

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**THB(T)230****(Question Serial No. 5299)**

Head: (60) Highways Department
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified
Programme: (1) Capital Projects
Controlling Officer: Director of Highways (K K LAU)
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Housing

Question (Member Question No. 55):

In Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2014-15 of this Programme, the Administration stated that barrier-free access facilities for public footbridges, elevated walkways and subways will be provided under the Universal Accessibility (UA) Programme. In this connection, will the Government advise this Committee on:

- (a) the details of the UA Programme, including its commencement date and objectives, the items that have already been and will be implemented; and
- (b) the operating expenses, staff establishment and estimated salary expenditure for the aforesaid matter in the 2014-15 estimates.

Asked by: Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply:

- (a) The Government has been installing barrier-free access facilities at public walkways (i.e. public footbridges, elevated walkways and subways), where technically feasible, for years (i.e. the Original Programme). The Original Programme is to provide lifts or standard ramps to existing public walkways which are not equipped with standard barrier-free access facilities and there is no proper at-grade crossing facilities available within about 100 meters. Currently, there are 158 items which are technically feasible under the Original Programme. As at end February 2014, the investigation work of these items has been completed, with retrofitting works of two items completed, 62 under construction and 94 under design. The works of these items will be completed by phases from 2014 to 2018.

In August 2012, the Government launched the new policy on UA which aims at further enhancing the barrier-free facilities for existing public walkways. The new policy received overwhelming responses from the public and lift installations at about 250 public walkways were proposed (i.e. the Expanded Programme). The Government consulted the 18 District Councils (DCs) in the first half of 2013 on the priority for implementing these suggestions for retrofitting of lifts. Technical feasibility studies for the three priority projects identified by each DC are largely completed and the

Government is consulting DCs concerned on the study findings. After consultation with the DCs, the Government will proceed with the detailed design for the items confirmed to be technically feasible and supported by the district. The Government will review the implementation schedule for the remaining items in the Expanded Programme when the implementation of the priority items is on track, taking into account the progress of works, the views of the DCs and the public, the capacity of the construction market, the resources of the departments concerned, etc.

- (b) The estimated expenditure for the implementation of the UA Programme in 2014-15 is \$639 million. The Government has been deploying existing staff to oversee the implementation of the UA Programme.