

Speaking Notes for S for S
at the Special FC Meeting on 31 March 2015

Chairman,

- In the draft Estimates for the new financial year (2015-16), the allocation on the security policy area group is \$41.6 billion, representing 9.4% of the total government expenditure. The two policy areas of Internal Security and Immigration Control under my responsibility will account for \$35.3 billion.

Law and Order

- The overall law and order situation in Hong Kong saw further improvement in 2014. The overall crime figure in 2014 represented a drop of 7.1%, whilst the violent crime figure registered a decrease of about 8.9% as compared with 2013. The overall crime figure was the lowest since 1997 and the violent crime figure marked a new low since 1971. Most categories of crimes such as robbery, burglary, triad-related offences, theft, wounding and serious assault, criminal damage and youth crimes recorded decreases.
- The major operational targets of the Commissioner of Police for 2015 are to combat violent crimes, triads syndicated and organised crimes, dangerous drugs and “quick-cash” crimes, to promote cyber security and combat technology crimes, and to maintain professionalism in ensuring public safety and counter terrorism work.

- A total of 603 additional posts will be created in the Hong Kong Police Force in 2015-16, including 581 police officer posts and 22 civilian posts. These new posts are mainly for increasing manpower in preparation for the upgrading of Tseung Kwan O Police Division to a Police District; increasing the establishments of the Police Tactical Unit and back-end support service to strengthen frontline operational capability and support the handling of major security and crowd management events; strengthening the capabilities in combating cyber crimes and safeguarding cyber security; and providing policing services after the opening of the Midfield Concourse at the Hong Kong International Airport etc.

Control Points and e-Channel Service

- Last year the number of inbound and outbound passengers continued to increase, with the number of visitor arrivals reaching 60.8 million in 2014, representing a 12% increase comparing with 2013.
- The Immigration Department will continue to flexibly deploy its manpower in accordance with the actual situation, as well as to implement various measures to cope with the ever-increasing workload at control points. These measures to enhance control points capacity include improvement works, flexible passenger flow management, launching a new immigration control system, extension of e-Channel service, enhancing the workflow for immigration clearance and stepping up publicity efforts, etc.

Mutual use of automated immigration clearance service

- The Immigration Department (ImmD) has entered into arrangements for reciprocal use of automated immigration clearance services with Korea, Germany and Singapore. It will continue to liaise with other countries and regions with close relationship with Hong Kong in tourism and economic development to implement similar arrangements. We believe that this will allow greater travel convenience for people in Hong Kong and our partnering economies, which in turn will enhance the economic, social and cultural ties between the places. Details will be announced in due course.

Talent admission arrangement

- We will shortly implement the list of measures announced by the Chief Executive in the 2015 Policy Address to attract talent from outside Hong Kong to complement local workforce and facilitate the economic development of Hong Kong. Measures include implementing a pilot scheme to facilitate the return of the second generation of Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents who have emigrated overseas to Hong Kong to work. In addition, existing schemes will be enhanced to attract professionals, talent and entrepreneurs to come and stay in Hong Kong.
- The measures will not change the existing requirement that applicants will normally need to be employed by local employers at market remuneration. The measures will also not be biased towards Mainland talent. Currently, overseas talent make up 80% of all talent admitted, mainly from UK, US, India and Japan.

- In tandem with the above enhancement measures, we will step up the promotion of the various schemes and work closely with trade and economic offices in the Mainland and overseas. This will enable us to attract more high quality talent to Hong Kong, which in turn will improve the quality of our population and competitiveness.

Unified Screening Mechanism

- The number of non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants (NECII) is rebounding in recent years. In 2014, 1 984 NECIIs were intercepted, representing an increase of 63% over 2013. Meanwhile, between the commencement of the unified screening mechanism (USM) in March last year and end 2014, the ImmD received over 3 400 non-refoulement claims, which is 2.7 times the average for the four years before.
- To expedite the screening of pending claims, the ImmD will determine around 1 500 claims in Financial Year 2014-15. With the experience garnered after operating the USM for one year, the ImmD estimates that at least 2 000 claims can be determined in Financial Year 2015-16. Meanwhile, the Government is reviewing the screening procedures to make it more efficient whilst maintaining the high standard of fairness required.

