

Speaking Notes for S for S

at the Special FC Meeting on 24 March 2010

Chairman,

- In the draft Estimates for the new financial year (2010-11), the allocation on the security policy area group is \$34.4 billion, representing 10.8% of the total government expenditure. The two policy areas of Internal Security and Immigration Control under my responsibility will account for \$30.5 billion. The remaining \$3.9 billion is allocated to the four policy areas of Administration of Justice, Anti-corruption, Legal Administration and Legal Aid.

Law and Order

- In 2009, the overall crime figure and the violent crime figure registered a decrease of 1.1% and 1.6% respectively as compared with 2008. Most categories of crimes — such as robberies, burglaries, wounding and serious assault as well as indent assault — 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 2010 include combating violent crimes, triad activities, “quick-cash” crimes, terrorism, trafficking and abuse of drugs, offences related to visitors and illegal immigrants, and road safety.
- The Police will also create new posts with a view to strengthening the overall counter-terrorism capability and enhancing the capability of the Very Important Person Protection Unit.

Immigration Control

- We will continue to facilitate people from around the world to come to Hong Kong for visit, business and investment. We will also strive to provide efficient immigration clearance services and at the same time, uphold effective immigration control and maintain law and order.

Individual Visit Scheme

- As regards Mainland visitors, since the implementation of the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) in 2003, there have been more than 47 million visitor-arrivals to Hong Kong under the scheme, bringing considerable benefits to tourism, retailing and related sectors. Following the implementation of the “multiple journey individual visit exit endorsements valid for one year” to permanent

residents of Shenzhen, the Mainland authorities had extended the IVS to non-Guangdong residents in Shenzhen since 15 December last year. In the first two months of 2010, there were more than 2.5 million visitor-arrivals under the IVS, a jump of 26% over the same period last year. The Immigration Department and relevant departments will continue to monitor the passenger flow closely and put in place relevant facilitation measures to ensure the smooth operations at control points. In 2010-11, the Immigration Department will recruit some 100 staff.

Admission of Talent

- The Quality Migrant Admission Scheme was launched in June 2006 to attract talent from around the world to come to settle in Hong Kong. Changes have been made to the scheme since January 2008, including lifting the upper age limit, adjusting the marking scheme and streamlining the assessment of extension of stay applications from successful applicants. So far, approvals have been given to 1 572 applicants to come to Hong Kong. They come from different professions and industries, ranging from finance, accounting as well as sports and arts.

Capital Investment Entrant Scheme

- We welcome investors to come to Hong Kong for investment. From October 2003 to end-2009, 5 953 applicants were given formal approvals to reside in

Hong Kong under the Capital Investment Entrant Scheme. They invested a total of \$42.1 billion, or an average of \$7.07 million per entrant. The scheme benefits various local sectors, such as the development of financial services, and indirectly creates many job opportunities.

- As we have indicated to the Legislative Council earlier, the investment made under the scheme only represented approximately 1% of the total transaction value of the property market, hence, should not have significant effect on the overall price. In fact, property price mainly hinges on factors such as supply and demand, interest rate and investment environment etc. Furthermore, Hong Kong is an open market and investors can come to Hong Kong for investment through different channels.

e-Channels

- We will continue to enhance our services through the use of technology. The Immigration Department has commenced a pilot scheme on Express e-Channels since March 2009 to shorten the clearance time for Hong Kong residents to eight seconds. So far, one million residents have enrolled. We have also implemented the immigration convenience measures between Hong Kong and Macao since December last year. Eligible Hong Kong residents may enjoy automated clearance services at Macao control points. So far, more than 150 000 Hong Kong residents have enrolled for the service. As

regards e-Channels for visitors, the number of enrolled users is around 120 000.

The Immigration Department will continue to promote the service.

Screening of torture claims and combating illegal employment

- An enhanced torture claim screening mechanism has been implemented since December 2009. The Administration now provides a subvention to the Duty Lawyer Service, for the latter to provide publicly-funded legal assistance to needy claimants. We have also appointed adjudicators with legal professional background, to rule on petitions against screening decisions independently. The Administration will continue to devote efforts to the fair and effective screening of torture claims. In the coming year, additional manpower will be deployed in the handling of claims. We will also put forth this year the draft legislation for a statutory screening mechanism to be set up.
- To combat illegal employment, the Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2009 was passed by the Legislative Council in November last year. Stringent enforcement actions to combat illegal employment will continue, to reduce the economic incentives for illegal immigrants and overstayers to prolong their presence in Hong Kong. We note that since the legislation took effect in mid November, the number of torture claims received by the Immigration Department has declined, while the number of withdrawal and voluntary repatriation cases has gone up.

Assistance to Hong Kong residents overseas

- We will continue to provide assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong. The Immigration Department will gradually enhance the “1868” hotline services in this year, such as increasing the capacity of the hotline and adding automatic call distribution function.
- Furthermore, the Immigration Department, in coordination with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, is exploring an e-registration system on GovHK platform to allow Hong Kong travellers to inform the Immigration Department of their itineraries and emergency contact information.
- As regards the Outbound Travel Alert System, we will take into account operational experience to exchange views with relevant trades and conduct review from time to time, with a view to enhancing the system.

