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The Secretariat
Task Force on Land Supply
17/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar,
Hong Kong
(email: tfls@devb.gov.hk)

Dear Sirs,

Task Force on Land Supply Public Engagement Activities
Response by the Hong Kong E&M Contractors' Association (The EMCA)

With reference to the Consultation Paper of the Task Force on Land Supply Public Engagement Activities, we enclose herewith our Response for your perusal.

Yours faithfully,

Gilbert TSANG
President

THE HONG KONG E&M CONTRACTORS' ASSOCIATION

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Task Force on Land Supply Public Engagement Activities
Response by the Hong Kong E&M Contractors' Association (The EMCA)

Our Position

1. We agree with the Task Force that:

1.1 Insufficient land for housing, economic and other purposes has become one of the major concerns of the public.

1.2 Hong Kong lacks at least 1,200 ha of land even if the Government's continuing multi-pronged approach to implement various on-going land supply measures can be implemented smoothly and as scheduled.

1.3 There is no single measure that could provide sufficient land to meet all the foreseeable and unforeseeable development needs.

Selection of Options

2. Reclamation

Reclamation has long been an important source of land supply to support the past development of Hong Kong. Six satellite new towns, namely Tsuen Wan, Sha Tin, Tuen Mun, Tai Po, Tseung Kwan O and Tung Chung, and the Chek Lap Kok Airport were largely built on reclaimed land. The virtual halt of large-scale reclamation for more than 10 years may be a major factor causing land shortage today.

The EMCA strongly supports the HKSAR Government to start the reclamation process immediately. Unlike other land supply options, reclamation does not have a major impact on existing land uses and generally does not require private land resumption or household resettlements. Should the use of reclaimed land be consulted and planned in conjunction with reclamation but not later, negative sentiment from the general public may be contained considerably. Similar early engagement with environmentalists and ecologists may also reduce the worries of the vocal minority.

3. Brownfield Sites

As pointed out by the Consultation Paper, around 540 ha of brownfield sites have been covered by the medium-to-long term large-scale development projects in the pipeline. There are a further 760 ha of brownfield sites that may be of potential use for development. The total area of brownfield sites matches the shortage of land supply that the Task Force has identified.

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The EMCA supports the HKSAR Government to locate suitable space to accommodate those operators who want to continue their business if their brownfield sites are being resumed so as to fully utilise the identified 540 ha. We further support the HKSAR Government to earnestly consider the potential for development of the remaining 760 ha from the brownfield sites study.

4. Land-Extensive Recreational Facilities

There has been widespread public concern on certain facilities run by private sports clubs which have been and are instrumental to contribute to the sports development of Hong Kong. Among others, the Fanling Golf Club (FGC) has provoked a heated public debate from different points of views. Based on the two preliminary development options of the FGC site for housing or other purposes proposed by the Government-appointed consultants, The EMCA supports the Partial Development Option for both housing and keeping part of the FGC to host international tournaments. Yet detail studies on the conservation of trees and heritages inside the FGC, and the level of transport infrastructure support for the development have to be conducted thoroughly.

Concluding Remarks

5. In view of the growth potential as brought out by the One Belt One Road and the Greater Bay Area Initiatives, a land supply of 1,200 hectares may not be sufficient to meet the needs in housing, economic or other purposes. Whilst Hong Kong has already paid a considerable price arising from land shortage, The EMCA supports the HKSAR Government to take a decisive step to implement different measures to resolve land shortage bearing in mind no single action will be adequate.

6. As one of the most open world cities where diversity of views is always a norm, reaching of a consensus by a majority of stakeholders in Hong Kong may never emerge especially in this year-long discussed sensitive issue of Land Supply. We strongly believe that the problem of land supply will aggravate with time if no immediate action is taken. The HKSAR Government is recommended to embark on a decisive move to implement more than one option to resolve the problem. The shortage of land supply will become more acute if we do not act now.

About The EMCA

The EMCA has been playing a leading role in the electrical & mechanical contracting sector to deal with all major issues with the Government and all stakeholders. Members of The EMCA are sizable companies which collectively undertake about 60% of the total contract value of the entire industry in Hong Kong and are the major holders of electrical & mechanical contracts outside the territory.

The EMCA is one of the three Association Members of the Real Estate and Construction Functional Constituency which also consists of The Real Estate Developers Association of Hong Kong and The Hong Kong Construction Association.