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Panel on Security

**Information note prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 4 July 2017**

**Inshore and mountain search and rescue operations of
the Government Flying Service**

The Government Flying Service ("GFS") was established under the Government Flying Service Ordinance (Cap. 322) in 1993 to provide a wide range of flying services, including, search and rescue ("SAR"), air ambulance service, fire fighting, aerial surveys and support for law enforcement, for various government departments and people in need.

2. According to the Administration, GFS conducts two types of SAR operations, namely inshore and long range SAR. Inshore SAR refers to a mission within the Hong Kong waters, while long range SAR refers to a mission carried out within the Hong Kong Maritime Search and Rescue Region (which covers the Hong Kong Flight Information Region).

3. GFS also carries out mountain SAR together with the Civil Aid Service and the Fire Services Department. According to the Administration's reply to an oral question on hiking safety raised at the Council meeting of 10 May 2017, the numbers of SAR operations for hikers conducted by GFS between 2014 and 2016 were 503, 560 and 513 respectively.

4. The Panel on Security ("the Panel") has not specifically discussed the inshore and mountain SAR operations of GFS. However, when the Panel discussed the long range SAR service of GFS at its meeting on 7 July 2015, members were advised that the number of call-outs for inshore SAR operations increased by 44% from 371 cases in 2010 to 535 cases in 2014. In addition, in the course of the examination of the Estimates of Expenditure 2015-2016, concern was raised by a member about whether GFS could meet its flying missions for SAR operations.

The Administration explained that flying missions of GFS were often affected by various external factors, including the weather, air traffic control and the special geographical environment of the incident location, for example, high voltage cable or windshear, etc. There were also cases when time was required for changing equipment on the aircraft to perform different tasks, and extra time was required for pre-flight planning and manpower deployment. These factors would lead to longer than usual on-scene time for certain call-outs. The Administration assured that GFS would continue to review from time to time its operation, including the deployment of aircraft, equipment and aircrew, and make necessary adjustments for meeting service demands.

5. The Administration will brief the Panel on the inshore and mountain SAR operations of GFS at the meeting on 4 July 2017.

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