

# **立法會**

## ***Legislative Council***

LC Paper No. CB(2)441/20-21

(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/SE

### **Panel on Security**

#### **Minutes of meeting**

**held on Tuesday, 3 November 2020, at 2:30 pm  
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**

#### **Members present**

: Hon CHAN Hak-kan, BBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP  
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP  
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Kin-por, GBS, JP  
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP  
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP  
Hon Claudia MO  
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS  
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming, SBS, JP  
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH  
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS  
Hon MA Fung-kwok, GBS, JP  
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP  
Hon CHAN Han-pan, BBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP  
Hon Kenneth LEUNG  
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki  
Hon Dennis KWOK Wing-hang  
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung  
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan  
Hon IP Kin-yuen

Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
Hon Alvin YEUNG  
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin  
Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP  
Hon LAM Cheuk-ting  
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding  
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP  
Hon SHIU Ka-chun  
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH  
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-kwan, JP  
Hon HUI Chi-fung  
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai  
Hon KWONG Chun-yu  
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS, JP

**Member  
absent** : Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan

[According to the announcement made by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government on 11 November 2020 pursuant to the Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Qualification of the Members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Kenneth LEUNG, KWOK Ka-ki, Dennis KWOK Wing-hang and Alvin YEUNG were disqualified from being a member of Legislative Council on 30 July 2020.]

**Public Officers  
attending** : Item VI

Mr Sonny AU Chi-kwong, PDSM, PMSM, JP  
Under Secretary for Security

Mrs Vicki KWOK WONG Wing-ki, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Security 2

Mr LEUNG Kwun-hong, FSDSM  
Assistant Director (Licensing & Certification)  
Fire Services Department

Mr LAM Kin-kwan  
Division Officer (Policy) 2  
Fire Services Department

Dr Raymond CHEUNG Wai-man, JP  
Deputy Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office (Mainland)  
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Ms Jessie KWONG Shun-man  
Chief Geotechnical Engineer / Mines also Superintendent  
of Mines  
Civil Engineering and Development Department

Item VII

Mr Sonny AU Chi-kwong, PDSM, PMSM, JP  
Under Secretary for Security

Mr YEUNG Yan-kin  
Deputy Director of Fire Services

Miss Rebecca CHEUNG Pui-ling  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Security B

Mr CHAN Derek Armstrong  
Deputy Chief Fire Officer (Headquarters)  
Fire Services Department

Item VIII

Mr Sonny AU Chi-kwong, PDSM, PMSM, JP  
Under Secretary for Security

Mr Kevin LAI Ming-fai  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Narcotics) 1  
Security Bureau

Ms Louise HO Pui-shan, CMSM  
Deputy Commissioner of Customs & Excise  
Customs and Excise Department

Mr Ellis LAI Lau-pak, CMSM  
Assistant Commissioner (Administration and Human  
Resource Development)  
Customs and Excise Department

<b>Clerk in attendance</b>	: Miss Betty MA Chief Council Secretary (2) 1
<b>Staff in attendance</b>	: Mr Timothy TSO Senior Assistant Legal Adviser 1
	Ms Rita LAI Senior Council Secretary (2) 1
	Ms Gloria TSANG Senior Council Secretary (2) 7
	Ms Priscilla LAU Council Secretary (2) 1
	Ms Kiwi NG Legislative Assistant (2) 1
	Miss Lulu YEUNG Clerical Assistant (2) 1

---

Action

**I. Election of Deputy Chairman**  
(Appendices III and IV to LC Paper No. CB(2)9/20-21)

Election of Deputy Chairman

The Chairman called for nominations for the deputy chairmanship of the Panel. Mr James TO was nominated by Ms Claudia MO and the nomination was seconded by Mr Kenneth LEUNG. Mr James TO accepted the nomination. The Chairman called for other nominations.

2. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan was nominated by Mr CHAN Chun-ying and the nomination was seconded by Mr Christopher CHEUNG. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan accepted the nomination. The Chairman called for other nominations.

3. As there was no other nomination, the Chairman announced a vote by secret ballot. The result of the vote was that 17 members voted for Mr James TO and 24 members voted for Ms YUNG Hoi-yan. The Chairman declared Ms YUNG Hoi-yan elected as the Deputy Chairman of the Panel for the 2020-2021 session.

