

Extract of draft official record of proceedings of the Legislative Council meeting on 15 May 2002

Implementation of Co-location Clearance at Border Control Points

7. **MS MIRIAM LAU** (in Chinese): *Madam President, improvement works are being undertaken to upgrade the vehicular border links and facilities for passenger and freight traffic at Lok Ma Chau Control Point in order to cope with the increasing flow of passenger and freight traffic. At the 5th Plenary of the Hong Kong/Guangdong Cooperation Joint Conference, both sides agreed in principle to put on trial the arrangement of "co-locating" immigration and customs facilities for cross-boundary passengers at Lok Ma Chau Control Point and Huanggang Border Control, whereby officers from Hong Kong and Shenzhen will conduct separate cross-boundary checks within the same premises. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether:*

- (a) consideration will be given to examining the feasibility of implementing "co-location" of boundary crossing facilities for freight traffic; if not, of the reasons for that;*
- (b) modifications will be made to the current and proposed improvement works at Lok Ma Chau Control Point in the light of the arrangement for "co-location" clearance of cross-boundary passengers; if so, of the details; and*
- (c) consideration will be given to planning afresh the overall facilities at Lok Ma Chau Control Point upon the implementation of "co-location" clearance for cross-boundary passengers, and providing additional lanes for cross-boundary freight vehicles so as to expedite the customs clearance of such vehicles; if not, of the reasons for that?*

SECRETARY FOR SECURITY (in Chinese): *Madam President, at the 5th Plenary of the Hong Kong/Guangdong Cooperation Joint Conference held on 15 March 2002, both sides agreed to implement "co-location" of immigration and*

customs facilities at Huanggang and a new control point to be built at Shenzhen Western Corridor. The principle of implementing "co-location" as agreed between the two sides is that the relevant departments of the two sides will use the site of a control point on the Shenzhen side. They will carry out separate immigration and customs clearance in accordance with their own relevant laws and regulations.

- (a) The consensus reached by Guangdong and Hong Kong is to first implement "co-location" of immigration and customs facilities for passenger traffic at Huanggang. The advantages under the new arrangement are that travellers will not have to get on and off the coaches as many times before and can go through clearance procedures of the two sides in a more comfortable environment. The "co-location" arrangement to be put on trial at Huanggang will not include clearance of goods vehicles. The main reason is the lack of space in Huanggang to accommodate our vehicle inspection lanes and other facilities such as the X-ray building. Moreover, the costs of relocating these facilities will be very high. Nevertheless, at the new control point at Shenzhen Western Corridor, the "co-location" plan will cover clearance of both passenger and freight traffic of the two sides.
- (b) The proposed "co-location" arrangement will not affect Phase II improvement works being carried out at Lok Ma Chau Control Point. As the "co-location" arrangement at Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang will apply to the clearance of passenger traffic only, it will not affect a larger proportion of improvement works under Phase II which are related to clearance of goods vehicles, such as refurbishment of vehicle kiosks and the construction of the X-ray building, and so on. As for passenger traffic, the major expansion works, such as extension of the Terminal Building and improvement works relating to coach boarding and alighting areas are scheduled for completion in July 2002, October 2002 (alighting areas) and March 2003 (boarding areas) respectively. The rest of the works including refurbishing and additions of immigration counters and the remaining ancillary facilities will be completed by September 2003 by phases. As we need time to study and resolve

the complex legal and jurisdictional issues involved in the implementation of "co-location", we should not in the absence of a concrete timetable for its implementation modify the schedule of the existing improvement works which are about to be completed soon. In fact, it is worthwhile to continue to pursue these improvement measures, even as transitional or interim measures prior to implementing the "co-location" arrangement, to alleviate the congested passenger and vehicular traffic at Lok Ma Chau Control Point.

- (c) Upon the implementation of the "co-location" arrangement, a majority of the passenger vehicles may be diverted to Huanggang to undergo clearance procedures required by both sides, leaving all vehicle kiosks at the Lok Ma Chau Control Point free for clearance of goods vehicles. In view of the continuing growth in passenger traffic at Lok Ma Chau (a growth of 302% from 1996 to 2001), we need to study in greater detail whether some facilities at Lok Ma Chau for passenger clearance should be retained. Therefore, we do not think it is time to consider planning afresh the facilities for passenger traffic at the Lok Ma Chau Control Point so as to provide additional lanes for cross-boundary goods vehicles.