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**Panel on Security**

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for the meeting on 4 January 2011**

**Measures to facilitate immigration clearance of visitors and vehicles  
at boundary control points**

The immigration clearance of visitors and vehicles at boundary control points has not been discussed by the Panel on Security. The Administration had, in response to the request of the Panel, provided information on immigration clearance for visitors at land boundary control points, which is summarized in the following paragraphs.

**Cross-boundary statistics**

2. The number of cross-boundary trips made by Mainland visitors increased substantially in recent years from 31.23 million in 2007 to 36.09 million in 2009, representing an increase of 15.6%. Among these, those who travelled by land rose from 23.35 million in 2007 to 29.12 million in 2009, representing an increase of 24.7%. For the first 10 months of 2010, Mainland visitors made a total of 38.03 million cross-boundary trips to Hong Kong, of which 30.72 million were made by land. The number of trips made by Mainland visitors using the various land boundary control points for the first 10 months of 2010 is set out below:

Railway

- Lo Wu	12.68 million
Lok Ma Chau Spur Line	4.08 million
Hung Hom	0.96 million

Other mode of transport

- Lok Ma Chau	6.71 million
Shenzhen Bay	5.62 million
Sha Tau Kok	0.44 million
Man Kam To	0.23 million

3. According to the Administration, the Immigration Department ("ImmD") has all along strived to provide efficient immigration clearance service to visitors. ImmD pledged that 95% of the visitors using land boundary control points could have their clearance completed within 30 minutes. In 2009, 99.6% of arriving visitors travelling by land were cleared within 30 minutes. All land boundary control points were able to meet the performance pledge during the National Day festive period of 2009 and the Labour Day Golden Week of 2010.

### **Immigration clearance situation during the recent National Day festive period**

4. During the National Day festive period (1 to 7 October) of 2010, Mainland visitors made 1.34 million cross-boundary trips (an increase of 24.1% over 2009), of which 1.09 million were made by land.

5. Lo Wu Control Point ("LWCP") was the busiest land boundary control point. During the National Day festive period of 2010, 49.5% of all land boundary passengers used LWCP to cross the boundary. The number of Mainland visitors increased from 0.39 million in 2009 by about 20% to 0.47 million in 2010 during the National Day festive period. During the National Day holidays, as many as 40% to 50% of the Mainland visitors entered Hong Kong between 8:00 am to noon, rendering the immigration clearance service not meeting the performance pledge during the peak periods of passenger traffic.

### **Measures adopted by the Immigration Department to facilitate immigration clearance**

6. The commissioning of the Shenzhen Bay Control Point and the Lok Ma Chau Spur Line Control Point in 2007 has relieved passenger flow using busy control points such as LWCP. To cope with increased passenger traffic during festive periods, the following measures are adopted by ImmD to facilitate immigration clearance -

- (a) ImmD would step up publicity before festive periods and encourage visitors to avoid using cross-boundary service during peak hours. To ensure effective delivery of such message, ImmD would also spread such message through the local as well as Mainland media, including Xinhua News Agency, China News Service, i-Phoenix, Phoenix Satellite TV and People's Daily;

- (b) during the National Day festive period, the joint command centre with members comprising representatives from ImmD and other relevant government departments (including the Police, Customs & Excise Department, Transport Department) and the Mass Transit Railway Corporation would come into operation to monitor passenger traffic. ImmD would deploy more frontline staff according to the prevailing passenger traffic, and suitably arrange staff to work overtime to enhance service; and
- (c) in the long run, ImmD would enhance its automatic system and strengthen the handling capacity of its control points. To tie in with the plan of the Mainland authorities to issue, from 2012 by phases, electronic "Exit-Entry Permits for Travelling to and from Hong Kong and Macao" to Mainland residents, ImmD has secured funding approval from the Finance Committee in July 2010 for upgrading its computer system and installing facilities for enabling Mainland visitors using such electronic permits to go through immigration clearance. The system would also enable frequent visitors from the Mainland to enjoy efficient clearance service through e-Channels following enrolment.

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