

Speaking Notes for S for S
at the Special FC Meeting on 9 April 2013

Chairman,

- In the draft Estimates for the new financial year (2013-14), the allocation on the security policy area group is \$36.6 billion, representing 8.3% of the total government expenditure. The two policy areas of Internal Security and Immigration Control under my responsibility will account for \$31.1 billion.

Law and Order

- The overall law and order situation in Hong Kong remained stable in 2012. The overall crime figure was about the same as the level in 2011, whilst the violent crime figure registered a decrease of 2.1% as compared with 2011. Most categories of crimes — such as robberies, blackmail, burglaries, thefts, criminal intimidation, wounding and serious assault, as well as missing motor vehicles — also decreased in number. The Police will always remain alert to maintain the law and order of our society.

- The major operational targets of the Commissioner of Police for 2013 are to combat violent crimes, triads syndicated and organised crimes, dangerous drugs, “quick-cash” crimes, technology crime, and to maintain professionalism in ensuring public safety (including public events, road safety as well as major incidents and disasters) and counter terrorism work.
- The Police will also create 45 new posts for addressing the policing needs in Tseung Kwan O and Kai Tak areas; and strengthening the Sexual Conviction Record Check Scheme.

Control Points and e-Channel Service

- To maintain Hong Kong’s status as an international trade and tourism hub, the Immigration Department (ImmD) has all along strived to provide a smooth and effective immigration clearance service. The number of visitors arriving Hong Kong has continued to grow over the past few years. In 2012, the total number of visitor arrivals reached 48.6 million, representing a 16% increase from 2011.

- ImmD has adopted a series of measures to cope with the passenger traffic. In the 2013-14 financial year, there will be a net increase of 154 posts in ImmD, among which 116 will be deployed for carrying out immigration control and related duties at new and existing control points. We have commenced recruiting suitable candidates for these new posts and will provide suitable training for them with a view to having them deployed to control points as soon as possible to relieve the manpower pressure thereat.
- ImmD has also strived to increase its handling capacity and efficiency through strengthening its e-Channel service. Since the introduction of Mainland frequent visitor e-Channel service, the usage rate was satisfactory in that the number of users has accounted for more than 20% of all Mainland visitors. To further alleviate the pressure at boundary control points, we will increase the number of visitor e-Channels available for use by Mainland visitors to 100 within this year. On the other hand, the handling capacity of Lok Ma

Chau and Man Kam To control points would increase upon completion of improvement works within the current year.

- ImmD will flexibly deploy its staff resources to deal with rising cross-boundary passenger and vehicular flow and other immigration control duties including implementing the complementary immigration measures on Mainland pregnant women under the “zero quota” policy, and facilitation measures for cross-boundary students. In the light of the trend of passenger traffic, ImmD will continue to review its manpower and resources requirements as required.

Capital Investment Entrant Scheme

- We welcome investors coming to Hong Kong for investment. From 2003 to end 2012, nearly 17 000 applicants have been given formal approval to reside in Hong Kong under the Capital Investment Entrant Scheme, investing almost \$130 billion.

- We will review the scheme this year, taking into account overseas practices, operational experience, etc., to ensure that the scheme is up to date and to serve the best overall interest of Hong Kong.

Assistance to Hong Kong Residents Overseas

- We will continue to provide assistance to Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong. We will review the coverage of the Outbound Travel Alert (OTA) system biannually. Since its launch in late 2009, we have extended the OTA coverage from 60 countries and regions to 85. The newly added places are popular tourist or business destinations for Hong Kong residents.
- With effect from 30 November 2012, we have also issued OTA information via the “GovHK Notifications” mobile platform so that the public can conveniently receive relevant information via smartphones.

Screening Torture Claims

- The enhanced torture claim screening mechanism was implemented by ImmD since December 2009 to ensure that the screening is processed in a fair and effective manner. The administrative mechanism was underpinned by legislative framework through the amendment of the Immigration Ordinance last year. Under the statutory mechanism, claimants may continue to receive publicly-funded legal assistance through the Duty Lawyer Service. Retired judges and magistrates have been appointed as members of the statutory Torture Claims Appeal Board to determine appeals. As at the end of 2012, ImmD has commenced screening over 4 000 claims and made decision on over 2 700 claims.

