
Planning, Environment and Lands Bureau

I. Planning, Lands and Conservation

In the past year, we have been working on 67 pledges, of which :

- we have completed 26;
- we are on schedule with 25;
- five are under review;
- we are taking active measures to speed up the progress on three which are behind schedule; and
- we are pressing ahead with eight on-going commitments.

The following sets out the detailed report for each main programme area.

Territorial and Sub-regional Planning

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
1997	1. To establish the “Hong Kong and Mainland Cross-boundary Major Infrastructure Projects Co-ordinating Committee” to handle a number of cross-boundary infrastructure projects between Hong Kong and Guangdong.	The “Hong Kong and Mainland Cross-boundary Major Infrastructure Projects Co-ordinating Committee” was established in October 1997.

- | | | | |
|------|----|---|---|
| 1996 | 2. | To make the planning system more efficient in 1997 by developing a planning register and information system covering population, land supply, employment distribution and community facilities. | Phase one of the Planning Register System was completed in January 1998 and enhancement work is making good progress. Phase two of the system, which is made up of an information system covering population, land supply, employment distribution and community facilities, was ready for use in September 1998. |
| 1996 | 3. | To complete the Central and East Kowloon Development Statement (CEKDS), which sets out planning guidelines for the district, in late 1996. | The Statement was completed in December 1997. |
| 1996 | 4. | To revise in late 1996 the planning standards and guidelines on the provision of industrial land following completion of a study on the provision of new industrial premises. | Study completed and revised standards and guidelines on the provision of industrial land were promulgated in October 1997. |
| 1996 | 5. | To revise planning standards and guidelines on the provision of open space and recreational facilities in early 1997 in the light of a study on leisure habits and recreational preferences. | Study completed and revised standards and guidelines on recreation and open space were promulgated in March 1998. |
| 1996 | 6. | To revise planning standards and guidelines on the provision of retail facilities in early 1997 following completion of a study on shopping habits. | Study completed and revised standards and guidelines on the provision of retail facilities were promulgated in March 1998. |

Action in Progress : On Schedule

- | | | | |
|------|-----|--|---|
| 1997 | 7. | To start in 1998-1999 a new round of review of the Territorial Development Strategy to assess Hong Kong's future development needs in a wider regional perspective and a longer planning time horizon, possibly up to 2026 and beyond. | Preparatory work is being undertaken with a view to commencing the new round of review of the Territorial Development Strategy in early 1999. |
| 1997 | 8. | To complete by mid-1999 feasibility studies on the two proposed cross-boundary road links, namely the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Western Corridor and the Lingdingyang Bridge, to enable a decision to be made on the cross-link projects. | Feasibility studies for additional cross-boundary road links are currently in progress and are scheduled to be completed by mid-1999. |
| 1997 | 9. | To enact the Town Planning Bill and the necessary subsidiary legislation as soon as possible. | The Town Planning Bill and the subsidiary legislation are scheduled to be introduced into the legislature in early 1999. |
| 1996 | 10. | To guide development in the New Territories by completing sub-regional development strategies for the Southwest New Territories in 1998. | Recommended strategies are scheduled for completion by end 1998. |

Good progress has been made with the following commitment in the past year. We will continue to work on it on an on-going basis.

- | <i>Year</i> | | <i>Pledge</i> |
|-------------|-----|---|
| 1995 | 11. | To continue formulating and updating planning standards and guidelines and prepare, revise and implement statutory and non-statutory plans for the urban and rural areas. |

