Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Home Affairs
Session No. : 8

Reply Serial No.	Question Serial No.	Name of Member	Head	Programme
S-HAB01	S021	LAM Wai-keung, Daniel	53	District and Community Relations
S-HAB02	S027	CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando	53	Rights of the Individual
S-HAB03	S028	CHAN Yuen-han	53	Youth Development
S-HAB04	S029	CHAN Yuen-han	53	Rights of the Individual
S-HAB05	S070	CHAN Yuen-han	63	Community Building
S-HAB06	S022	LAM Wai-keung, Daniel	63	Local Environmental Improvements
S-HAB07	S008	WONG Kwok-hing	63	Community Building
S-HAB08	S037	WONG Kwok-hing	63	All Programmes
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S-HAB10	S023	WONG Kwok-hing	95	All Programmes
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Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB01

Question Serial No.

S021

Head : 53 – GS : Home Affairs Bureau

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme : (4) District and Community Relations

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

In respect of the joyous event of the 10th anniversary of Hong Kong's reunification this year, what celebration activities will the Government organise at the district level and what are the resources involved?

Asked by : Hon. LAM Wai-keung, Daniel

Reply :

To celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Government will organise a wide variety of celebration events in Hong Kong, the Mainland and overseas from April to December 2007. They include ceremonial events, exhibitions and international conferences, cultural and sports events, district events, commissioning of infrastructure projects and celebration activities in the Mainland and overseas. Celebration activities at the district level are organised by the Home Affairs Department, for which resources have been earmarked under Head 63. For more details, the Hon. Member may wish to refer to our reply HAB Serial No. 118, a copy of which is attached.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MRS CARRIE LAM

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs

Date 21 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

HAB118

Question Serial No.

0591

Head : 63 – Home Affairs Department

Subhead (No. & title): Community Building

Programme : (2) Community Building

Controlling Officer : Director of Home Affairs

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

In 2007-08, to celebrate the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Administrative Region, the Administration will organize a number of territory-wide activities, including Tree Planting Day, Bunting Design Competition and Photo Competition, as well as over 50 district-based activities. Please inform this Committee the details of the activities, time schedule and expenditure involved.

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply :

In 2007-08, $23.976 million has been earmarked under Head 63 Home Affairs Department Programme (2) Community Building for celebration activities for the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). With this allocation as well as community sponsorship, the department will organise 5 territory-wide and over 60 district-based activities with emphasis on community involvement and working towards the objective of building a harmonious and cohesive community. Details of the five territory-wide celebration activities are as follows –

Activities	**Brief Description**	**Estimated budget** (HK$ million)	**Schedule**
1. Photo Competition	To organise a photo competition and stage a roving exhibition of the winning entries in the 18 districts	0.7	November 2006 – June 2007
2. Bunting Design Competition	To organise bunting design competition for members of the public to express their creativity and talent in celebrating the 10th Anniversary and arrange bunting display in the 18 districts	1.71	March 2007 – July 2007
3. Tree Planting and Greening in the 18 Districts	To organise tree planting and greening activities in the 18 districts	1.62	April 2007 – May 2007

Activities	Brief Description	Estimated budget (HK$ million)	Schedule
4. Youth Cultural and Arts Competitions	To organise a series of 20 cultural and arts competitions	0.18	December 2006 – July 2007
5. Territory-wide Building Management Quiz Competition	To organise a quiz in newspaper for members of the public and a game show on TV for Owners Corporations invited	0.58	July 2007 – September 2007

As the district-based activities are under preparation, detailed information including schedules and estimated budget of individual activities are not available at this stage.

Planning of celebration activities for the 10th Anniversary of the Establishment of HKSAR is still in progress. More activities may be organized within the earmarked provision.

Signature	
Name in block letters	Mrs PAMELA TAN
Post Title	Director of Home Affairs
Date	13 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB02

Question Serial No.

S027

Head : 53 – GS : Home Affairs Bureau

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme : (2) Rights of the Individual

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

The Administration stated that the total estimated expenditure on promoting children's rights is about $960,000 in 2007-08. Please give details of the work and a breakdown of the subsidies involved.

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Chiu-hung, Fernando

Reply :

In 2007-08, the total estimated expenditure on promoting children's rights is about $960,000. Details are provided as follows-

Item	**Estimated expenditure ($)**
Funding for schools and non-Government/community organizations to promote children's rights	700,000
Cost of the Non-civil service contract staff and other expenses under the Children's Rights Unit to support the Children's Rights Forum (which the Government sets up to exchange views with non-Government organizations on children's rights) and related matters	260,000

Signature _____

Name in block letters MRS CARRIE LAM

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs

Date 21 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB03

Question Serial No.

