



Permanent Secretary for Housing

Message from
Ms Agnes WONG Tin-yu, J.P.

Welcome all to the Forum today to share experience and exchange the latest information on safety at work and occupational health for promoting further a safety culture. The Forum was originally scheduled for 2 November 2022. However, due to typhoon, it was rescheduled to today.

Being a major public housing developer in Hong Kong, the Housing Authority (HA) formulates site safety requirements of the highest standard. The principle of “zero fatal accidents” is always the safety indicator that we uphold to ensure a safe working environment. As seen from the theme of this year’s Forum, i.e. “Accident prevention for safeguarding lives”, we attach utmost importance to the safety and health of site workers. Effective precaution measures must be adopted to strengthen site safety management, prevent accidents by nipping the problem in the bud and to make safety our top priority. The HA has long been encouraging contractors to enhance safety standards and health management by way of a three-pronged approach, i.e. procurement strategies and stringent performance monitoring mechanisms with incentives and sanctions; strengthening of safety and health requirements in contract provisions; and ongoing research, training and promotion.

We endeavour to improve our procurement and monitoring mechanisms on a continuous basis to ensure that the safety performance of contractors meets our requirements. Three months ago, there was a serious industrial accident on a construction site at Anderson Road. Although the site is not under the HA, we immediately instructed contractors of all our projects to double-check the installation of tower cranes to ensure safety. At the same time, we have suspended the relevant contractor’s eligibility for tendering until the end of 2023. Once a bacterium that can cause melioidosis was found in some soil samples of our Pak Tin Estate Redevelopment site, we cooperated with the Department of Health and the Centre for Health Protection in the investigation process and adopted their advice on follow up actions by spreading hydrated lime onto the soil for disinfection, arranging workers for blood test and reminding all site personnel to pay attention to site hygiene and epidemic prevention.

The HA is going to build a total of some 360 000 public housing flats in the coming decade. Shouldering this important task, we are determined to make our best efforts to speed up, enhance efficiency and increase production. At the same time, we will stay alert at all times and uphold the “safety first” principle. We will continue to explore and deploy advanced technologies, procedures



and machinery to enhance overall efficiency, and strive to ensure that all work processes meet the requirements in terms of both safety and quality. In addition to the conventional prefabrication technology, we will expand the application of Design for Manufacture and Assembly (DfMA), Modular Integrated Construction (MiC) and Multi-trade Integrated Mechanical, Electrical and Plumbing (MiMEP) in order to reduce the construction procedures to be performed on site, and lowering the accident number.

Our partner organisations also provide support at different levels for the industry to enhance safety and health performance. For instance, different funding schemes are offered by the OSHC to help contractors improve their equipment for construction. The CIC, through the Construction Innovation and Technology Fund, also encourages the industry to adopt innovative construction technologies to uplift build quality and enhance site safety. Besides, the HA has recently become a supporting organisation to the Heart Caring Campaign co-organised by the OSHC and the Labour Department to help frontline workers in the construction industry and the property management sector to prevent cardiovascular and cerebrovascular diseases. Contractors are encouraged to actively make use of these resources.

Last but not least, on behalf of the HA, I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the OSHC, the CIC, all supporting organisations, speakers and the industry for their staunch support in making this Forum a success. We believe that site safety can definitely be enhanced with the concerted efforts of all stakeholders so that colleagues and frontline staff can work in a safe and healthy environment in the process of building quality public housing and providing comprehensive management and maintenance services.