

For discussion on
5 May 2009

Legislative Council Panel on Security

Progress on **Implementation of Recommendations of the** **Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress on implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse (Task Force).

Background

2. The Task Force led by the Secretary for Justice released its Report on 11 November 2008. The Report contains some 70 recommendations spanning the five prongs of the anti-drug policy, namely –

- (a) preventive education and publicity;
- (b) treatment and rehabilitation;
- (c) law enforcement and legislation;
- (d) external cooperation; and
- (e) research.

The recommendations also include the promotion of a community culture of care for young people through the *Path Builders* initiative.

3. To steer, coordinate and monitor the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force, an inter-departmental working group chaired by the Commissioner for Narcotics was set up in early 2009 and is working in full swing. Its membership is at **Annex**.

Implementation Strategies

4. The 70-plus recommendations of the Task Force represent an ambitious agenda for the Government. In order to achieve maximum impact, the inter-departmental working group will ensure a proper focus and accord appropriate priorities in implementing various recommendations. The inter-departmental working group aims to implement the recommendations to the largest possible extent within the next three years taking into account priorities. It will evaluate the results towards the end of the period and refine the way forward as appropriate.

5. To achieve the above aim, the inter-departmental working group has adopted the following implementation strategies –

- (a) Given the hidden nature of psychotropic substance abuse, the inter-departmental working group should step up efforts in identifying young drug abusers for early intervention as soon as possible.
- (b) The inter-departmental working group should pursue close collaboration between anti-drug policy and other policy areas with a view to mainstreaming anti-drug work across Government and in the public sphere to achieve synergy.
- (c) The inter-departmental working group should strive for better coordination among the five prongs of anti-drug work to ensure a continuum of services and complementary support. In this regard, the inter-departmental working group will give due consideration to appropriate downstream treatment and rehabilitation services as young drug abusers are identified by new means such as drug testing.
- (d) The inter-departmental working group should promote team work within the Administration and engage the anti-drug sector (comprising the many non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and others) and various stakeholders (e.g. schools, parents, teachers, social workers, legislators, etc.) to ensure ownership of and support for the anti-drug cause.

- (e) The inter-departmental working group should sustain the anti-drug profile built up over the Task Force's deliberations to raise public awareness and garner public support, taking advantage of the on-going two-year territory-wide campaign with the theme "No Drugs, No Regret. Not Now, Not Ever." We should promote community participation and mobilise resources outside the government, notably through the *Path Builders* initiative.
- (f) The inter-departmental working group should seek to create maximum impact for the anti-drug efforts by appropriate management of the sequence of events, the timing of initiatives, the interface and dovetailing of different measures, etc.

6. Following the above strategies, the inter-departmental working group has identified the following priority areas –

- publicity in the second year of the "No Drugs, No Regret. Not Now, Not Ever" campaign and beyond;
- implementation of a "Healthy School Policy";
- anti-drug elements in various Key Learning Areas and subjects for students, and diversified learning opportunities such as moral and civic education, and life-wide learning activities for positive peer influence and life values cultivation;
- enhancement of collaboration on a cluster basis among different agencies, including Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers (CCPSAs), Substance Abuse Clinics (SACs), Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres (DTRCs), schools and the Police;
- sustained improvements in the treatment and rehabilitation programmes and re-engineering of resources for heroin and psychotropic substance abusers;
- study on voluntary school-based drug testing (to be followed by a pilot scheme);

- public consultation on compulsory drug testing (to be followed by a legislative exercise as appropriate);
- pilot scheme for the enhanced probation system;
- tackling cross-boundary drug abuse; and
- *Path Builders* and community involvement.

Progress and Action Plan

7. The latest progress and tentative action plan of the inter-departmental working group in different prongs are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Preventive Education and Publicity

(a) Two-year territory-wide campaign and beyond

8. The current two-year territory-wide campaign with the theme “No Drugs, No Regrets. Not Now, Not Ever.” launched in June 2008, as well as the release of the Task Force Report, have been heightening awareness and building consensus on the seriousness and urgency of the youth drug abuse problem in society. It is important to maintain the profile amidst other emerging social issues.

