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27 January 2015

Clerk to the Establishment Subcommittee  
Establishment Subcommittee  
Legislative Council Complex  
1, Legislative Council Road  
Central, Hong Kong  
Attn: Mr Jason Kong

Dear Mr Kong,

**Establishment Subcommittee  
Follow-up to meeting on 23 January 2015**

Thank you for your letter of 23 January 2015 to the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau following up on the request for relevant information by the Establishment Subcommittee at its meeting of even date from the Narcotics Division (ND) of the Security Bureau.

2. The major tasks and the expected deliverables of the post of Principal Assistant Secretary (Narcotics)<sup>2</sup> [PAS(N)<sup>2</sup>], which we propose to retain for the next three years, are set out below.

**Work Related to Treatment and Rehabilitation Services**

3. One of the major areas of work of PAS(N)<sup>2</sup> concerns the drug treatment and rehabilitation (T&R) services in Hong Kong. She is responsible for drawing up the Three-year Plan on Drug Treatment and

Rehabilitation Services in Hong Kong (the Three-year Plan) (2015-2017) The Three-year Plan aims to map out a framework on the direction, strategies and priorities of the T&R services in the next three years, and to serve as a reference by relevant sectors. The Three-year Plan in 2012-14 focused on the consolidation and effective use of the additional recurrent resources previously allocated for strengthening different services in tackling the problems arising from the growing prevalent psychotropic substance abuse. The 2015-2017 Three Year Plan, the seventh of such plan and currently under preparation, attempts to rationalise the resources of various service providers and to strengthen the collaboration among different services, with a view to best serving the needs of different groups of drug abusers with distinctive characteristics. PAS(N)2 and her team are in the process of engaging stakeholders (including the social services sector, drug treatment and rehabilitation centres, the medical services and relevant Government departments, etc.) in dialogue and have collected many useful suggestions on how to enhance T&R services, such as encouraging service providers to strengthen support for family members of the drug abusers; equipping drug abusers with vocational training as well as providing job counselling and aftercare services upon completion of the treatment programmes; and enhancing support for pregnant drug abusers and the newborns. It is also suggested that more efforts be devoted to researches and studies for facilitating an evidence-based policy formulation.

4. As to the deliverables, we will conclude the consultation and preparation of the Three-year Plan within 2015. We will also continue to coordinate the work of various departments and service providers, and where necessary, go into partnership with different parties in the community to pursue the direction, strategies and priorities recommended in the Three-year Plan. We will review annually the progress and effectiveness of the Plan and report the findings to the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN). We will also provide an annual update of the drug situation, covering progress made in respect of T&R services, to the Legislative Council.

### **Providing Assistance for Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres**

5. To enhance the overall residential T&R services, PAS(N)2 and her team will keep on assisting drug treatment and rehabilitation centres (DTRCs) in relocation or in-situ upgrading/redevelopment projects to meet the licensing requirements. Among the 15 DTRCs which have yet to obtain licences, seven have already made some progress in their plans of relocation or in-situ upgrading/redevelopment. Four of the seven will commence their



respective projects within 2015; two are planning the technical feasibility studies; and one has completed the project design and is soliciting further funding support. PAS(N)2 will continue to assist these seven DTRCs in taking forward the projects and continue to vigorously help the remaining eight to identify the possible way forward.

6. As mentioned in our submission to the Establishment Subcommittee (EC(2014-15)14), DTRCs invariably may encounter various problems in their plans of relocation or upgrading/redevelopment. It is difficult to estimate when their projects will be ready to commence or when these works can be completed. Yet we are confident that under the collaborative efforts of different parties, progress can be made in individual projects. As a matter of fact, since 2010, seven additional DTRCs have successfully acquired licences, bringing the number of licensed DTRCs to 24, out of a total of 39. In the next few years, PAS(N)2 and her team will continue to provide assistance for DTRCs. Apart from identifying ways to take forward the relocation or upgrading/redevelopment plans, we will also assess the situation of the remaining DTRCs which may not have a feasible plan and consider the possible way forward.

### **Healthy School Programme with a Drug Testing Component**

7. The main objective of the Healthy School Programme with a Drug Testing Component (HSP(DT)) is to foster drug-free campus through school-based drug prevention activities, including voluntary drug testing. Since the launch of the Programme in the 2011/12, 71 schools are participating in the 2014/15 school year. To ensure the effectiveness of the Programme, PAS(N)2 will oversee an evaluation study on HSP(DT) in the 2015/16 school year and have already started the preparatory work, including defining the scope of the study, and preparing the consultancy brief for commissioning an independent researcher to carry out the study. PAS(N)2 will monitor the work of the researcher to be engaged. It is expected that the outcome of the evaluation and recommendations will be available in the second half of 2016. PAS(N)2 will assist in consolidating and analysing the outcomes, map out the way forward of HSP(DT) for discussion with stakeholders, and implement the final recommendations. The task is expected to be completed within 2017.



## **Study on RESCUE Drug Testing Scheme**

8. PAS(N)2 is also responsible for examining details of the RESCUE Drug Testing Scheme (RDT). In July 2014, ACAN announced the consultation conclusion on the RDT and recommended that the Administration should further explore the Scheme but also emphasised that we should –

- (a) continue to engage stakeholders, professional bodies and the public in ongoing discussion;
- (b) explore ways to address the concerns of professional bodies, especially how to minimise the interference to human rights and civil liberties; and
- (c) develop a follow-up mechanism which could effectively balance giving a chance to the drug abusers but mandating counselling and treatment.

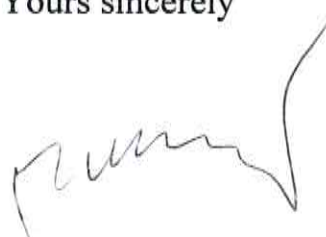
9. The Administration agreed with ACAN's recommendations and undertook to work out a proposal for further public consultation. In fact, apart from those raising concerns about the Scheme, many in the community are looking forward to hearing from the Administration feasible solutions to the hidden drug abuse problem. We would have disappointed the public if we were to give up the study on the RDT at this stage.

10. We fully realise that the subject involves many controversial issues and consider it important to maintain close dialogue with relevant sectors on such issues. Apart from actively participating in the deliberations with relevant sectors during the first-stage public consultation, PAS(N)2 and her team are in parallel soliciting views from stakeholders on the RDT during the Three-year Plan engagement. We will carry on such dialogue with stakeholders even after the consultation work on the Three-Year Plan, including identifying possible solutions to the issues set out in paragraphs 8(b) and (c) above. Our commitment to further studying the RDT is not meant to ensure implementation of the Scheme at any cost but to enable the identification of effective strategies to tackle the hidden drug abuse problem. Currently, we do not envisage the need to have a fixed timetable for launching the second-stage public consultation. The next step would hinge on the views and further deliberations of the subject by the various sectors in the community. We also acknowledge that the buy-in of relevant sectors

with the follow-up mechanisms would be particularly important for achieving the ultimate objectives of early intervention and assistance for the drug abusers.

11. We are grateful for Members' concern on the above issues and appeal to Members' support for the subject proposal so that ND could take forward the work falling within the portfolio of PAS(N)2.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Erika Hui', with a long, sweeping flourish extending upwards and to the right.

( Mrs Erika Hui )  
for Secretary for Security

c.c.

Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury  
Secretary for the Civil Service

(Attn: Ms Esther Leung)  
(Attn: Mr Eddie Mak)