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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1993

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1993

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CIVIL SERVICE WILL REMAIN POLITICALLY NEUTRAL

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, REITERATED TODAY (TUESDAY) THAT THE HONG KONG CIVIL SERVICE, BEING ONE OF THE BEST IN THE WORLD, IS POLITICALLY NEUTRAL AND WILL REMAIN POLITICALLY NEUTRAL.

SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA AFTER THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING, MR PATTEN SAID EXCO MEMBERS WERE SURPRISED OF THE ALLEGATIONS WHICH HAD BEEN MADE OVER THE WEEKEND ABOUT THE POLITICISATION OF THE CIVIL SERVICE.

HE NOTED THAT THESE ALLEGATIONS APPEARED TO BE BASED ON TWO RATHER SURPRISING PROPOSITIONS.

"FIRST OF ALL, THERE WAS AN ARGUMENT THAT WE WERE NOW SUDDENLY TAKING A DECISION TO ALLOW CIVIL SERVANTS TO TAKE PART IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES AND A DOCUMENT WAS CITED TO THAT EFFECT.

"THE TRUTH OF THE MATTER IS THAT THE DOCUMENT WHICH WAS ATTACKED WAS ISSUED IN OCTOBER 1990 BEFORE THE 1991 ELECTIONS AS PUBLIC GUIDANCE, AGREED BY THE EXCO, FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE.

"IF IT WAS ALL RIGHT FOR THE 1991 LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ELECTIONS, WHY IS IT SUDDENLY BEING ATTACKED TODAY.

"SECONDLY, THERE IS A SUGGESTION THAT SOMEHOW IT WOULD BE CURIOUS FOR CIVIL SERVANTS TO VOTE IN FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY SEATS.

"AGAIN THE TRUTH IS THAT UNDER PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS, EIGHT OF THE 21 FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES HAVE CIVIL SERVANTS VOTING IN THEM. IN TWO CASES, MORE THAN 50 PER CENT OF THOSE ENTITLED TO VOTE IN THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES CONCERNED, MORE THAN 50 PER CENT ARE CIVIL SERVANTS.

"SO AGAIN, THERE'S NOT SOME NEW PRINCIPLE BEING BREACHED," THE GOVERNOR SAID.

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CIVIL SERVANTS' PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS

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THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT IS ISSUED IN RESPONSE TO MEDIA INQUIRIES CONCERNING CIVIL SERVANTS' PARTICIPATION IN POLITICS:

THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR STUART HARBINSON, SAID TODAY (TUESDAY) THAT CIVIL SERVANTS HAD BEEN ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS IN HONG KONG WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE NEUTRALITY OF THE CIVIL SERVICE.

HE SAID THE GUIDELINES FOR CIVIL SERVANTS WISHING TO JOIN POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS AND PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES WERE WELL UNDERSTOOD IN THE SERVICE, AND WERE GOVERNED BY A CIRCULAR ISSUED BY THE CIVIL SERVICE BRANCH IN OCTOBER 1990.

/THE BASIC

THE BASIC PRINCIPLE UNDERLYING THE CIRCULAR WAS THAT THE CIVIL SERVICE SHOULD REMAIN POLITICALLY NEUTRAL IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT GOVERNMENT BUSINESS WAS, AND WAS SEEN TO BE, CONDUCTED IMPARTIALLY.

"THERE IS NO EVIDENCE TO SUGGEST THAT THE INVOLVEMENT OF CIVIL SERVANTS IN POLITICS HAS LED TO ANY COMPROMISE WITH THIS FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF CIVIL SERVICE POLITICAL NEUTRALITY," MR HARBINSON SAID.

HE NOTED THAT UNDER THE ELECTORAL PROVISIONS ORDINANCE, CIVIL SERVANTS WERE DISQUALIFIED FROM SEEKING ELECTION TO DISTRICT BOARDS, THE URBAN AND REGIONAL COUNCILS, AND THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

ADDITIONALLY, UNDER CIVIL SERVICE GUIDELINES, ALL DIRECTORATE OFFICERS, ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS AND INFORMATION OFFICERS WERE PROHIBITED FROM TAKING PART IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. THIS WAS BECAUSE THE NATURE OF THEIR JOBS MIGHT MAKE THEM SUSCEPTIBLE TO ACCUSATIONS OF BIAS.

