THE HONG KONG BAR ASSOCIATION'S POSITION PAPER ON THE REPORT OF THE TASK FORCE ON YOUTH DRUG ABUSE

1. The Report of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse issued in November 2008 ("Report") contains a number of recommendations to combat youth drug abuse. In principle, the Hong Kong Bar Association ("HKBA") supports lawful, appropriate and proportionate measures to combat problems arising from youth drug abuse. The observations set out in this Position Paper deal with various recommendations contained in the Report which raise issues of human right protection and other constitutional issues, namely:

   (1) Compulsory drug testing scheme
      (i) **Recommendation 7.1**: Introduction of new legislation to empower law enforcement officers to require a person reasonably suspected of having consumed dangerous drugs to be subjected to a drug test.
      (ii) **Recommendation 7.2**: To consider whether the compulsory drug testing scheme is to extend to young persons or all ages.
      (iii) **Recommendation 7.3**: To consider whether to adopt a two-tier or three-tier system in the compulsory drug testing scheme.
      (iv) **Recommendation 7.4**: That the compulsory drug testing scheme should provide for taking of bodily samples from a minor in the presence of a parent or legal guardian or an independent person.

   (2) Extra territorial and cross border measures
      (i) **Recommendation 7.5**: To consider whether the offence of consumption of drugs should be extended to have extra-territorial effect.
      (ii) **Recommendation 10.1**: To step up cooperation with Mainland authorities including Hong Kong police obtaining from Mainland authorities information of youngsters caught abusing drugs in the Mainland.
      (iii) **Recommendation 10.3**: Where a young person is obviously intoxicated or otherwise incapacitated upon his return from the Mainland via a boundary control point, and that his health and well being give rise to concern, the Police should make

enquiries of this person and contact his or her parents if necessary.

(iv) **Recommendation 10.4**: The Government will advise parents to keep their under-age children's home visit permits, and inform them of the availability of a statement of travel records in respect of their children at the Immigration Department.

(3) Voluntary drug testing

(i) **Recommendation 7.7**: To commission a research project to devise possible school-based drug testing schemes for voluntary adoption by schools.

(4) Cyber patrols

(i) **Recommendation 9.5**: Cyber patrols for intelligence on drug trafficking and abuse to be strengthened.

COMPULSORY DRUG TESTING SCHEME

2. The Report postulates that a drug testing scheme may serve 4 main objectives: Monitoring and deterrence, early intervention, preventing drug abuse, and crime investigation and prevention. [para 7.1]

3. The Report recognizes that there is currently no legal authority for compulsory drug testing without consent and proposes the introduction of legislation "to provide for compulsory drug testing by our law enforcement agencies for the lawful purposes of crime investigation and prevention and protection of public health". [para 7.32 -7.37]

4. The subject of compulsory drug testing is of great controversy. Since compulsory drug testing involves taking of bodily samples, whether intimate or not, there is arguably a violation of the right to privacy (which is guaranteed under Art 14 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights and Art 17 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights) and also arguably a violation of the protection accorded by Art 28 of the Basic Law of the HKSAR against arbitrary or unlawful search of the body of any HKSAR resident. Canadian cases (to be discussed below) have also indicated that such drug testing could amount to discrimination.

5. It should be noted that in the jurisdictions examined below, the Courts have not condoned a blanket compulsory drug testing. The Courts have been careful to restrict any compulsory drug testing to very limited groups in the population on the basis that the test results would be used for limited purposes. Moreover, the Courts in jurisdictions examined below have not condoned compulsory drug testing which would ultimately lead to criminal prosecution.

6. The HKBA notes the discussion in the Report [para 2.6 - 2.31] in respect of drug abuse trend in Hong Kong. The HKBA is not in a position to comment on the seriousness of youth drug abuse in Hong Kong. The point that the HKBA wishes to stress is that any proposed legislative measures should be proportionate to the problems arising from youth drug abuse, no matter how well intended the proposed legislative measures may be.

United States

7. There is much case law on the legality of compulsory drug testing in the United States and most challenges have been based on a violation of the rights protected by the Fourth Amendment of the United States Constitution, which seeks to secure the right of the person against "unreasonable searches and seizures".

8. In *Skinner v Railway Labor Executives Assn.* 489 U.S. 602 (1989) and *National Treasury Employees v Von Raab* 489 U.S. 656 (1989), the US Supreme Court held that the government was allowed to conduct compulsory drug tests on government employees without the need for an individualized suspicion requirement when there is a "special need" or when the compelling governmental interests served by the regulations outweigh employees' privacy concerns. Thereafter, the US Courts have generally upheld compulsory drug testing in cases of motor vehicle operators, transportation workers, medical officers, aviation employees, police officers, fire fighters, government employees handling sensitive information, and prison guards. However the Courts have generally subjected these cases to careful scrutiny and have only upheld compulsory drug testing where there was a clear nexus between the nature of the job and possible dangers presented by possible drug abuse.

