

**Presentation to the Finance Committee of Legislative Council
by the Secretary for Home Affairs
on 2 April 2008 at 4:30 p.m.**

Chairman,

The Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) is responsible for quite a diversified policy portfolio covering a total of eight Heads of Expenditure. Total expenditure on policy and programme areas under the purview of HAB amounts to \$9,185.3 million in 2008-09, which represents an increase of \$792 million (about 9%) compared with the Revised Estimate of last year. It will be used to take forward the following priority areas of HAB in the new financial year.

(I) 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events

2. The Beijing 2008 Olympic Games is the first Olympics ever held on Chinese soil and Hong Kong will be co-hosting the Equestrian Events. The preparatory work is in full swing and we will continue to work closely with all parties concerned and consolidate experience from the trial run in August last year, in order to ensure the Equestrian Events a resounding success to bring pride to our nation and our city.

3. HAB will engender more deeply the Olympic and Paralympic spirits within the community and strive to promote community-wide participation in a variety of cultural, sport, educational and celebration activities in relation to the Olympics. We will also proactively bolster youth participation in the promotional programmes and capitalise on the Beijing Olympics to promote national education, so as to enhance the youth's understanding of our country and their sense of national pride.

(II) National Education

4. HAB is responsible for promoting national education at community level. We will continue to work closely with the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education and Commission on Youth to strengthen national education in the community, particularly among the youths. We plan to engage interested organisations to participate in organising these activities. For example, we will organise study tours to the Mainland for youths, particularly those who have not visited the Mainland before, to enhance their understanding of our country. We will continue to promote flag-raising. We are working on a pilot scheme for youth uniformed groups to raise the national flag at the

Golden Bauhinia Square and other suitable locations regularly on a rotation basis after receiving proper training.

(III) Sports Hardware and Software Development

5. Hong Kong is the co-host city of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games and the host of the 2009 East Asian Games. We will capitalise on these opportunities to further promote sports development in Hong Kong, along the three strategic directions to promote sports in the community, develop elite sports and make Hong Kong as a major location for international sports events.

6. On hardware, we have earmarked over \$10 billion to take forward suitable leisure and cultural services projects having regard to the community's needs. Moreover, we are facilitating the planning of the re-development of the Hong Kong Sports Institute for its early completion in order to provide better support to elite training and development in Hong Kong. Furthermore, we will continue to pursue the development of the Multi-purpose Stadium Complex in Kai Tak.

7. The enhancement of hardware has to be complemented by improvement to software. We will continue with our effort to promote sports development in the community and encourage active participation in sports by people of all age groups. We will further enhance the School Sports Programme so as to achieve the objective of "One Student, One Sport".

8. With additional recurrent funding since 2007-08 and the collaborative effort of the sports sector, support to elite athletes has been strengthened in various aspects, including financial assistance, education opportunities, career development and athlete training and coaching support.

9. Hosting major sports events not only facilitates sports development in Hong Kong, but also attracts overseas visitors and helps enhance Hong Kong's reputation. Implemented since 2004, the "M" Mark System and Support Package has supported a number of major sports events in Hong Kong.

(IV) West Kowloon Cultural District (WKCD) Project

10. The WKCD is an important strategic investment in arts and culture for the future of Hong Kong. We introduced the WKCD Authority Bill to the Legislative Council on 20 February. The Bill has taken into account the views of the Legislative Council Members, the arts and cultural sector and the public.

Upon the enactment of the Bill, the WKCD Authority will be set up to take forward the WKCD project.

11. The Government proposes to give an upfront endowment of \$21.6 billion to the WKCD Authority to cover the capital costs of the arts, cultural and other facilities. It represents the long-term commitment and determination of the Government towards the development of culture and the arts. It will also provide funding certainty and flexibility for the WKCD Authority to plan and develop the cultural district as well as its facilities and programmes in an integrated manner.

(V) Cultural Software Development

12. We reckon the need to strengthen the development of cultural software to help realise the vision of the WKCD project. We propose to increase our total expenditure on cultural software from the existing provision of \$2.54 billion to \$2.75 billion in 2008-09, representing an increase of \$0.21 billion or 8.2%.

Increased Support for the Major Performing Arts Groups

13. We will provide additional funding to nine major professional performing arts groups to enable them to consolidate growth, build audience and strengthen their outbound cultural exchange activities during the transitional period before a new funding and assessment mechanism is in place.

