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**HONG KONG
CUSTOMS AND EXCISE DEPARTMENT**
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6 January 2003

Public Accounts Committee
(Attn.: Miss Sandy Chu)
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road, Central
Hong Kong

Dear Miss Chu,

**The Director of Audit's Report on the
Results of value for money audits (Report No. 39)**

**Chapter 2 : The Customs and Excise Department's efforts
to protect government revenue from dutiable commodities**

Thank you for your letter of 11 December 2002.

I append below the information that you requested :

- (a) The C&ED's limited resources at Lowu Control Point have always been focused on the front-line enforcement work to interdict smuggling activities. Before the recent audit exercise, we only kept an estimated figure on passengers "checked" at Lowu Control Point for internal management purpose. There was no detailed breakdown figure on the various means through which travellers were checked. Since September 2002, we have adopted Audit Commission's recommendation to improve our record keeping system to capture such breakdown figures.

Currently, we have 25 narcotic detector dogs. In 2001 and 2002 , 7 drug seizures with a total value of HK\$2 million were detected by the detector dogs. We plan to increase 2 specially trained dogs in 2003 for detection of bombs and explosives.

- (b) The C&ED adopts a risk management approach in processing passengers at various Control Points. Internal guidelines have been distributed to front-line officers to assist them in applying risk indicators for passenger selection. Such risk indicators include a passenger's behaviour/physical appearance, passport information, and the type and content of baggage he/she is carrying. Prevailing smuggling trends and methods, and the background of a particular passenger will also be important elements to assist the Customs officers' judgment.

Selection of a passenger for checking is an individual assessment based on the experience of a Customs officer. Therefore, we do not set any performance target on the number of passengers to be selected for Customs check.

- (c) The operational statistics required for November 2002 are attached at Annex.

Yours sincerely,



(K Chow)

for Commissioner of Customs & Excise

c.c. Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Director of Immigration
Director of Audit

**Breakdown Data of Inbound Travellers Checked
in November 2002 at Lowu Control Point**

a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	Total
Target Surveillance	Sniffed by Narcotics Dogs	Oral Processing	Baggage Exam	X-ray Scanning	Metal Detector	Ion Scan	Personal Search	
186,461	12,588	91,183	42,714	42,385	75	-	1,007	376,413 ⁽¹⁾

Notes :

- (1) 9.2% of the total 4,090,440 inbound travellers in Nov 2002 were checked under [a – h].
- (2) **Inbound travellers intercepted for checking under [c-h]** : 177,364 (monthly)
: 5,912 (daily)
: 4.34% of daily average of 136,348 [4,090,440 ÷ 30] inbound travellers
- (3) Daily average number of Customs officers engaged in all [i.e. a-h]passenger processing duties : 48 (excluding officers on other duties/leave)
- (4) **Daily average number of Customs officers engaged in [c-h] passenger processing duties** : 40
- (5) On average, around **10 officers are engaged in baggage examination counter duties** [i.e. c-d] at any time during the AM or PM shift, with an additional 3 officers from SWING shift to relieve officers on meal/hygiene breaks and to provide reinforcement (i.e. 23 officers in whole day).

(6) Daily average no. of inbound travellers intercepted for checking by each officer :

- for oral processing and baggage examination at counters [c-d] only : $\frac{(91,183 + 42,714) \div 30}{23} = 194$
- for [c-h] types of checking only : $\frac{177,364 \div 30}{40} = 148$