9. It should be noted that some States[1] have enacted legislation to restrict drug testing on private sector employees.

10. The US Supreme Court case of *Board of Education of Independent School District No. 92 of Pottawatomie County, et al, v. Lindsay Earls et al.* 536 U.S. 822 (2002) has been cited by the Report [para 7.7] in support of compulsory drug testing in the school setting. However, it should be noted that the drug testing scheme in place in the relevant school district in Oklahoma only applied to student athletes competing extracurricularly and involved taking a urine sample without direct observation. Positive test results would not result in any disciplinary action or academic consequences. The test results were not handed over to any law enforcement agency. They were kept in a confidential file and were only released to personnel on a "need to know" basis. The only consequence of a failed compulsory drug test result was a restriction on the student's privilege to participate in extracurricular activities. Moreover, the school district was able to demonstrate that there was an increase in drug use problem in their district. In these circumstances, the Supreme Court held that the school district was reasonable and did not violate the Fourth Amendment. This judgment was subject to trenchant criticism in the leading text on Fourth Amendment jurisprudence[2].

11. In spite of the availability of federal, state and local funding to facilitate schools in the United States to introduce compulsory drug testing of students, many school officials and parents have opposed compulsory drug testing of students. A publication of the American Civil Liberties Union and the Drug Policy Alliance entitled *Making Sense of Student Drug Testing: Why Educators Are Saying No* (2nd Edition, January 2006), provides a case based on research of pediaetricians, public health experts and educationalists that, apart from the claim that a policy of compulsorily testing students for drugs is an unwarranted invasion of privacy, compulsory drug testing *does not* effectively reduce drug use among young people and has many risks and drawbacks and leads to unintended consequences.

12. Recently, the Supreme Court of the State of Washington held that the policy of a school district requiring compulsory drug testing of student athletes (which was modelled upon a policy that passed federal muster in an earlier

[1] Connecticut, Maine, Rhode Island, Montana, Minnesota, Iowa, Vermont, and Hawaii.
[2] See LaFave, *Search and Seizure: A Treatise on the Fourth Amendment* (4th Ed, 2004) §10.11(c).

case of the US Supreme Court) violated the protection of the Washington State Constitution against searches "without authority of law": *York et al v Wahkiakum School District No. 200 et al* 163 Wn. 2d 297 (2008). The Supreme Court focused upon an analysis that primarily requires constitutional justification of a search by a valid warrant subject to "a few jealously guarded exceptions". A student athlete had a genuine and fundamental privacy interest in controlling his or her own bodily functions. A compulsory requirement upon the student athlete to provide his or her urine was a significant intrusion of his or her fundamental right to privacy. The school district's argument by reference to the federal jurisprudence discussed above that the special needs in the context of public schools constituted an exception to the warrant requirement was rejected.

13. On the other hand, in *Ferguson et al. v. City of Charleston et al.* 532 U.S. 67 (2001), the US Supreme Court held that a state hospital's performance of a diagnostic test to obtain evidence of a patient's criminal conduct for law enforcement purposes is an unreasonable search if the patient has not consented to the procedure.

14. A survey of the US authorities show that compulsory drug testing has been generally limited to public sector employees whose job nature may put the lives of others at risk and therefore passes a "special need" criterion. The case law relating to school drug testing is still in a state of flux and in any event, only a very restricted policy had been found to be "reasonable". Those cases should not be interpreted as endorsing a blanket approval on all school-based drug testing programmes. Rather, two observations may be made. Firstly, it should be remembered that students "do not 'shed their constitutional rights' at the schoolhouse door": *Goss v Lopez* 419 U.S. 565 (1975) at 574, US Supreme Court. Secondly, the jurisprudence of Washington State may be more apposite to the HKSAR than the jurisprudence of the federal jurisdiction in light of the language of Art 28 of the Basic Law of the HKSAR.

<u>*Canada*</u>

15. The Canadian Courts have generally not endorsed random compulsory drug testing. Challenges have been based on sections 7 and 8 of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom. Section 7 protects the right to security and

section 8 protects the right to be secure against unreasonable search and seizure.