OTHERWISE, CIVIL SERVANTS WERE FREE TO PARTICIPATE IN POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, PROVIDED THIS DID NOT GIVE RISE TO ANY CONFLICT OF INTEREST WITH THEIR OFFICIAL DUTIES.

THESE ACTIVITIES INCLUDED:

- * SUPPORTING OR PARTICIPATING IN POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS, AND CANVASSING OR CAMPAIGNING ON THEIR BEHALF.
- * DISTRIBUTING POLITICAL PUBLICATIONS AND PROMOTING OR ADVOCATING POLITICAL VIEWS OR THE ELECTIONEERING PLATFORM OF ANY CANDIDATE.
- * SPEAKING PUBLICLY ON POLITICAL ISSUES OUTSIDE OF THEIR OFFICIAL DUTIES.

MR HARBINSON ADDED THAT ONE SIGNIFICANT WAY IN WHICH CIVIL SERVANTS HAD PARTICIPATED IN POLITICS IN RECENT YEARS WAS THROUGH THE FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY SEATS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL.

HE NOTED THAT CIVIL SERVANTS ACCOUNTED FOR MORE THAN 12 PER CENT OF THE TOTAL POTENTIAL ELECTORATE IN EIGHT LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCIES.

IN TWO OF THEM - ENGINEERING AND ARCHITECTURAL, SURVEYING AND PLANNING - THEY ACCOUNTED FOR MORE THAN HALF OF THE ELECTORATES. THEY ALSO ACCOUNT FOR 35 PER CENT OF THE ELECTORATE IN THE TWO LABOUR SEATS, 18 PER CENT IN THE LEGAL AND 15 PER CENT IN ACCOUNTANCY.

"AS THE LARGEST SINGLE GROUP OF EMPLOYEES IN HONG KONG, AND THE LARGEST SINGLE GROUP OF TAXPAYERS, WE BELIEVE CIVIL SERVANTS HAVE AS MUCH RIGHT AS ANY OTHER SECTOR OF THE COMMUNITY TO TAKE PART IN THE POLITICAL PROCESSES THAT GOVERN THEIR LIVES AND THOSE OF THEIR FAMILIES, WHILE STILL MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY AND NEUTRALITY OF THE SERVICE," MR HARBINSON ADDED.

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COURT OF APPEAL RULING ON ILLEGAL IMMIGRANT SMUGGLERS

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THE COURT OF APPEAL HELD IN CRIMINAL APPEALS NO. 538 AND 287 OF 1992 TODAY THAT THE DISTRICT COURT WAS JURISDICTIONALLY INCOMPETENT TO HEAR THE PROCEEDINGS AND THAT THE PROCEEDINGS WERE A NULLITY BECAUSE THE GOVERNOR'S CONSENT WAS REQUIRED UNDER SECTION 23C OF CRIMES ORDINANCE, FOR PROSECUTIONS UNDER VII A OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE.

A SPOKESMAN FOR THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT SAID THE CROWN WOULD NOT SEEK TO RESTART PROCEEDINGS AGAINST THE APPELLANTS, LEUNG KWOK-SING AND FOUR OTHERS, AS THEY HAD SERVED ALMOST HALF OF THEIR SENTENCES.

FOR THE OTHER PERSONS CONVICTED UNDER PART VII A OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE WHO ARE ENTITLED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TODAY'S RULING AND WHO HAVE NOT ALREADY LODGED APPEALS, THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT IS CONSIDERING HAVING THEIR CASES REFERRED TO THE COURT OF APPEAL.

THE GOVERNOR'S CONSENT IS NOW ALWAYS GIVEN TO PROSECUTIONS UNDER PART VII A OF THE IMMIGRATION ORDINANCE.

THE COURT OF APPEAL RULED THAT THE GOVERNOR'S APPROVAL MUST BE SOUGHT BEFORE CHARGES WERE LAID AGAINST FOREIGN NATIONALS WHO HAD COMMITTED CRIME IN HONG KONG WATERS.

