

**Secretary for Education and Manpower's
Speaking Note at the
Special Meeting of Finance Committee to Examine
the Draft Estimates of Expenditure 2001-02
held at 10:15am on Friday, 23 March 2001**

Chairman,

I would like to give an account of Government's expenditure on education and highlight our major initiatives in the coming financial year. In the interest of time, I have already tabled my presentation material. Now I would like to briefly outline some of the key points.

Overall Expenditure on Education

2. In the 2001-02 financial year, education is the policy area to which Government will devote the most resources. The total expenditure on education will be **\$55.33 billion**, accounting for 21.9% of total Government expenditure. When compared with last year's expenditure on education, there is a 5.9% increase in real terms. The lion's share of the provision goes to basic education, accounting for 68.8% of the total spending on education and representing a 9% real growth in recurrent expenditure.

Major Expenditure Items

3. The increase in our expenditure in the coming year will mainly be devoted to the following five areas:

- (a) developing a professional teaching force;
- (b) improving teaching and learning;
- (c) enhancing support to students;
- (d) providing quality teaching and learning environment; and
- (e) promoting lifelong learning.

4. On developing a professional teaching force, we will strengthen training, and encourage self-learning and exchanges among teachers. We will also provide additional staff and upgrade posts in recognition of teachers' professional qualifications. The total estimated expenditure on this area amounts to about \$1,100 million in the coming year.

5. On improving teaching and learning, our priorities will be on cultivating students' habit and interest in reading, enhancing language proficiency, implementing curriculum reform, and encouraging teachers to collaborate and share experience. In support of the above initiatives, the Education Department will disseminate successful teaching practices at the district level in the coming year. We have injected a one-off grant of \$200 million into the Language Fund in 2001. Additionally, we will spend about \$100 million on improving teaching and learning in the next year.

6. Regarding support to students, we will, first and foremost, cater for students' individual differences so that students of mixed abilities can develop their potentials to the full. On the one hand, we will continue to promote integrated education; on the other, we will strengthen the

enrichment programmes for gifted students. Counselling services and self-development education for needy students will also be enhanced. The additional expenditure on this area in the coming year will be around \$300 million.

7. On improving teaching and learning environment, we will continue our sustained efforts to implement whole-day primary schooling and the School Improvement Programme with a view to meeting our policy targets. The total provision in the coming year is about \$2,200 million.

8. To promote lifelong learning, we will conduct an overall review of the mode of operation and contents of adult education courses in the coming year. Our objectives are to enable people who have been deprived of education opportunities in their earlier years to equip themselves, and to strengthen the link between adult education and employment. We will continue to run the Project Springboard to provide secondary school leavers who cannot secure a S6 place with an alternative channel to continue their studies. The estimated expenditure on this area in the coming financial year is about \$200 million.

9. Chairman, this concludes my presentation on the education programme area. The Controlling Officers and I will be happy to listen to Members' views and answer any questions.