S028

Head : 53 – GS : Home Affairs Bureau

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme : (5) Youth Development

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

According to Reply Serial No. HAB100, "the estimated allocation for the Centre for Youth Development is $10.25 million in 2007-08". Would the Administration inform this Committee of the number and details of activities to be funded by the above allocation? What is the estimated number of participants in each of the activities?

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply :

The provision of $10.25 million earmarked in 2007-08 for commissioning the Centre for Youth Development is mainly for covering charges on water, electricity, gas, security and management, and publicity and promotional items. Based on the present programme of construction work and the estimated time required for allocating premises to users, and for the users to take possession of the premises, furnish and equip the premises, etc., it is expected that the Centre will only start to provide services or activities from 2008-09. We are thus not able to provide the number and details of activities and the estimated number of participants at this stage.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MRS CARRIE LAM

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs

Date 23 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB04

Question Serial No.

S029

Head : 53 – GS : Home Affairs Bureau

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme : (2) Rights of the Individual

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

Reply Serial No. HAB006 stated that the Administration has planned to spend $0.64 million and $2.6 million to establish two Community Support Teams for Ethnic Communities and two Community Development Teams for Ethnic Minorities from South Asia respectively. In this connection, would the Administration inform this Committee whether these four teams will be at district level, i.e. set up in districts. If yes, in which districts? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply :

In 2007-08, we plan to spend about $0.64 million to provide sponsorship for the establishment and operation of a Pakistani service team and a Nepalese service team. Both teams offer territory-wide services to members of their own communities in their own languages and in a culturally sensitive manner. We also plan to continue our funding of about $2.6 million for two dedicated teams, based in Yuen Long and Yau Tsim Mong districts, to assist the ethnic minority residents from South Asia across the territory in getting access to community resources and social services and promote their social integration into the community. Yuen Long and Yau Tsim Mong districts were chosen as the service base, partly due to the high concentrations of the South Asian residents in these districts.

Signature _____

Name in block letters MRS CARRIE LAM

Post Title Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs

Date 21 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB05

Question Serial No.

S070

Head : 63 – Home Affairs Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme : (2) Community Building

Controlling Officer : Director of Home Affairs

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

There are no plans or activities in the coming year targeted at women who have newly arrived in Hong Kong and are living in poverty, though they are also disadvantaged groups who often need dedicated assistance and mutual support from peers. The post-migration centres that the Administration set up in the past have received positive response and appreciation from service recipients. In this connection, would the Administration inform this Committee why there are no plans and activities targeted at women who have newly arrived in Hong Kong and are living in poverty?

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Yuen-han

Reply :

For 2007-08, the Home Affairs Department has earmarked about $2 million to carry out programmes aiming at facilitating the early integration of new arrivals from the Mainland into the community. These include the publication of a handbook to provide new arrivals with information about various public services available to them and the organisation of a wide range of community education programmes to promote community acceptance of new arrivals and to enhance mutual understanding between residents and new arrivals.

Activities and programmes targeted at women who have newly arrived in Hong Kong are also undertaken by non-governmental organisations in various districts. Resources for such activities and programmes are provided by the Government and various sources in the public sector.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs Pamela TAN

Post Title Director of Home Affairs

Date 23 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB06

Question Serial No.

S022

Head : 63 – Home Affairs Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme : (3) Local Environmental Improvements

Controlling Officer : Director of Home Affairs

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

At present, there are inadequate leisure facilities in remote rural areas. Would the Government consider using the areas around walled villages to provide more leisure facilities for the residents? If yes, what is the expenditure involved? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon. LAM Wai-keung, Daniel

Reply :

The Home Affairs Department (HAD) implements minor works projects under the Rural Public Works (RPW) Programme (the Programme) to upgrade the infrastructure and improve the living environment of the rural areas of the New Territories. Under the Programme, the rural community and members of the District Councils (DCs) may put forward proposals to HAD for consideration. Proposed projects may include development of leisure facilities such as construction of sitting-out areas, playgrounds, soccer pitches and basketball courts.

Subject to local needs and the resolution of technical problem, if any, RPW projects such as development of leisure facilities may be implemented using areas around the walled villages if suitable locations can be identified.

In 2007, about $120 million has been earmarked for the implementation of RPW projects in the rural areas of the New Territories. These will include projects on leisure facilities.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs PAMELA TAN

Post Title Director of Home Affairs

Date 22 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB07

Question Serial No.

