

**Speaking Notes for the Secretary for Security
at the Special Meeting of the Finance Committee on 16 April 2021**

Chairman,

- In the draft Estimates for the new financial year, allocation under Security Bureau (SB)'s responsibility will be \$54.3 billion, accounting for 7.5% of the total government expenditure. The allocation is 5.6% less than last year.

Law and Order

- The Hong Kong National Security Law has considerably suppressed the acts of violent riots, Hong Kong independence and colluding with external forces that prevailed in 2019-20, and restored normal lives for Hong Kong's residents so that they can live without fear and threat to their safety. However, the violent riots have seriously tarnished the law and order and law-abiding awareness of Hong Kong.
- In the four decades or so before the violent riots, Hong Kong has witnessed a steady decrease in its crime figures. The downward trend, however, was disrupted and reversed by the violent riots. The number of crimes increased by 9% in 2019 and continued to increase by 7% in 2020. Crimes recording more significant increase include deception cases, blackmail, as well as vice, gambling activities, and drug-related offences (including serious drug, serious gambling and organised vice offences). We will therefore closely monitor the crime trend and take strict enforcement actions. We will also have to rebuild the law-abiding awareness through promotion and education, and inform the public about common criminal tactics so that they will be more vigilant. In this regard, the Government, the Police and different sectors in the society will have to work together to rebuild positive values and the law-abiding awareness of the society.
- While order in the community has broadly resumed, security risks

still prevail. We need to be more vigilant particularly in the following areas:

- (a) people who endanger national security still leverage on the media, arts and culture, and publications etc. to continue to disseminate the idea of Hong Kong independence, and shamelessly fabricate heroic stories for those violating the law;
- (b) there are risks of local terrorism lurking in the community, and we have to beware of self-radicalised people pursuing “lone wolf” terrorist acts;
- (c) agents of foreign countries are still present and external forces are still exploiting every opportunity to interfere and damage the city.

We need to stay vigilant and equip ourselves with the ability to deal with contingencies any time.

Control Points

- The HKSAR Government will continue to closely collaborate with the Shenzhen Municipal Government to enhance the clearance capability of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen land boundary control points, which help facilitate the realisation of the “East in East out, West in West out” planning strategy. These measures include –
 - (a) The opening of the cargo clearance facilities of the Liantang Port/Heung Yuen Wai Boundary Control Point in August 2020; and
 - (b) Provision of round-the-clock cargo clearance service at the Shenzhen Bay Port starting from December 2020.
- Regarding the redevelopment of Huanggang Port Control Point and the implementation of co-location arrangement, on 24 March 2021 I moved a government motion at the Legislative Council (LegCo) supported by all attending Members for us to press ahead the corresponding work in collaboration with the Shenzhen Municipal Government . I would like to express my gratitude for your support.

Non-refoulement Claims

- Various measures of handling non-refoulement claims have achieved positive progress. The number of non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants has dropped by over 80% from the peak, and the number of new non-refoulement claims received has also dropped by about 80%. The number of appeals pending the Torture Claims Appeal Board's (TCAB) handling has also dropped significantly to around 1 600, which are expected to be completed within this year the soonest.
- To handle non-refoulement claims more effectively, we have earlier introduced the Immigration (Amendment) Bill 2020 (the Bill) with a view to further strengthening our measures and the legal basis. The Bills Committee has largely completed the scrutiny. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to the Bills Committee. Taking into account the Bills Committee's comments, we will introduce committee stage amendments to the Bill, including further specifying whether the person concerned is likely to pose a security risk to the community should be taken into consideration when assessing whether the detention period is reasonable and lawful. Subject to the agreement of the House Committee, we will resume 2nd Reading on 28 April this year.

Enhancing Fire Safety in Old Buildings

- In respect of enhancing fire safety in old buildings, the Government agrees that there is a need to consider empowering the Fire Services Department and the Buildings Department to carry out fire safety improvement works for owners of old buildings who are incapable of complying with the requirements of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance, and to recover the costs incurred from such owners upon completion of the works. SB will make reference to a similar mechanism under the prevailing Buildings Ordinance and take into account the experience of the Buildings Department in the work of

building safety, and will do our best to resolve the legal and enforcement issues involved. It is expected that a public consultation will be launched in the second half of 2021 in order to formulate a suitable mechanism and amend the legislation to empower relevant departments to carry out the related work.

Anti-epidemic Work taken up by the Disciplined and Auxiliary Services

- In addition to the work mentioned above, the disciplined services and the two auxiliary forces have actively participated in the work of the Government in fighting the epidemic. In early days, they mainly assisted in increasing masks production in correctional institutions, setting up the quarantine centres, and assisting Hong Kong people stranded overseas to return home. Recently, we have been providing assistance in strengthening contact tracing, and stepping up enforcement actions against contravention of the Prevention and Control of Disease Ordinance. At the peak, over 3 000 officers from the disciplined services involved in the various anti-epidemic operations on a daily basis, especially during the time of the “restriction-testing declarations” operation.
- I would like to take this opportunity to express my heartfelt gratitude to the colleagues from the disciplined and auxiliary services for their hard work.

Chairman, the representatives from Departments and I are pleased to answer questions from Members.

Thank you, Chairman.

Security Bureau
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