Action

**II. Application for late membership**  
(LC Paper No. CB(2)42/20-21(01))

4. Members accepted the application for late membership from Mr WONG Ting-kwong in accordance with Rule 23 of the House Rules.

**III. Information papers issued since the last meeting**  
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)28/20-21(01), CB(2)75/20-21(01), CB(2)78/20-21(01), CB(2)97/20-21(01) and (02) and CB(2)128/20-21(01))

5. Members noted that the following papers listed in the agenda had been issued since the last meeting:

- (a) letter dated 13 October 2020 from Mr Tony TSE;
- (b) letter dated 21 October 2020 from Ms Elizabeth QUAT;
- (c) letter dated 19 October 2020 from Mr Kenneth LAU;
- (d) letter dated 16 October 2020 from Mr HUI Chi-fung and the Clerk's reply; and
- (e) letter dated 28 October 2020 from Dr Fernando CHEUNG.

6. The Chairman said that apart from the above letters, Dr Helena WONG had just sent in a letter to the Panel proposing items for discussion by the Panel in the 2020-2021 session.

*(Post-meeting note: The letter from Dr Helena WONG was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)149/20-21(1) on 4 November 2020.)*

7. Dr Helena WONG said that in addition to the issues raised in her letter, she was concerned about the enforcement actions relating to the National Security Law. The Chairman advised that members who wish to propose items for discussion in the 2020-2021 session were requested to provide in writing. He would then follow up the issues raised by members when he and the Deputy Chairman discussed the work plan of the Panel with the Secretary for Security.

Action

**IV. Date of next meeting and items for discussion**  
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)105/20-21(01) and (02))

Regular meeting in December 2020

8. Members agreed that the following items would be discussed at the next regular meeting on 1 December 2020 at 2:30 pm:

- (a) Briefings by the Secretary for Security and the Commissioner, Independent Commission Against Corruption on the Chief Executive's 2020 Policy Address; and
- (b) Proposed upgrading of one post of Principal Immigration Officer to the rank of Senior Principal Immigration Officer in the Immigration Department to strengthen the capability in respect of the new enforcement duties.

9. The Chairman added that the agenda item in paragraph 8(a) above would be subject to the delivery of the Policy Address by the Chief Executive at the Legislative Council ("LegCo") in November 2020.

**V. Proposal to appoint a subcommittee on labour exploitation, illicit activities by employment agencies, and human trafficking under the Panel**  
(LC Paper No. CB(2)105/20-21(03))

10. Members noted a joint letter from Mr Kenneth LEUNG and Mr Dennis KWOK proposing the appointment of a subcommittee on labour exploitation, illicit activities by employment agencies, and human trafficking under the Panel ("the proposal").

11. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Kenneth LEUNG briefed members on the need for and the objective of the proposal, as detailed in the joint letter provided to the Panel.

12. Members supported the proposal. The Chairman said that the House Committee would soon deliberate on the priority for the activation of various policy subcommittees after taking into account how the LegCo Secretariat's resources were allocated to the servicing of these committees.

Action

**VI. Proposal to revamp the Dangerous Goods (General) Regulations and to amend the Dangerous Goods (Application and Exemption) Regulation 2012**

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)105/20-21(04) and (05))

13. Under Secretary for Security ("US for S") briefed members on the need for the proposal to revamp the Dangerous Goods (General) Regulations (Cap. 295B) ("DG(G)R") and to amend the Dangerous Goods (Application and Exemption) Regulation 2012 (Cap. 295E) ("DG(A&E)R 2012") under the Dangerous Goods Ordinance (Cap. 295) ("DGO"). With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Assistant Director (Licensing & Certification), Fire Services Department ("AD(L&C)/FSD") briefed members on the key points of the legislative amendment proposal.

14. Members noted an information note entitled "Proposal to revamp the Dangerous Goods (General) Regulations and to amend the Dangerous Goods (Application and Exemption) Regulation 2012" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

International standards in the regulation of dangerous goods

15. Noting that DGO was first enacted in 1956 and the relevant international system kept updating from time to time, Mr CHAN Chun-ying expressed concern about how the Administration would keep the local regulatory system in line with the latest international standards. US for S explained that to align with the international standards, DGO and its subsidiary legislation were reviewed in 2002 and 2012 respectively. However, the current legislative amendment proposal was more complicated in the context that more laboratory testings had to be conducted and various stakeholders consulted. It took time to consolidate different views before finalizing the legislative amendments. US for S took the opportunity to appeal to members' support for the Government's legislative proposal.

