

**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 2012**

Purpose

This paper reports on the progress of the Government's follow-up action as at 31 December 2012 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 3,500¹ Government premises and facilities, amongst which nearly 90% have been retrofitted by 30 June 2012 (Class A) and the remaining will be completed 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. As at 31 December 2012, among all Class A items (3,060 premises/facilities), we have completed the works for 99.6% of them (3,048 premises/facilities). The remaining items under Class A (12 premises/facilities) are expected to be completed in the coming few months. For Class B items (411 premises/facilities) including relatively complex items which require construction of accessible lifting platforms or lifts, accessible unisex toilets and works requiring Heritage Impact Assessment prior to commencement, we anticipate that these items will be completed by end-June 2014 or earlier. As at 31 December 2012, we have completed the site survey for 74.2% of them (305 premises/facilities) and completed both the site survey and feasibility studies for 59.4% of them (244 premises/facilities).

¹ Another 86 government premises and facilities have been grouped under other improvement programmes, such as the Public Toilet Refurbishment Programme of the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the refurbishment programme of the Architectural Services Department, and upgrading of the barrier-free facilities will be carried out as part of the renovation works.

4. 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.

5. A full list of the venues covered by the retrofitting programme under Class A and Class B, their respective progress as at end-December 2012 (with details on the scope of works and completion dates for projects where works have commenced and relevant information are available) and level of complexity can be found at **Annex B** and **Annex C** respectively.

6. For the retrofitting programme devised by HA to improve the accessibility of premises/facilities under its management (which covers public housing estates, commercial centres, carparks and factory buildings), all improvement works scheduled to be implemented by 30 June 2012 have been completed. To strike a balance between the progress of improvement works and service interruption/nuisances to tenants, HA has scheduled 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 retrofitting works scheduled for completion by 30 June 2014 is at **Annex D**. Among these 96² premises/facilities, improvement works for 51 premises/facilities have been fully completed while works for the remaining sites have been completed 50% or more.

7. Over the years, the Highways Department (HyD) has been implementing a retrofitting programme for the provision of barrier-free access facilities (lifts or ramps) at public walkways (i.e. footbridges, elevated walkways and subways). As at 31 December 2012, HyD has completed investigation of 200 public walkways, of which 136 were found feasible for lift/ramp retrofitting works. Retrofitting works for 27 public walkways have been completed while works for 136 public walkways are in good progress or under active planning. As regards the remaining facilities, HyD has already commenced planning and investigation for retrofitting works. Retrofitting works for all remaining feasible items would be taken forward as soon as possible, 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**.

8. On 21 August 2012, the Chief Executive announced a new policy which aims at further enhancing the barrier-free facilities for existing walkways. Under the new policy, when considering the type of facilities to be installed at existing or new walkways, the Administration will treat lifts and ramps equally. This is a change from the past practice which gives priority to ramps. As long as site conditions permit, the Administration will consider installing lifts at walkways though there is already a standard ramp installed. The public have been invited to suggest locations where lifts should be installed to the Administration before 31 October 2012.

9. The Administration obtained the approval of the Legislative Council Finance Committee (FC) on 11 January 2013 to establish a

² In these 96 premises/facilities, HA will carry out a total of 154 works items, among which 78 are in domestic blocks and external areas; 23 in public transport interchanges; 12 in commercial centres; 29 in carparks; 2 in factory buildings and 10 in other venues.

dedicated funding source for this “universal accessibility” programme on an annual basis. The Administration is in the process of consulting the relevant District Councils to determine the priorities for the lift retrofitting projects. Once a project is supported by the district and confirmed to be technically feasible, the Administration will commence the design and construction works as soon as possible according to its priority.

Access Co-ordinators and Access Officers

10. To dovetail with the appointment of Access Co-ordinators (ACs) in Government bureaux and departments as well as Access Officers (AOs) for individual Government venues in April 2011, the Government has launched a series of training, including seminars and pilot workshops, in collaboration with the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) for ACs and AOs since early 2011. Two new episodes of training videos have been produced in collaboration with the EOC. Together with the existing web-based training package, they are uploaded onto the government intranet and Cyber Learning Centre Plus 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 and Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, etc.) continue to organise, in collaboration with the EOC and the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI), tailor-made accessibility seminars/workshops for their frontline staff.

11. Furthermore, the Labour and Welfare Bureau and CSTDI, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, organised the first three rounds of sign language training workshops for frontline staff of government departments in August 2011, March and July 2012 respectively to enhance their knowledge in basic sign language and awareness of the deaf culture, thereby facilitating the hearing impaired in accessing government services. New series of training workshops will be organised in February 2013.

Way Forward

12. 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 2013