

**Motion Debate on
“Concern about the youth drug problem”
at the Legislative Council meeting of 29 April 2009**

In response to the motion “Concern about the youth drug problem” carried at the Legislative Council (LegCo) on 29 April 2009, this note briefs Members on the latest progress on implementation of the anti-drug policy reinvigorated by the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse (Task Force), including measures to support various sectors to address the youth drug abuse problem.

Progress of Implementation of Anti-Drug Policy

2. The Task Force led by the Secretary for Justice released its Report on 11 November 2008. The Report contains some 70 recommendations spanning the five prongs of the anti-drug policy, namely –

- (a) preventive education and publicity;
- (b) treatment and rehabilitation;
- (c) law enforcement and legislation;
- (d) external cooperation; and
- (e) research.

The recommendations also include the promotion of a community culture of care for young people through the *Path Builders* initiative.

3. To steer, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force, an Inter-departmental Working Group chaired by the Commissioner for Narcotics was set up in early 2009 and is working in full swing. Its membership is at the **Annex**. Since the motion debate on 29 April, we briefed Members on the overall progress at a Security Panel meeting on 5 May. Details can be found at CB(2)1419/08-09(07).

4. The latest progress and action plan of the Inter-departmental Working Group in different areas are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Preventive Education and Publicity

5. A pledge ceremony to reinvigorate the current two-year territory-wide campaign launched in June 2008 with the theme “No Drugs, No Regrets. Not Now, Not Ever.” was held on 21 June 2009. A new series of TV and radio Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs) for the campaign was produced and launched on the same day.

6. A resource kit to equip parents with anti-drug knowledge, attitude and skills to identify and handle youth drug problems was launched on 24 June 2009. To promote dissemination, a series of workshops and demonstrations are being organised and an online website has also been launched. The Narcotics Division (ND) will also separately commission the production of short videos targeting parents.

7. In addition, ND will revamp its website into an anti-drug portal and to revamp the Drug InfoCentre by phases into a focal point and resource centre for drug education.

School Sector

8. EDB continues to spearhead and coordinate efforts in the institutionalisation of a “Healthy School Policy” with an anti-drug element. EDB is inviting pilot schools to try out the policy before full implementation and provide exemplars for schools’ reference.

9. EDB will further strengthen anti-drug education in the New Senior Secondary Curriculum to be launched from September 2009 onwards, e.g. by the core subject “Liberal Studies” and the elective “Health Management and Social Care”. A new subject “Life and Society” will be offered at the junior secondary level which covers anti-drug education. To support the promotion of the school curriculum, learning and teaching resources as well as professional development programmes for teachers are continuously provided. To provide further drug education for students, in the 2008-09 school year, ND has commissioned non-government organisations (NGOs) to deliver programmes targeting 50% of primary four to six students and students from international and non-Chinese speaking schools, while SWD-subsided programmes would reach 75% of secondary schools. From school year 2007/2008 onwards, the

Department of Health(DH) has also incorporated anti-drug elements in its Junior Health Pioneer Workshops for primary three students. Furthermore, since 2008/09, drug education has become a core basic life skill training for all Form 1 students enrolled with Adolescent Health Programme. ND is working with Social Welfare Department (SWD), the Police, DH and NGOs concerned to enhance and coordinate various programmes in the 2009-10 school year, with a view to extending the coverage gradually to all primary schools (upper primary students) and secondary schools as far as possible within three years.

10. The Beat Drugs Fund has sponsored an NGO to develop resource kits for the school sector in modular form, which will be ready for use in the 2009-10 school year, in consultation with a working group formed under the Action Committee Against Narcotics. Campus protocols for handling student drug abuse cases are being developed as part of the kits, with a view to building a good network of support and referral for students and taking timely and effective follow-up actions. The NGO will arrange seminars, training and demonstration following the launch of the kits. EDB, SWD, Police, and ND will gauge initial feedback from users with a view to refining the kits as an on-going process.

11. ND and EDB are making preparation for the provision of basic and advanced teacher training programmes in the 2009-10 and 2010-11 school years, having regard to the experiences in the programmes in 2008-09. They will also continue to reach out to more parents for enhanced home-school cooperation in the anti-drug cause, in collaboration with parent-teacher associations, the Committee on Home-School Co-operation and parent education units.

