

SBCR 1/2098/98 Pt.12

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11 December 2001

Mrs Sharon Tong
Clerk to LegCo Panel on Security
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
(Fax: 2877 8024)

Dear Mrs Tong,

**LegCo Panel on Security
Meeting on 6 December 2001**

The updated Information Systems Strategy of the Immigration Department was discussed at the above meeting. During the meeting, the Administration undertook to provide the following information:

- (a) Measures pursued or being pursued to facilitate the clearance of cross-boundary passengers and vehicles before Automated passenger Clearance and Automated Vehicle Clearance systems are introduced; and
- (b) Updated cross-boundary statistics in respect of passengers and vehicles.

I enclose the relevant information at Annexes A and B and should be grateful if you would distribute them to Members.

Yours sincerely,

(Miss Ada Chan)
for Secretary for Security

cc D of Imm (Attn: Mr K C Chow)
(Attn: Mr C H Cheung)
(Attn: Mr Albert Lai)
C of C&E (Attn: Mr O T Chow)

**Measures to Facilitate Clearance of
Cross-boundary Passengers and Vehicles**

(1) Passenger traffic

Contra-flow (Tidal Flow) Arrangement - to open some arrival counters for departure clearance during departure peaks and vice versa to ease passenger traffic at the dominant flow direction.

Extension of operating hours - starting from December 1 this year, the operating hours for passenger traffic at Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau control points have been extended, running from 6.30 am to midnight.

Enhancement of manpower resources - the Immigration Department has created another 117 posts at the Lo Wu Control Point in the financial year 2001/02 and will further strengthen manpower there in 2002/03. As for the Customs and Excise Department, the number of posts will be increased by 31 at the Lo Wu Control Point in the financial year 2002/03 to cope with the ever-increasing passenger traffic at the control point.

Issue of machine-readable travel documents - the Immigration Department intends to introduce new machine-readable Re-entry Permits by late December this year. The Department will also enhance existing non machine-readable Re-entry Permits (around 400 000) by attaching machine-readable labels on them free of charge. This would shorten clearance time at control points by doing away with the existing procedure of manual input of the personal data of the holders, and will help to speed up the passenger flow. The Department also intends to issue machine-readable Document of Identity next year. This would likewise shorten clearance time by doing away with the need for manual input of personal data of the holders.

Expansion works at Lok Ma Chau - with the commencement of Phase II Expansion project at Lok Ma Chau, the passenger hall will be expanded and renovated, and the number of immigration counters will be increased to 48. This will increase the handling capacity of the control point to 7 000 passengers per hour during peak periods.

Improvement works at Lo Wu Terminal - we are now making plans for further improvement works at the Lo Wu Terminal, including widening of the passageway to alleviate congestion, expansion of the departure hall and addition of immigration counters to cater for clearance of more passengers during peak periods. Funds have been earmarked for the improvement works which are expected to be completed in 2004 by phases.

(2) Goods vehicular traffic

Dedicated Lanes for Unladen Goods Vehicles Scheme - this scheme was introduced in August 1999. At present, unladen goods vehicles account for 60 per cent and 30 per cent of northbound and southbound traffic respectively. Through separate processing of unladen and laden goods vehicles, the average handling capacity of a customs kiosk in respect of unladen vehicles can be increased from 60-90 vehicles to 110-130 vehicles per hour.

Land Cargo Advance Clearance System - The Customs and Excise Department has been operating a trial scheme of Land Cargo Advance Clearance System at Lok Ma Chau Control Point since March 2000. Under the scheme, vehicular clearance time will be shortened by advance submission and processing of cargo manifest. This scheme may bridge over to the future Road Manifest Electronic Data Interface (ROMAN).

Super Link China Direct - it was introduced in August 2000. Transshipment air cargo heading for the Mainland via Lok Ma Chau Control Point will be checked at the airport by Customs and then sealed. The sealed cargo will not be checked again unless it is absolutely necessary, and the clearance time for such cargo at land boundary crossings is shortened.

