

**Speaking Notes for S for S**  
**at the Special FC Meeting on 24 March 2009**

**Chairman,**

- In the draft Estimates for the new financial year (2009/2010), the allocation on the security policy area group is \$30.6 billion, representing 10.3% of the total government expenditure. The two policy areas of Internal Security and Immigration Control under my responsibility will account for \$26.8 billion.

**Law and Order**

- In 2008, the overall crime figure and the violent crime figure registered a decrease of 2.9% and 3.4% respectively as compared with 2007. Many serious crimes — including blackmail and robberies — also decreased in number. Overall speaking, the law and order situation of Hong Kong has remained stable. The Police will as always remain alert to maintain the law and order of the society.
- The major operational targets of the Commissioner of Police for 2009 include combating violent crimes, triad activities, “quick-cash” crimes, terrorism, trafficking and abuse of dangerous drugs, offences related to visitors and illegal immigrants, and road safety. The 5<sup>th</sup> East Asian Games will be held in Hong Kong in December this year; and the Police have formulated an effective operational strategy and will adopt a multi-agency approach to ensure all the events of the Games are held in a safe and secure environment, while at the

same time maintaining effective day-to-day police service.

- On the other hand, as the use of internet has become increasingly popular and technology crime is fast changing, the Police will provide additional staff to intensify their efforts in combating technology crime and will enhance the public's cyber crime prevention awareness through promotion and education.

### **Deferral of the introduction of the Import and Export (Amendment) Bill**

- The Police and the Customs and Excise Department of the Security Bureau are responsible for combating smuggling activities. We will review from time to time to ensure the relevant legislation continues to be effective in combating smuggling activities, having regard to the latest trends of these activities and departments' operational experience. To further enhance the effectiveness of departments' enforcement against smuggling activities at sea, we will submit proposals to the Legislative Council (LegCo) to amend certain technical provisions of the Import and Export Ordinance.
- We are finalizing the legislative proposals and will soon consult the affected industry and then the LegCo Panel on Security.
- Our original plan was to introduce the Import and Export (Amendment) Bill into LegCo in the latter half of the 2008-09 legislative session. However, considering the likely effect of the Bill to the industry and to allow sufficient time for consultation, we plan to introduce the Bill into LegCo in the first half of the next legislative session.

## **Immigration Control/ Customs Services**

- Since its implementation in July 2003, the coverage of the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) has been extended from four Mainland cities initially to 49 cities<sup>1</sup> as at present. Over the years, there have been more than 37 million visitor-arrivals to Hong Kong under the Scheme, bringing considerable benefits to the tourism, retail and related sectors. It is encouraging that the Mainland will further liberalise the Scheme shortly, including allowing Shenzhen residents to apply for one-year IVS endorsement for multiple visits to Hong Kong; and allowing residents living in Shenzhen but with household registration in other places to apply for IVS endorsement. Such liberalisation will open up new sources of tourists for relevant sectors. The Government will continue to ensure that the corresponding measures are in place, such as the smooth operation of control points. In 2009/10, the Immigration Department will recruit some 160 immigration service staff.
- We will continue to enhance our services through the use of information technology. The Immigration Department has extended e-Channel facilities at the airport to frequent visitors since May 2008. So far, over 16 000 visitors from about 80 countries have registered for the service. We will consider promoting the service to more visitors. We have also commenced a pilot scheme on Express e-Channels recently. The clearance time for a traveller using an Express e-Channel will be a few seconds faster than that for the existing e-Channel. We will review the public response to the pilot scheme in the second half of 2009.

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<sup>1</sup> 21 cities in Guangdong, Beijing, Shanghai, Fuzhou (urban area only), Xiamen, Chuenzhou, Nanjing, Suzhou, Wuxi, Hangzhou, Ningbo, Toizhou, Chongqing, Tianjin, Shenyang, Dalian, Chengdu, Jinan, Nanning, Nanchang, Changsha, Haikou, Guiyang, Kunming, Shijiazhuang, Zhengzhou, Changchun, Hefei and Wuhan.

- Hong Kong welcomes visitors from around the world apart from those from the Mainland. We all along maintain a liberal immigration regime. At present, persons from about 170 countries or territories can visit Hong Kong visa-free. We expect to sign a visa abolition agreement with Russia soon. The agreement will facilitate the exchanges between the two places on tourism and trade.
- In the face of the financial tsunami, we endeavour to attract more investors to invest in Hong Kong. Up to end February 2009, 3 605 applicants have been granted formal approval for residence in Hong Kong under the Capital Investment Entrant Scheme introduced in October 2003. Their total investment reaches some HK\$25.7 billion, or on average HK\$7.13 million per entrant.
- In the current economic environment, the Government spares no effort in securing employment. In processing applications for work visas, the Immigration Department will work diligently to ensure that only talent of value to and not readily available in Hong Kong are permitted to come for employment, in order to protect the employment opportunities of local labour. In fact, in the fourth quarter of 2008, the number of work visas issued by the Department recorded a decrease of about 18%, as compared with the average of the first three quarters.

