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Panel on Security

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 1 June 2010**

**Integrity management and behavioural guidelines
of the Hong Kong Police Force**

Purpose

This paper provides background information on the integrity management initiatives being pursued by the Hong Kong Police Force ("the Force") and summarizes members' concerns about the standard of integrity and conduct of Police officers.

Integrity Management in the Hong Kong Police Force

2. According to the Administration, the Force has long recognized the importance of promoting and sustaining a culture of integrity and honesty. Managing the integrity of its officers is the cornerstone of the Force's policing philosophy of garnering public support. The Force manages the integrity of all members through its "Vision, Statement of Common Purpose and Values"; its "Strategic Directions and 2008-2010 Strategic Action Plan"; and the "Ethical Leadership Programme".

3. The Force's Vision, Statement of Common Purpose and Values, introduced in 1996, highlights integrity and honesty as one of the Force's core values. "Enhancing the Personal and Professional Qualities of Force Members", which calls for continued improvement in developing the quality of the Force members, is one of the Force's four Strategic Directions.

4. Under the Government-wide Ethical Leadership Programme launched in December 2006, the Commissioner of Police has appointed the Director of Management Services ("DMS"), who is the Senior Assistant Commissioner of Police responsible for Force ethics and integrity, as the Force Ethics Officer. DMS is tasked to oversee various projects in the Force designed to realize the aims of the Ethical Leadership Programme and to entrench a

culture of integrity among Police officers through the leadership and commitment of the Force's senior management.

Integrity Management Initiatives

5. Over the years, the Force has introduced a variety of initiatives and programmes to ensure a high level of integrity among all its members. These initiatives and programmes can be categorized under four areas, namely, education and culture building; governance and control; enforcement and deterrent; and rehabilitation and support.

Ethics and integrity education

6. Among the many initiatives and programmes to manage integrity and guide the conduct of Police officers, ethics and integrity education forms an important part of all training for new recruits and serving officers in the Force. Their implementation is the joint responsibility of Service Quality Wing, Personnel Wing and Police College which are responsible for knowledge sharing, socialization and formal mandatory training respectively.

7. The Force also emphasizes that every member of the Force is responsible for upholding the key values of integrity and honesty. Supervisors at all levels are encouraged to lead by example and to closely supervise officers whose integrity might have been brought into doubt.

Integrated Integrity Management Framework

8. To ensure that the Force's various integrity management initiatives are mutually reinforcing, support the Force's priorities, reflect the Force's values and are able to meet public expectations, a key project of the Force's 2008-2009 Strategic Action Plan is the formulation of an Integrated Integrity Management Framework. Within the Framework, a Force Committee on Integrity Management ("FCIM") has been set up at the Force level. Chaired by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (Management) and comprising senior members of the Force and the Independent Commission Against Corruption ("ICAC"), FCIM formulates and develops policies to effectively promote and sustain the Force's values throughout the Force. It also identifies key issues in managing police integrity and give directions to address them, and monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of the Force Strategy for Integrity Management ("FSIM").

9. At the formation level, the Force has appointed Formation Integrity Officers and set up Formation Integrity Committees ("FICs"). The main responsibilities of FICs include -

- (a) reviewing and monitoring integrity-related issues as decided by FCIM in their respective formations and supporting the work of FCIM;
- (b) implementing relevant components of FSIM through instigating local

initiatives;

- (c) monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of these initiatives; and
- (d) providing feedback on all issues related to the Force's values to FCIM, the Force Ethics Officer and the relevant policy wings.

Introduction of a set of behavioural guidelines

10. To support the four-pronged strategies for integrity management, the Force has also introduced a set of behavioural guidelines. Besides civil service regulations, all Force members have to comply with the Force's directives and guidelines, which cover a wide variety of issues including conduct, correct attitude, confidentiality of information and conflict of interest.

