

26 October 1999

The Honourable James To
Chairman of Security Panel
The Legislative Council
c/o Clerk to Sub-committee
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central Hong Kong

Dear Mr. To,

**LegCo Panel on Security
Sub-committee on Indebtedness of Police Officers**

Thank you very much for inviting us to appear before your Sub-committee on the indebtedness of Police officers. To enhance a further exchange of views, we would like to share with you below our perception regarding the issue in general.

We are proud that the Force has probably the most comprehensive and proactive mechanism amongst the disciplined services for the handling of indebtedness. This mechanism takes a positive approach in identifying officers with unmanageable debts (OUDs), providing counselling services and close monitoring of OUD cases, while at the same time instilling a sense of self-discipline and financial prudence in Police officers through education and publicity. We consider the current mechanism is effective in controlling the indebtedness situation. We render our full support to the Force Management for their initiatives as we believe that the measures are heading along the right track.

In order to objectively assess the indebtedness situation of the Force, your Sub-committee, as we are aware, has tried comparing the figures regarding the number of OUDs in various disciplined services departments. While we have no strong view on assessing indebtedness situation by means of statistical comparison, we believe that no mature and sensible conclusion can be drawn from the figures available given that the definition of an OUD varies considerably across the departments. We suggest that a universal definition be set from the outset if a comparison is needed.

As staff associations, we fully acknowledge the current indebtedness situation and its possible adverse effects on the operation and image of the Force, and we have been assuming responsibility to monitor the implementation of the measures to handle indebtedness. There is always room for improving the indebtedness situation and we are seeking new ways to refine the current mechanism. To this end, we welcome new ideas from your Sub-committee on this issue and our Local Inspectors' Association (LIA) would be happy to further discuss with you on the indebtedness issue at a coming Sub-committee meeting of your convenience. A list of LIA representatives will be sent to you in due course.

We are looking forward to hearing from you soon on the meeting

arrangements and agenda.

Your faithfully,

(Stephen Handley)
for Chairmen,
Police Force Council Staff Associations

c.c.

Chairman SPA
Chairman LIA
Chairman OIA
Chairman JPOA

Attn.: Mr. LUNG Hung-cheuk, Larry (DC SSPODIST)

Attn.: Mr. LIU Kit-ming (RCPO KW)

Attn.: Mr. Stephen Handley (CIP CIB D2)

Attn.: Mr. LAU Kam-wah (AOC RMO E&C T KE)