16. With a view to updating the existing regulatory system of dangerous goods ("DG") by aligning it with the international standards, and facilitating the operations of the trade and daily use of DG by the public, Ms Elizabeth QUAT expressed support for the legislative amendment proposal. Mr POON Siu-ping cited the Beirut explosion incident in August 2020 and said that the introduction of the legislative proposal to enhance the safety of conveyance and storage of DG was essential. He expressed concern as to whether the legislative

Action

amendment proposal would be aligned with the commonly adopted international standards.

17. AD(L&C)/FSD responded that the Government would make reference to standards set by international organizations in the International Maritime Dangerous Goods ("IMDG") Code, the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road and the International Air Transport Association Dangerous Goods Regulations.

Key points of the legislative amendment proposal

18. Mr CHAN Chun-ying expressed concern about the introduction of the concept of "limited quantity" in the legislative amendment proposal and the storage quantity of DG in consumer packs, which were commonly found in daily use by members of the public. Mr Frankie YICK expressed concern about the maximum quantity of alcohol-based hand rub to be stored in a retail shop.

19. AD(L&C)/FSD advised that "limited quantity" was an international concept adopted to indicate the size of a package that was small enough to be exempted from DG marking and labelling requirements. There was no separate exempt quantity for DG in consumer packs under the existing DGO. A consultancy study commissioned by the Government had found that relevant exempt quantity could be relaxed. By taking the international standards, risk assessment results and views collected in public consultations and from relevant trades into consideration, the exempt quantity for DG in consumer packs were proposed to be 1 000 litres in an uninhabited compartment and 5 000 litres in an industrial warehouse respectively. In this connection, FSD had discussed the matter with the Wholesale and Retail Task Force of the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee.

20. In view of the epidemic situation of Coronavirus Diseases 2019, Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether the mass manufacturing of alcohol-based hand rub by some non-profit organizations would be regarded as a reasonable excuse under the legislative amendment proposal. AD(L&C)/FSD said that by taking all relevant factors into account, the exempt quantity for DG in consumer packs were proposed to be 1 000 litres in an uninhabited compartment.



Action

21. Mr CHAN Chun-ying and Mr Frankie YICK were concerned about the regulation of rubber tyres of vehicles under DGO. AD(L&C)/FSD said that rubber tyres of vehicles were combustible goods in Category 9A under DGO and, when incinerating, would emit a large quantity of carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide and black smokes. If the total storage quantity was in excess of 50 rubber tyres in premises used for non-industrial purposes, the person in control should send a notice in writing to the Director of Fire Services in respect of the details of storage within 48 hours. FSD would follow up and issue fire safety directions as appropriate. As long as relevant fire safety directions were complied with, permission would be given to store over 50 rubber tyres in premises used for non-industrial purposes. For premises used for industrial purposes, FSD should be notified if the storage quantity was in excess of 500 rubber tyres. In the last 12 months, FSD handled a total of 10 cases in respect of the storage of Category 9A DG.

22. Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned about the impact of the legislative amendment proposal on DG vehicles and relevant practitioners. AD(L&C)/FSD said that the current proposed amendments included stepping up the control on conveyance of DG by requiring the display of the vehicle identification disc on the windscreen of all licensed DG vehicles.

23. Given that DGO was first enacted in 1950s, Mr Holden CHOW considered that the legislative amendment proposal understandable. He expressed concern as to whether it was adequate to display the vehicle identification disc on the windscreen of all licensed DG vehicles, and whether DG vehicles would be regulated to follow specific routes under the current legislative amendment proposal. AD(L&C)/FSD stressed that FSD was highly concerned about the regulation of DG vehicles. Reference had been made to the international requirements to enhance relevant licensing regimes and safety guidelines, for example, warning signs and placards modelling on international standards were introduced under the current amendment proposal to ensure public safety. As regards any specified routes for DG vehicles, AD(L&C)/FSD said that they were not permitted to enter or remain in the tunnel area under the relevant tunnel regulations.

