

All-out efforts for relief work after extreme conditions and launch of special inspections

The Secretary for Development, Ms Bernadette Linn, today (September 9) said that departments under the Development Bureau (DEVB) continued to carry out relief work and follow up with every effort on the impacts brought by the extreme conditions, with a view to enabling the community to resume normal as soon as possible. To ensure public safety, the DEVB has also instructed relevant departments to launch special inspections exercise to identify slopes, trees and structures with potential risk after the torrential rain.

As of 8am today, the Drainage Services Department (DSD) has received 60 confirmed cases of flooding, all of which have been eliminated and the affected areas reopened. The DSD will continue to inspect and clean up drainage and river channels to ensure smooth operation of drainage systems. During the period, more than 550 staff members of the DSD and contractor have been deployed to handle flooding-related emergency and follow-up work.

In response to landslide incidents triggered by the extreme rainstorm, the Emergency Control Centre of the Geotechnical Engineering Office (GEO) of the Civil Engineering and Development Department have so far deployed around 90 geotechnical engineers and technical staff to inspect landslide sites, and offer advice to various government departments and emergency service personnel. As of noon today, the GEO received 60 reports of landslides and completed inspection on 35 landslide cases which were relatively severe. Departments responsible for slope maintenance including the Highways Department and the Lands Department were advised to carry out urgent slope maintenance works. Such incidents include 16 cases with roads completely closed (being reopened progressively), five cases with roads partially closed and four cases involving evacuation of residents (one case with arrangements made for residents to return home after temporary evacuation).

The GEO's Emergency Control Centre will remain in operation to handle the remaining landslide cases with relevant maintenance departments. Meanwhile, relevant departments will proactively carry out emergency slope maintenance works as required including clearing road surface, removing debris and loose soil, and using cement spray to stabilise exposed slopes under safe condition when the weather permits.

Owing to the damage of underground water mains in the landslide incident near Yiu Hing Road in Shau Kei Wan, water supply to the Yiu Tung Estate had been affected. With the all-out efforts of the Water Supplies Department in emergency repair, water supply resumed fully this afternoon.

Various government departments responsible for the maintenance of man-made slopes, including works departments, the Lands Department, the Housing

Department and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department commenced special inspections today to comprehensively inspect all the man-made slopes under their purview to further enhance the safety of all government man-made slopes to protect the safety of the general public.

Besides, tree management departments will conduct another round of special inspections following the large-scale inspections mounted earlier after the passage of typhoon, in order to ensure the stability of trees after the torrential rain and properly handle trees with potential risks to ensure public safety.

The Buildings Department (BD) will continue to inspect the external walls of buildings in accordance with a risk-based approach and select those with higher potential risk for special inspections of their external walls by using drones to ascertain their conditions as early as possible. Where necessary, the BD will arrange the government contractor to carry out emergency works on behalf of the owners and then recover the costs from them.

Although the extreme conditions has ended, the landslip warning is still in force. Members of the public should remain vigilant and stay away from slopes. Motorists should avoid driving in hilly areas or parking vehicles in front of slopes. Residents living close to slopes should stay in rooms furthest away from slopes or on high floors if possible. When a notification to evacuate is received, members of the public should follow rescuers' instructions and move immediately to a safe shelter. If they witness a landslide, they should leave immediately and call the Police under safe conditions.

Furthermore, trees and structures may be affected after torrential rain due to a large intake of water into soil and surface layers. Members of the public should therefore remain vigilant when going outdoor, and avoid prolonged stay under trees and structures with signs of concrete spalling.

Moreover, land and building owners, property management staff and site contractors should complete inspections of structures, trees, drains, slopes and retaining walls, construction sites and the like under their charge as soon as possible and carry out appropriate risk mitigation work to avoid accidents.