9. To sustain the momentum of the campaign in 2009-10, a programme outline has been drawn up. Beyond that, the Narcotics Division (ND) will consider and plan publicity programmes in the light of the results of the present campaign and the advice of the inter-departmental working group and the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN).

(b) Parental education

10. ND is working with the Education Bureau (EDB), the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and other relevant departments and NGOs to reach out to parents through various means, with a view to incorporating drug education into more general parental education programmes and activities. We are developing a resource kit for parents to help schools and parent-teacher associations plan and implement anti-drug programmes for parents. The

production is underway and will be completed shortly, to be followed by demonstrations and training sessions for one year. The resource kit will be uploaded to ND's and EDB's websites for ease of access by the public and parents.

(c) Anti-drug portal

11. To revamp the website of ND into an anti-drug portal, ND has solicited professional advice from the design and information technology sectors, initially gauged the views of young people, teachers, social workers and parents and looked into the practices of overseas agencies. ND has drawn up a project brief and plans to assign a contractor in the 2nd quarter of 2009 to update its website. The revamped website www.nodrugs.gov.hk may go online in early 2010.

(d) Drug InfoCentre

12. To make the Drug InfoCentre more attractive and informative as a focal point and resource centre for drug education, ND is examining different revamping models (e.g. interactive exhibits) and collecting views from different parties (including teachers, social workers, doctors, works departments and operators of similar venues). Taking into account the findings and views collected, ND plans to develop a proposal (including redevelopment plans, content, approach, works schedules and options, funding options, etc.) and decide on the way forward in 2010. In the meantime, ND will continue to organise various events at the Drug InfoCentre. It will also collaborate with various Government bureaux and departments, such as EDB, the Police, the Customs and Excise Department (C&ED), SWD as well as the Leisure and Cultural Services Department through mutual exchange of resources and information or co-organisation of programmes.

School Sector

(a) "Healthy School Policy" with an anti-drug element

13. Since the 2008-09 school year, EDB has set up a time-limited dedicated anti-drug education team to spearhead and coordinate efforts in the institutionalisation of a "Healthy School Policy" with an anti-drug element during the initial three years, as well as an advisory council to benefit from the

counsel of representatives from the school sector and departments concerned. As the cornerstone of the anti-drug efforts in the school sector, a “Healthy School Policy” can, among other things, provide a platform to sustain and update anti-drug measures, and encourage a more open attitude towards discussion of the drug abuse problem in schools, hence making stakeholders more receptive to new measures (such as drug testing) that will help identify young abusers effectively. To sustain the momentum and to disseminate good practices, EDB plans to reinvigorate efforts to promote the “Healthy School Policy” in the coming few years.

(b) Strengthening drug education

14. EDB reviews and updates the school curriculum as well as other learning opportunities to strengthen anti-drug education. For example, the Moral and Civic Education curriculum framework was revised in 2008 with specific learning expectations relevant to anti-drug education for schools’ curriculum planning. It will further strengthen anti-drug education in the New Senior Secondary Curriculum to be launched from September 2009 onwards, e.g. by the core subject “Liberal Studies” and the elective “Health Management and Social Care”. A new subject “Life and Society” will be offered at the junior secondary level which covers anti-drug education. To support the promotion of the school curriculum, learning and teaching resources as well as professional development programmes for teachers are continuously provided.

15. On further drug education for students, in the 2008-09 school year, ND has commissioned NGOs to deliver programmes targeting 50% of primary four to six students and students from international and non-Chinese speaking schools, while SWD-subsented programmes would reach 75% of secondary schools. ND is working with SWD, the Police, Department of Health (DH) and NGOs concerned to enhance and coordinate various programmes in the 2009-10 school year, with a view to extending the coverage gradually to all primary schools (upper primary students) and secondary schools as far as possible within three years.

