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17 January 2011

Ms Macy NG
Legislative Council Secretariat
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central, Hong Kong

(Fax No: 2537 1204)

Dear Ms NG,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the
Results of Value for Money Audits (Report No. 55)**

**Residential Treatment and Rehabilitation Services for Drug Abusers
(Chapter 10)**

Thank you for your letter of 11 January to the Secretary for Security. Please find at the **Annex** additional information requested by Members.

Please feel free to contact me if needed.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Wong', written over a printed name in parentheses.

(David Wong)

for Secretary for Security

c.c.

SLW	(Attn: Miss Helen KWAN)	(Fax no: 2524 7635)
DSW	(Attn: Mr ML FUNG)	(Fax no: 2838 0757)
D of H	(Attn: Mr David YUEN)	(Fax no: 2573 7432)
D of Lands	(Attn: Mr Jeff LAM)	(Fax no: 2868 4707)
SFST	(Attn: Ms Elsie YUEN)	(Fax no: 2530 5921)
Director of Audit		(Fax no: 2583 9063)
SARDA	(Attn: Ms Angelique Tam)	(Fax no: 2165 2202)

Latest Development of Project Youth Care

At the public hearing of the Public Accounts Committee on 7 December 2010, we explained that the Society for the Aid and Rehabilitation of Drug Abusers (SARDA) had, in response to the changing drug scene, shifted its efforts from the Project Youth Care proposal (targeting youth aged 12 to 18) to a new programme named Project SARDA (targeting young adults aged 21 to 35). As requested in your letter of 11 January 2011, we would like to provide information on the latest development.

2. The Administration has been working with SARDA in earnest to help the latter re-engineer its resources and facilities, as previously advised by the Audit Commission and the Public Accounts Committee. As mentioned in paragraph 2.9 of the Audit Report No. 55, SARDA submitted a framework proposal to the Narcotics Division (ND) in December 2009 for a three-year pilot programme named Project Youth Care. At the same time, SARDA applied to the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust for funding support for the proposed pilot programme. The proposed programme sought to deliver, inter alia, residential services for male adolescents aged 12 to 18 through the facilities of Centre 1, after necessary upgrading and conversion.

3. Furthermore, as stated in paragraphs 2.10, 2.11 and 2.13(d) of the Audit Report, ND has since May 2010 provided detailed observations and comments to SARDA to help it substantiate its proposal, against its ongoing funding application to the Hong Kong Jockey Club. A number of exchanges and meetings were held with SARDA to render the Administration's advice and assistance. We emphasised the need for expediting the Project Youth Care proposal to better use the under-utilised facilities in Centre 1 to serve more psychotropic substance abusers (PSAs), and for redeploying existing resources to this pilot project as early as possible. During the time, there was no mention of Project SARDA.

4. In November 2010, SARDA advised ND that it would not further pursue the Project Youth Care proposal. Rather, it would shift and focus its efforts on Project SARDA, an initiative that it had launched at Centre 1 in August 2010 to meet the changing drug scene. Project SARDA provides a residential programme of 26 to 52 weeks

targeting at adult male PSAs aged between 21 and 35. Initially, Centre 1 has set aside 38 places for Project SARDA.

5. We have looked carefully into the Project SARDA initiative and found that it has enabled SARDA to –

- (a) make early and better use of existing resources and facilities at Centre 1 to service young adult male PSAs without the need for additional project funding or much conversion works;
- (b) meet a service need brought by the changing drug scene. According to the Central Registry of Drug Abuse, the number of PSAs aged between 21 and 40 saw a notable increase of 86% from 2005 to 2009, which was much faster than those aged below 21 (51%). In 2009, the numbers of reported drug abusers of these two age groups were similar, that is, over 3,000; and
- (c) capitalise on the strength of Centre 1 in handling adult male drug abusers and enhance the vocational elements, to help young adult male PSAs reintegrate into society after completion of the new residential programme.

6. At the public hearing on 7 December 2010, Members noted the latest occupancy of some 54% by opiate abusers at Centre 1 (paragraph 2.8 of the Audit Report) and suggested that SARDA make better use of the facilities, achieving 80% occupancy overall if possible. We consider that Project SARDA, which started with 38 places (hence making up the overall occupancy of 66% at Centre 1 when these places are filled), is a proactive and prudent first step of SARDA in the right direction. With sustained efforts to provide more places for male PSAs over time, there is realistic scope for SARDA to bring the overall occupancy of Centre 1 to around 80%.

7. In this direction, SARDA has been working closely with different parties such as Probation Offices to promote Project SARDA to the target groups in need. As at 12 January 2011, 15 male PSAs have been admitted to the Project SARDA programme. SARDA has undertaken to strive for success and expand the programme by phases where appropriate. We will continue to work with SARDA to make optimal use of the resources and facilities at Centre 1.

Security Bureau
January 2011