### **Public Safety**

- Subsequent to the major fire at Cornwall Court last year, the Government has already stepped up the fire safety inspections of licensed premises and taken action against operators who contravene the relevant regulations. To this

end, FSD has already accorded priority to those buildings with higher risk in the list of target buildings to be inspected under the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance. In the new financial year, FSD will create an additional 39 posts to speed up the inspection works under the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance, with a view to improving the fire safety standards of pre-1987 composite and domestic buildings as soon as possible. FSD will also launch a pilot Building Fire Safety Envoy Scheme to further encourage the participation of the local community in promoting fire safety.

- In respect of the emergency ambulance services, the Government is in the process of replacing some 190 ambulances, which account for 80% of the existing fleet. The new ambulances will be delivered by batches in 2009 and the first half of 2010, by which time the average age of the fleet will be reduced from the current 8.2 years to 1.7 years. FSD will also create 120 additional ambulanceman posts in the new financial year, so as to ensure that the response time performance of the emergency ambulance service will meet our performance pledge to the public. In addition, we will step up publicity efforts to encourage the appropriate use of ambulance services; we will also continue to study the feasibility of introducing the ambulance priority dispatch system in Hong Kong, and to consult public and LegCo, to ensure the emergency ambulance services can better cater for those in genuine need.

### **Custody and Rehabilitation of Offenders**

- CSD has been implementing a series of measures to address the problems of outdated penal facilities and overcrowding in some of our penal institutions. The new Lo Wu Correctional Institutions will commence operation in 2010. The 1 400 penal places to be provided there could alleviate the overcrowding situation in female institutions. The Department has also made more effective

use of penal places in different institutions via a number of consolidation projects. We will continue to consider other possibilities to further improve prison environment.

- To assist rehabilitated offenders' re-integration into society, the Administration will continue to facilitate the provision of rehabilitative services. Apart from the counselling services, education and vocational training provided within CSD's institutions, we will also appeal for community acceptance and support for rehabilitated offenders through public education and publicity activities.

### **Countering the Menace of Drugs**

- We are very concerned about the drug abuse problem, in particular psychotropic substance abuse among the youth. The Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse led by the Secretary of Justice released its Report last November, setting out a host of 70 plus recommendations. Bureaux and departments are now working closely under the auspices of an inter-departmental group led by the Commissioner for Narcotics to pursue rigorous implementation of the measures.
- In the 2009-10 Financial Year, we plan to allocate new resources to implement two of the Task Force recommendations. Firstly, the Government plans to inject \$5 million to provide medical support at seven counseling centres for psychotropic substance abusers (CCPSAs), in a bid to strengthen drug treatment and rehabilitation services for young drug abusers. Second, the Government plans to inject nearly \$1 million to launch a two-year pilot project to provide more focused, structured and intensive probation services for young drug offenders, with a view to enhancing the rehabilitative process.

- In view of the severity and hidden nature of youth drug abuse, we will, in this year, pursue drug testing proposals at three levels. First, the medical support services to be provided at CCSPAs will include voluntary drug testing arrangements. Second, we will commission a research to develop possible school-based drug testing schemes for voluntary adoption by schools. Third, we will launch a public consultation exercise on a concrete proposal for compulsory drug testing.
- As part of the multi-pronged strategy, we will continue the campaign with “No Drugs, No Regrets. Not Now, Not Ever”, strengthen school and parental education, enhance drug treatment and rehabilitation services, step up law enforcement, fight cross-boundary drug abuse, reduce supply of drugs, promote external cooperation and further research efforts. We will also garner support from various sectors of the community through *Path Builders* to promote a caring culture for the youth.

### **Independent Police Complaints Council**

- The Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC) Ordinance was enacted in July 2008 and will commence operation, and accordingly the statutory IPCC will be established, on 1 June 2009. The Administration has allocated additional resources to the Council, as reflected in the 2009-2010 draft Estimates, in support of its operation as a statutory body. To underline its independent status, the IPCC will retain its separate Head of Expenditure in the annual Estimates with its Secretary-General as the Controlling Officer. A mechanism is in place to consider the resource requests of the IPCC in the context of the annual resource allocation exercises and special requests for additional resources may be submitted during the year should the circumstances arise. The Administration is committed to ensuring that the statutory IPCC

will be provided with appropriate support and resources for the continued effective discharge of its functions.

### **Increasing Employment Opportunities**

- As regards increasing employment opportunities, in the coming financial year, Security Bureau and its departments plan to create 483 new posts and a few tens of temporary jobs. Our departments will also implement some special measures to expedite the recruitment process, for example, shortening the selection process and streamlining procedures. In the coming financial year, we plan to recruit about a total of 2 080 staff to fill the new posts and vacancies resulting from wastage.

Chairman, this concludes my opening remarks. My colleagues and I will be happy to answer questions from Members.

*Security Bureau*

*March 2009*