(c) Enhancing support for schools

16. EDB and ND have commissioned an NGO to develop resource kits for the school sector in modular form, which will be ready for first use in the 2009-10 school year. Campus protocols for handling student drug abuse cases

are being developed as part of the kit, with a view to building a good network of support and referral for students and taking timely and effective follow-up actions. EDB and ND will gauge initial feedback from users by the end of the 2009-10 school year for planning for the future.

(d) Teacher training

17. EDB and ND have commissioned NGOs to run the teacher training programmes for 2008-09 school year. Resources have been obtained to provide teaching relief grant for teachers to attend the two-day advanced training. The structured programmes include -

- (a) a half-day, on-site school-based training programme for class teachers and subject teachers to enhance their knowledge on drug prevention and early intervention; and
- (b) a two-day intensive training programme for key school personnel (such as guidance and discipline teachers) to equip them with knowledge and skills in planning and implementing a “Healthy School Policy” with an anti-drug element, and to handle drug abuse cases involving students.

We will review the teacher professional development and plan for the 2009-10 school year.

(e) Reaching out to parents for mutual support

18. EDB and ND have been working hand in hand with parent-teacher associations and the Committee on Home-School Co-operation (CHSC) in 2009. From February to April 2009, the CHSC, with the help of the Police, has arranged visits to the Government Laboratory for parent-teacher associations and federations of parent-teacher associations in order to strengthen parents’ understanding on the scientific process relating to drug issues. They will reach out to more parents for enhanced home-school cooperation in the anti-drug cause.

(f) Police School Liaison Programme

19. In the fourth quarter of 2008, 27 police school liaison officer posts have been created on top of the previous 58 and communication has been strengthened for the more effective sharing of information between various parties. EDB and the Police will review the enhanced collaboration among themselves and schools, as well as on drug offence cases on campus and cases involving students outside schools.

Treatment and Rehabilitation

20. In 2008-09, resources have been allocated or deployed to subvent an additional 101 places in DTRCs, to enhance medical social services in SACs, and to open two new SACs and two new CCPSAs, and to strengthen the manpower of the 16 District Youth Outreaching Social Work Teams, 18 teams of Overnight Outreaching Service for Young Night Drifters and five teams Community Support Service Scheme (CSSS).

21. For 2009-10, the Estimates have included a provision of about \$4.7 million to introduce on-site medical support at the CCPSAs. Preparation is underway to launch the service by end 2009.

22. A host of medium-term recommendations in the Task Force Report have been further developed and taken forward in the context of the Fifth Three-Year Plan on Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Services (2009-2011) (Three-Year Plan), which was released on 2 April 2009. These include the development of a networking model on a cluster basis, provision of training for anti-drug workers, enhancement of the reintegration elements in treatment and rehabilitation programmes, improvement in capacity and quality of various programmes, and resources reengineering.

23. The inter-departmental working group will continue to pursue vigorous implementation of the Task Force recommendations in relation to treatment and rehabilitation following further the direction set out in the Fifth Three-Year Plan. The inter-departmental working group will also identify areas that require additional resources and consider new projects in the light of the latest drug abuse situation.

Drug Testing

24. Regarding the compulsory drug testing proposal, ND and relevant bureaux and departments are now preparing for a public consultation exercise tentatively scheduled for launch in end 2009. The Administration will proactively engage various stakeholders in formulating the details of the proposal.

25. Separately, ND and relevant bureaux and departments have been working to commission a research project to devise possible school-based drug testing schemes for voluntary adoption by schools in Hong Kong. The tasks should cover the following-

- (a) conduct in-depth research on the experience and details regarding the implementation of voluntary school-based drug testing in schools overseas and international schools in Hong Kong;
- (b) study pertinent issues requiring attention and ways to address such issues if voluntary school-based drug testing is to be implemented in local schools, including privacy, possible stigmatisation, methods of testing, costs of the scheme, and support and referral services required;
- (c) consult local schools, the education sector, the social welfare sector, and other stakeholders with a view to gauging their concerns and requests; and
- (d) recommend one or more concrete, feasible schemes, covering relevant aspects such as arrangements, procedures, resources, support measures, etc.

