

Special FC Meeting on 13 April 2005
Speaking notes for S for S

Chairman and Members,

- In the draft Estimates for the new financial year (2005/2006), the allocation on the security policy area group is \$26.2 billion, representing 10.6% of the total government expenditure. The two policy areas of Internal Security and Immigration Control under my responsibility will account for \$22.7 billion, which is 3.4% lower than my allocation of \$23.5 billion for the last financial year.
- Although we have a reduced budget, with the savings we earn from various efficiency measures, we manage to introduce new or enhanced services to meet new challenges and requirements. I will briefly highlight some of these new services or enhancements.

Law and Order

- In 2004, the overall crime figure registered a decline of 8.0% and the violent crime figure also decreased by 4.5%. This is a pleasing result, but the Police will as always remain vigilant. For 2005, the Commissioner of Police has identified a number of major operational targets, namely, combating violent crimes, triad-related cases, “quick-cash” crimes, terrorism, trafficking and abuse of dangerous drugs, crimes committed by illegal immigrants and mainland visitors, and enhancing road safety.
- In terms of manpower, in 2005-06 the Police Force will have a net reduction of 412 posts, most of which are for support and administrative work. This will not result in a reduction of the manpower for front-line operations or core policing services provided to the public.
- To cope with new demands and new services, a total of 44 posts will be created mainly to cater for traffic management duties.

Immigration Control

- In the use of technology, one of our main focuses is to ensure the smooth and timely implementation of the Automated Passenger Clearance and Automated Vehicle Clearance systems. We plan to install about 270 e-Channels at our control points by mid-2006 and to complete the installation of Automated Vehicle Clearance kiosks for all vehicular control points in phases by the first half of 2005.
- As regards the construction of boundary crossing facilities (BCF) for the Hong Kong Shenzhen Western Corridor (HKSWC), reclamation works have required a longer time to complete because of problems relating to the rate of settlement (沉降速度) of the reclaimed site. Nevertheless, we are making our best endeavours to catch up and the piling works for the passenger hall terminal have just been completed.
- To meet the public demand for a more diversified service, we will take proactive steps to facilitate private sector participation in solemnisation of marriages and aim to introduce legislation to provide for the appointment of civil celebrants within this legislative session.
- The Individual Visit Scheme has been extended gradually and currently covers 34 Mainland cities¹. Since its implementation in July 2003, more than 6 million Mainland residents have visited Hong Kong under the Scheme, bringing considerable benefits to the tourism, retail and related sectors.
- The Admission of Mainland Talents and Professionals Scheme and the Capital Investment Entrant Scheme were implemented in July and October 2003 respectively. As at end-February, we have received 6 897 applications from Mainland talents and professionals out of which 5 705 have been approved. 325 applicants have been granted formal approval for residence in Hong Kong under the

¹ 21 cities in Guangdong, Beijing, Shanghai, 3 cities in Fujian, 3 cities in Jiangsu, 3 cities in Zhejiang, Tianjin and 15 districts in Chongqing.

Capital Investment Entrant Scheme. Their total investment in Hong Kong amounts to some HK\$2 402.41 million, or on average HK\$7.39 million per entrant which exceeds the minimum requisite amount of HK\$6.5 million. Another 124 applicants granted approval-in-principle were allowed to enter Hong Kong as visitors to procure the necessary investment under the Scheme.

- Having regard to the international trend for enhanced passport security, we will introduce biometric HKSAR passport in early 2007 to safeguard and promote travel convenience enjoyed by HKSAR passport holders and to tie in with the first tide of applications for renewal of HKSAR passports issued in 1997.

Public Safety

- On the emergency ambulance side, we have implemented paramedic ambulance service in full in the first quarter of 2005. We will explore the feasibility of introducing prioritization of emergency ambulance calls in accordance with the urgency of the patient's medical condition in order to better utilize ambulance resources. Meanwhile, to cope with increasing service demand, we will commission two new ambulance depots in MongKok and Kwai Chung in 2005 - 06 through flexible internal re-deployment of resources. We will also create 50 disciplinary posts to man a new fire station-cum-ambulance depot in Kowloon Tong scheduled to be opened in the second half of 2006.
- We have earmarked \$31M for the procurement and replacement of fire appliances, ambulances and equipment to enhance our rescue capability and training facilities.

Custody and Rehabilitation of Offenders

- We will continue to seek long and short term solutions to address the problems of overcrowding and outdated facilities in our penal institutions.
- We will also continue to work in partnership with various sectors of the community to help rehabilitated offenders re-integrate into society. To that end, CSD will continue to organize public education and

publicity activities to appeal for community acceptance and support for rehabilitated offenders.

Countering the Menace of Drugs

- The Hong Kong Jockey Club Drug InfoCentre will continue to serve as a focal point for anti-drug educational and publicity activities. Apart from young people, programmes targeting parents will be strengthened to reinforce the anti-drug message through parental engagement and empowerment.
- On treatment and rehabilitation, we will continue to improve our services to drug abusers through implementing the Third Three-year Plan on Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Services in Hong Kong (2003-2005) and monitoring the progress of the licensing scheme for drug treatment centres. For 2005-06, more attention will be placed on enhancing professionalism of front-line anti-drug workers through structured education and development programmes.

Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing

- At the international level, we will continue to participate actively in the work of the Financial Action Task Force and the Asia/Pacific Group on Money Laundering and contribute towards the global fight against money laundering and terrorist financing. Within Hong Kong, we shall continue our preparatory work to put in place the revised Forty Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force with a view to further enhancing our own regime and meeting the latest international standards.

Chairman, this concludes my opening remarks. My colleagues and I will be happy to answer questions from Members.