

Speaking Notes for S for S at the Special FC Meeting on 30 March 2004

Mr. Chairman and Members,

- In the draft Estimates for the coming financial year (2004/2005), the allocation of \$27 billion on the security policy area group represents 9.5% of the total public expenditure. The two policy areas of Internal Security and Immigration under my responsibility will account for \$23.5 billion, which is 2.9% lower than my allocation of \$24.2 billion for the current financial year.
- Through the concerted efforts of the departments under my purview, we are able to reduce our resource requirement whilst maintaining our existing services. Even with a slightly lower provision, we will continue to ensure that Hong Kong remains a secure and safe city. Our essential services will not be affected as we strive to meet all performance targets that we have pledged to the public. With our more efficient and flexible plan in deploying our resources, we will make use of the savings from our streamlined operation to introduce new or enhanced services. I will briefly highlight some of these new programs.

Law and Order

- Overall, the Police Force will have a net reduction of 658 posts, most of which are for support and administrative work.
- On the other hand, over 90 posts will be created primarily to

strengthen front-line operational capability including the policing of East Rail extensions, Penny's Bay, Tuen Mun Ferry Terminal etc.

Immigration Control

- We will continue to improve conditions at our boundary crossings to facilitate the flow of passengers, vehicles and goods between Hong Kong and the Mainland through various means including flexible redeployment of staff, streamlining of procedures, improvement works and use of technology.
- So far, progress relating to installation of air-conditioning for the Lo Wu Footbridge and the design of Boundary Crossing Facilities for the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Corridor is satisfactory. As regards the introduction of Automated Passenger Clearance and Automated Vehicle Clearance Systems, we have awarded contract to the successful tenderer and aim to roll out these Systems at end 2004 by phases.
- To meet the public's demand for services of higher quality, ImmD will soon seek funding approval from LegCo to implement Phase III of the Updated Information Systems Strategy to enhance its productivity, to move away from a paper-driven platform and to launch electronic services such as paperless visas in future.
- While we accord priority on various facilitation measures, we will not compromise our immigration control. We will introduce a pilot scheme of facial recognition system at our control points later this year to facilitate verification of identity of suspect arrivals and

immigration offenders.

- The Individual Visit Scheme currently covers 14 cities in Guangdong¹, Beijing and Shanghai. Since its implementation in July 2003, more than 1.4 million Mainland residents have visited Hong Kong under the Scheme, bringing considerable benefits to the tourism, retail and related sectors. The Scheme will be extended to the whole of Guangdong by May this year. In 2004-05, about 150 new recruits will be posted to control points to cope with the increase in the number of visitors.
- The Admission of Mainland Talents and Professionals Scheme and the Capital Investment Entrant Scheme were implemented in July and October 2003 respectively. The schemes aim to bring in quality professionals and investors to facilitate economic development in Hong Kong. As at end-February, we have received 2,427 applications from Mainland talents and professionals out of which 1,952 have been approved. 39 applicants have been granted formal approval for residence in Hong Kong under the Capital Investment Entrant Scheme. Their total investment in Hong Kong amounts to some HK\$290.6 million, or on average HK\$7.45 million per entrant which exceeds the minimum requisite amount of HK\$ 6.5 million. Another 72 applicants granted approval-in-principle were allowed to enter Hong Kong as visitors to procure the necessary investment under the Scheme.

¹ Jiangmen, Foshan, Zhongshan, Dongguan, Guangzhou, Zhuhai, Shenzhen, Huizhou, Shantou, Chaozhou, Meizhou, Zhaoqing, Qingyuan, Yunfu.

Public Safety

- To meet new service requirements, we will commission new fire stations-cum-ambulance depots through flexible re-deployment of resources. A new mobilizing system will be rolled out in mid-2004 to enhance the mobilization of fire fighting and ambulance resources. A replacement fireboat will be commissioned in December 2004 to strengthen fire fighting and rescue capabilities in the coastal waters. On the emergency ambulance side, we will continue to extend paramedic ambulance service to all ambulances in phases, with a view to achieving full implementation by the first quarter of 2005.
- We have earmarked \$45M for the procurement and replacement of fire appliances, ambulances and equipment to enhance our rescue capability and training facilities. We will continue to improve operational efficiency through organizational re-engineering.

Custody and Rehabilitation of Offenders

- We will continue with our efforts on the rehabilitation of offenders. CSD has launched a three-year publicity campaign starting from 2003-04 to promote community support for rehabilitated offenders, with a provision of \$4.8M drawn from the department's savings. We will continue to encourage community involvement in our efforts, including the utilization of community resources.
- We will also continue to pursue long and short term proposals for relieving the over-crowding problem in penal institutions.

Countering the Menace of Drugs

- Our campaign against drug abuse will be further bolstered through the launch of the Hong Kong Jockey Club Drug InfoCentre this year. Upon its opening in June, this first ever exhibition centre in Hong Kong dedicated for drug information will become a focal point for the territory's drug preventive education activities.
- On treatment and rehabilitation, we will continue to improve our services to drug abusers through implementing the Third Three-year Plan on Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Services in Hong Kong (2003-2005) and monitoring the progress of the licensing scheme for drug treatment centres.

Combating Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing

- Domestically, we will further enhance our anti-money laundering and countering terrorist financing regime by putting in place the revised Forty Recommendations of the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering. On the international front, we will continue to contribute towards the global fight against money laundering and terrorist financing through active participation in the work of the Financial Action Task Force and the Asia / Pacific Group on Money Laundering.

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