Supply and Control of Land

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. To simplify and streamline various government planning, land, environment and building approval processes for residential development.	The package of initiatives to simplify and streamline the development approval process was announced in October 1997.
1997	2. To review the density guidelines for residential development.	We have completed the review of density guidelines for both public and private housing. It is recommended that the existing controls should be maintained whilst flexibility should be given to permit a higher intensity of development in areas having spare infrastructure capacity.
1997	3. To fast-track reclamation works by adopting an advance start and a parallel approach in the gazetting under the Town Planning Ordinance and the Foreshore and Sea-bed (Reclamations) Ordinance. This will cut 26 months from the normal 62 months of statutory procedures and preparation of detailed design.	Fast-track arrangement has been adopted in reclamation works according to the Technical Circular on the new administrative arrangement for reclamation works promulgated in September 1997.
1997	4. To introduce legislation to impose a nine-month statutory time limit for resolving objections to draft town plans and infrastructural projects.	The legislative amendments to the Foreshore and Sea-bed (Reclamations) Ordinance and the Town Planning Ordinance 1998 were approved by the Provisional Legislative Council (PLC) in March 1998 and came into operation in April 1998.

- 1997 5. To introduce legislation in 1998 to facilitate land assembly. This will help the private sector maximise its ability to produce flats using their existing land holdings.
- The Land (Compulsory Sale for Redevelopment) Bill, which serves to help the private sector to assemble land for redevelopment, was passed by the PLC in April 1998.
- 1997 6. To save 12 months from the 42 months of normal planning and engineering feasibility study process by integrating planning and engineering feasibility studies for new strategic growth areas. To commence in October 1997 integrated planning and engineering studies for three strategic growth areas identified in the Territorial Development Strategy Review, namely Northwest New Territories, Northeast New Territories and Hong Kong Island South and Lamma Island with a view to providing sufficient land for the production of 124 000 units of residential flats.
- We have adopted new procedures to save 12 months time by integrating planning and engineering feasibility studies for new strategic growth areas.
- We have commenced the integrated planning and development studies for the three longer-term strategic growth areas. The studies are scheduled for completion in early to mid-2000.
- 1997 7. To complete a review of our land use policy to facilitate land exchange associated with rezoning of existing land, including agricultural and industrial land, where infrastructural capacity and environmental considerations permit.
- We have completed the review of land use policy and the opportunity for land use rezoning.
- Based on the review findings, we had rezoned about 20 hectares of agricultural land and about 45 hectares of industrial land by September 1998 for housing and associated development.

- 1997 8. To work together with the private sector to make the fullest possible contribution towards meeting the demand for housing by expediting the approval process for private sector flat production and to facilitate the implementation of private sector development schemes.
- The package of initiatives to simplify and streamline the development approval process was announced in October 1997.
- 1997 9. To fast-track the provision of housing-related infrastructure so as to facilitate both public and private sector residential development.
- The legislative amendments to the Foreshore and Sea-bed (Reclamations) Ordinance and the Town Planning Ordinance were approved by the PLC in March 1998 and came into operation in April 1998.
- 1997 10. In 1998-1999, to strengthen the project management capability within the Territory Development Department so that we could better track project progress.
- Five senior engineer posts for project management were created in April 1998. Project management training courses to enhance the management skills and capabilities of staff in the delivery of public works projects commenced in December 1997, and all courses were completed by August 1998.
- 1996 11. To complete an engineering feasibility study of the Kai Tak Airport and Kowloon Bay Reclamation Area in late 1997, following completion of a draft concept plan.
- The general feasibility study report for the Kai Tak Airport, Kowloon Bay Reclamation Area and surrounding old districts (namely the Southeast Kowloon Development) was completed and endorsed by the Committee on Planning, Lands and Development (chaired by the Secretary for Planning, Environment and Lands) in November 1997. The whole study report including a preliminary design memorandum was completed in August 1998.

- 1996 12. To increase public awareness of planning controls, especially in the Northwest New Territories where 199 hectares of land are used for unauthorised purposes, by organising major publicity activities in 1997.

Interviews with the media and meetings with concerned trade organisations on the need for and procedures of planning control and enforcement work have been undertaken. Pamphlets on enforcement against unauthorised development have been distributed. The Administration has established a formal liaison channel with concerned trade organisations to exchange views on the provisions of open storage land in the rural New Territories.