12. With the creation of 27 police school liaison officer posts on top of the previous 58, the Police have extended coverage of anti-drug school talks and enhanced collaboration with NGOs concerned and schools.

13. Since the motion debate on 29 April, the Administration has further briefed Members on the progress of anti-drug efforts in schools from both the preventive and rehabilitative aspects at the separate special meetings of the Education Panel on 25 May and 2 July. Details are set out at CB(2)1414/08-09(01) and CB(2)2058/08-09(01).

Treatment and Rehabilitation

14. With a new additional provision of about \$4.7 million since the 2009-10 Financial Year, SWD is making preparation for providing on-site basic medical support at the Counselling Centre for Psychotropic Substance Abusers (CCPSAs) by end 2009, including body check-up, motivational interviews and voluntary drug testing.

15. To promote development of cross-disciplinary networking on a cluster basis as recommended in the Task Force Report and the Fifth Three-Year Plan on Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Services (2009-2011) (Fifth Three-Year Plan), the latter of which was released on 2 April 2009, ND held a collaboration meeting in June 2009 among the seven CCPSAs and the seven Substance Abuse Clinics. Separately, with funding support by the Beat Drugs Fund, the Hong Kong Medical Association commenced on 24 May 2009 a Professional Training Course for Family Doctors.

16. The Inter-departmental Working Group will continue to pursue vigorous implementation of other Task Force recommendations in relation to treatment and rehabilitation following the further directions set out in the Fifth Three-Year Plan. These include enhancement of the reintegration elements in treatment and rehabilitation programmes, improvement in capacity and quality of various programmes, and resources reengineering. The Inter-departmental Working Group will also identify areas that require additional resources and consider new projects in the light of the latest drug abuse situation.

Drug Testing

17. Regarding the compulsory drug testing proposal, ND and relevant bureaux and departments are now actively preparing for the launch of a public consultation exercise scheduled for end 2009. The anti-drug sector and the Fight Crime Committee were consulted on a draft outline of the consultation paper in May 2009. The Administration will proactively engage various stakeholders in formulating the details of the proposal for incorporation into the consultation paper.

18. As for school-based voluntary drug testing, ND invited on 12 June 2009 interested parties to participate in a research project to devise possible

school-based drug testing schemes for voluntary adoption by schools in Hong Kong. We aim to commission the research study by the 4th quarter of 2009. The research party is to recommend a model scheme(s) and to run it as a pilot project in a number of representative schools in school year 2010-11. Having regard to practical operational experiences, ND will refine and promote the scheme(s) for general adoption by local schools. Among other things, support services on treatment and rehabilitation will be carefully studied before the launch of the pilot test.

19. In parallel with and without prejudice to the undertaking of a research project, ND and EDB are proactively exploring scope for assisting in the launching of a small scale trial scheme on voluntary drug testing in school year 2009-10 as initiated by certain schools. Notably we will explore appropriate opportunities to provide adequate downstream support services on counselling, treatment and rehabilitation for those who have been tested positive in the future trial scheme.

Enhanced Probation System

20. Preparation is underway to carry out a two-year pilot scheme at Magistracies to strengthen the collaboration between Probation Officers and Judicial Officers on probation service starting from October 2009. This would enhance the assistance rendered to young drug abusers caught by the law. The Estimates 2009-10 have included an additional provision of about \$0.9 million for this purpose.

Law Enforcement

21. The relevant law enforcement departments are taking forward various recommendations of the Task Force. First, the law enforcement agencies and Department of Justice have been working closely together to continue to invoke section 56A of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap.134)¹ and the aggravating factor of importation of drugs for enhanced sentencing in appropriate cases.

¹ Section 56A of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap 134) empowers the court, where it is satisfied with evidence that an adult has involved a minor in the commission of a drug-related offence and if it thinks fit, to pass a sentence on the convicted adult offender that is more severe than the sentence it would, in the absence of such evidence, have passed.

22. Second, a team established in the Police since April 2008 continue to carry out Internet patrol on drug offences. The law enforcement departments also continue to sustain their crime prevention efforts through publicity and preventive education in collaboration with NGOs as well as industry partners.

23. Specifically for the summer vacation in 2009, law enforcement departments are spearheading major enhancement of enforcement efforts to combat the problem of youth drug abuse at the supply side and to ensure that no efforts are spared.

