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Premier applauds reconstruction for aging, unsafe structures

Premier Lai Ching-te on Tuesday applauded aggressive efforts on the part of the Ministry of the Interior (MOI) to reinforce and reconstruct excessively old or unsafe buildings across the nation.

Speaking at the 17th interministerial meeting on accelerating investment in Taiwan, the premier encouraged the MOI to continue raising public awareness of the building reconstruction policy while helping local governments improve their policy implementation capacities. Reconstruction subsidies will also be provided to ensure the right to safe housing for all.

The MOI said that because standards for seismic design specifications were revised after a deadly earthquake in 1999, all structures for which construction permits were requested prior to December 31, 1999 must undergo seismic hazard assessments. Of these, rapid screening is expected to be completed on 7,500 buildings having nine or more floors by the end of 2018, and on all buildings having six or more floors by 2020.

To implement the reinforcement and reconstruction policy in phases, the MOI rolled out secondary legislation and complementary measures to the Statute for Expediting Reconstruction of Urban Unsafe and Old Buildings in August 2017.

This year the MOI also launched a nationwide structural seismic inspection and reconstruction guidance project with a budget of NT\$5.7 billion (US\$186.1 million). From 2018 through 2021, these funds will go toward helping local authorities implement structural safety assessments, reinforce buildings in phases, formulate reconstruction plans, establish guidance committees, subsidize interest on reconstruction loans and provide credit guarantees for the loans.

In urban renewal efforts, the National Housing and Urban Regeneration Center

inaugurated August 1, 2018 is implementing eight government-led urban renewal projects while local governments are seeking investors for nine projects, altogether requiring an estimated NT\$133 billion (US\$4.3 billion) in investments.