

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**THB(T)235**

**(Question Serial No. 6316)**

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:

Over the past five years, what were the details of the items completed, the actual expenditures incurred and the number of staff involved in the provision of barrier-free access (BFA) facilities for public footbridges, elevated walkways and subways under the Universal Accessibility (UA) Programme? In 2016-2017, what are the details of the items to be commenced under the UA Programme? What are the actual project expenditures and the number of staff involved?

Asked by: Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki (Member Question No. 236)

Reply:

According to Rule 49 of the Finance Committee Procedures, special meetings of the Finance Committee are convened to examine the annual Estimates of Expenditure prepared by the Government in support of the Appropriation Bill. Expenditure charged to the Capital Works Reserve Fund does not form part of the Appropriation Bill. As such, questions relating to expenditure under the Fund are not relevant to the examination of the Estimates of Expenditure or the Appropriation Bill. Nonetheless, the information sought is provided below:

The Government has been installing BFA facilities at public walkways (i.e. public footbridges, elevated walkways and subways maintained by the Highways Department (HyD)) for a number of years (the Original Programme) on the recommendation of the Equal Opportunities Commission. The implementation of 150 items under the Original Programme continues, with most of the items anticipated for progressive completion by 2018 as scheduled. As at 29 February 2016, 29 items have been completed, 91 items are under construction, 13 items are anticipated to commence in 2016-17 and the remaining 17 items will commence as soon as possible upon completion of detailed design and obtaining of support from the relevant District Councils (DCs).

In August 2012, the Government launched the new UA Programme to further enhance the BFA facilities for existing public walkways maintained by the HyD. Installation of lifts at about 250 public walkways was proposed by the public. In the first half of 2013, we invited all the 18 DCs to prioritise the new items in their districts proposed by the public. Each DC selected three public walkways for priority implementation (the Expanded Programme). The implementation of these priority items under the Expanded Programme is well underway. Most of the retrofitting works items are anticipated for completion from 2017 to 2018 in phases. As at 29 February 2016, 49 priority items are under construction, seven priority items are anticipated to commence construction in 2016-17 and one priority item will commence as soon as possible upon completion of its investigation and design works, and obtaining of support from the DC concerned.

The expenditure on the UA Programme in 2011-12, 2012-13, 2013-14, 2014-15 and 2015-16 was \$6.6 million, \$28.5 million, \$232.2 million, \$554.3 million and \$720.9 million (estimated) respectively, covering the costs for conducting technical feasibility studies / investigation works, design, construction works and supervision of construction. The estimated expenditure in 2016-17 is \$788.7 million. The Government has been deploying existing staff resources to oversee the implementation of the UA Programme.

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