24. Mr WU Chi-wai asked whether the types of DG would be expanded under the current legislative amendment proposal. AD(L&C)/FSD said that under the existing DGO, around 1 100 types of DG were classified into 10 categories. In order to align the existing

Action

regulatory system of DG with international standards, the list of DG would be expanded to about 2 300 types under nine classes. As the IMDG Code would be updated every two years, the Government would propose the necessary amendments to DGO and its subsidiary legislation when needed.

Public consultation

25. Mr SHIU Ka-fai thanked the Security Bureau ("SB") and FSD for their continuous communication and consultation with relevant trades on the proposed legislative amendments. He said that he and the relevant trades were generally supportive of the legislative amendment proposal. He asked how the Administration would facilitate relevant stakeholders to adapt to and comply with the new regulations during the grace period.

26. US for S responded that the Government had consulted relevant trades including the retail industry and the Wholesale and Retail Task Force of the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee on the proposed legislative amendments and they generally expressed support for the proposal. The Government had also conducted a risk assessment and hopefully a balance would be struck between the fire safety and business facilitation. AD(L&C)/FSD added that after the passage of the legislative proposal, a grace period of 24 months would be given for the trades and the public to adapt to the new regulations. Meanwhile, the Government would maintain close liaison with stakeholders and draw up practical guidelines and code of practice to facilitate their compliance with the new regulations. Relevant publicity work would be launched to facilitate public understanding on the new regulations.

27. Mr POON Siu-ping asked whether the grace period could be shortened so as to enhance DG regulations and public safety in a more efficient manner. AD(L&C)/FSD said that FSD had maintained close liaison with relevant trades over the past several years, and noted that a majority of the stakeholders would prefer a longer grace period. Nevertheless, it was stressed that FSD would closely monitor the international DG regulations and propose further updates when necessary.

28. Mr WU Chi-wai was concerned about the relatively short scrutiny period under the negative vetting procedure for amending the subsidiary legislation under DGO in view of the significant increase in the number of types of DG. US for S said that when the Dangerous Goods (Application and Exemption) Regulation 2012 (Cap. 295E) and the Dangerous Goods (Shipping) Regulation 2012 (Cap. 295F) were

Action

introduced into LegCo in 2012, they were also scrutinized under the negative vetting procedure in which most of the new types of DG had already been introduced. That said, the Government would continue listening to the views from relevant trades and the public, and make necessary adjustments to the legislative amendment proposal. To allow more time for scrutinizing the subsidiary legislation upon introduction to LegCo next year, Mr WU suggested the Administration to consider the positive vetting procedure.

Other issues

29. Dr Helena WONG expressed grave concern about the use and regulation of DG, including the use of tear gas and other chemicals during Police's dispersal operations. Noting that the ingredients in tear gas and relevant chemicals would be disclosed in some other countries, she requested the Administration to disclose relevant ingredients and user guidelines, and regulate such chemicals under DGO. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that some war game enthusiasts were worried that they would be prosecuted of carrying arms or ammunition or imitation firearm upon the passage of the legislative amendment proposal.

30. US for S responded that the current legislative amendment proposal mainly sought to facilitate the operations of the trade and the daily use of DG by the public. The issues of concern mentioned by Dr WONG and Dr CHEUNG were regulated by the Firearms and Ammunition Ordinance (Cap. 238), which had no direct relevance to this amendment exercise.

31. Ms Elizabeth QUAT was concerned about the making and illegal use of petrol bombs and explosives by "local terrorists" and asked about the Administration's strategy in tackling it. She was also concerned about the storage requirement of explosives and illegal use of flammable gases. US for S said that although the amendment proposal sought to facilitate the trade and the public, the licensing regime was highly strict and would not compromise safety. The existing regulatory framework on fuel trading and activities was considered to be effective. Moreover, FSD had been strictly combatting illegal fuel activities and regulating the trade of flammable goods. A task force was also set up under FSD to conduct regular inspections and make appropriate prosecutions. There were around 1 000 inspections and 100 prosecutions every year. Deputy Head of Geotechnical Engineering Office (Mainland), Civil Engineering and Development Department added that explosives which were classified under the proposed Class 1 DG were mainly used in blasting

Action

operations and stored in Government Explosives Depots. Relevant safety, conveyance and storage requirements were strict.