16. The case of *Entrop v. Imperial Oil* (2000) 50 O.R. 3d 18 (C.A.) (applying the test set out by the Supreme Court in the case of *British Columbia (Public Service Employee Relations Commission) v. British Columbia Government and Service Employees' Union*, [1999] 3 S.C.R. 3) shows that the Courts were reluctant to uphold random testing of employees especially in cases where a positive test result lead to termination of employment.

17. In the case of *Canadian Civil Liberties Association v Toronto Dominion Bank* (1998) 163 D.L.R. (4th) 193, the Federal Court of Appeal held that TD Bank's drug testing policy on employees constituted employment discrimination against drug-dependent persons.

18. Compulsory drug testing is endorsed via Canadian legislation relating to impaired driving and tests administered by the Correctional Services Canada on inmates. However even under such legislation, compulsory drug testing is not random and is restricted to situations where specified criteria are met[3].

19. A general survey of the case law shows that the Canadian Courts require there to be, amongst other things, an objective element in any mandatory drug testing programme before it will be sanctioned.

United Kingdom

20. The legal position of the United Kingdom is set out in the Report [paras 7.8 and 7.14]. It should be added that the results from drug tests are protected by the Data Protection Act 1998, which states that data can be obtained only where there is a lawful purpose for their collection and processing of the information must be with the consent of the data subject[4]. The legality of the United Kingdom's retention of bodily samples taken in connection with the investigation into a criminal offence had been the subject of litigation, which

[3] For example s 54 of the Corrections and Conditional Release Act provides that an inmate may be tested within an institution where a staff member believes on reasonable grounds that the inmate has committed a disciplinary offence for which a urine sample is necessary to provide such evidence. See also the case of *R v Dion*, unrep, CAQ, 31 May 1990; and *Jackson v Joyceville Penitentiary* [1990] 3 FC 55 (TD).

[4] See Schedules 1 and 2 of the Act.

is to be discussed below under the jurisprudence of the European Court of Human Rights.

European Court of Human Rights

21. The challenges in the European Court of Human Rights ("ECtHR") in respect of compulsory drug testing have been made on the basis of Art 8 (right to respect for private and family life) of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms ("European Convention").

22. The general view of the ECtHR is that compulsory blood and urine testing amount to "interferences" within the meaning of Art 8(1) of the European Convention[5]. However some cases have upheld compulsory testing on prisoners on the basis that the practice complied with Art 8(2) of the European Convention[6].

23. In *Wretlund v Sweden* (Application No. 46210/99, 9 March 2004), the ECtHR upheld the compulsory drug testing administered by an employer on an employee. The Court considered that since the applicant was an employee working in a nuclear plant, that the test results were limited to detecting cannabis, that the test results were disclosed only to personnel involved in the drug policy programme, and the test results were not to be used for any other purpose, the compulsory drug testing was justified on the legitimate grounds of public safety and the protection of the rights and freedoms of others, in particular other employees.

24. In *Jalloh v Germany* (2007) 44 E.H.R.R. 32 [Grand Chamber], it was held that forcible medical treatment by an emetic was a violation of Art 3 European Convention. It was also held at para 71, "[any] recourse to a forcible medical intervention in order to obtain evidence of a crime must be convincingly justified on the facts of a particular case. This is especially true where the procedure is intended to retrieve from inside the individual's body real evidence of the very crime of which he is suspected."

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[5] See *X v Austria* (1979) 18 DR 154; and *Peters v Netherlands* (Application No. 21132/93, 6 April 1994).
[6] See *Peters v Netherlands* (Application No. 21132/93, 6 April 1994) and *Galloway v United Kingdom* (Application No. 34199/96, 9 September 1998).

25. In the recent case of *S and Marper v United Kingdom* (Application No. 30562/04 and 30566/04, 4 December 2008), a Grand Chamber of the ECtHR held that the retention by the United Kingdom authorities of the fingerprints, cellular samples and DNA profiles of persons suspected but not convicted of offences failed to strike a fair balance between the competing public and private interests and such failure went beyond any acceptable margin of appreciation in context, thus constituting a disproportionate interference with the applicants' right to respect for private life and could not be necessary in a democratic society. The Grand Chamber was "struck" by the breadth of the power of retention, which made no distinction in terms of nature or gravity of the offence with which the individual was originally suspected or of the age of the suspected offender. There was no time limit and no independent review. Persons not convicted of any offence had been treated in the same way as convicted persons, raising the risk of stigmatization. Further the Grand Chamber considered that the retention of data of unconvicted persons who were minors was particularly harmful, given their special situation and the importance of their development and integration in society, referring to the special position of minors in criminal justice specified by Art 40 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Discussion

26. The Report suggests that compulsory drug testing is to enable early intervention for treatment and rehabilitation.

27. It should be noted that any bodily samples taken from a subject will be caught under the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap 486). Principle 3 of the data protection principles provided in Schedule 1 of that Ordinance states: "Personal data shall not, without the prescribed consent of the data subject, be used for any purpose other than- (a) the purpose for which the data were to be used at the time of the collection of the data; or (b) a purpose directly related to the purpose referred to in paragraph (a)."