BASED ON THIS RULING, FIVE MAINLAND CREWMEN WHO HAD BEEN SENTENCED TO JAIL FOR SMUGGLING ILLEGAL IMMIGRANTS WERE RELEASED BY THE COURT OF APPEAL.

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AGREEMENT ON SURRENDER OF FUGITIVE OFFENDERS

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AN AGREEMENT ON THE SURRENDER OF FUGITIVE OFFENDERS THAT WILL REMAIN IN FORCE AFTER 1997 WAS SIGNED BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CANADA TODAY (TUESDAY).

THIS IS THE SECOND AGREEMENT WHICH HONG KONG HAS SIGNED IN THIS IMPORTANT AREA OF CRIMINAL CO-OPERATION.

THE FIRST AGREEMENT, WITH THE NETHERLANDS, WAS SIGNED IN NOVEMBER 1992.

THE AGREEMENT SETS OUT THE CONDITIONS FOR THE SURRENDER OF FUGITIVE OFFENDERS BETWEEN THE TWO PLACES BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER 1997.

SIGNING THE AGREEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WAS SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY. THE COMMISSIONER FOR CANADA, MR JOHN HIGGINBOTHAM, SIGNED ON BEHALF OF CANADA.

MR ASPREY NOTED THAT HONG KONG'S PRESENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE SURRENDER OF FUGITIVE OFFENDERS CAME UNDER A SCHEME WHICH IS ONLY APPLICABLE TO COMMONWEALTH COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES AND WOULD THEREFORE COME TO AN END IN 1997.

/"THAT IS

"THAT IS WHY WE ARE NOW - WITH THE AGREEMENT OF BOTH THE BRITISH AND THE CHINESE GOVERNMENTS - NEGOTIATING A NEW NETWORK OF BILATERAL AGREEMENTS ON THE SURRENDER OF FUGITIVE OFFENDERS.

"THE NEW AGREEMENTS WILL REMAIN IN FORCE BEYOND 1997. THEY WILL HELP TO BOLSTER HONG KONG'S REPUTATION AS A PLACE WHERE THE RULE OF LAW PREVAILS - WHICH WILL IN TURN SUPPORT OUR STATUS AS A MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR TRADE AND FINANCE," MR ASPREY SAID.

THE AGREEMENT WITH CANADA CONTAINS SAFEGUARDS WHICH ARE NORMALLY FOUND IN AGREEMENTS GOVERNING THE SURRENDER OF FUGITIVE OFFENDERS:

- * THE DOUBLE CRIMINALITY RULE: THE ACT IN RESPECT OF WHICH A FUGITIVE'S RETURN IS REQUESTED MUST CONSTITUTE A CRIME IN BOTH JURISDICTIONS AT THE TIME IT WAS COMMITTED;
- * THE PRIMA FACIE RULE: THERE MUST BE A PRIMA FACIE CASE AGAINST A PERSON WHOSE RETURN IS REQUESTED;
- * THE SPECIALITY RULE: A RETURNED FUGITIVE SHOULD NOT BE TRIED FOR OFFENCES OTHER THAN THOSE FOR WHICH HE WAS SURRENDERED; AND
- * THE POLITICAL OFFENCES RULE: RETURN MAY BE REFUSED IF THE OFFENCE IN QUESTION IS A POLITICAL OFFENCE.

THE CHINESE SIDE IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP HAVE BEEN CONSULTED ON THE TEXT AND HAVE INDICATED THAT THEY ARE CONTENT WITH IT.

THE AGREEMENT WILL COME INTO FORCE AFTER THE ENACTMENT IN HONG KONG OF A NEW FUGITIVE OFFENDERS ORDINANCE TO PROVIDE LEGISLATIVE BACKING FOR IT.

IT IS HOPED THAT, FOLLOWING CONSULTATION WITH THE CHINESE SIDE IN THE JOINT LIAISON GROUP, THE BILL WILL BE INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL NEXT YEAR.

