

**Opening Statement by  
Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs  
at the Special Meeting of the Finance Committee  
on 3 April 2017**

Chairman,

I wish to brief Members on the main points of the estimates of expenditure of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (“CMAB”) in 2017-18.

**Estimates of Expenditure of CMAB**

2. In 2017-18, CMAB is allocated \$698.1 million, which is \$90.2 million (about 14.8%) higher than the revised estimates for 2016-17. The financial provision is mainly used in the following areas-

**(I) Electoral Arrangements**

3. The Government will continue to work closely with the Electoral Affairs Commission (“EAC”) to ensure that the public elections will be conducted in a fair, open and honest manner in accordance with the relevant legislation.

2019 District Council election

4. To prepare for the 2019 District Council (“DC”) election, we are conducting a review on the number of elected seats for the sixth-term DCs. We expect that we will consult the Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs (“CA Panel”) on the outcome of the review around mid this year, followed by amendments to the subsidiary legislation to reflect such outcome, with a view to facilitating the EAC to, in accordance with the Electoral Affairs Commission Ordinance, conduct timely review of the boundaries of DC constituencies and recommend the delineation of DC constituencies before the 2019 DC election.

2017 Voter Registration

5. The 2017 Voter Registration (“VR”) campaign has already commenced on 10 March. The statutory deadline for both voter

registration and change of registration particulars is 2 May this year. We will, through various channels, encourage eligible persons to register as electors, remind electors to update their registration particulars, and encourage electors to use the Online Voter Information Enquiry System to verify their registration status and particulars. The Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”) will continue to implement checking measures and inquiry process in the 2017 VR cycle, and remind the public of the importance of providing true and accurate information for registration and updating their address in the 2017 VR campaign. If any person is suspected of providing false information for voter registration, the REO will refer the case to the law enforcement agencies for follow up action and investigation in accordance with the established procedures.

### Enhancement of Voter Registration System

6. The Consultation Report on Enhancement of Voter Registration System was released in January 2016. Some of the recommendations in the Report have already been implemented in the 2016 VR cycle. As regards the other proposed measures that involve amendments to the electoral legislation, including review of the VR objection mechanism, raising the penalties on offences relating to VR and introducing requirement of submitting address proofs by electors, we would take into account Members’ views when formulating the detailed arrangements and the legislative proposals. When the concerned legislative proposals are ready, the Government will submit them to the Legislative Council for scrutiny with a view to implementing these measures before the next election cycle.

## **(II) Promoting the Basic Law**

7. In 2017-18, CMAB will continue to set aside about \$16 million for enabling the public to have a more comprehensive and thorough understanding of the “one country, two systems” principle and the Basic Law via various means of organising or sponsoring various types of promotional activities.

8. The year 2017 marks the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR. Riding on this opportunity, relevant policy bureaux/departments responsible for promoting the Basic Law will organise various types of activities this year to help people from different walks of life grasp the complete concept of “one country, two systems” in a correct and comprehensive manner and to deepen their understanding of the Basic Law.

### **(III) Rights of the Individual**

9. In 2017-18, subventions to the Equal Opportunities Commission (“EOC”) and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data (“PCPD”) will remain the major parts of the estimated total provision in human rights under the Bureau. CMAB will continue to carry out promotional and educational work in certain areas.

#### Anti-discrimination on grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity

10. We are actively taking forward the strategies and measures recommended by the Advisory Group on Eliminating Discrimination against Sexual Minorities in December 2015. First of all, we have enhanced public education and publicity efforts, which include appealing to employers for their adoption of the Code of Practice against Discrimination in Employment on the Ground of Sexual Orientation. In addition, for drawing up a charter on non-discrimination of sexual minorities, we are now studying the relevant legislation, codes of practice and guidelines in different jurisdictions. We shall consult the stakeholders on the content of a draft charter within this year.