Public Safety

- To enhance public safety, the Fire Services Department (FSD) will create 165 additional posts in the new financial year. Of these new posts, 111 are to tie in with the commissioning of a new fire station at Cheung Yip Street in Kowloon Bay in the latter half of 2013, and to strengthen the manpower of the Tsim Tung Fire Station and Shun Lee Fire Station in response to the increased fire risks in these areas. The other 54 posts are for adding 5 ambulance shifts and establishing a special support unit to further enhance emergency ambulance services.
- To ensure the safety of frontline personnel, FSD replaces fire services and ambulance equipment in a timely manner. The expenses on procurement of fire appliances, vessels, ambulances and major equipment, etc. for 2013-14 are estimated to be around \$300 million.

- In terms of fire prevention, FSD will continue to promote a fire safety culture in collaboration with various sectors in the community. The department will continue to adopt a 4-pronged approach to enhance the fire safety of buildings through publicity, law enforcement, inspection and partnership with owners/occupiers and property management of buildings, and educate the public about the appropriate responses in case of a fire. FSD will also provide support to FEHD in improving the fire safety of hawker pitches.
- In 2013-14, FSD will gradually roll out the pilot scheme on reduction of weekly conditioned hours of work for operational staff from 54 to 51 in different districts. Phase I of the pilot scheme has commenced on 15 March 2013. The Department will ensure that the reduction arrangement will not affect the fire-fighting and rescue services.

Custody and Rehabilitation of Detainees

- The Correctional Services Department (CSD) has been implementing various measures to improve ageing correctional facilities. The partial redevelopment programme of the Tai Lam Centre for Women has already commenced in mid-2012 and will be completed in end-2016. The Department is also conducting improvement works of a relatively smaller scale in other penal institutions to enhance the rehabilitation and security facilities. We will continue to explore proposals to redevelop other correctional institutions and conduct improvement works as appropriate.
- To strengthen the security and maintain discipline and order in correctional institutions, CSD officers need to conduct searches on persons in custody to prevent their possession of contrabands such as drugs and weapons. In end-2012, the Department put the first low radiation X-ray body scanner into use at the Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre to replace manual rectal searches. In view of the satisfactory outcome, the Department

plans to install one X-ray body scanner each in Pik Uk Correctional Institution, Lo Wu Correctional Institution and Tai Lam Centre for Women in 2013-14.

- To ensure that there is effective monitoring on whether some rehabilitated persons have relapsed into drugs when they re-integrate into society, CSD will collect their urine specimen for testing. To strengthen the integrity of the urine specimen testing arrangements, CSD will set up a Urine Specimen Collection Centre next to the Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre this year. The urine specimen will be collected and processed by staff outside the Rehabilitation Division to minimise any possible conflict of interest. Besides, CCTV will be installed in the centre to record and monitor the testing process.

Combating Drug Abuse Problem

- The concerted efforts of the Government, the anti-drug sector and the community in combating drug abuse problem over the past years have brought

improvements in the drug scene, evident in the substantial decline in young drug abusers. Nonetheless, we need to remain alert to the problem of hidden drug abuse. We will continue to take forward anti-drug measures along the five-pronged anti-drug strategy, namely preventive education and publicity, treatment and rehabilitation, legislation and law enforcement, research and external co-operation to sustain the momentum of our war against drugs.

- The Government has injected new resources to support anti-drug initiatives in different areas. In 2013-14 the Social Welfare Department (SWD) will extend the Enhanced Probation Service (EPS) territory-wide to all seven magistrates' courts. Through more focused, intensive and structured treatment programmes, the EPS will continue to help young offenders under the age of 21 convicted of drug-related offences to turn a new leaf.

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

Security Bureau

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