**VII. Proposed creation of one permanent post of Chief Fire Officer in the Fire Services Department**  
(LC Paper No. CB(2)105/20-21(06))

32. US for S briefed members on the proposal to create a permanent Chief Fire Officer ("CFO") post in FSD to strengthen the supervision, direction and support to the operation in the New Territories Command ("NT Command").

Proposed creation of the post of Chief Fire Officer and other resources

33. Ms Elizabeth QUAT said that in the past three years, nearly 40% of fire and special service incidents and about 70% of major fire incidents occurred within the boundary of NT Command. With a view to coping with the growing population and the building of new infrastructures in the New Territories, she expressed support for the Administration's proposal and sought information on the plan to upgrade the facilities and equipment in relevant fire stations and ambulance depots. Deputy Director of Fire Services ("DD of FS") responded that FSD had been monitoring the demand for emergency services in NT Command and assessing the need for additional fire stations and ambulance depots based on its overall population density, intensity of development, building use, height index and the risks associated with these factors. New fire stations and ambulance depots were planned to be set up in NT Command, including one under planning at the Lok Ma Chau Loop which was subject to approval. Ms QUAT called on FSD to keep an eye on the situation and seek additional resources as appropriate.

34. In view of the continuous development of the New Territories, Mr YIU Si-wing expressed support for the Administration's proposal. With the commissioning of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge in 2018 and the development of the Three-Runway-System ("3RS") of the Hong Kong International Airport, he considered that the New Territories South Division would face great challenges in the planning and management of operational resources. Hence, Mr YIU was concerned about the duties and responsibilities of the proposed CFO post. US for S said that SB fully supported FSD's proposals, which were subject to approval, for additional fire stations, fire appliances and personnel under the 3RS

Action

project. DD of FS added that the three additional fire stations under the 3RS project would be supported by sufficient fire personnel and fire appliances equipped with multiple functions suitable for use in the airport, all of which were subject to approval. Given the complexity of the 3RS project which involved considerable amount of new fire engineering designs, relevant training would be provided to frontline staff to facilitate them to carry out their duties. For example, station officers and firemen stationing at the airport were required to undergo a six-week and three-week training respectively. The officer assuming the proposed CFO post should possess relevant knowledge as well.

35. Noting that the proposed CFO post would be responsible for overseeing New Territories South and the existing CFO post would be responsible for overseeing New Territories North upon creation of the new post, Mr WU Chi-wai was concerned about FSD's directorate support in other New Territories regions in future, such as Northeast part of the New Territories. He further enquired about the justifications of having six fire stations located at the Hong Kong International Airport region, which appeared to be disproportionate. DD of FS explained that new fire stations had been planned to be set up in some new development areas in the New Territories and the coverage of geographical divisions would be reviewed, if necessary, based on a number of factors. To ensure that aircraft rescue and firefighting services could be delivered in line with the International Standards and Recommended Practices of the International Civil Aviation Organization subsequent to the expansion of Hong Kong International Airport into a 3RS, a total of four fire stations should be required inside the airport restricted area. In addition, there should be two fire stations located outside the restricted area according to FSD's performance pledge that building fire calls would be responded to within six minutes in built-up areas. Dr Fernando CHEUNG asked whether the development of "Lantau Tomorrow" was one of the considerations to create the proposed CFO post. US for S said that the justifications of creating the post had been fully reflected in the Administration's paper.

36. Given the continuous development of the New Territories and the heavy workload of NT Command, Mr POON Siu-ping expressed support for the Administration's proposal to create a permanent CFO post in FSD to strengthen the supervision, direction and support to the operation in NT Command. He was concerned about the estimated timeline of the post creation. US for S said that the proposed CFO post was expected to be created before the implementation of the 3RS project. If it could not be

Action

created by then, in the interim, FSD would, based on the priority of tasks, deploy manpower as appropriate and optimize the use of resources to cope with the necessary work. If necessary, under the existing rigorous system, creation of a supernumerary post for a period not exceeding six months for temporary purposes might be considered with full justification and in compliance with a number of conditions.

Other issues

37. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern about the communication and cooperation between FSD and Police when discharging their duties on site. DD of FS said that regular meetings would be arranged between representatives of FSD and Police, with a view to reviewing and improving the performance of joint actions. Joint training with Police would be conducted on a regular basis as well.