Increased Support for the Hong Kong Arts Development Council (HKADC)

14. To ensure that there is a progression and succession ladder for the budding artists and arts groups as well as the small and medium sized arts groups to rise to the league of majors, we propose to provide the HKADC with additional recurrent resources to increase the support to them.

Increased Support for the Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts (HKAPA)

15. To address the upsurge in manpower needs for technical and theatrical arts, we will provide the HKAPA with additional recurrent resources for it to provide short programmes in the School of Theatre and Entertainment Arts. To augment the manpower base for arts administration, we will be supporting the HKAPA in its initiative to bring the UK Clore Leadership Programme to Hong Kong this year. We also encourage the Academy to

collaborate further with local universities to offer arts administration courses in business studies programmes.

Arts Education and Audience Building

16. The Working Group on Arts Education under the Committee on Performing Arts is launching a comprehensive research study on general arts education soon to take stock of the provision of general arts education inside and outside schools with a view to benchmarking our provision against international best practices. We are working with the Education Bureau on this study.

Enhanced programming support for small and medium sized arts groups at venues of the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) to complement LCSD's Venue Partnership Scheme

17. We will provide LCSD with new resources of \$25 million to implement the Venue Partnership Scheme on a pilot basis and to strengthen the support to small and medium sized arts groups to stage and organise performance. The aim is to make the best use of the performing arts venues managed by LCSD as cultural assets to assist arts groups in artistic development, audience building and establishment of artistic character of venues.

(VI) Provision of Performing Arts Venues

18. In addition to WKCD, we are planning to provide additional cultural facilities in various districts to meet the needs of the performing arts sector and the community. We propose to build a new cross-district cultural community centre in Lower Ngau Tau Kok, Kwun Tong. The centre will cater mainly for large-scale theatrical, musical and dance performances, and will serve the cultural sector and the districts of Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin, Kowloon City and Sai Kung. Furthermore, to reinforce the Ko Shan Theatre, an Annex Building with an auditorium of 600 seats and rehearsal halls will be built. The Theatre will become the hub for Cantonese Opera performance in the territory. In addition, we will convert the Yau Ma Tei Theatre and the Red Brick Building into a Xiqu Activity Centre. The Centre, scheduled for completion in 2011, will be equipped with an auditorium of 300 seats and rehearsal/practising rooms.

19. To alleviate the short-term shortage of venues, we are in active dialogue with organisations managing non-governmental venues to work

towards opening their venues for use by non-tenant performing arts groups. Plans are also in hand to upgrade the facilities of the proposed community halls in Siu Sai Wan and Fanling to make them more amenable for performance.

(VII) Enhancement of District Administration

20. Since the commencement of the new District Council (DC) term starting from January 2008, the 18 DCs have been fully implementing the recommendations to enhance the functions of DCs. They have begun to participate in the management of some district facilities and are devising work plans to carry out measures in enhancing district administration.

21. We will provide additional manpower resources for District Offices to support their work in promoting district administration. The Home Affairs Department has issued a new manual on the Use of DC Funds to increase the flexibility in using the funds. For example, DCs may use 10% of their respective district allocation for engaging additional staff to assist DCs in implementing community involvement projects.

(VIII) Social Enterprise

22. In respect of the promotion of the development of social enterprises (SEs), we will allocate resources to continue to make use of various channels to enhance public understanding of SEs. We will launch a new series of Announcements in the Public Interest in mid April. We also plan to strengthen publicity at district level to enhance recognition of SEs.

23. We are also implementing the Social Enterprises Partnership Programme. The Programme provides a platform to enhance and facilitate partnership among different sectors of the community through a matching forum and the SE Mentorship Scheme. Through the matching forum, interested business organisations can team up with non-government organisations to establish SEs or to partner with SEs. The partnership can be in the form of outsourcing certain operations to SEs; providing concessionary rental of their premises or vacant land for use by SEs; and allowing SEs access to their clients, etc. The Mentorship Scheme provides a channel to link up entrepreneurs or professionals with SEs for the former to offer voluntary professional and business advisory services to the latter. In addition, we will continue to implement the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme to provide seed money to support SEs during their initial operation. Since the launch of the Programme in 2006, we have

approved some 50 million to over 50 SE projects in various areas. At present, about \$100 million remains available for application. We are processing the third batch of applications and have already approved some of the applications.

(IX) Conclusion

24. Chairman, this concludes my opening remarks. My colleagues and I will be glad to answer questions from Members. Thank you.