

**Legislative Council Panel on Security
20 October 2009**

Policy Initiatives of Security Bureau

This note elaborates on the new and ongoing initiatives of the Security Bureau in the 2009/10 Policy Agenda.

New Initiatives

Enhancing efforts to tackle the youth drug abuse problem

2. In July 2009, the Chief Executive announced escalating and expediting anti-drug efforts along five directions, namely community awareness and mobilisation, community support, drug testing, treatment and rehabilitation, and law enforcement.

3. To raise the awareness of different sectors of the community to the youth drug abuse problem and mobilise their support, we are stepping up the territory-wide campaign at both the central and community level and are enhancing the scale and coverage of anti-drug educational and training programmes, particularly to teachers and parents.

4. Aiming at youths who are at risk or have abused drugs, the 18 districts launched a one-year youth anti-drug abuse community programmes in August. The programmes bring together different sectors of the community to provide assistance and support services for the youth in need.

5. Focusing on prevention and early intervention for students, the Administration is joining hands with secondary schools in Tai Po to take forward a drug testing trial scheme, supported by non-government organisations (NGOs) and community partners. After engaging teachers, parents and students to explain the scheme details, we will start testing in December. We will conduct a study in parallel to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme with a view to improving the scheme for gradual and general rolling out to other schools and districts. Meanwhile, we are tasking the Government Laboratory to develop hair testing technology and service capability as soon as possible, and transfer the technology to other laboratories in Hong Kong.

6. To better serve the youth who undergo voluntary drug treatment and rehabilitation programmes and meet the increasing needs, we are consulting the anti-drug sector on possible new and effective services. We look forward to inviting proposals in due course.

7. On law enforcement, Police and Customs are stepping up collaborative efforts with the Shenzhen authorities and are pursuing enhanced measures to curb cross-boundary drug abuse and trafficking problems. Enforcement actions within the territory have also been strengthened in tandem.

8. We will further brief Members on details of such new initiatives and the corresponding need for additional manpower provision in the Narcotics Division.

Enhancing the measures to assist Hong Kong residents travelling abroad

9. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is committed to providing swift and effective assistance to Hong Kong residents who are in distress overseas. To this end, we will introduce a new outbound travel alert system and enhance the mechanism to assist Hong Kong residents overseas.

10. For the public's better understanding of the risk to personal safety in visiting overseas destination, we announced on 30 September 2009 to implement the Outbound Travel Alert System with effect from 20 October this year. The System uses three colours, namely, AMBER, RED and BLACK, to differentiate the levels of risk to facilitate the public to consider making corresponding trip arrangements, such as adjusting travel plans or exercising caution at the region concerned. The travel trade will also complement the System with its outbound tour and relevant arrangements under different alerts.

11. In respect of strengthening the mechanism of providing assistance to Hong Kong residents overseas, the Immigration Department will upgrade the '1868' hotline system, improve the manpower arrangements and enhance training. The Department is also exploring setting up an electronic network for residents to register their itineraries and emergency contact means before and while travelling abroad. Furthermore, we will strengthen our liaison with airlines with respect to reserving seats on scheduled flights or arranging chartered flights to bring

back Hong Kong residents in case of needs and on a priority basis. We may also ride on the Mainland's contingency plan and use flights arranged by the Mainland authorities to evacuate Hong Kong residents should the circumstances warrant.

Enhancing the screening procedure of torture claims

12. Under Article 3 of the *Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment* of the United Nations, we will not expel, return or extradite a person to another State where there are substantial grounds for believing that he would be in danger of being subjected to torture. In recent years, the number of torture claims has increased incessantly. To ensure that the procedures for screening torture claims are fair and effective, and to ensure the maintenance of effective immigration control and prevent abuse, we will introduce a package of enhancement measures. The measures include appointing persons with a legal background to handle appeals; providing legal assistance to torture claimants; and strengthening the training and support for officers responsible for the screening, etc. We also plan to introduce legislation on the screening procedures within this legislative session.