38. Mr Frankie YICK asked about the number of hill fires caused by human negligence in the New Territories regions, as well as FSD's manpower required for relevant fire fighting and measures to prevent hill fires. DD of FS said that in the past three years, there were 2 428 cases of hill fire reported in NT Command, while 197 and 271 cases were respectively received by Hong Kong and Kowloon Command. FSD would strategically mobilize colleagues from other Commands on a need basis. FSD would also keep in touch with New Territories villages to promote awareness of fire safety. Besides, Fire Safety Ambassadors would help disseminate fire protection messages in hill fire black spots on some special occasions. Fire appliances would be put on standby as well. In addition, FSD's Community Emergency Preparedness Division would disseminate educational messages regarding the handling of hill fires on social media.

39. The Chairman concluded that members had no objection to the Administration's proposal.

**VIII. Rationalization of Directorate Support for the Administration and Human Resource Development Branch in the Customs and Excise Department**  
(LC Paper No. CB(2)105/20-21(07))

40. US for S briefed members on the proposal to rationalize the directorate support for the Administration and Human Resources Development Branch ("AD Branch") in the Customs and Excise

Action

Department ("C&ED") by creating one permanent Assistant Commissioner of Customs and Excise ("AC of C&E") post, to be offset by deleting one permanent Customs Civil Secretary ("CCS") to ensure continued provision of pertinent professional support for C&ED to cope with the increasingly complex duties and heavy workload.

41. Noting that the range of duties performed by C&ED had become more diversified and sophisticated, Ms YUNG Hoi-yan expressed concern about the manpower support in AD Branch, in particular the duties of overseeing matters relating to formulation and review of legislation, as well as prosecution of Customs offence-related cases to be discharged by the proposed AC of C&E post. Deputy Commissioner of Customs & Excise ("DC of C&E") said that the proposed AC of C&E post would head the AD Branch, which was responsible for two major functions, including providing administrative support, such as general administration and financial management; as well as support for the Customs and Excise service, including amongst others the prosecution of Customs offence-related cases and review of orders and procedures. Currently, there were around 480 staff members working in the AD Branch, and C&ED was responsible for the enforcement of some 60 pieces of legislation. C&ED was mindful to secure adequate manpower to cope with the increasing workload, and would keep reviewing its organizational structure and establishment, flexibly deploy its manpower and seek extra resources where necessary.

42. Ms Elizabeth QUAT and Mr Tony TSE expressed support for the proposal to rationalize the directorate support for AD Branch in C&ED. They called on other government departments to model on C&ED to use public money in a more prudent manner. Mr TSE further considered that C&ED's proposal was pragmatic in a way that Customs professional knowledge and experience were honoured. Given the increasing workload and public expectation in recent years, in particular on the enforcement work against false trade descriptions and unfair trade practices, as well as anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing, Ms QUAT was concerned about the adequacy of manpower support in C&ED. DC of C&E said that on the protection of consumers, C&ED had been, closely monitoring business practices and sought to flexibly deploy manpower resources, such as setting up special teams to speed up complaints investigation where necessary. As regards anti-money laundering, C&ED oversaw money service operators and enforced the declaration/disclosure system for large quantities of cash, as well as worked closely with the Police to combat and investigate money

Action

laundrying cases. For manpower resources, she reiterated that C&ED would review its needs and requirements from time to time.

43. Mr POON Siu-ping expressed support in principle for the Administration's proposal to create the AC of C&E post, to be offset by deleting one permanent CCS. He enquired if the functions in relation to staff recruitment and training of the AD Branch of C&ED would overlap with those of the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB"). DC of C&E explained that the AD Branch was responsible for the recruitment and training specific to the grade of Customs Inspectors and Customs Officers, and there was division of duties with CSB.

44. While expressing support for C&ED's work, Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that C&ED had been involved with political tasks since the "anti-extradition amendment bill" incidents. He was concerned that the proposed AC of C&E post would be responsible for executing political tasks and relevant law enforcement work. US for S responded that C&ED carried out its enforcement and other duties in strict accordance with the law. DC of C&E further stressed that C&ED would handle all cases related to law enforcement fairly and according to the law, and would seek advice from the Department of Justice where necessary.

45. The Chairman concluded that members had no objection to the Administration's proposal.

46. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:26 pm.