26. Work is underway to commission the research study by the 4th quarter of 2009. The research party is to recommend a model scheme(s) and to run it as a pilot project in a number of representative schools in 2010. Having regard to practical operational experiences, ND will refine and promote the scheme(s) for general adoption by local schools.

27. Separately, DH will further explore the provision of voluntary drug test services as part of its effort to promote student and adolescent health. SWD is making preparation for voluntary drug testing in CCPSAs as part of the enhanced medical support to be provided at these centres by end 2009.

Enhanced Probation System

28. Preparation is underway to carry out a two-year pilot scheme at Magistracies to strengthen the collaboration between Probation Officers and Judicial Officers on probation service starting from the second half of 2009-10 Financial Year. This would enhance the assistance rendered to young drug abusers caught by the law. The Estimates 2009-10 have included a provision of about \$0.9 million for this purpose.

Judiciary

29. To provide magistrates with information on the latest drug trends and harms of drugs, ND and the Judiciary organised a seminar on 25 April 2009, with talks given by the Commissioner for Narcotics and the Chairman of the Treatment and Rehabilitation Sub-Committee of ACAN. ND will continue to provide the latest information to the Judiciary from time to time for background reference.

Law Enforcement

30. The relevant law enforcement departments are taking forward various recommendations of the Task Force. First, the law enforcement agencies and Department of Justice have been working closely together to continue to invoke section 56A of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap.134)¹ and the aggravating factor of importation of drugs for enhanced sentencing in appropriate cases. A recent example was a case decided in January 2009 where a 55-year-old male used a nine-year-old girl to carry drugs from the Mainland to Hong Kong. The Court has, on the application of the Department of Justice, raised the sentence of 54 months by 50% to 81 months. Second, the Administration welcomes the Court of Appeal's recent judgment which laid down the sentencing guidelines

¹ Section 56A of the Dangerous Drugs Ordinance (Cap 134) empowers the court, where it is satisfied with evidence that an adult has involved a minor in the commission of a drug-related offence and if it thinks fit, to pass a sentence on the convicted adult offender that is more severe than the sentence it would, in the absence of such evidence, have passed.

for trafficking of large quantities of heroin & cocaine (600 grammes or above) and specified aggravating factors which call for enhanced sentencing.

31. Third, as reported in paragraph 19 above, the Police School Liaison Programme was enhanced in the second half of 2008 with the addition of 27 police school liaison officers and strengthened communication among the Police and various parties.

32. Moreover, the Police have since April 2008 set up a team to carry out Internet patrol on drug offences. The law enforcement agencies will also continue to sustain their crime prevention efforts through publicity and preventive education in collaboration with NGOs as well as industry partners.

Cross-boundary Drug Abuse

33. Since the publication of the Task Force Report, various actions have been taken to step up efforts against cross-boundary drug abuse. First, the Police have discussed with the Mainland authorities detailed arrangements for the sharing of information on youngsters caught abusing drugs in the Mainland, as well as repatriation of those who have been administratively detained by the Mainland. Second, C&ED has enhanced its detector dog services and plainclothes operation at boundary control points. Third, publicity at boundary control points has been enhanced during the festive seasons.

34. Apart from the above efforts, the Police have started making enquiries of youngsters apparently under the influence of drugs at boundary control points and contact their parents. To appeal to parents to better exercise their responsibility over their children's movements to the Mainland, publicity efforts have included the message that parents may consider keeping their children's Home Visit Permits and that they can apply to the Immigration Department for a statement of travel records on behalf of their children.

External Cooperation

35. The United Nations Commission on Narcotics Drugs adopted a political declaration in March 2009, calling for the adoption of "an integrated, multidisciplinary, mutually reinforcing and balanced approach to supply and demand reduction strategies". In the context of drug demand reduction, mainstreaming drug treatment and rehabilitation services into healthcare

systems was a key direction advocated by the United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs and the World Health Organisation and concurred by many participating countries.

36. The World Health Organisation Expert Committee on Drug Dependence will consider in September 2009 whether the tightening of control of ketamine is warranted. In this connection, ND has already filed its return through the Mainland authorities to a questionnaire by the International Narcotics Control Board on measures to control ketamine and on ketamine abuse and trafficking in respective jurisdictions.

