting works (involving 10 facilities). For the remaining retrofitting works, the Administration intends to seek funding from the Legislative Council in several batches as soon as the design works have been completed.

Access Co-ordinators and Access Officers

7. To dovetail with the appointment of Access Co-ordinators (ACs) and Access Officers (AOs) in Government bureaux and departments in April 2011, the Government has launched a series of training, including seminars and pilot workshops, in collaboration with EOC for ACs and AOs since early 2011. Web-based training package and new training video clips produced in collaboration with EOC have also been uploaded onto the government network to further enhance the awareness of accessibility in the civil service. Besides, departments having frequent interface with the public in their service delivery (such as the Hong Kong Post, Transport Department, Hong Kong Police Force, Food and

Environmental Hygiene Department, Housing Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department etc.) continue to organise, in collaboration with the EOC and the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI), tailored-made accessibility seminars/workshops for their frontline staff.

8. Furthermore, the Labour and Welfare Bureau and CSTDI, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, organized the first series of sign language training workshops for frontline staff of government departments in August 2011 to enhance their knowledge in basic sign language and awareness of the deaf culture, thereby facilitating the hearing impaired in their access to government services. The next round of workshops will be rolled out in February 2012.

Way Forward

9. It is the Government's established policy objective to provide a barrier-free environment for persons with disabilities with a view to enabling them to access to premises and make use of the facilities on an equal basis with others, thereby facilitating them to live independently and integrate into society. We will continue to work closely with EOC, the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, the rehabilitation sector and the community in building towards a barrier-free and inclusive society.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
February 2012