

Doc Type	DC
Paper No	7/97
Title	Long Term Housing Strategy Review Clearance of Squatter Areas on Mixed Lots in Urban Areas
CONTENTS	<p>DC 7/97 (LTHS 15/97)</p> <p>THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY</p> <p>Memorandum for the Development Committee</p> <p>Long Term Housing Strategy Review</p> <p>Clearance of Squatter Areas on Mixed Lots in Urban Areas</p> <p>PURPOSE</p> <p>This paper seeks Members' views on the feasibility of clearing all squatter areas on mixed lots in urban areas.</p> <p>BACKGROUND</p> <p>2. The Housing Department (HD) is the clearance agent on behalf of the Government. Under the existing policy, squatter structures are cleared when they are involved in development clearance (DC), non-development clearance (NDC) or on slope safety grounds. DCs or NDCs are initiated by the Lands Department (LD) through the submission of Clearance Application Forms (CAFs) and LD's confirmation of availability of funding for the payment of ex-gratia allowances (EGAs) to the eligible clearers, subject to availability of rehousing resources. If private land is involved, it must first be resumed before the clearance is launched. However, it is a statutory requirement that private land can only be resumed if it is required for public purpose.</p> <p>3. In 1992, the Government pledged to offer rehousing to all urban squatters entirely on Government land by 1996. Through rehousing under DCs and NDCs, the pledge was successfully met in March 1996. Nevertheless clearance of squatter areas on mixed lots (i.e. private lots mingled with Government land) are not covered because there are more complications in clearing mixed lots. Clearance of private land on mixed lots cannot be initiated unless there is a plan for the land to be resumed for a public purpose. If a partial clearance excluding the private land is carried out, the remaining residents on private land will encounter environmental, security and social problems.</p> <p>PRESENT SITUATION</p> <p>4. As a result of our clearances over the years, the total squatter population has dropped from 440,000 in 1986 to about 240,000 today. At present, there are 22 squatter settlements on mixed lots remaining in urban areas with an estimated population of 20,700. A list of these squatter areas is at Annex.</p> <p>LONG TERM HOUSING STRATEGY REVIEW PROPOSAL</p> <p>5. With a view to improving the living conditions of those who are inadequately housed, the Long Term Housing Strategy (LTHS) Review proposes that the Housing Authority (HA) should consider the feasibility of clearing all squatter areas on mixed lots in urban areas, subject to the availability of rehousing resources.</p> <p>FEASIBILITY</p> <p>6. Since clearance of squatter areas on private land cannot be initiated unless the private lots concerned are resumed for a public purpose, the best opportunity to clear the squatter areas on mixed lots is when the mixed lots are required for development for a public purpose. Through the launching of DCs, private lots will be resumed, and squatter areas will be cleared. Squatters on both private lots and government land can have a fair chance to get rehousing to improve their living condition. Correspondingly, the urban squatter population can be further reduced.</p> <p>7. However, there are constraints in clearing urban squatters on mixed lots through DCs, as follows -</p> <p>(a) DCs must be initiated by the Government. We cannot launch DCs without LD's CAFs and confirmation of sufficient funding for EGA payment;</p>

- (b) Clearance cannot be conducted if the mixed lot is not required for development for a public purpose;
- (c) Development programmes on mixed lots require inputs/resources from the concerned Government departments, including LD, Planning Department, Territory Development Department, Highways Department and other Government departments etc.;
- (d) Resumption of private lots will be subject to availability of adequate staff/funding resources from LD; and
- (e) Clearance of the mixed lots will require some 5,200 public rental housing and 4,300 interim housing units in the urban areas.

DISCUSSION

8. At the meeting on 24 march 1997, Members are requested to comment on the feasibility of clearing all squatter areas on mixed lots in urban areas as proposed in the LTHS Review.

---0---0---0---

File Ref. : HD(SCC) 3/42/94(C) II
Date : 19 March 1997