

For information  
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## **LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON SECURITY**

### **Security Arrangements for the Sixth Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization held in Hong Kong from 13 to 18 December 2005**

#### **Purpose**

This paper reviews the security arrangements for the Sixth Ministerial Conference (MC6) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) held in Hong Kong from 13 to 18 December 2005.

#### **Background**

2. MC6 was held at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) from 13 to 18 December 2005, as scheduled. The Commerce and Industry Panel was already briefed on the logistics aspects of MC6 at its meeting on 17 January 2006. This paper, prepared for the Panel on Security, focuses on the security arrangements for the conference.

#### **Security Arrangements**

3. The policing mission for MC6 was three-fold: (a) to provide for a safe and uninterrupted conference; (b) to endeavour to facilitate as far as possible all peaceful demonstrations; and (c) to protect the rights and freedoms of others. To achieve the above, and on top of a range of policing measures as well as contingency arrangements, the Government maintained liaison with local and overseas non-governmental organizations (NGOs) representatives throughout the preparation of MC6 and also held regular briefings for local NGO representatives during the conference period to provide updates on both the logistics and substance aspects. The following paragraphs deal with the various aspects of the security arrangements.

### Setting up of a Closed Area and Related Accreditation Arrangement

4. A closed area around the vicinity of HKCEC was set up by way of the Closed Area (Hong Kong Ministerial Conference of World Trade Organization) Order under section 36 of the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245) from 6:00 pm on 12 December to 5:00 am on 19 December 2005. Only holders of accreditation badges issued by the Ministerial Conference Coordination Office (MCO), as well as individuals with the permission of the Commissioner of Police, could enter or leave the closed area during the specified period.

5. Over 11 300 persons were accredited by the WTO Secretariat for attending MC6, and eventually, a total of 10 313 persons (comprising 5 786 delegates, 2 931 press and 1 596 representatives of NGOs) collected their accreditation badges<sup>1</sup>. Besides, around 10 000 staff of the Government and supporting agencies were accredited to provide logistics support to the conference.

6. The accreditation and collection process was conducted smoothly, and the access control system operated by the Police at the designated entrances of HKCEC complemented with the accreditation system, thus ensuring the necessary security control. Notwithstanding various attempts by some protesters to enter the closed area, the Police ensured it to be clear of unauthorized persons at all times, by way of physical barriers on the land side and patrol of marine launches on the sea side. The closed area arrangement was effective in ensuring that the conduct of MC6 was not unduly disturbed.

### Areas for Demonstration and NGO Activities

7. Similar to past WTO MCs, there were a number of demonstrations against the WTO during the MC6 period. The Police estimate that some 4 000 overseas and 2 500 local protesters took part in the various demonstrations/processions. The local body coordinating these demonstration activities was the Hong Kong People's Alliance on WTO. The major demonstrations were mounted by overseas protesters, most notably the Korean farmers and Asian migrant workers.

<sup>1</sup> In accordance with the practice of WTO Ministerial Conferences (MCs), accreditation badges were required for access to the MC6 venue. These badges were distributed at the Accreditation Centre set up on the ground floor of the Hong Kong Central Library during 8 to 18 December 2005.

8. As reported in the Administration's paper submitted to the LegCo Panel on Security on 6 December 2005 (LC Paper No. CB(2)546/05-06(04)), the Police and MCO had earlier identified Wan Chai Public Cargo Working Area (WCPCWA) and Wan Chai Sports Ground as designated public activity areas (DPAAs). In the end, Wan Chai Sports Ground was not used, as the WCPCWA was sufficient to accommodate the demonstrators. However, WCPCWA and the road outside WCPCWA (Hung Hing Road) became the focal point for confrontation between protesters and the Police throughout the MC6 period (see para. 10 below).

9. Victoria Park, an area reserved for public activities related to MC6, was largely used by NGOs and protest groups as the starting point for processions and for holding various public activities like cultural performances and discussions. Sculptures conveying messages critical of the WTO were permitted to be erected in Victoria Park as they met the requirements of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (including insurance coverage and safety). Overall, no incident of concern occurred in Victoria Park. The Southorn Playground was also reserved for the conduct of public activities apart from demonstrations but in the end no organization used this facility.

### *Incidents of Disorder*

10. In the course of MC6, arrangements were made for the facilitation and policing of some 105 separate demonstration activities. Only eight of them, which occurred on 13, 14, 16 and 17 of December 2005, involved an element of public disorder or violence. Five of these took place outside WCPCWA at the Police cordon line along Hung Hing Road, two involved small-scale disorderly activities at the South Korean and US consular premises, and one involved more widespread disturbance in Wan Chai and required an escalation of Police response. The Police faced demonstrators who were well-organized, well-equipped, focused and extremely determined. These demonstrators had a clear strategy for escalating confrontations, as well as using violence, negotiations and various distractions to divert Police attention. As the demonstrators escalated their violent actions, the Police had to react accordingly to restore order. Overall, the Police were able to maintain law and order during the MC6 period and to minimize the effect of disorderly incidents on the general public.

### Other Policing Measures

11. During the MC6 period, the Police deployed appropriate manpower and resources to ensure the integrity of the closed area. At the same time, arrangements were also made to provide for sufficient policing of areas outside the closed area to protect public order and public safety. To meet the manpower requirements, the Police implemented a number of measures including the imposition of a leave restriction from 20 November to 20 December 2005, the suspension of non MC6-related training activities, re-scheduling of indoor duties, adjustment of the shift pattern to maximize outdoor coverage and the enhanced assistance from their Auxiliary colleagues. The deployment arrangements proved to be effective, and the overall order and security throughout the territory were maintained during the conference period, save for the isolated incidents of disturbance as set out in para. 10 above.

12. During the period of the conference, the Police constantly kept the security situation under review, taking into account latest developments both in Hong Kong and internationally. Guidelines were issued to all frontline officers concerned explaining strategies in handling security and public order events during the MC6 period. In line with established policy, the Police adopted a tolerant and accommodating approach in handling incidents throughout the conference period. Although enforcement actions had to be taken in respect of the incidents of public disorder or violence which occurred on 13, 14, 16 and 17 of December, sufficient prior warnings were given to the individuals concerned, and the use of force and weapons was kept to a minimum. Overall, the Police achieved the policing mission set out in para. 3 above.

### **Conclusion**

13. We are appreciative of the community's understanding of the security measures put in place during the MC6 period. The Police have also gained valuable experience in handling large-scale and violent demonstrations which will make the Force better prepared for future challenges.

**Security Bureau**  
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