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Twenty-eight months' jail for offering \$1m bribes over WSD project

4 January 2013

Two directors of a subcontractor, charged by the ICAC, were today (Friday) each sentenced to 28 months' imprisonment at the District Court for offering nearly \$1 million in bribes in relation to a water works project of the Water Supplies Department (WSD).

Stephen Au Yeung Ching-cheong and Eric Choi Chun-wai, both 58 and directors of Sunshine Traffic Engineering and Contractors Company Limited (STE), were earlier found guilty of a joint charge of conspiracy to offer advantages to an agent, contrary to Section 9(2)(b) of the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance and Section 159A of the Crimes Ordinance.

In sentencing, Judge Sham Siu-man remarked that there was no doubt Hong Kong people cherished a clean society.

The judge said people disdained corruption as it not only created unfairness in the society, but also caused some works to be completed not in accordance with established rules or standards.

Should the water works project involved in the case be completed sloppily due to corruption, the victim would be the public at large, the judge stressed, adding that the court had to mete out deterrent sentences to the offenders so as to nip corruption in the bud.

The court heard that at the material times, STE was subcontracted a project for the replacement and rehabilitation of water works in the New Territories by China National Chemical Engineering Hongkong Limited (CNC).

CNC was the main contractor of the project under a \$163 million term maintenance contract awarded by WSD in July 2007 to China National Chemical Engineering Group Corporation, the mother company of CNC.

CNC assigned its assistant project manager Eric Tai Kee-cheong to oversee and monitor the progress of the project.

The court heard that in the same month, the defendants had a meeting with Tai. Upon Tai's solicitation, the defendants agreed to offer a monthly bribe payment of \$30,000 to him so as to enhance the working relationship with CNC.

Between December 2007 and January 2011, the defendants issued a total of 33 cheques, each for \$30,000, to Tai. The cheques, totalling \$990,000, were encashed by Tai, the court was told.

WSD and CNC had rendered full assistance to the ICAC during its investigation.

The prosecution was today represented by prosecuting counsel Thomas Iu, assisted by ICAC officer Tim So.

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