

For information
3 May 2005

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON SECURITY**

**Security Arrangements for the Sixth Ministerial Conference
of the World Trade Organization**

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the security arrangements for the Sixth Ministerial Conference (MC6) of the World Trade Organization (WTO) to be held in Hong Kong in December 2005.

Background

2. At the meeting on 7 July 2003, the Panel on Commerce and Industry supported Hong Kong making a formal offer to host MC6. Following WTO's acceptance of Hong Kong's hosting offer in October 2003, the Finance Committee approved a budget of \$256 million on 14 May 2004 for hosting MC6. We have reported progress on logistics preparation of MC6 to the Panel on Commerce and Industry on 16 November 2004 and on 15 February 2005.

Date and Venue

3. The Conference will be held in the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (HKCEC) from 13 to 18 December 2005. The entire HKCEC will be used for this purpose. A Press Centre and an NGO (non-governmental organisation) Centre will also be located within HKCEC. An Accreditation Centre will be set up on the ground floor of the Hong Kong Central Library. We anticipate some 11,000 participants for MC6, including 6,000 delegates, 3,000 press and 2,000 NGO representatives.

MC6 Coordination Office

4. The Trade and Industry Department has set up the MC6 Coordination Office (MCO) to undertake and co-ordinate the preparatory work. A Steering Committee, chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Commerce and Industry) and comprising senior directorate representatives from the most heavily involved bureaux and departments, has been set up to oversee the planning and implementation of MC6.

Security and Accreditation

5. The Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF) is responsible for matters relating to security arrangements during MC6. Its primary objective is to ensure the security of all participants in Hong Kong during MC6, their attendance at the various MC6-related activities at the designated venues, and the facilitation of freedom of expression of those who wish to protest while keeping inconvenience and disruption to the community to the minimum. It will also look after public order and safety. HKPF has set up 9 working groups to look into various aspects, viz. security; public order; traffic management; public relations and publicity; command and control; tactics and training; logistics; information technology and communications; and manpower and procurement. HKPF has reviewed and will draw on relevant experience overseas (e.g. past WTO Ministerial Conferences; meetings of Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation, Free Trade Area of the Americas, G8; etc.) to devise a plan most suitable to Hong Kong.

6. Given the scale and nature of MC6, HKPF will prepare for all possible contingencies. It will formulate a comprehensive manpower deployment plan to cater not only for the MC6 commitments but also to maintain the general watch and ward coverage. The plan will be refined on a continuous basis to reflect the updated assessment of threats and information on other major commitments (e.g. crowd control events) closer to the time of MC6. To ensure maximum availability of manpower, a number of resources management measures will be enforced, most notably the leave restriction for all frontline officers, immediately before and during the MC6 period.

7. On security of the venue, only persons and vehicles which have undergone an accreditation process and obtained a personalised accreditation badge (accreditation labels for vehicles) may have access to HKCEC and other venues (e.g. car parking area) designated for MC6 use. MCO is working closely with the WTO Secretariat and HKPF in developing an accreditation system for MC6.

8. Past WTO Ministerial Conferences and some large-scale international events in recent years had attracted rigorous demonstrations, some of which had unfortunately resulted in violence and damage to properties as was evidenced during MC3 in Seattle in 1999. Sometimes even peaceful and non-violent protests may result in blockades and disruption to the public. We appreciate that non-governmental organisations (NGOs), as with the general public, may like to express views on various issues during the MC6 period. Freedom of expression is most respected in Hong Kong but it would be important to maintain law and order at the same time in the interest of the community at large. We will maintain a dialogue with NGOs as well as with any other groups, both locally and from overseas, in the run-up to and during MC6, with a view to facilitating their freedom of expression and conduct of orderly and peaceful demonstration activities. Work on this front has commenced, for example, MCO has met with the Hong Kong People's Alliance on WTO (HKPAWTO) and the event organiser of the Fair Trade Fair and Sustainable Trade Symposium. HKPF has also met with HKPAWTO and is identifying suitable sites for demonstrations. MCO also briefed representatives of major NGOs in Geneva (where the WTO Secretariat is based) in March 2005 on the general logistical arrangements for MC6.

9. In view of the scale of MC6, it is inevitable that special traffic, crowd control and other security arrangements will have to be introduced during MC6 (e.g. road closure, traffic diversion and special arrangements of certain public transport services). We are giving detailed examination to the specific arrangements that may need to be put in place. We will consult the relevant District Councils (e.g. Wanchai, Central & Western, etc.) and take their views into account wherever possible. We aim to keep the disruption to the normal life of the community to the minimum while ensuring the secure and smooth conduct of MC6. Whatever special arrangements are decided, we will make sure

they are disseminated to the public in a timely manner so as to engender understanding and cooperation by the affected entities and persons.

10. In the coming months, we will pro-actively reach out to the businesses, building management companies, etc. in the neighbourhood of HKCEC, brief them on MC6 and discuss with them on what measures they may wish to adopt in the run-up to and during the Conference. In addition, we are touching base with the operators of various important facilities / services (e.g. public utilities, financial institutions, public transport operators, etc.) and inviting them to formulate plans in light of MC6.

Special Arrangements for the First Day

11. We anticipate that on the first day of MC6 (i.e. Tuesday, 13 December), participants will converge at HKCEC at the same time and protestors may also be attracted to gather in the vicinity of HKCEC. HKPF and other concerned departments will consider and make preparation for necessary special arrangements. In order to reduce traffic load and inconvenience to the public, we will implement special measures such as diverting public transport links away from the immediate vicinity of HKCEC. The Education and Manpower Bureau will also advise and encourage schools to designate 13 December as a discretionary school holiday / staff development day, particularly those schools on the Hong Kong Island.

Way Forward

12. We will keep LegCo Members informed of further progress of preparation on MC6 as and when necessary.

Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau
May 2005