11. To provide training and resources for personnel in specific fields, we have gathered the views of training providers on the content and delivery mode of the sensitivity training and a psychologist with experience in designing and teaching related training programmes is developing the training resources. For the review of support services for sexual minorities, we are now gathering views from users and providers of support services to inform the examination of the effectiveness and room for improvement of existing services.

12. We are also conducting a further study on the experience of other jurisdictions in tackling discrimination through legislative and non-legislative measures. The findings of the study would form the basis for future public consultation. Our progress on the related work will be reported to the CA Panel in due course.

#### EOC and PCPD

13. The statutory function of the EOC is to be responsible for the implementation of the four anti-discrimination ordinances<sup>1</sup>. The total

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<sup>1</sup> The four anti-discrimination ordinances include Sex Discrimination Ordinance (Cap.480), Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap.487), Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (Cap.527) and Race Discrimination Ordinance (Cap.602)

subvention for the EOC in 2017-18 is \$115.5 million. The statutory function of the PCPD confines to enforcing the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance. In 2017-18, we will allocate \$76.1 million to the PCPD.

14. On 20 March, we consulted the CA Panel on the 9 prioritised recommendations proposed by the EOC in its Discrimination Law Review. CA Panel generally agreed that the 9 prioritised recommendations including the one on introducing express provisions prohibiting discrimination on the grounds of breastfeeding, and protection from direct discrimination by perception or imputation that a person is of a particular racial group, etc., should be taken forward. Among other things, CA Panel also expressed views that the recommendation concerning the amendment to the Disability Discrimination Ordinance for introducing provision on being accompanied by an assistance animal (i.e. a guide dog) as a category of protection from discrimination should be covered as well. After the meeting, we have conveyed this suggestion to the Labour and Welfare Bureau for their consideration. We will follow up as soon as possible and take forward the related legislative preparatory work for the various recommendations.

#### Promotion of Children's Rights

15. For promotion of children's rights, we have earmarked about \$1.08 million (excluding manpower cost) for implementing programmes for enhancing children's rights promotion in 2017-18. We will continue to promote children's rights through the Children's Rights Education Funding Scheme and the Children's Rights Forum.

#### **(IV) Mainland Affairs and Co-operation with Taiwan**

16. In 2017-18, the financial provision for the Mainland and Taiwan Offices is \$354.6 million, representing an increase of \$75.2 million (26.9%) when compared with the revised estimates for 2016-17, mainly due to the setting up of more liaison units in the Mainland and organization of activities in the Mainland to celebrate the establishment of the HKSAR.

#### Enhancing network of Mainland Offices

17. The SAR Government has established in the eastern, southern, western, northern and central region of the Mainland five offices and eight liaison units. To further enhance the network of our offices in the Mainland and to provide better support for Hong Kong

residents and enterprises in seizing the development opportunities in the Mainland, we will set up three additional liaison units before mid this year. They will be located in Hangzhou City of Zhejiang Province, Nanning City of Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, and Xi'an City of Shaanxi Province respectively. We will also make use of existing resources to equip each Mainland Office with its own Immigration Division to provide more timely support to Hong Kong residents in distress in the Mainland. Besides, we created the post of Head (Cultural Exchange) under the Beijing Office in July last year to enhance promotion of cultural exchange and co-operation between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

#### Organisation of activities in the Mainland to celebrate 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of HKSAR

18. In 2017-18, the five Mainland Offices and the total 11 liaison units under their purview will organise a series of events in their respective service areas to celebrate the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, under the theme of “Together•Progress•Opportunity” to showcase the successful implementation of “one country, two systems”, bring about social cohesion and unity, build up confidence, and seize opportunities.

#### National 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan

19. Promulgated in March last year, the Outline of the National 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan<sup>2</sup> (“13-5 Plan”) reaffirms the strong support of the Central Authorities in maintaining the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and provides more opportunities for the future development of Hong Kong. Our Bureau will continue to provide support to the Steering Committee on Co-operation with the Mainland, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, to co-ordinate various policy bureaux and departments to actively implement the initiatives related to Hong Kong’s development set out in the 13-5 Plan under the “one country, two systems” principle.