S008

Head : 63 – Home Affairs Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme : (2) Community Building

Controlling Officer : Director of Home Affairs

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

According to Reply Serial No. HAB 189, "in 2007-08, District Offices will continue to work with DCs to promote district attractions." Would the Administration inform this Committee of the number of district attractions to be promoted across the territory in 2007-08? Where are these attractions? How many of them are new attractions?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

The District Offices (DOs) collaborate with District Councils (DCs) in identifying and implementing appropriate initiatives to promote district attractions. For 2007-08, DCs and DOs have yet to formulate their plans for the year. Hence, details of the district attractions to be promoted in 2007-08 are not available at this stage. In the past years, DCs and DOs have promoted both existing and new attractions in their districts with enthusiasm. We envisage that DCs and DOs will continue to do so in 2007-08.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs PAMELA TAN

Post Title Director of Home Affairs

Date 22 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB08

Question Serial No.

S037

Head : 63 – Home Affairs Department

Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational Expenses

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Director of Home Affairs

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

According to Reply Serial No. HAB 191, Home Affairs Department will create 101 non-directorate permanent posts in 2007-08 and 28 of them will be created to replace non-civil service contract staff positions. Please inform this Committee of the following:

(a) When non-civil service contract staff apply for these posts, will their relevant experience be considered?

(b) Is it possible to establish an open, fair and just points system, so that their relevant experience will be considered in terms of points?

(c) Should a points system be established, what percentage of the total points will such relevant experience account for?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply:

(a) The 28 new non-directorate permanent posts mentioned in Reply No. HAB191 are clerical grade posts. The Civil Service Bureau would redeploy surplus clerical staff in other bureaux or departments to take up these new posts having regard to the operational needs. Since clerical grades are included in the Second Voluntary Retirement Scheme, they are subject to a recruitment freeze until March 2008. The Civil Service Bureau therefore has no plans to conduct open recruitment for the clerical grade at this stage. Should it be decided to conduct open recruitment for any civil service grades later, the Bureau will set the entry requirements having regard to the work of the grades, academic qualifications, working experience, language proficiency and other qualities or attributes required. In an open recruitment exercise, all candidates will be assessed on the basis of their overall performance and qualities. Generally speaking, non-civil service contract staff who meet the basic entry requirements would stand a better chance of success in the selection process if their previous Government experience is relevant to the post applied for.

(b) & (c) Appointments to the Civil Service are based on the principle of open and fair competition. As explained in (a) above, the entry requirements for each grade/rank are set having regard to the work nature of the grade/rank. To be eligible for consideration for appointment, applicants must satisfy the basic entry requirements. Qualified applicants are required to go through a competitive selection process, including interviews. The Civil Service Bureau would, having regard to the job requirements, decide on the selection criteria and the weightings to be given, and select candidates on the basis of their ability, working experience and performance at interviews.

Signature _____

Name in block letters Mrs PAMELA TAN

Post Title Director of Home Affairs

Date 23 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB09

Question Serial No.

S007

Head : 95 – Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational expenses

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

According to Reply Serial No. HAB269, the outsourced services are provided by 51 contractors in total as at the end of 2006. In this connection, would the Administration inform this Committee among these 51 contractors, how many of them are social enterprises? What are the names of these social enterprises?

Of the 51 outsourced services contractors, some of them are engaging greater number of workers. What are the reasons? What was the performance of these contractors in the past?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

There is no distinction of social enterprises from other contractors in the contracts. Amongst the 51 contractors, six are non-profit making non-governmental organisations, viz Christian Family Service Centre, Mental Health Association of Hong Kong, New Life Psychiatric Rehabilitation Association, Po Leung Kuk, Richmond Fellowship of Hong Kong and The Salvation Army Heng On Workshop.

Some contractors are engaging more workers than the others depending on the operational requirements as specified in the contracts. The past performance of the contractors has been satisfactory.

Signature _____

Name in block letters THOMAS CHOW

Post Title Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Date 23 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB10

Question Serial No.