On-going Initiatives

Continuing to pursue measures to facilitate the movement of people and goods across the boundary. These include the further promotion of self-service immigration clearance to visitors

13. Since self-service immigration clearance (i.e. e-Channel) was extended to frequent visitors in May 2008, nearly 30 000 such visitors have enrolled for the service up to end of September 2009. From September 2009, the Immigration Department will further promote the service through airlines.

Undertaking the necessary legislative and administrative measures with a view to reducing the coverage of the Frontier Closed Area

14. The Frontier Closed Area (FCA) is an integral part of the security measures for maintaining the integrity of the boundary between Hong Kong and the Mainland and for combating illegal immigration and

other cross-boundary illegal activities. Following consultation with the local community and relevant bodies, we announced in January 2008 to substantially reduce the land area of the FCA from about 2 800 hectares to about 400 hectares. The reduced FCA will comprise a narrow strip of land covering the re-aligned boundary patrol road (BPR) and areas to its north, together with crossing points along the boundary (i.e. the Boundary Control Points and Sha Tau Kok town).

15. To safeguard the security of the reduced FCA, we need to construct a secondary boundary fence along the existing BPR to ensure that the BPR and the existing primary boundary fence are protected from interference. New sections of the BPR, with a primary and a secondary boundary fence constructed along its northern and southern curbs, will also be constructed at certain parts of the boundary.

16. To facilitate early implementation of the reduced FCA coverage, the project has been divided into four sections. Three of the four sections will be taken forward in the first phase. We have obtained Public Works Sub-committee's (PWSC) and Financial Committee's (FC) funding approval for the first phase of the project in June 2009, and aim to start the construction works in December 2009. The second phase of the project will involve the resumption of private land. Subject to the completion of the land resumption procedures, we will consult the Panel on Security and seek funding approval from PWSC and FC.

Implementing measures in providing greater immigration convenience to Hong Kong and Macao residents travelling between the two places

17. To enhance travel convenience for residents of the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Regions, we will allow Macao permanent residents to use e-Channels at our control points after enrolment, and waive the arrangements for Macao permanent residents to furnish arrival/departure cards. These measures will be reciprocated by the Macao side. We envisage that these measures will be implemented before end 2009, after the passage of the Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2009 by the Legislative Council.

Continuing the study on long-term options for better provision of emergency ambulance services

18. In order to enhance the existing emergency ambulance services by providing quicker response to people in most urgent need, we have launched a public consultation on the proposed introduction of the Medical Priority Dispatch System. We propose, with reference to overseas experiences, to categorise and prioritise response to emergency ambulance calls in accordance with the degree of urgency. We will carefully consider all the comments and views received during the consultation before finalising our proposal. In addition, Fire Services Department will continue to step up public education to encourage proper use of emergency ambulance service.

Continuing with intelligence-based and proactive strategy in combating illegal employment

19. The Government has been taking a three-pronged approach to combat illegal employment by tackling the problem at source; ensuring effective law enforcement; and stepping up publicity and education. The Immigration Department will pass the particulars of Mainland visitors found working illegally in Hong Kong to the Mainland authorities. This helps ensure closer scrutiny of any subsequent applications by those visitors for entry into Hong Kong. The local law enforcement departments also regularly exchange information and coordinate their enforcement efforts in combating illegal workers and their employers. The Government will continue to actively carry out publicity programmes against illegal employment, encourage reports, and remind members of the public the consequences of hiring illegal workers. Moreover, the Government introduced the Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2009 into the Legislative Council in June this year. The Bill will, among others, provide for a criminal offence against taking of employment, or establishing/joining in of business by illegal immigrants and other ineligible persons.

