

Land resumption at Choi Yuen Tsuen to be conducted in a humane way

The Government will carry out land resumption at Choi Yuen Tsuen (CYT) again tomorrow (November 19), with an aim to take possession of structures vacated by villagers who have already moved out of CYT, and to understand the progress of the moving plans of other villagers.

The Government has stated repeatedly that it will handle the phased land resumption in a humane manner. The Administration will firstly take over structures from the villagers and business undertakings who have moved out as well as agricultural and vacant land, with a view to commencing the preparatory works, such as site formation, as soon as possible.

The spokesman said that by taking over land in phases, the progress of the works of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-HK Express Rail Link (XRL) project would not be affected; and at the same time villagers with special needs would have more time to implement their moving plans. If villagers are willing to cooperate, a win-win outcome can be achieved.

The spokesman stressed, "All the structures and agricultural land recovered since the launching of the first phase of the clearance operation in mid-October were handed over by the villagers voluntarily. Consent of villagers for demolishing these structures were also obtained. The Government has communicated with the villagers time and again and the purpose of the operations were well known to the villagers. It did not involve any acts of 'intimidating and forcing the villagers to leave'".

On the news report that an illiterate villager had signed an undertaking under the pressure of a Lands Department officer, the spokesman stressed, "the accusation is totally unfounded. It is definitely not true. Apart from going through the procedure of obtaining a written consent from the villager concerned beforehand, Government officer had called up the villager again in the afternoon of the operation day. She re-confirmed that she had no objection to carrying out site formation on her farmland and to clearing the remaining crops that would not be put up for sale in the market. In fact, the villager has already collected the ex-gratia crops allowance and did not ask for re-assessment."

The Government will continue to aim at a win-win situation during tomorrow's land resumption and clearance operation and will take possession of the structures from villagers who had agreed to surrender their land. If individual villagers have genuine special needs, the Government will try to match their moving plans as far as possible and handle such cases in a humane manner provided that the progress of the XRL project will not be adversely affected. Nevertheless, the villagers should genuinely implement their moving plans as the XRL project cannot be delayed indefinitely.

Separately, some CYT villagers intend to move to the vicinity of Yuen Kong San Tsuen and Tai Wo Village. The spokesman was glad to learn that with the help of Heung Yee Kuk, negotiation over the land transaction had reached its final stage.

We shall look into arrangements that will facilitate the house building plans of the villagers in the coming months and at the same time will not affect the progress of the rail project," the spokesman said.

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