

INFORMATION NOTE

Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Electronic Passport

Introduction

This information note provides Members of the Legislative Council with an update on the latest development of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Electronic Passport (HKSAR e-Passport) project.

2. With funding approval for the introduction of HKSAR e-Passport and development of the related computer system in March 2005, the Immigration Department started the project in April 2005.

The Passport

3. HKSAR e-Passport will be in compliance with the standard of the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Digital data including holder's personal data and facial image will be stored in the contactless chip embedded in the back cover of the e-Passport.

4. The cover of the HKSAR e-Passport will basically be the same as the existing passport save for the addition of an electronic travel document symbol on the front cover, according to the standard of ICAO, signifying that the passport contains a chip. The bio-data page of the e-Passport is made of polycarbonate. On the artwork design, Hong Kong's landmarks - the Tsing Ma Bridge and the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre, form the main theme which projects Hong Kong's image as a cosmopolitan city. For improved security, the holder's personal particulars and photograph will be engraved onto the e-Passport by laser engraving technology.

5. Further improvements made to the new passport booklet are mainly security and design related, including the employment of advanced security features and sophisticated printing techniques. On the whole, the HKSAR e-Passport can safeguard the travel convenience enjoyed by the holder and help counter passport forgeries as well as illegal migration and other transnational crimes facilitated by passport frauds. Illustrations of the existing HKSAR passport and the e-Passport are reproduced at Annex.

The Computer System

6. For the issuance of HKSAR e-Passport and other Hong Kong travel documents¹, a new e-Passport system is being built in the Immigration Department to replace the old one. The new system utilizes the latest technologies to achieve a paperless working environment and to produce passports with high quality and security. For further enhancement of customer service, the time required for processing applications will be shortened from 15 to 10 working days.

7. The project has now reached the final stage of system fine-tuning and familization of the system by staff, to ensure its smooth operation upon implementation.

Application Procedures

8. The existing application procedures for HKSAR passport will remain unchanged, except that applicants will be required to submit colour photos with white background. The passport fees will remain unchanged upon implementation of the HKSAR e-Passport.

Implementation Date

9. The Immigration Department will start accepting applications for HKSAR e-Passport as from 5 February 2007 (Monday). e-Passports will be issued for applications received on that day onwards. The existing version of HKSAR passports will remain valid until their expiry.

Publicity

10. A press release will be issued on 1 January 2007 promulgating the introduction of the HKSAR e-Passport. Briefing and demonstration sessions will be arranged later this month by the Immigration Department for parties concerned such as the local consulates in Hong Kong.

¹ The e-Passport system will process and produce HKSAR e-Passports and e-Document of Identity for Visa Purposes, both of which will be introduced on the same day, i.e. 5 February 2007.

Enquiries

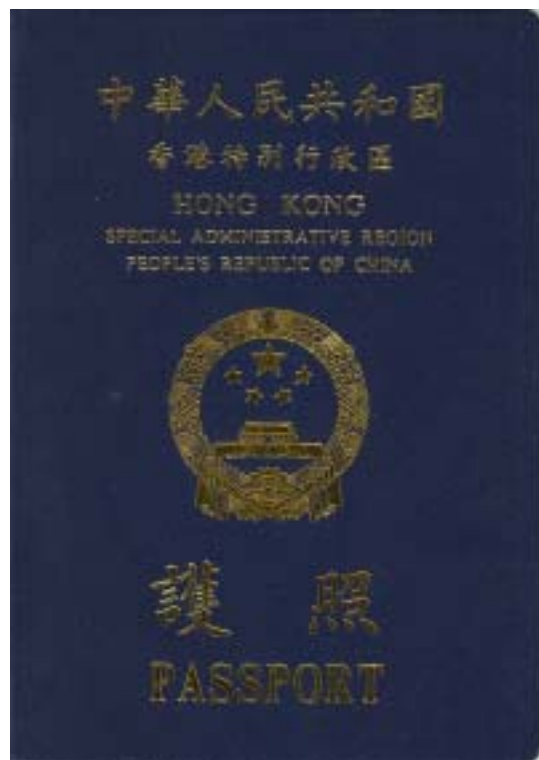
11. Enquiries about this information note can be made to Ms Anita Li, Assistant Secretary for Security at 2810 2699.

Security Bureau

1 January 2007

HKSAR Passport

Cover



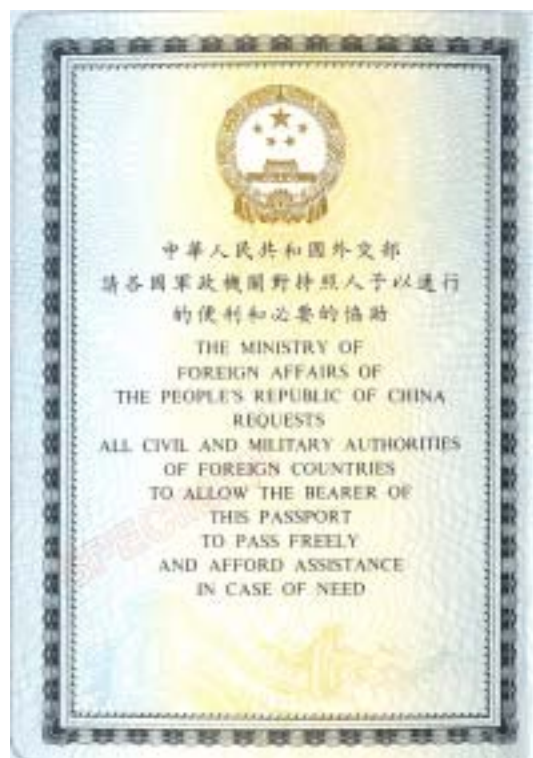
Existing passport



Electronic travel document symbol

e-Passport

Inside front cover



Existing passport



e-Passport