Fighting youth drug abuse on a sustained basis

20. In November 2008, the Secretary for Justice promulgated a reinvigorated comprehensive and long term strategy to meet the challenges, as contained in some 70 recommendations of the high-level inter-departmental Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse he led. Narcotics

Division has since been playing a central role in pressing ahead with the implementation of the recommendations, not only coordinating the efforts of bureaux, departments, public agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders in the areas of publicity and preventive education, treatment and rehabilitation, legislation and law enforcement, research, and external cooperation, but also spearheading initiatives in promoting a culture of care for young people in the community at large. Such comprehensive efforts will continue on a sustained basis. Members were briefed on progress in December 2008 and May 2009.

Continuing the promotion of various talent admission schemes, and reviewing their application procedures from time to time with a view to streamlining the arrangements for the employment of talents and professionals

21. To enhance the long-term competitiveness of Hong Kong, the Government's long established policy objective of "optimizing our demographic structure and attracting talent" remains unchanged despite the recent economic fluctuations. On immigration, the Immigration Department will continue its liberal measures to facilitate the entry of talents, and from time to time explore how to further streamline the admission of talents and professionals for the employment in Hong Kong, taking into consideration the need to strike a balance between facilitating their entry and protecting the interest of local labour. Relevant departments including the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices in the Mainland and overseas will also continue their publicity efforts with a view to attracting more talents around the world to Hong Kong.

Continuing to ensure that our legislative regime for combating terrorism is current and meets the need of changing circumstances

22. We are committed to combating terrorism and terrorist financing. To this end, we enacted the United Nations (Anti-Terrorism Measures) Ordinance (Cap. 575) in July 2002 and the United Nations (Anti-Terrorism Measures) (Amendment) Ordinance 2004 in July 2004 to implement the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 and some of the Special Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering. Some of the provisions in Cap. 575 concerning, for instance, freezing and forfeiture of terrorist property as well as law enforcement power, can only enter into operation when the accompanying rules of court and code of practice are in place. We aim to submit the rules of court and

the code of practice to the Legislative Council in stages for scrutiny in the 2009/10 legislative session. This exercise will help ensure that Hong Kong is well placed to tackle terrorism and terrorist financing and to discharge our international obligations.

Continuing to seek long-term solutions to address the problems of outdated facilities and overcrowding in some of our penal institutions

23. The new Lo Wu Correctional Institutions are expected to commence operation in 2010. In addition, we are planning to redevelop the institutions in Chi Ma Wan. Apart from providing additional penal places, the redeveloped institutions will also provide rehabilitative facilities that are more suited to today's needs, so as to facilitate more effective rehabilitation for offenders.

Continuing discussions with the Mainland and other jurisdictions on bilateral co-operation relating to Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters, Surrender of Fugitive Offenders and Transfer of Sentenced Persons

24. Hong Kong is committed to international cooperation in combating serious crimes. We will continue to extend our network of bilateral agreements with other jurisdictions on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters (MLA), surrender of fugitive offenders (SFO) and transfer of sentenced persons (TSP). To date, Hong Kong has signed 27 agreements on MLA, 18 agreements on SFO, and 11 agreements on TSP with other jurisdictions.

25. Our agreement with Belgium on TSP came into force in April 2009. We signed two agreements on MLA and SFO respectively with South Africa in February 2009. We are preparing the necessary subsidiary legislation to implement these agreements as soon as possible.

26. We will continue our discussions with the Mainland on the rendition and transfer of sentenced persons arrangements.

Continuing to implement the Risks and Needs Assessment Protocol to identify prisoners prone to custodial and re-offending risks, and to deliver rehabilitative programmes matching their needs, with a view to more effectively reducing re-offending

27. The Risks and Needs Assessment Protocol is a scientific and evidence-based approach to prison management and offender rehabilitation. Since the implementation of the Protocol in October 2006, more than 10 000 offenders have undergone re-offending risks and rehabilitative needs assessments. Correctional Services Department will further enhance the risks and needs assessment of offenders and delivery of various matching rehabilitative programmes, with a view to more effectively reducing the chance of re-offending by prisoners.

Security Bureau
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