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INSURANCE OFFERS PATIENTS GREATER CHOICE

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ONE OF THE WAYS THAT THE GOVERNMENT SEEKS TO PROMOTE GREATER CHOICE FOR PATIENTS IS THROUGH THE DEVELOPMENT OF MEDICAL INSURANCE, THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, SAID TODAY (TUESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE SECOND INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC MEETING OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNAECOLOGISTS, MRS WONG NOTED THAT ONLY ABOUT 14 PER CENT OF HONG KONG PEOPLE HAVE MEDICAL INSURANCE.

"INSURANCE GIVES THESE PEOPLE GREATER CHOICE BY PROVIDING COVERAGE WHICH MAKES TREATMENT BY PRIVATE DOCTORS AND AT PRIVATE HOSPITALS ACCESSIBLE TO THEM," SHE SAID.

MRS WONG ALSO TOUCHED ON THE CO-ORDINATED VOLUNTARY INSURANCE APPROACH WHICH WAS DISCUSSED IN THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT "TOWARDS BETTER HEALTH".

THIS OPTION PROPOSES THAT MEDICAL INSURANCE SCHEMES WHOSE COVERAGE INCLUDES THE PUBLIC SECTOR SHOULD BE SUBJECT TO APPROVAL BY A DESIGNATED BODY.

"BY SCRUTINISING SCHEMES TO ENSURE THAT THEIR COVERAGE WAS ADEQUATE, THE BODY WOULD ENHANCE GREATER TRANSPARENCY AMONG INSURANCE SCHEMES," THE SECRETARY SAID.

"COMPANIES WOULD BE PREVENTED FROM INCLUDING 'FINE PRINT' WHICH COULD DEPRIVE A POLICY-HOLDER OF BENEFITS WHICH ONE WOULD EXPECT TO RECEIVE.

"THIS WOULD PROTECT CONSUMERS' RIGHTS AND ENHANCE THEIR CHOICE OF WHICH POLICY TO BUY, KNOWING THAT ALL WOULD HAVE TO PROVIDE A GIVEN MINIMUM LEVEL OF BENEFITS," MRS WONG SAID.

ANOTHER OPTION DISCUSSED IN THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT IS TO INTRODUCE A CLASS OF ROOM IN PUBLIC HOSPITALS TO FACILITATE BETTER CHOICE.

AT PRESENT, PUBLIC HOSPITALS CONTAIN ESSENTIALLY ONE CLASS OF PUBLIC HOSPITAL BED -- THE GENERAL WARD.

"IF A PATIENT DESIRES GREATER PRIVACY OR MORE PERSONAL COMFORT, THIS IS NOT AVAILABLE AS A CHOICE, EVEN THOUGH SOME MAY BE PREPARED TO PAY SOMETHING EXTRA FOR IT," MRS WONG SAID.

SHE ALSO SPOKE OF DEVELOPING A PATIENT-ORIENTED CULTURE OF SERVICE AS A WAY TO HEED THE NEEDS OF PATIENTS AS INDIVIDUALS.

BOTH THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY AND THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH ARE COMMITTED TO A RANGE OF IMPROVEMENTS TO MAKE PUBLIC SECTOR SERVICES AND FACILITIES MORE USER-FRIENDLY.

MRS WONG SAID: "THIS IS EXEMPLIFIED IN THEIR PROMULGATION OF PATIENTS' CHARTERS WHICH WILL STATE THE STANDARDS OF SERVICE WHICH PATIENTS CAN EXPECT TO RECEIVE.

"THE MEDICAL PROFESSION HAS ALSO RESPONDED TO THE CALL TO BE MORE PATIENT-ORIENTED, WITH THE HONG KONG MEDICAL ASSOCIATION PUBLISHING A PAMPHLET ENTITLED 'PATIENTS' RIGHTS'."

SHE NOTED THAT THIS ADVOCATED THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EVERY DOCTOR TO INFORM THE PATIENT IN GOOD TIME ABOUT HER CONDITION, HER TREATMENT OPTIONS, WHAT MEDICINE WAS BEING PRESCRIBED AND THE FEES TO BE CHARGED, SO THAT SHE COULD MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE ABOUT HOW TO PROCEED.