Members' concerns

11. The issue of police conduct and integrity was raised at the meeting of the Panel on Security ("the Panel") on 19 January 2004 in the context of the monitoring of Police officers associated with triad and undesirable elements. The issue was further raised at the meetings on 21 January 2009 and 20 October 2009 when the Commissioner of Police and the Secretary for Security briefed members respectively on the crime situation in Hong Kong in 2008 and the Chief Executive's 2009-2010 Policy Address.

Monitoring mechanism for undesirable association

12. Arising from a case in which a Senior Superintendent of Police (who was later convicted of three counts of "Misconduct in Public Office" and sentenced to imprisonment for three years) was arrested by ICAC on suspicion of corruption offences, the Panel discussed the Force's policy on and monitoring mechanism for undesirable association.

13. Members expressed concern whether the Police's monitoring mechanism could effectively detect and prevent undesirable association, and whether the Police considered, in view of the case, that there was a need for improving the existing mechanism for monitoring undesirable association.

14. In response, the Police advised that -

- (a) the monitoring mechanism was aimed at detecting cases early within the Police. The mechanism sought to embed training and education of officers on the correct attitude; encourage them to report cases of improper conduct and malpractice including undesirable association; render support service to officers making such reports; and direct investigations into suspected cases identified by the intelligence network within the Police;

- (b) it was spelt out clearly in the Police General Orders ("PGO") that a Police officer should not, other than in the course of his duty, associate with known criminals or triad personalities. Police officers were also advised that they should not associate with persons of doubtful or undesirable reputation. Where such undesirable association was detected, the officers concerned might become the subject of criminal or disciplinary investigation;
- (c) the meaning of conflict of interest and the reporting requirements were clearly explained in the Force Procedures Manual in that a conflict of interest was likely to arise when an officer's loyalty to the Force conflicted with his loyalty to his family and other relations. An officer should therefore report to Assistant Commissioner of Police (Personnel) any private interest that might influence, or appear to influence, his judgment in the performance of his duties. PGO and section 10 of the Police Force Ordinance (Cap. 232) also spelt out the duty of a Police officer to prevent and detect crimes and, where necessary, carry out arrests. It followed that an officer who failed to take action in respect of any criminal activity within his knowledge might be in neglect of his duty;
- (d) the Police had adopted a comprehensive anti-corruption strategy aimed at eliminating corrupt practices including undesirable association through education, prevention and enforcement. In support of the strategy, the Force Anti-Corruption Strategy Steering Committee (which was substituted by FCIM in 2009), comprising senior officers of the Police and ICAC, was responsible for identifying and addressing those areas of police activity which might present opportunities for corruption through liaison meetings, case studies, review of procedures; training and education with emphasis on the Force's values of honesty and integrity; and rendering full cooperation and assistance to ICAC in the latter's enforcement actions against corruption within the Force. The collaboration mechanism was subject to regular reviews to ensure better management of the problems; and
- (e) the Police had been reviewing whether there were areas for improvement to the mechanism for monitoring undesirable association. It should be noted that the monitoring mechanism was overseen by an internal committee of the Police, which had suggested improvements to procedures and regulations in the past. When Police officers, whether on or off duty, came into contact with undesirable characters pertaining to their duty, there were mechanisms for them to declare or report such contacts. There was also a Headquarters Order which stipulated a support system for the internal reporting of malpractice and corruption of other officers, i.e. whistle blowing.

15. A member remarked that the Police and ICAC had given the public the impression that their relationship was not harmonious in the past. Members were concerned about the coordination and cooperation between the Police and ICAC.

16. The Police responded that all reports relating to corruption were referred through the Internal Investigations Office of the Police to ICAC. Where there were doubts about whether a case involved corruption, ICAC would be consulted. Such a mechanism had been in place for many years and had worked well. The Police considered the existing channels of communication between the Police and ICAC adequate. The Force remained firmly committed to supporting ICAC's work. Likewise, ICAC would strive to maintain closer communication with the Police.