Action in Progress : On Schedule

- 1997 13. To form some 137 hectares of new land in West Kowloon, Kai Tak – Kowloon Bay, Tseung Kwan O and Tung Chung – Tai Ho. This will produce over 200 000 flats between 2001 and 2006.

Development and engineering works in West Kowloon are carried out in parallel with the remaining reclamation in that area.

Town plans for Kai Tak – Kowloon Bay have been gazetted. Detailed design and preparation for initial development phases are in progress.

Intensification studies for Tseung Kwan O and Tung Chung – Tai Ho to increase development potential are scheduled for completion by end 1998.

- 1997 14. To develop the following strategic growth areas :

Au Tau – Kam Tin – Yuen Long South;

Central – Wanchai Reclamation (Remainder);

Fanling North – Kwu Tung;

Green Island Reclamation;

Hong Kong Island South;

Southeast Kowloon;

These strategic growth areas are at different stages of development or under planning and feasibility studies.

It has been decided that the Central-Wanchai Reclamation will not accommodate any residential flats, but this will not have a great effect on our original estimate of the number of flats which could be provided for.

Tsuen Wan Bay Reclamation;
Tseung Kwan O;
Tung Chung – Tai Ho; and
West Kowloon Reclamation.

This will produce sufficient land for supplying over 270 000 flats between 2006 and 2011.

- 1997 15. To plan for additional urban development arising from proposed strategic rail and road projects, including the West Rail, the port and airport development in North Lantau and Hong Kong Island, and provision of new East-west and North-south strategic road links.

The three longer-term strategic growth areas viz. Au Tau - Kam Tin - Yuen Long South, Fanling North - Kwu Tung and Hong Kong Island South are being examined under three integrated planning and development studies scheduled for completion in early to mid-2000.

A number of planning and development studies are being undertaken to explore additional urban development opportunities available along currently proposed major transport routes.

Action in Progress : Under Review

- 1997 16. To provide annually a clear five-year land disposal programme comprising a firm programme for the first two years and an annual target of disposable land area under various use categories for the following three years.

The Five-year Land Disposal Programme (1998-1999 to 2002-2003) was announced in March 1998. Land sales for the 1998-1999 financial year were subsequently suspended with effect from 22 June 1998 as a measure aimed at relieving the pressure on the economy and stabilising property prices. The next Land Disposal Programme is expected to be announced in early 1999.

Good progress has been made with the following commitments in the past year. We will continue to work on them on an on-going basis.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>
1997	17. To identify areas where infrastructure would permit more intensive public and private housing development.
1997	18. To expedite the restructuring of old industrial areas for development into commercial/residential uses.
1995	19. To begin cleaning up environmental black spots in the eastern part of the North District in early 1996 and to clear and landscape those sites which are on government land.

Land Administration

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. To set up a land administration team in 1998-1999 to administer the re-development of the Kai Tak airport site which is to be vacated by 1998.	A team of five posts has been created and the posts were filled in early September 1998.
1997	2. In 1998-1999, to accelerate non-development clearance in the New Territories by speeding up the clearance programme involving some 200 villages.	With the setting up of a centralised land team in May 1998, non-development clearances in the New Territories have been speeded up. 202 vacant squatter huts had been demolished and new clearance projects had started in five villages by the end of July 1998. It is anticipated that 600 more vacant huts will be demolished and new projects in 14 villages will start within 1998-1999. We shall keep up the momentum of the clearance programme.

- 1997 3. To review the provisions of existing building covenants with a view to ensuring that flats are being put into the market speedily.
- The review was completed in February 1998. Its conclusion is that the existing provisions are sufficient and need not be changed.