Public Safety

- In recent years, the Government has already stepped up fire safety inspections of licensed premises and taken action against operators who contravene the relevant regulations. Fire Services Department (FSD) will continue to adopt a 4-pronged approach for enhancing the fire safety of old buildings through

publicity, law enforcement, checking and partnership with owners / occupiers and property management of buildings.

- After the No.4 Alarm Fire in the industrial building in Cheung Sha Wan, FSD has decided to conduct a survey of all industrial buildings in order to assess their current fire safety conditions and examine whether it is necessary to introduce improvement measures. During the survey, FSD will take fire hazard abatement action on the industrial buildings being surveyed. In addition, in the new financial year, FSD will create 10 additional posts to enhance live-fire and rescue training for frontline fire fighters.
- All along, the Security Bureau supports FSD to renew their equipment in order to protect the safety of frontline firemen. In the past few years, the Administration has allocated funding to FSD in a timely manner for the procurement of equipment. For instance, a total of \$45 million was earmarked in 2008-09 and 2009-10 for FSD to procure new breathing apparatuses; in 2009-10, \$170 million was allocated for the replacement of the radio communication system; and \$89 million was recommended to be earmarked in 2010-11 for the procurement of fire tunic and overtrousers that offers greater protection. In addition, we have earmarked over \$290 million in 2009-10 and 2010-11 for the procurement of fire appliances and equipment.

- In respect of the emergency ambulance services, FSD will create 44 additional ambulance officers and ambulancemen posts in the new financial year, so as to strengthen the management functions of ambulance services and increase ambulance shifts. Furthermore, we will step up publicity efforts to encourage more judicious use of ambulance services.
- In order to further enhance ambulance services, we propose to implement a Medical Priority Dispatch System (MPDS) in Hong Kong to prioritise emergency ambulance calls in accordance with the degree of urgency, so as to provide quicker response to patients in critical or life-threatening conditions. We conducted a public consultation on MPDS last year. In general, around 70% of the respondents supported the proposed MPDS. We are examining the comments collected and plan to report the outcome of the consultation and the proposed way forward to the Panel on Security of the Legislative Council in April this year.

Custody and Rehabilitation of Offenders

- CSD has been implementing different measures to address the problems of outdated penal facilities and overcrowding in some of our penal institutions. The new Lo Wu Correctional Complex will commence operation in the second half of 2010. The 1 400 penal places to be provided there will alleviate the overcrowding situation in female institutions. At the same time, CSD plans to

handover the management of the Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre to the Immigration Department next month so as to release the manpower to other (including redeveloped) penal facilities. The Immigration Department has also been actively preparing for the takeover, including the creation of 115 new posts. The vetting of the relevant subsidiary legislation is also in progress. I would like to thank the Members who have participated in the vetting for their valuable comments. We are studying the comments in detail so as to ensure that the rights of the detainees at the Castle Peak Bay Immigration Centre will continue to be safeguarded. We will report to the Subcommittee on the Subsidiary Legislation next week.

- To assist rehabilitated offenders' re-integration into society, apart from the ongoing provision of vocational training, CSD has since 2009 added the element of vocational training into the correctional industries. Prisoners are now given the opportunity to receive training during their work in prison workshop. The Department plans to provide about 1 100 training places to prisoners in 2010, which represents a 22% increase as compared with 2009. In addition, CSD will continue to appeal for community acceptance and support for rehabilitated offenders through public education and publicity activities.

Anti-drug Strategy

- The Administration attaches great importance to youth drug abuse problem. As early as in 2007, the Chief Executive appointed the Secretary for Justice to lead a high-level interdepartmental Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse to formulate policies and measures to tackle the issue from different aspects. The Administration's strategy is to implement a comprehensive set of strengthened anti-drug measures following five-strategic directions promulgated by the Chief Executive, namely community mobilisation, community support, drug testing, treatment and rehabilitation, and law enforcement, in order to tackle the problem in a sustainable manner.
- In the last two financial years, the Administration allocated additional resources to implement short-term recommendations of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse. The 2010-11 Budget has set aside additional resources of \$52 million to accelerate the drive. Main measures to be rolled out include opening four new Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers; increasing the manpower of the 16 teams of District Youth Outreaching Social Work teams; increasing 15 more police dogs and 15 police officers to enhance anti-drug operations; creating 9 posts of police school liaison officers (sergeants); purchasing hair drug testing equipment; increasing the capacity of youth drug treatment and rehabilitation centres subvented by the Department of Health;

and increasing relevant manpower in different departments for implementing anti-drug measures.

- To demonstrate the Administration's resolve and to take the lead in mobilising the community to fight drugs, the Administration proposes a capital injection of \$3 billion into the Beat Drugs Fund (BDF). This will enable the BDF to generate an enhanced level of income and more resources to sponsor anti-drug programmes organised by various quarters of the community. We will seek the views of the Action Committee Against Narcotics and stakeholders in the anti-drug sector on details of the proposed injection before consulting the LegCo Panel on Security in April and following the established procedures to seek funding approval from the LegCo Finance Committee.

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

Security Bureau

March 2010