Public Safety

- To enhance public safety, the Fire Services Department (FSD) will create 146 additional posts in the new financial year, mainly for manning the new fire services facilities to be commissioned soon; enhancing firefighting and rescue services; adding ambulance shifts; and

implementing the quality assurance mechanism, etc.

- To ensure the safety of frontline personnel and the efficiency of operations, FSD will replace fire service and ambulance equipment in a timely manner. The expenses on the procurement of fire appliances, vessels, ambulances and major equipment, etc. for the new financial year are estimated to be around \$450 million.
- The new Fire and Ambulance Services Academy at Pak Shing Kok, Tseung Kwan O is expected to be completed by end of this year. The new campus will be equipped with various simulation training facilities which will allow fire services personnel to receive realistic training in a safe simulated setting. It will also enable firemen and ambulancemen trainees to be trained together, thereby enhancing their coordination and response capability in responding to disasters.

Custody and Rehabilitation

- The Correctional Services Department (CSD) has been implementing various measures to improve ageing correctional facilities. Works of the partial redevelopment programme of the Tai Lam Centre for Women commenced in mid-2012 and will be completed in end-2016. Efforts will continue to be made to enhance other penal facilities, such as setting up a central visit room complex at Hei Ling Chau to provide a more convenient location for visitors and to improve the visiting facilities.
- CSD will continue to provide market-oriented vocational training to inmates and work with various sectors of the community to facilitate the re-integration of inmates into the society.

Combating Drug Abuse Problem

- On the anti-drug front, the Government closely monitors the evolving drug trend, and ensures that anti-drug policies and measures could respond to the latest drug situation in Hong Kong. In the past few years, concerted efforts of the Government and different sectors of the community have successfully reversed the rising trend of reported drug abusers in Hong Kong, in particular, bringing a more pronounced decline in the number of reported young drug abusers aged under 21. Yet, we cannot afford to be complacent, and will continue to tackle the drug problem in a holistic manner through the five-pronged strategy of preventive education and publicity, treatment and rehabilitation, legislation and enforcement, external co-operation and research.
- On the other hand, we are concerned about the growing problem of hidden drug abuse. We will strengthen help-seeking channels to encourage people with drug problem to seek help early, and will endeavor to enhance public awareness on drug problems and encourage early identification of drug abusers, with a view to providing them with timely assistance.

Relaxation of the Age Limit for Category B Security Personnel

- In line with the Population Policy which seeks to promote a longer working life, the Government has obtained the in-principle agreement of the Security and Guarding Services Industry Authority (SGSIA) to extend the age limit of the Category B security personnel from 65 to 70, and to impose a requirement of biennial medical checks on security personnel aged 65 or above. The proposal has also received the support of the

Legislative Council Panel on Security. The SGSIA will amend the criteria of issuing security personnel permits. As required by the law, the amendments will be laid before the Legislative Council for approval before implementation.

Reduction of the Frontier Closed Area

- In response to the calls from society and local communities, the Government announced in 2008 to substantially reduce the land area of the Frontier Closed Area (FCA) from about 2 800 hectares to about 400 hectares. The first and second stages of the FCA reduction were implemented in February 2012 and June 2013 respectively, releasing more than 1 450 hectares of land from the FCA. The last stage of the FCA reduction, covering the section of the boundary between Ng Tung River and Lin Ma Hang, is scheduled for implementation by end of this year. When this is done, the entire exercise of FCA reduction will be completed.

Chairman, this concludes my opening remarks. My colleagues and I will be happy to answer questions from Members.

Security Bureau
March 2015