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Panel on Security

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for the meeting on 5 January 2016**

Acquisition of Mobile Response and Command Platform

When the Panel on Security discussed the Administration's proposal to replace 18 police launches at its meeting on 13 May 2014, members were advised that the proposal involved the replacement of a Regional Training Launch by a Mobile Response and Command Platform ("MRCP").

2. According to the Administration, MRCP was a purpose-built launch designed to be used as a command platform for major maritime incidents, including serious crime, terrorist-related threats and disaster relief. The proposed MRCP was a 40-metre long catamaran/multi-hull type craft constructed largely of marine grade aluminium alloy. With its full range of modern navigation, detection and communications equipment as well as a purpose-built command and control suite, MRCP was suitable for both handling multi-agency major maritime incidents and day-to-day police operations. It could strengthen the command capability of the Marine Police to effectively handle on-scene command of major maritime incidents on a round-the-clock basis. The improved functionalities of the new MRCP were as follows -

- (a) it would be equipped with a variety of smaller support vessels designed to enhance the ability of MRCP to handle incidents in shallow waters and beach/foreshore areas where traditional police craft could not operate;
- (b) the increased top speed of 25 knots of MRCP would enable the Marine Police to arrive on-scene significantly earlier and take up its major incident management role more promptly;
- (c) the catamaran/multi-hull design would provide a more stable working environment and improved deck space for on-scene initial handling of injured persons; and

- (d) it would be equipped with advanced thermal imaging, radar and navigation equipment enabling incident commanders to make more informed and timely decisions based upon real time information.

3. Members were also advised that apart from the serviceable lifespan of vessels recommended by the ship-builders, a number of factors would be taken into account in assessing the time for the replacement of the launches, such as whether the launches were well maintained and repaired, the conditions under which the launches were operated and the degree of erosion of the launches by seawater. Government craft had a usual serviceable lifespan ranging from eight to 20 years. The specifications and equipment required of new police launches were determined by the Police Regional Fleet Review Committee, having regard to the latest information obtained at international conferences, exhibitions on new launches, maritime products or equipment, exchanges with the counterparts of other jurisdictions and the views of frontline marine police officers. The specifications required had also been discussed with the Government New Construction Section of the Marine Department.

4. The Administration will brief the Panel on Security on 5 January 2016 on its proposal to acquire an MRCP for the marine region of the Police Force.