Cross-boundary Drug Abuse

24. Since the publication of the Task Force Report, various actions have been taken to step up efforts against cross-boundary drug abuse. First, the proposal for the sharing of information on Hong Kong youngsters caught abusing drugs in the Mainland, as well as repatriation of those who have been administratively detained by the Mainland, was raised by the Chief Executive with the Mayor of Shenzhen at a meeting on 23 June 2009. We are following up with the Mainland authorities for implementation. Second, C&ED has enhanced its detector dog services and plainclothes operation at boundary control points. Third, publicity at boundary control points has been enhanced during the festive seasons and dedicated efforts will be made in the summer vacation of 2009.

25. Apart from the above efforts, the Police have started making enquiries of youngsters apparently under the influence of drugs at boundary control points and contact their parents. To appeal to parents to better exercise their responsibility over their children's movements to the Mainland, publicity efforts have included the message that parents may consider keeping their dependent children's Home Visit Permits and that they can apply to the Immigration Department for a statement of travel records on behalf of their children should they see the need to.

External Cooperation

26. ND continues to monitor the latest development on discussion over tightening of ketamine in international fora such as World Health Organisation

Expert Committee on Drug Dependence and International Narcotics Control Board. We will provide necessary information to these organisations to support our case when suitable opportunities arise.

27. A meeting between ACAN and the Anti-Drug Committee of Macao was held in May 2009. ND will pursue the resumption of the tripartite cooperation framework among the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao. In addition, the Police and C&ED continue to pursue closer collaboration on law enforcement efforts with their Mainland and overseas counterparts.

Research

28. The results of the latest Survey of Drug Abuse among Students will be released in end 2009. As for the Central Registry of Drug Abusers (CRDA), ND rolled out a series of improvement measures in the first half of 2009 which include maintaining close contact with the reporting agencies and enhancing their efficiency in reporting to CRDA, assessing and reducing the extent of under-reporting, and widening and deepening the reporting network.

29. Several research studies, including two studies on the impact of ketamine, a longitudinal study on socioeconomic and health impacts of psychoactive drug abuse, as well as a study on effective ways to dispel at-risk youth's misunderstandings about psychotropic substances, are underway. They are expected for completion from 2010 to 2011. ND is also working to commission further studies in 2009 and beyond.

30. ND, DH and SWD have also been following up on the recommendations of the Task Force on evaluation of drug treatment and rehabilitation services.

31. An evaluation has also been planned for 2009 for the Service Information System², which is currently in use under a pilot scheme by five subvented DTRCs. Subject to the findings of the final review and necessary adjustments, ND will consider extending the Service Information System to all

² The Service Information System is a data management system which collects data regularly from each participating Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres about the centre itself, its programmes and clients, for compiling outcome indicators to measure the effectiveness of respective programmes, and provides greater characterisation of the clients and a wider range of behavioural and other changes with which to describe the outcome.

other subvented DTRCs and promote it for voluntary adoption by non-subvented DTRCs as far as possible to facilitate continuous service improvement.

Beat Drugs Fund

32. A total 159 applications for the annual funding exercise 2009/10 have been received. Despite a challenging investment environment, the Beat Drugs Fund Association sees the importance to step up anti-drug work at different levels and has made as much funding as possible for anti-drug projects in the community. 68 projects have been approved with a total funding of some \$23 million.

Community Care, Support and Participation

33. To encourage complementary support among bureaux and departments in tackling the youth drug abuse problem, ND has been working with the Family Council, the Women's Commission, EDB, FHB, DH, the Home Affairs Department, etc. to explore more collaborative opportunities in pursuing the programmes in various related policy areas.

34. To date, over 200 organisations and individuals have pledged support for the Path Builders initiative. Recognition was given to contributors at the Pledge Ceremony of the territory-wide campaign on 21 June 2009. ND is tailor-making individual packages and matching the contributors' offers with potential beneficiaries based on their preferences.

Advice Sought

35. Members are invited to note the latest progress of implementation of anti-drug strategy as set out in the paper.

**Membership of the
Inter-departmental Working Group on Youth Drug Abuse**

Chairman

Commissioner for Narcotics

Members

Representative of Secretary for Justice

Representative of Secretary for Education

Representative of Secretary for Food and Health

Representative of Commissioner of Police

Representative of Commissioner of Customs and Excise

Representative of Director of Home Affairs

Representative of Director of Health

Representative of Director of Social Welfare

Representative of Director of Information Services