37. As regards cooperation with the Mainland and Macao, ND will pursue the resumption of the tripartite cooperation framework. In this connection, a meeting between ACAN and the Anti-Drug Committee of Macao is being planned for May 2009. The Police and C&ED will also pursue closer collaboration on law enforcement efforts with their Mainland and overseas counterparts.

Research

38. The implementation timetable for various research studies and surveys is as follows –

- (a) Student Survey – the results of the latest survey will be released in end 2009;
- (b) Central Registry of Drug Abusers – ND is seeking to implement a series of improvement measures in the first half of 2009 which include maintaining close contact with the reporting agencies and enhancing their efficiency, reducing the extent of under-reporting, and widening and deepening the reporting network; and
- (c) Two studies on the impact of ketamine - The results will be available in 2010.
- (d) A longitudinal study on socioeconomic and health impacts of psychoactive drug abuse and a study on effective ways to dispel at-risk youth's misunderstandings about psychotropic substances are underway. They are expected for completion in 2nd quarter of

2011 and 3rd quarter of 2010 respectively.

39. ND is also working to commission further studies in 2009 and beyond. These include –

- (a) a study to review the various methodologies for estimating the drug-abusing population and recommend a possible method that is suitable in the Hong Kong context;
- (b) a study of the drug abuse situation of non-engaged youth;
- (c) a study on the impact of Ice; and
- (d) development of the qualitative module of the Supplementary Drug Abuse Monitoring System.

40. ND, DH and SWD have also been following up on the recommendations of the Task Force on evaluation of drug treatment and rehabilitation services.

41. An evaluation has also been planned for 2009 for the Service Information System², which is currently in use under a pilot scheme by five subvented DTRCs. Subject to the findings of the final review and necessary adjustments, ND will consider extending the Service Information System to all other subvented DTRCs and promote it for voluntary adoption by non-subvented DTRCs as far as possible to facilitate continuous service improvement.

Beat Drugs Fund

42. A total 159 applications for the annual funding exercise 2009/10 have been received. As approved by ACAN in December 2008, the priority areas reflect the importance of the recommendations of the Task Force. The amount of funds available for granting, however, is likely to be modest, due to the unfavourable investment market prevailing at the moment. Meanwhile, ND is

² The Service Information System is a data management system which collects data regularly from each participating Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres about the centre itself, its programmes and clients, for compiling outcome indicators to measure the effectiveness of respective programmes, and provides greater characterisation of the clients and a wider range of behavioural and other changes with which to describe the outcome.

implementing a number of measures to improve the operations of the Fund. It also plans to pursue a review of the overall effectiveness of the Fund in due course, subject to other competing commitments.

Institutional Support

43. The Legislative Council has approved the creation of a three-year supernumerary Administrative Officer Staff Grade C post within ND from March 2009 to February 2012.

Community Care, Support and Participation

(a) Complementary support

44. To encourage complementary support among bureaux and departments in tackling the youth drug abuse problem, ND has been working with the Family Council, the Women's Commission, EDB, DH, the Home Affairs Department, etc. to incorporate anti-drug work into various policy areas.

(b) Path Builders

45. To date, over 200 organisations and individuals have pledged support for the Path Builders initiative. ND is making its best endeavour to maintain the momentum of the initiative, including seeking more anchor contributors. ND will also ride on the annual International Anti-Drug Day (with a large-scale publicity event scheduled for 21 June 2009) to give recognition to contributors to the initiative.

Advice Sought

46. Members are invited to note the strategies, implementation progress, and action plan as set out in the paper.

**Membership of the
Inter-departmental Working Group on Youth Drug Abuse**

Chairman

Commissioner for Narcotics

Members

Representative of Secretary for Justice

Representative of Secretary for Education

Representative of Secretary for Food and Health

Representative of Commissioner of Police

Representative of Commissioner of Customs and Excise

Representative of Director of Home Affairs

Representative of Director of Health

Representative of Director of Social Welfare

Representative of Director of Information Services