Action in Progress : Under Review

- 1997 4. To meet the growing demand from more international professionals operating in Hong Kong, to sell 117 hectares of land, sufficient for at least 9 000 large flats, before March 2002 in areas such as the Peak, Hong Kong Island South, Shatin, Tai Po and South Lantau, in addition to the 64 hectares already included in the sales programme up to March 1999.
- From July 1997 to June 1998, 13 hectares of land falling within this category had been disposed of. However, land sales for the 1998-1999 financial year were suspended with effect from 22 June 1998 as a measure aimed at relieving the pressure on the economy and stabilising property prices. The next Land Disposal Programme is expected to be announced in early 1999.
- 1997 5. Through auction and tender, to dispose of 82.8 hectares of land for housing development and 28 hectares for other uses in 1998-1999. This will provide for approximately 35 000 residential units and 81 000 m² of commercial space in three to four years' time.
- About 13.7 hectares of land for housing development and 5.8 hectares of land for other uses were disposed of. Land sales for the 1998-1999 financial year were suspended with effect from 22 June 1998.

Survey and Mapping

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
-------------	---------------	-------------------------

Action in Progress : On Schedule

- 1997 1. To set up a Geodetic Information System in 1998 to provide efficient survey information to surveying and construction industry.
- Equipment for Phase I sites has been installed. Detailed system has been designed and Stage I staff training is in progress. We expect the System to be in place by end 1998.

1997	2.	To introduce a network of Global Positioning System reference stations in 1999 to improve survey work efficiency.	A feasibility study is being carried out and site selection is in progress.
1997	3.	All mapping products to be bilingual by 1999.	We are seeking technical support from the Information Technology Services Department for upgrading the hardware and software to support Chinese character output. We are on schedule in meeting our target for all mapping products to be bilingual by 1999.

Legal Advice and Land Matters

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>	
<i>Action Completed</i>			
1997	1.	To put in place by the end of 1997 a telephone hotline service for information on consents for sale of units in uncompleted development.	The telephone hotline is operative in Cantonese, English and Putonghua, providing information on consents to sell residential units issued and applications pending approval. Printed reports by fax-on-demand are also available.
<i>Action in Progress : On Schedule</i>			
1997	2.	To expedite approval of Deeds of Mutual Covenants in consent applications by contracting out the work to the private sector.	Contracting-out exercises have expanded gradually, with 11 cases, including one with simple Government, Institution and Community (GIC) facilities, having been contracted out since October 1997.

Building Safety

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed		
1997	1. To set up in 1998 an Urban Rehabilitation Fund to provide low interest loans to qualified owners of old buildings to undertake building inspection and repair works under the mandatory Building Safety Inspection Scheme (BSIS).	While the implementation of the mandatory BSIS is under review (please refer to item 6 below), a loan scheme entitled the "Building Safety Improvement Loan Scheme" was formally launched in August 1998 providing owners of premises within domestic and domestic/commercial buildings with low interest loans to undertake inspection and repair works under the voluntary BSIS.
1997	2. To further streamline and simplify the procedure for approving building plan submissions and giving consent to building works.	Simplified procedures for approving building plans and submissions and giving consent to building works have been introduced.
Action in Progress : On Schedule		
1997	3. To set up a dedicated task force to deal with dangerous canopies and appendages on the exteriors of buildings. Our target is to increase the number of cases dealt with from 1 400 to 2 000 per year.	Ten new posts approved for the task will be created in October 1998.
1997	4. To provide 17 additional staff in the Buildings Department to process building plans so as to increase productivity in housing construction.	One of the new posts was created in June 1998, while the remaining 16 posts will be created in October 1998.

- 1996 5. To require in late 1997 authorised persons to submit supervision plans setting out systems for safety management at construction and demolition sites before works may commence.
- In response to the concerns of the trade about the supply of Technically Competent Persons required, we have adopted a pragmatic approach in implementing the supervision plan system. The first two phases of the supervision plan system for demolition, site formation, foundation and excavation and lateral support works commenced in December 1997 and June 1998 respectively. Two more phases covering other types of building works will follow.

