

19 September 2002

Mrs Sharon Tong
Clerk to the Panel
Legislative Council Panel on Security
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Dear Mrs Tong,

LegCo Panel on Security

I refer to your letter of 3 September 2002. The information you request is set out, in seriatim, in the following paragraphs -

- a) The Administration has quickly brought the press report on the sale of forged Hong Kong identity (HKID) cards in Guangdong to the attention of the Guangdong Public Security authorities. We understand that the authorities have already taken actions to combat the alleged illicit activities. The two sides will continue to maintain close liaison in this area.

- b) The Administration has been monitoring the problem of forged HKID cards closely. The number of forged HKID cards seized in Hong Kong in the past few years are as follows –

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<u>Year</u>	<u>No of Forged HKID Cards seized (increase/decrease over previous year)</u>
1996	511
1997	494 (-3.3%)
1998	446 (-9.7%)
1999	437 (-2%)
2000	632 (+44.6%)
2001	497 (-21.4%)
2002(Jan-July)	276 (-4.9%, first seven months only)

As shown above, with the exception of the upsurge in 2000, the number of forged HKID cards seized in recent years did not reflect an upward trend. It is also worth noting that no forged ID card was found in the 1,333 anti-illegal worker operations conducted between 1 July and 31 August 2002. The facts, therefore, do not indicate any deterioration in the problem of forged ID cards recently.

Our assessment notwithstanding, the Administration will continue to take vigorous actions against such illegal activities. It should be noted that using or possessing a forged HKID card is a serious crime in Hong Kong, with offenders liable on conviction to a fine of \$100,000 and imprisonment for 10 years. We will also continue to encourage through publicity and education persons encountering suspected forged HKID cards to report or make enquiries through Immigration Department's hotline. In the longer term, the smart HKID card to be introduced in May next year, which will adopt sophisticated technology for data protection and security enhancement, will greatly boost our efforts to combat forged HKID cards.

- c) Statistics on forged HKID cards seized in Hong Kong are provided in (b) above. However, the Administration only keeps statistics on the number of people arrested for the offence of using or possessing forged documents of identity, which, apart from forged HKID card, include travel document, entry and re-entry permits, certificate of identity, document of identity, etc. Statistics specifically relating to arrests made for using and

possessing forged HKID cards are not available. Statistics on forged HKID cards seized in the Mainland are also not available.

- d) As explained in (c), statistics on forged HKID cards seized in the Mainland are not currently available. However, the law enforcement authorities of Hong Kong maintain close liaison with their Mainland counterparts and information pertaining to cross-boundary illegal activities has been and will continue to be exchanged through established channels to meet law enforcement needs.

I will let you have the above information in Chinese as soon as possible.

(Miss May CHAN)
for Secretary for Security