

(III) QUALITY PEOPLE

52. A professional and respectable workforce is important to the delivery of quality construction. To uplift the construction industry's status, it requires joint effort from the Government, developers, contractors, sub-contractors, workers and training authorities. Through close liaison with various stakeholders, we have formulated and introduced measures to enhance the manpower development for construction workforce and to improve the safety and health conditions of their working environments. Initiatives to uplift professionalism of the construction workforce are highlighted in the following paragraphs.

Pillar Ten – Uplifting Professionalism

53. **Trade test certification** is one of major initiatives in uplifting the skill level of the construction workers. With the increase of our contract requirements of trade tested workers to an average of 45% for the 14 core trades in 2001 and ultimately to 60% in 2003 (Paper No. BC 64/2001, QH 10/2001 refers), we have closely worked with CITA to ensure the training capacities will cope with our requirements. In 2002, we have increased the percentage requirements of the 14 core trades to around 60% and introduced new trade tests to cover piling, ground investigation and some other building trades (Paper No. BC 32/2002 QH 4/2002 refers).

54. In order to provide a more reliable basis for manpower planning of the construction workforce, Works Bureau has agreed with the industry on a proposed framework for the **Construction Personnel Registration Scheme** and will introduce the relevant legislation in December 2002. The registration scheme will serve as a platform for launching other initiatives to uplift the skill levels of the construction workers. The Authority is in support of the implementation of the registration scheme and has spearheaded the requirement of employing trade tested workers for HA contracts.

55. To attract and retain capable personnel, it is important to **uplift the professional status** of the contractors' front-line site supervisory staff so that they will take pride in their work. We have introduced contract

requirement to specify the qualification and experience of the key site personnel, such as Site Agent, General Foreman and Block Foreman (Paper no. BC 104/2001, QH 15/2001 refers).

56. The daily wage system of employment, which is very common in the construction industry, is not conducive to the development of quality culture nor talent retention. Due to the fluctuating workload and the uneven manpower requirements for different trades, employment of direct labour may not be feasible. To improve the quality of its workforce, the industry needs to provide more stable employment for its workers particularly the site supervisory staff. We have therefore introduced contract provisions to require the main contractors to **employ their key site supervisory staff on a monthly wage basis**. An environment of more stable employment will attract and retain capable personnel. This will in turn encourage the contractors to invest in staff training and foster a quality culture in the construction industry (Paper no. BC 104/2001, QH 15/2001 refers).

57. **Close liaison between the Department and CITA** to develop public housing oriented courses for training of construction workers and the Department's site staff has been a continuous process. This is to ensure that the training courses are practical and in line with the latest specification requirements for HA contracts. In addition to the training of construction skills in the core trades and the works ethics, some trades specific to HA building contracts, such as the metal formwork erection, handling of precast façade and uPVC lined G.I. pipe installation etc., have been incorporated into the syllabus of the training courses. Apart from the training of the construction workers, CITA has also organized tailor-made craft appreciation courses for the Department's site staff to enhance their knowledge in new trade practices and their skills in site supervision.

58. Implementing the Quality Housing Initiatives with regard to **Site Safety** has achieved positive results. There has been a continuous decline of construction accident occurrences; safety awareness of all parties of construction projects is heightened. The accident rate per 1,000 workers has improved from 109 in 1999 to 86 in 2000. Projected statistics for 2001 indicates that the rate should dropped to below 70.

59. **Site safety** measures cover a comprehensive range. In brief, procurement, tender and contractual control are tightened for maintaining safety standard and proved to be effective venues. Safety consideration is attended through listing assessment, tender award, contractual payment, awarding bonus and imposing disciplinary action. Through systematic training and publicity, safety awareness and knowledge of workers, and also line personnel, are to be heightened. Source of accidents data are analysed and used as a management tool. The Housing Authority will continue to exercise her role as a major stakeholder in the industry-co-organizing joint safety campaigns, promoting HA projects and contractors' participation and working with other government departments and stakeholders on safety improvement. These pointers support the effectiveness of the quality initiative, which the Department will continue to pledge its full implementation.

60. A **safe and tidy working environment** is a basic requirement for attracting and retaining workers. While various safety initiatives have been implemented to improve the safety records on our construction sites, we have also introduced measures such as improved toilet facilities, dust control system to improve the hygiene conditions on site, and the use of passenger lifts before project completion to facilitate the vertical transportation of the construction workers, contractor's site supervisors and our site staff to the upper floors.