#### Regional Co-operation

##### *Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Big Bay Area*

20. The Dedicated Chapter on Hong Kong and Macao (“the

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<sup>2</sup> The full name is the “Outline of the 13<sup>th</sup> Five-Year Plan for the National Economic and Social Development of the People’s Republic of China”

Dedicated Chapter”) in the 13-5 Plan emphasizes deepening co-operation between the Mainland and Hong Kong/Macao, and for the first time expresses “support for Hong Kong and Macao to play an important role in the Pan-Pearl River Delta Region co-operation, and the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Big Bay Area and major inter-provincial/regional co-operation platforms.” The SAR Government is now following the strategic direction of the Dedicated Chapter and the principle of “one country, two systems” to jointly participate in the planning of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Big Bay Area with the National Development and Reform Commission, as well as the Guangdong Provincial Government and Macao Government. Through active consultation and consensus-building, this can facilitate Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao to leverage their own unique yet complementary advantages.

#### *Co-operation with the Guangdong Province*

21. The Guangdong Province has all along been the most important partner of Hong Kong in terms of regional co-operation. At the 22nd Working Meeting of Hong Kong/ Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference held on 23 February this year, both sides formulated the 2017 Work Plan of Hong Kong/ Guangdong Co-operation to foster collaboration in a number of areas, including the Belt and Road Initiative, innovation and technology, youth, environmental protection, financial services, professional services, key co-operation regions, education, tourism, etc.

#### *Qianhai, Nansha and Hengqin*

22. The Dedicated Chapter expresses support in “expediting development of co-operation platforms among Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao, such as Qianhai, Nansha and Hengqin”. The SAR Government strongly supports the future development of the three areas, which is also one of the cooperation items under the Work Plan of the Hong Kong/ Guangdong Co-operation. Under the principle of “one country, two systems”, the SAR Government will continue to enhance exchanges and co-operation with the Guangdong Provincial Government, as well as the Guangzhou, Shenzhen and Zhuhai Municipal Governments, with a view to enhancing the partnership with the Guangdong Province and the three areas. We will also work together to expedite the development of the three areas as co-operation platforms among Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao, thereby opening up more room and opportunities for the development of Hong Kong people and enterprises.

### *Co-operation with Macao*

23. At the Hong Kong Macao Co-operation High Level Meeting held in July last year, Hong Kong and Macao agreed to strive for the formal signing of the HK-Macao CEPA within this year. Both sides also agreed to focus on promoting economic co-operation, financial, exhibition and tourism co-operation, cross-boundary infrastructure and youth co-operation.

### *Co-operation with Shenzhen*

24. On Hong Kong/Shenzhen Co-operation, at the Hong Kong/Shenzhen Co-operation Meeting held on 3 January this year, both sides agreed on the key co-operation areas : development of the Hong Kong/Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park at the Lok Ma Chau Loop, innovation and technology, Qianhai development, financial co-operation, professional services and youth co-operation.

### *Co-operation with Pan-Pearl River Delta Region and regional co-operation*

25. We will make use of the existing cooperation platforms to strengthen exchanges and cooperation with the nine provinces of Pan-Pearl River Delta Region, Shanghai Municipality, Beijing Municipality, and Fujian to give full play to Hong Kong's unique advantages of "one country" and "two systems", as well as the extensive and strong international connections to promote the development of the relevant regions/provinces/municipalities and open up business opportunities for Hong Kong industries.

### Development of Hong Kong – Taiwan Relations

26. Hong Kong and Taiwan continue to promote exchanges and co-operation on various fronts such as economic and trade, culture, tourism, social livelihood and city management through the two non-official platforms "Hong Kong-Taiwan Economic and Cultural Cooperation and Promotion Council" and the "Taiwan-Hong Kong Economic and Cultural Co-operation Council". In addition, our "Hong Kong Economic, Trade and Cultural Office" in Taiwan will continue to promote Hong Kong through organising and participating in various activities.

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau  
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