Action in Progress : Under Review

- 1997 6. After completing the consultation exercise on the mandatory BSIS, to put forward legislation to implement the Scheme in 1998.
- We completed the consultation exercise in October 1997. The PLC and Provisional District Boards suggested that Government should undertake the inspection under the mandatory BSIS. There are also concerns over a number of technical problems which need to be addressed for ensuring the smooth operation of the mandatory BSIS. We are considering the way forward, having regard to the views received during the consultation exercise.

Good progress has been made with the following commitments in the past year. We will continue to work on them on an on-going basis.

- | <i>Year</i> | <i>Pledge</i> |
|-------------|---|
| 1996 | 7. The designated Site Monitoring Team established in the Buildings Department to carry out 3 000 inspections a year. |
| 1996 | 8. To regularly update technical guidelines and codes of practice on building safety. |

Urban Renewal

*Year**Pledge**Present Position***Action Completed**

- | | | | |
|------|----|---|--|
| 1997 | 1. | In 1998, to explore mechanisms to improve the financial viability of the Urban Renewal Authority (URA) urban renewal projects and quicken their processing. | A set of streamlined planning procedures to speed up processing of redevelopment projects has been introduced. The effectiveness of various mechanisms to enhance project viability have been considered in the context of the Urban Renewal Strategy Stage II Study. These mechanisms have been incorporated into the detailed recommendations of the Working Group on URA. |
|------|----|---|--|

Action in Progress : On Schedule

- | | | | |
|------|----|--|--|
| 1997 | 2. | To set up a URA in 1999 with statutory powers to expedite urban renewal on a larger scale and in a more comprehensive manner. | The detailed recommendations of the Working Group which was set up to study the establishment of the URA are being considered. |
| 1997 | 3. | To complete the Urban Renewal Strategy Study in 1998-1999 and identify priority urban renewal areas to enable the proposed URA to immediately embark on urban renewal projects upon its establishment. | Stages I and II of the Study on the magnitude of the urban renewal problem and selection of priority redevelopment projects have been completed. Stage III of the Study is underway. The whole Study will be completed in 1998-1999. |

1996	4.	To grant two hectares of land to the Housing Society for the development of 2 000 additional flats to provide rehousing for the redevelopment projects of the Land Development Corporation.	Conditions have been offered to the Housing Society regarding the grant of a site on the West Kowloon Reclamation. Preparation for the grant of two other sites in Ma On Shan and Tseung Kwan O is in progress.
------	----	---	---

Flood Prevention

<i>Year</i>		<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action Completed			
1996	1.	To start in 1997 another two studies of seven Drainage Master Plan Studies to review and upgrade our stormwater drainage system.	All seven studies had started by September 1998.

Action in Progress : On Schedule

1997	2.	To recommend comprehensive plans to extend and upgrade the stormwater drainage systems under the seven Drainage Master Plan studies. To implement in phases the recommended drainage improvement works upon the completion of these studies. Detailed design for the first packages of works is scheduled to commence in 1999, and construction to begin in 2001.	The first study has been completed and its recommendations finalised. Preparation for starting detailed design in 1999 is in progress.
------	----	---	--

- | | | | |
|------|----|---|--|
| 1996 | 3. | To continue to work closely with the Shenzhen authorities on the preparations for stage two of the Shenzhen River Regulation Project. To award two new contracts by April 1997 to construct 6.4 kilometres of main river channel, to start work before June 1997 and to complete works by 2000. | Construction works commenced in May 1997 and are in progress for completion by 2000. |
| 1994 | 4. | To spend \$1.1 billion over the next three years to construct 20 kilometres of stormwater drains and other drainage channels. To complete by 1998 works on three contracts for the first stage of river channel improvement work in Yuen Long and Kam Tin areas. | 20 kilometres of drainage works have been completed. We remain on target to complete the improvement works in Yuen Long and Kam Tin. |