S023

Head : 95 – Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): 000 Operational expenses

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

According to Replies Serial No. HAB242 and HAB243, the Government has stated that for the (posts to be created in the) Leisure and Cultural Services Department, "The majority of these new civil service posts are at recruitment ranks and they will be filled through open recruitment." and "When there is open recruitment for civil service posts, NCSC staff will have to apply in response to vacancy advertisement in the same manner as outside candidates in accordance with the established government policy." In this connection, would the Administration inform this Committee why are the serving Non-Civil Service Contract (NCSC) staff not given priority consideration for appointment in the open recruitment process? Since the serving NCSC staff have relevant experience, will the experience be an advantage for them to apply for civil service posts? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

It has been the Government's long-established recruitment policy to fill civil service vacancies through an open, fair and competitive recruitment process, under which qualified candidates are selected on the basis of their own merits. We welcome serving Non-Civil Service Contract (NCSC) staff interested in joining the civil service to apply for those civil service posts where they can meet the basic qualification requirements in the open recruitment process. The arrangement of giving serving NCSC staff priority consideration for appointment as civil servants would be unfair to those who wish to join the civil service but are currently not working in the Government as NCSC staff.

In the civil service recruitment process, the factors considered include the candidate's academic or professional qualifications, technical skills, working experience, language proficiency and other qualities or attributes as required on the basis of the operational need of the grades/ranks concerned. While all candidates are assessed on the basis of their overall merits in an open recruitment exercise, generally speaking, NCSC staff who have relevant working experience in the Government may enjoy a competitive edge over other candidates in the selection process if their working experience is relevant to the post being applied for. We would like to stress that working experience is only one of the factors that will be considered among the others.

Signature	
Name in block letters	THOMAS CHOW
Post Title	Director of Leisure and Cultural Services
Date	23 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB11

Question Serial No.

S024

Head : 95 – Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

With regards to Project Item No. 21 to be implemented in Tsuen Wan as stated in the paper on "21 Leisure and Cultural Services Projects to Proceed Further with Planning Works", what are the anticipated commencement and completion dates of the Sports Centre between Tsuen Wan Park and Tsuen Wan Road?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

The proposed Sports Centre between Tsuen Wan Park and Tsuen Wan Road is located within the Comprehensive Development Area development site of the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC). We are actively liaising with KCRC on the technical details, including the exact position of the proposed Sports Centre within the site such that the project will not conflict with KCRC's project. In parallel, we are also consulting the Tsuen Wan District Council on the facilities to be provided in the proposed Sports Centre. We would be able to draw up an implementation programme once the technical issues have been resolved and the subsequent technical feasibility study for the project has been completed.

Signature _____

Name in block letters THOMAS CHOW

Post Title Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Date 23 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB12

Question Serial No.

S025

Head : 95 – Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

With regards to Project Item No. 25 on "Ecological Park (Tso Kung Tam Valley, Tsuen Wan)" to be implemented in Tsuen Wan as stated in the paper on "25 Priority Projects", what is the reason for not commencing the project until mid-2010? Why should the project be delayed for so long that it will not be completed even upon the expiry of the next term of office of the Government of the Special Administrative Region? Why is ecological preservation used as a pretext for delaying the project? Can the Department further conduct a detailed review so as to shorten the planning time and advance the commencement date of the project?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

The project covers a site area of some 32 hectares. Unlike many other park projects that are built on sites formed through civil works, the Ecological Park would be developed using an integration approach with the objectives of conserving as appropriate the existing natural environment of the site, providing recreation facilities for the public and promoting environmental education. Therefore, more time is required to carefully define the scope of the project, resolve land resumption and other issues, including traffic arrangement, geotechnical work and environmental protection etc., in close consultation with Tsuen Wan District Council and relevant government departments. A technical feasibility study has just commenced. We shall examine carefully whether it is technically feasible to advance the start date or phase the completion of the project such that members of the public can enjoy the new facility earlier.

Signature _____

Name in block letters THOMAS CHOW

Post Title Director of Leisure and Cultural Services

Date 23 March 2007

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08

CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION

Reply Serial No.

S-HAB13

Question Serial No.

S108

Head : 25 – Architectural Services Department

Subhead (No. & title):

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Director of Architectural Services

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Home Affairs

Question :

As the project definition statement for the Tso Kung Tam Ecological Park in Tsuen Wan has been submitted to the Architectural Services Department (ArchSD), could ArchSD advance the work commencement date for this project? If yes, to what year and if not, why? Could the work completion date for this project also be advanced? If yes, to what year and if not, why?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

The Architectural Services Department received the project definition statement in early March 2007 and has immediately commenced the technical feasibility study for completion by mid-2007. The technical feasibility study of this complex project will help to identify issues to be resolved e.g. land resumption, traffic arrangement, geotechnical work and environmental protection etc. Upon the completion of the study, we shall review the project programme and carefully assess if phase completion can be achieved.

Signature _____

Name in block letters C. H. YUE

Post Title Director of Architectural Services

Date 26 March 2007