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GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT
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22 February 2011

Mr Raymond Lam
Clerk to Panel on Security
Legislative Council
3rd Floor, Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road
Hong Kong

Dear Mr Lam,

**Panel on Security –
Standard III Inspectorate Professional Examination**

Further to my letter of 7 December 2010 which provided information on the Standard III Inspectorate Professional Examination (“Standard III Examination”), the Hong Kong Police Force (“the Force”) has conducted a review of the October 2010 sitting of the Standard III Examination as well as the previous sittings since April 2006. The review included focus group discussions with candidates who sat the October 2010 examinations.

The review concluded that the Standard III Examination is a professional testing process, which the Force utilises to ensure that its strict and high standards are maintained. The testing process, from deciding on the subject matter for the questions to the style, content and composition of the examination papers, has been subject to stringent supervision by the Force Examination Board which is chaired by the Director of the Hong Kong Police College, and the October 2010 Standard III Examination did not substantially differ in format, content or composition to other Standard III Examinations held in recent years. The Force considers that the poor examination results of the October 2010 sitting were not caused by any irregularities in this process.

The Force also examined other possible causes during the review, and noted that a total of 51 officers applied to withdraw from the October 2010 sitting of the Examination, with the majority of withdrawals occurring less than a week prior to the Examination. By way of comparison, the number of withdrawals from the Standard III Examination between April 2006 and April 2009 ranged from 1 to 6 candidates for each sitting, whereas in October 2009 and April 2010, the number of withdrawals was 34 and 30 respectively. The large number of withdrawals in recent examinations, together with information obtained from discussion of the candidate focus groups, indicate that many candidates did not fully appreciate the amount of time and study required for adequate preparation; some of them overly focused on past paper revision and had relatively weak knowledge of new topical issues relating to law and order and policing services in the changing social environment as well as new legislation or requirements, which are essential to effective policing operation.

Taking into consideration the review findings, the Force has introduced three specific measures –

- (a) from 2011 onwards, the Police College will conduct briefing sessions for Standard III Examination candidates twice per year in advance of the annual April and October examinations to help candidates better prepare. The Force will also continue to provide the candidates with a wide range of relevant examination and study materials through the Force Intranet;
- (b) to ensure that candidates appreciate the amount of time and preparation required for the examination, the Force Examinations Board will introduce a new rule that a Standard III Examination candidate scoring between 25% and 30% (both inclusive) in the same paper on two consecutive sittings, will be disqualified from sitting that paper at the next sitting; and
- (c) the Force Examination Board, now comprises eight regular members at the ranks from Chief Inspector to Assistant Commissioner of Police, will be expanded to include two additional external members - one Chief Superintendent of Police and one Senior Superintendent of Police from frontline formations, to assist in the scrutiny of Standard III Examination questions and oversight of the Standard III Examination syllabus.

With a view to maintaining the Force's professionalism and high efficiency, the Force Examination Board will continue to exercise strict oversight over the Standard III Examination syllabus to ensure that it upholds the Force's strict and high standards.

Yours sincerely,

(Mrs Millie Ng)
for Secretary for Security

c.c. Director, Hong Kong Police College
Mr Kevin Woods

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