Action in Progress : Behind Schedule

- | | | | |
|------|----|---|---|
| 1996 | 5. | To complete all seven Drainage Master Plan Studies by 1999. | The first study has already been completed. Five other studies are on schedule and will be completed by 1999. The scope of the last study has been reviewed and expanded, as a result of which it has been re-scheduled for completion by mid-2000. |
| 1994 | 6. | To complete flood protection schemes in the next three years (1994-1997) for 12 villages which are particularly vulnerable. | The works have been delayed due to land resumption problems. Flood protection works for three villages had been completed by September 1998. Works for the remaining nine villages will be completed by 1999. |

Nature Conservation

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>	<i>Present Position</i>
Action in Progress : On Schedule		
1997	1. To study in 1998-1999 more potential sites to assess their suitability for designation as marine parks or marine reserve.	Studies on four potential sites commenced in 1998 and will be completed in early 1999.
1997	2. To enhance the protection and conservation of Mai Po and Inner Deep Bay Ramsar Site by adopting a conservation strategy and implementing a management plan for the site in 1998-1999.	A management team is being established. The first project to implement the management plan commenced in August 1998.
1997	3. To work towards more efficient management of country parks by more contracting out of litter collection and grass cutting in 1998-1999.	Ten more contracts were commissioned in the first nine months of 1998. We expect another six contracts to be let by end 1998.
1997	4. To designate Lung Fu Shan as a country park under the Country Parks Ordinance in 1998-1999.	The draft map of Lung Fu Shan Country Park was gazetted on 5 June 1998 for public consultation. We expect to designate the area as a country park in 1998-1999.

Action in Progress : Under Review

1996	5. To update the Country Parks Ordinance in 1997 to strengthen the protection and management of country parks.	The draft amendment bill has been prepared. Introduction of the Amendment Bill has been deferred, as it was not considered as an essential item during the operation of the PLC. The Bill is now being reviewed in the light of resources to be made available to implement the proposed provisions.
------	--	--

Action in Progress : Behind Schedule

- | | | | |
|------|----|---|--|
| 1996 | 6. | To designate in 1997 Ma Shi Chau as a special area under the Country Parks Ordinance. | Ma Shi Chau was ready for designation as a special area in 1997. The designation has been delayed because the requisite subsidiary legislation was not considered as essential for tabling at the PLC in 1997-1998. It is now scheduled to be designated as a special area in 1998-1999. |
|------|----|---|--|

Good progress has been made with the following commitment in the past year. We will continue to work on it on an on-going basis.

- | <i>Year</i> | <i>Pledge</i> |
|-------------|--|
| 1996 | 7. To continue to liaise with the Guangdong authorities through the Hong Kong-Guangdong Environmental Protection Liaison Group on the conservation of Indo-Pacific humpbacked dolphins (also locally known as Chinese white dolphins). |

Sustainable Development

- | <i>Year</i> | <i>Pledge</i> | <i>Present Position</i> |
|-------------|---------------|-------------------------|
|-------------|---------------|-------------------------|

Action in Progress : On Schedule

- | | | | |
|------|----|--|--|
| 1996 | 1. | To launch a study on “Sustainable Development for the 21st Century” in early 1997 at a cost of \$40 million to : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – define the concept of “sustainability” as applied to Hong Kong; – develop sustainability indicators; | The Study commenced in September 1997. An Inception Report and five Topic Reports have been prepared. A three-month awareness enhancement and public consultation programme was completed in June 1998. A Report on Stage I Public Consultation is being prepared and will be made available to the public in September/October 1998. A second public consultation programme on the findings of the study will be conducted in the later half of 1999. |
|------|----|--|--|

- develop a system which enables incorporation of the concept of “sustainable development” into the process of policy formulation, strategic planning and implementation; and
- propose publicity strategies to increase public understanding of the concept of sustainability.

To consult the public on the findings of the study before formulating detailed plans on how to take the matter forward.

Good progress has been made with the following commitment in the past year. We will continue to work on it on an on-going basis.

<i>Year</i>	<i>Pledge</i>
1996	2. To achieve an acceptable balance between safeguarding Hong Kong’s environmental quality and maintaining social and economic growth.