28. It can be seen that in the case law of the jurisdictions examined above, compulsory drug testing is only permitted in respect of narrowly defined groups of persons, for very limited purposes. Moreover case law has shown not only that the test results are not to be used for criminal prosecutions but

also that minors must not be stigmatized in their brush with the public order institutions and the criminal justice system.

29. The Report has merely suggested that its recommended compulsory drug testing scheme be operated on the basis of a law enforcement officer's "reasonable suspicion" that the subject had consumed a dangerous drug. This suggestion is unsatisfactory in light of the acknowledgement in the Report of difficulties in gathering "sufficient evidence to prove consumption nowadays, particularly because many dangerous drugs are consumed in a manner which is much more difficult to detect" [para 7.17]. Given the significant intrusion of the right to privacy by a drug test, there must be a properly formulated triggering threshold to minimize misidentification. The risk of misidentification appears to be substantial bearing in mind that the usual method utilized by the law enforcement officer to form a reasonable suspicion is visual observation, plus perhaps cursory questioning of the person concerned.

30. The Police Superintendent's Discretion Scheme already provides a mechanism for initial warning to youth offenders as envisaged in the proposed two or three tiered system. The only difference is that in the proposed tiered system the law enforcement officer can, on the second time a person is caught, make an offer of mandatory treatment in lieu of prosecution. On the other hand, the Report has not clarified whether the statutory and non-criminal scheme of care or protection orders administered by the juvenile courts have any role to play as a measure of intervention and why.

31. It is clear that the Task Force envisages that the test results can and will be used for criminal prosecution.

32. As recognized in the Report, once test results obtained without the consent of the person are used for the purposes of prosecution, a number of fundamental rights may be violated including the right to self-incrimination (Hong Kong Bill of Rights, Art 11(2)(g)). Other rights that may be violated by a compulsory drug testing scheme include the right to privacy[7] (Hong Kong Bill of Rights, Art 14; Basic Law of the HKSAR, Art 30), the right against

[7] For a discussion of the meaning of privacy by the Court of First Instance, see *The Democratic Party v Secretary for Justice* [2007] 2 HKLRD 804, CFI.

unlawful or arbitrary search of the body (Basic Law of the HKSAR, Art 28), and the right to refuse medical treatment.

33. Any compulsory drug testing scheme should be the last resort and other less draconian options must be first explored. The HKBA invites the Task Force to explain further what other options they have considered and why those options are not viable so as to conclude that compulsory drug testing is the only viable and effective means to achieve the aims set out in the Report.

34. There appears to have been no consideration as to whether and how data yielded from a compulsory drug testing scheme is to be retained. Recent and strong jurisprudential authority is against the integration of such data into databases primarily concerned with the storage of data of convicted persons. Bearing in mind that minors constitute the principal target group of the recommendation, it is considered that unless the recommended scheme is properly formulated to take account of special position of minors in criminal justice, it cannot possibly pass constitutional muster.

35. In respect of the recommendation to consider whether compulsory drug testing to extend to young persons or to the population at large, the Task Force has not expressed any preference. Yet, it would be difficult to justify compulsory drug testing on the population at large. As illustrated by the case law of other jurisdictions, compulsory drug testing has been limited to very narrowly defined groups and thus very small sector(s) of the population.

36. On the other hand, compulsory drug testing limited to young persons gives rise to possible discrimination arguments. Statistics on drug abuse indicate that in 2007 there were 2,919 out of the total 13,491 drug abusers who were under the age of 21. Even if the statistics show that young drug abusers are on the rise, it is difficult to see the justification for imposing compulsory drug testing limited to young persons when they only represent 22% of the total figure.

37. In respect of whether to adopt the two or three tiered system, the problem lies in the discretion of the law enforcement officer to offer either mandatory treatment or prosecution. There has been no discussion in the Report to indicate what criteria will govern the exercise of the discretion. The Task Force should consider carefully the criteria to be considered when exercising

such discretion so as to ensure that such discretion is not exercised arbitrarily. There should also be mechanisms in place to ensure that the discretion is exercised properly. In particular it would be dangerous if the discretion were to be exercised by one person alone.

