

The 2000 Policy Address

Policy objectives of the Home Affairs Bureau

Speech by the Secretary for Home Affairs
at the meeting of the LegCo. Panel on Home Affairs
on 17 October 2000

Chairman and Honourable Members,

This is the first time I attend the meeting of the Home Affairs Panel since I assumed the office of the Secretary for Home Affairs. The targets and progress of the work of the Home Affairs Bureau, which fall into 4 programme areas, are set out in the four policy objective booklets. Today, my three Deputy Secretaries, the Director of Home Affairs, the Director of Leisure and Cultural Services and I will brief Members on the work of the Home Affairs Bureau. The Deputy Secretary for Health and Welfare is also present and he will respond to questions raised by Members regarding women's matters.

The Rights of the Individual

2. Our policy objective is to protect and promote the rights of the individual so as to give effect to the realization of

individual-rights as well as freedom guaranteed under the Basic Law. One of our key area of work is to prepare reports in respect of the international human rights treaties that are applicable to Hong Kong for submission to the United Nations (UN) through the Central People's Government and to attend hearings and respond directly to questions put forth by the UN Treaty Monitoring Bodies. Last year, we attended the UN hearings of our reports submitted under the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT). Our report under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) has been submitted to the UN earlier this month by the Central People's Government as part of China's report. Hong Kong's report is being printed and will be available as soon as possible for distribution to all Members and the public. The hearing of our report under the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) is scheduled for April/May next year. We will also conduct public consultations before proceeding with the preparation of our report under the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC).

3. To promote the rights of the individual, the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data have contributed much to

increasing the public's awareness of equal opportunities and privacy of the individual. According to the 'Biennial Survey of Civic Education 2000' published by the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education, 70% of the respondents agree that, human rights are, as a whole, protected in Hong Kong.

Community and Youth Development

4. Youth Development is one of the major areas of work of the Government. We are supported and advised by the Commission on Youth, the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education and various non-governmental organisations. Through implementing different programmes, we aim to enable our young people to develop their full potential, raise their civic awareness, promote their sense of belonging to Hong Kong, and enhance their understanding of our country and the wider world. In the coming year, we will continue to strengthen our cooperation with the organisations mentioned above and the government departments concerned in the development of youth.

5. The Government is reviewing how to enhance further the role played by District Councils in district administration. We will take the views of all members of the community into account during the review.

6. We have designated 18 November this year as The “District Councils Day”. A series of activities will be held on that day, including a seminar on district administration. All District Council members will be invited to attend the seminar and to give their views on district administration.

7. In view of the success of the Rural Planning and Improvement Strategy (RPIS) Minor Works Programme implemented in the rural areas, we have, starting from 2000-01, allocated an amount of \$ 35 million to carry out a similar programme - the “ Urban Minor Works Programme” - in the urban areas with a view to improving the environment there. We have also appointed the Chairmen or Vice-chairmen of the District Councils to join the Central Steering Committees and the District Working Groups of the above two programmes so as to solicit their views on the use of the funding.

8. We are committed to ensuring smooth and rapid integration of new arrivals into the community, so that they can make contribution to Hong Kong. We have made good progress both in the provision and coordination of services over the past few years.

- In services provision, apart from the general social services, Government departments and non-governmental organizations also provide orientation programme, language

courses and all sorts of information tailor-made for new arrivals to address their needs.

- In service coordination, we maintain close contact with non-governmental organizations so as to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the needs of the new arrivals and to plan our future services more effectively.

9. In the coming year, we shall strengthen our efforts in social education and promotion work so as to encourage the local communities to accept the new arrivals more readily.

Building Management

10. Building management is the third policy area of the Home Affairs Bureau. Since more than half of our population lives in private multi-storey buildings, building management is an important element of our daily life. Therefore, we have been making efforts to implement a number of administrative and legislative measures to assist private-flat owners to carry out their responsibilities for managing and maintaining their properties.

11. We have amended the Building Management Ordinance

this year to facilitate the setting up of Owners' Corporation for better building management. The Home Affairs Department will establish a new division next year, to be responsible for the coordination of matters relating to building management, the provision of building management services and for offering advice to the public.

12. We will continue with our education and promotion work to raise public awareness of the importance of building management. In addition, we will continue to assist owners to form Owners' Corporations and help them improve the management of their buildings.

Arts, Culture, Sport and Recreation

13. The year 2000 has seen the new development of an administrative structure for arts, culture, sport and recreation. The Leisure and Cultural Services Department was established on 1 January to assume the overall responsibility for the delivery of cultural and leisure services to the public. The Culture and Heritage Commission headed by Professor CHANG Hsin-kang was set up in April 2000. The Government will work closely with the Commission in the formulation of long-term cultural development strategies.

14. For the preservation of our cultural heritage, we are now

reviewing the current policies and relevant legislation on heritage preservation so as to keep in line with the prevailing situation and the ever-changing needs of society.

15. In the area of sport, we will work more closely with the SF&OC (the Sports Federation and Olympic Committee of Hong Kong, China), the Sports Development Board and various sports associations to improve the professional standards of our athletes. Additionally, we will work closely with District Councils, district sports associations and schools to promote sport in the community.

16. At present, we are actively preparing our bid for the 2006 Asian Games. We are hopeful that we can be awarded the Game, result of which will be announced in November.

Conclusion

17. This is the end of my briefing. My colleagues here and I are ready to listen to your views and take your questions. Also, my colleague of the Health and Welfare Bureau will be happy to listen to your views on matters relating to women matter.

18. Thank you.