"One-Stop-Shop" Arrangement for Goods Vehicles - With effect from October 2001, the Customs and Excise and the Immigration Departments have been jointly operating a trial scheme of "One-Stop-Shop" arrangement at the Lok Ma Chau Control Point. Under the scheme, customs and immigration officers are co-located inside one kiosk to conduct customs and immigration clearance procedures in order to increase the throughput of cross-boundary vehicles. The Scheme is now

under review by the relevant departments to see if the One-Stop-Shop arrangement should be implemented on a long-term basis.

Opening of more lanes at night - With effect from December 1 this year, two northbound lanes and four southbound lanes have been open from 10 pm to midnight at the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point.

Expansion works at Lok Ma Chau - Following the completion of Phase I expansion project in December 1999, the number of inspection kiosks at the Lok Ma Chau Control Point have been increased from 14 to 24. When the works relating to the replacement of the old kiosks are completed, the vehicular handling capacity of the Control Point will be substantially increased from 19 000 vehicles to 32 000 vehicles per day.

(3) Introduction of New Technology

Automatic Vehicle Recognition System - This is an automated computer-recognition system which recognizes vehicle registration numbers by the use of digital cameras and infrared equipment instead of human vision. The vehicle registration number will be converted into electronic data and input into the Land Boundary Computer System of the Customs and Excise Department for handling cross-boundary vehicles. The processing time for each vehicle will be reduced by two to three seconds on average. Installation works will commence in March next year in customs kiosks at Lok Ma Chau, Man Kam To and Sha Tau Kok Control Points respectively by phases.

Road Manifest Electronic Data Interface (EDI) - In order to ease the long-term pressure arising from cargo clearance, the Customs and Excise Department is now actively studying the feasibility of introducing Road Manifest EDI. If feasible, land cargo manifest can in future be submitted to the Customs and Excise Department for advance clearance by electronic means. The feasibility study of this system is now being carried out. Implementation of the system, if proved feasible, would greatly reduce the processing time for vehicles at customs kiosks.

Annex B**Cross-boundary Statistics for Control Points****Number of Passengers by Land during the Period
January - November 2000 and January - November 2001**

| Control Point | January - November 2001 | | January - November 2000 | | % Change | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | Arrival | Departure | Arrival | Departure | Arrival | Departure |
| Lo Wu | 41 280 808 | 40 010 953 | 39 943 810 | 38 748 857 | +3.3 | +3.3 |
| Hung Hom | 945 404 | 1 045 208 | 873 284 | 969 686 | +8.3 | +7.8 |
| Lok Ma Chau | 5 366 459 | 5 905 727 | 4 692 556 | 5 235 278 | +14.4 | +12.8 |
| Man Kam To | 463 869 | 510 872 | 433 084 | 485 062 | +7.1 | +5.3 |
| Sha Tau Kok | 569 085 | 631 091 | 546 313 | 580 233 | +4.2 | +8.8 |
| Total | 48 625 625 | 48 103 851 | 46 489 047 | 46 019 116 | +4.6 | +4.5 |

**Number of Passengers by Sea (to/from the Mainland only)
during the Period
January - November 2000 and January - November 2001**

| Control Point | January - November 2001 | | January - November 2000 | | % Change | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | Arrival | Departure | Arrival | Departure | Arrival | Departure |
| China Ferry Terminal | 2 523 693 | 2 693 205 | 2 419 768 | 2 607 186 | +4.3 | +3.3 |
| Macau Ferry Terminal | 445 005 | 260 438 | 428 614 | 240 181 | +3.8 | +8.4 |
| Total | 2 968 698 | 2 953 643 | 2 848 382 | 2 847 367 | +4.2 | +3.7 |

Number of Vehicles during the Period
January - November 2000 and January - November 2001

| Control Point | January - November 2001 | | January - November 2000 | | % Change | |
|----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| | Arrival | Departure | Arrival | Departure | Arrival | Departure |
| Lok Ma Chau | 3 655 635 | 3 623 764 | 3 520 522 | 3 442 842 | +3.8 | +5.3 |
| Man Kam To | 1 150 225 | 1 150 268 | 1 243 997 | 1 269 228 | -7.5 | -9.4 |
| Sha Tau Kok | 364 683 | 405 018 | 374 714 | 433 743 | -2.7 | -6.6 |
| Total | 5 170 543 | 5 179 050 | 5 139 233 | 5 145 813 | +0.6 | +0.6 |