38. In respect of the taking of bodily samples, other jurisdictions have limited compulsory drug testing to the taking of non-intimate samples, most commonly urine. The case law shows that Courts are unwilling to uphold "direct observation" cases, that is, cases where someone directly observes the taking of the sample. Hence although it is agreed that a parent or a legal guardian or an independent person should be present, there should not be any direct observation as it may amount to degrading treatment contrary to Art 3 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights.

EXTRA TERRITORIAL AND CROSS BORDER MEASURES

39. The recommendation to consider extending the offence of consumption of dangerous drugs outside the territorial limits of the HKSAR raises many problems.

40. Firstly the legislative power of the HKSAR in respect of extra-territorial legislation may require clarification. Secondly, the precise scope of any extra-territorial legislation envisaged by the Task Force is unclear. Thirdly, the enactment of such laws may give rise to problems of double jeopardy and this issue should be expressly addressed.

41. The Basic Law of the HKSAR grants the HKSAR with legislative power without specifying the extent of such power. The fact that the Hong Kong legislature may enact extra-territorial legislation prior to 1 July 1997 is of no relevance since such legislative power was specifically granted pursuant to an Act of the United Kingdom Parliament. Whether the National People's Congress intended to grant the HKSAR with such legislative power as including the power to enact extra-territorial legislation is a question that requires careful consideration of constitutional law and practices of the People's Republic of China as well as the Central Authorities' policy of "One Country, Two Systems" with the HKSAR enjoying "a high degree" of autonomy.

42. Legislation enacted in Hong Kong cannot possibly direct on another country's exercise of criminal or administrative jurisdiction. This means that if the offence of consumption of dangerous drugs is to be extended beyond Hong Kong territory, the HKSAR Government has no authority to stop any drug offence related proceedings in the other country. This means that the offender may be subjected to 2 sets of criminal legal proceedings arising out of one set of facts, albeit in different jurisdictions.

43. Moreover, there are serious evidentiary problems arising from this recommendation. The safeguards relating to seizure and admissibility of evidence in our laws may not mirror those other jurisdictions. If evidence is seized by the authorities of another country where the safeguards available in HKSAR's system are lacking, this may present an admissibility problem in the HKSAR Courts.

44. The Task Force should justify that its recommendation is rational and proportional in all the circumstances.

45. In respect of Recommendation 10.1, the Task Force has not made clear how it envisages the Police will use the data exchanged with the Mainland authorities. If the information is solely used to inform the parents, there needs to be guidelines and mechanisms in place to ensure that the information will not be used to facilitate any prosecution. If the Task Force plans to advocate for extra-territorial legislation, the use of the information obtained through exchanges with Mainland authorities and the extent of its admissibility needs to be carefully considered.

46. In respect of Recommendation 10.4, the restriction of the young persons to cross the border is possibly a violation of the freedom of movement. Article 31 of the Basic Law of the HKSAR guarantees the freedom of movement of HKSAR residents, including the freedom to travel and to enter or leave the HKSAR. Article 10(2) of the Convention on the Rights of the Child states, "State Parties shall respect the right of the child and his or her parents to leave any country including their own, and to enter their own country. The right to leave any country shall be subject only to such restrictions as are prescribed by law and which are necessary to protect national security, public order (*ordre public*), public health or morals or the rights and freedoms of others and are consistent with the other rights recognized in the

present Convention." Accordingly, such general advice from the Government should not be given lightly. Moreover, such general advice will affect non-drug abusers as well as drug abusers and is therefore much too broad to be justifiable. Any restriction of movement condoned by the Government without a proper legal basis is also vulnerable to criticisms.

VOLUNTARY DRUG TESTING IN SCHOOLS

47. While the research project is welcome, this should not be taken as endorsement of any school-based drug testing programme(s), bearing in mind the increased skepticism of such programmes in the United States and elsewhere.

CYBER PATROL

48. The Report does not make clear the method and extent of the cyber patrol to be undertaken by the Police. It is not clear if what is intended goes beyond monitoring by passive browsing or not.

49. In light of the success in the covert surveillance cases[8] in upholding the right to privacy, the extent and method of cyber patrol should be carefully considered. If such cyber "policing" is intrusive and is such as to monitor private conversations between individuals, then the Task Force will have show that such methods are rational and proportional. Moreover, such "cyber policing" will have to be in accordance with legal procedures, not arbitrary, and prescribed by law.

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[8] See *Koo Sze Yiu & Anor v HKSAR* (2006) 9 HKCFAR 441, CFA and *HKSAR v Chan Kau Tai*, [2006] 1 HKLRD 400, CA.