Conduct and integrity of Police officers

17. At the meeting on 21 January 2009, some members referred to a reported case in which a Police officer (who was later found guilty and sentenced to 12 years of imprisonment) was alleged to have raped a young woman inside a Police station. They remarked that the incident had aroused wide public concern about the management and security of Police stations and tarnished the reputation of the Force. They called on the Police to take immediate actions to address the matter, and added that measures should be taken to restore and enhance the public confidence in the Force, in particular, the conduct and integrity of Police officers.

18. The Police responded that the case, albeit serious, was an isolated incident. The Force was fully committed to upholding a high standard of conduct and discipline among all officers, and had in place a well-established and effective system to deal with any breach of discipline. Where misconduct or non-compliance with the Police's internal procedures was involved, disciplinary action would be instituted against the officer concerned. Where criminal offences were involved, the Police would bring the offender to justice. The Police also advised that it placed great emphasis on the integrity of its members. Integrity, as one of the core values of the Force, played a pivotal role in the inculcation of trainees and featured prominently in police training throughout the career of Police officers.

19. Some members expressed concern about Police officers committing criminal offences and its adverse impact on the Force's reputation. A member suggested that the annual report on Hong Kong's law and order situation should include the figures and overall trend of the crimes committed by Police officers. They queried the personal qualities and conduct of Police officers.

20. The Police responded that it had taken the following measures to foster correct values and good conduct among Police officers -

- (a) the Force management fully recognized the stress associated with police work and had been taking positive actions to assist Police officers to cope with stress and to seek professional care when necessary. Besides counselling services for Police officers with psychological problems, the Police promoted a healthy lifestyle among Police officers through a variety of activities such as sports, recreation, voluntary work, and physical fitness

and health management. It encouraged officers to lead a normal family life and to keep away from bad habits such as gambling, so that they would be in a better position to handle pressure generated from their work. As the unique nature and demanding requirement of police duties created great pressure on Police officers, the Police planned to strengthen its Psychological Services Group so as to provide a better service to Police officers in need;

- (b) the Police had arranged a wide range of training courses through welfare officers or training and staff relation officers so as to, on the one hand, help Police officers to face high-pressure work, and on the other hand, help the middle management of the Force as supervisory officers to be alert to the conditions of their subordinates. The supervisory officers would maintain a close watch over their subordinates' performance and behaviour, e.g. frequent requests for leave, so as to assess whether the latter were under stress or were encountering psychological or financial problems;
- (c) the Police was considering the implementation of psychometric tests on new recruits in order to assess whether the applicants were suitable in terms of their personality traits and personal values; and
- (d) the Police also attached great importance to ensuring that Police officers had the correct values. In addition to its existing training programmes for Police officers instilling the Force's values, the Force would continue to allocate resources to implement a number of projects with a view to enhancing the standard of ethics, probity and integrity among officers. An example was the establishment of FCIM to review and coordinate the Force's policies on officers' conduct. FCIM would also be responsible for implementing the Force's integrity management strategies including education, prevention and supervision, with emphasis placed on leadership and individual responsibility.

Measures adopted by the Police to enhance the conduct of Police officers

21. At the Panel meeting on 20 October 2009, members expressed concern about the increasing number of complaints against Police officers recorded in the first half of 2009, as compared with the same period in 2008. They sought information on measures adopted by the Police to enhance the conduct of Police officers.

22. In response, the Administration recapitulated the initiatives and programmes pursued by the Force to ensure the highest level of integrity among its members. The Administration emphasized that the Force attached great importance to the character and integrity of its members. In addition to the Force's core values which were instilled into Police cadets during their training programmes, the Force would make constant efforts and continue to adopt a four-pronged approach to promote and manage police integrity.

Recently reported case of misconduct

23. Arising from a case reported by the media in late February 2010 in which Police officers were found drinking alcohol while they were on duty, members have expressed concern about the conduct and behaviour of Police officers. The Panel would discuss the integrity management and behavioural guidelines of the Force at the meeting on 1 June 2010.

Relevant papers

24. Members are invited to access the Legislative Council's website at <http://www.legco.gov.hk> to view the relevant papers and minutes of meetings.

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