MRS WONG REITERATED THAT WHILE THE CONSULTATION DOCUMENT HAD OFFERED OPTIONS FOR REFORM TO BRING MANY BENEFITS AND IMPROVEMENTS, IT WAS UP TO THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE TO CHOOSE WHETHER REFORM SHOULD PROCEED AND, IF SO, WHICH OPTIONS SHOULD BE PURSUED AND HOW.

"IT IS NOT UP TO ME AS A HEALTH CARE POLICY-MAKER TO IMPOSE CHANGE AND I HAVE NO PRECONCEIVED PLANS OR VIEWS," SHE STRESSED.

"IF THE COMMUNITY DOES NOT SUPPORT CHANGE, AS THE DOCUMENT EXPLAINS, THIS WILL HAVE UNDESIRABLE CONSEQUENCES FOR THE FUTURE, AS RISING MEDICAL COSTS AND AN AGEING POPULATION IMPOSE INCREASING PRESSURE ON THE HEALTH CARE SYSTEM.

"IT IS THE INDIVIDUAL PATIENT AND THE PATIENT OF THE FUTURE WHO WILL BE DISADVANTAGED," MRS WONG ADDED.

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WORKS START ON SECOND TOWER OF TSING MA
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THE SECOND OF THE GIANT CONCRETE TOWERS OF THE TSING MA BRIDGE HAS STARTED TO RISE UP FROM A MAN-MADE ISLAND OFF MA WAN.

USING A PROCESS CALLED SLIPFORMING, CONSTRUCTION OF THE MA WAN TOWER BEGAN ON AUGUST 28. SO FAR 19 METRES OF THE TOWER BASE HAS BEEN CAST.

SLIPFORMING IS A FASTER METHOD OF CONCRETE CONSTRUCTION THAN MORE CONVENTIONAL METHODS.

CONSTRUCTION IS EXPECTED TO TAKE JUST FOUR MONTHS BY WHICH TIME THE TWO TOWER LEGS WILL REACH THEIR FULL HEIGHT OF 190 METRES. WITH THE ADDITION OF SADDLES AT THE TOP, THE HEIGHT OF THE TOWER WILL BE 206 METRES, THE SAME AS THE ONE ON TSING YI.

SLIPFORMING OF THE OTHER BRIDGE TOWER ON TSING YI STARTED IN EARLY JUNE AND WILL BE COMPLETED LATER THIS MONTH. THE TOWER HAS NOW REACHED A HEIGHT OF OVER 170 METRES.

BY SPRING NEXT YEAR, THE SHAPE OF THE TSING MA BRIDGE, WHICH WILL BE ONE OF THE WORLD'S LONGEST SUSPENSION BRIDGES, WILL START TO EMERGE WHEN WORK BEGINS ON THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE TEMPORARY CATWALKS, FROM WHICH THE MAIN CABLES WILL BE CONSTRUCTED USING A PROCESS KNOWN AS AERIAL WIRE SPINNING.

THE TSING MA BRIDGE, PART OF THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING, IS A KEY ELEMENT OF THE TRANSPORT NETWORK IN THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME LINKING NORTH LANTAU AND THE AIRPORT AT CHEK LAP KOK TO THE REST OF HONG KONG.

FOUNDATION WORK FOR THE MA WAN TOWER STARTED WITH EXCAVATION DOWN TO SOLID SEABED ROCK LEVEL, FOLLOWED BY THE CASTING OF TWO GIANT CAISSONS IN APRIL THIS YEAR.

THE BOTTOM SECTIONS OF THE HUGE CAISSONS WERE SEALED WITH A SPECIAL CONCRETE FOR UNDERWATER USE AND THE ROCK BELOW THE CAISSONS WAS GROUTED.

WATER WAS THEN PUMPED OUT FROM THE CAISSONS, WHICH WERE FILLED IN WITH CONCRETE. THIS WAS FOLLOWED BY THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE REINFORCED CONCRETE TOWER BASES WHICH OCCUPY THE UPPER LEVEL OF THE HOLLOW CAISSONS.

/STEEL TRUSSES

STEEL TRUSSES WEIGHING UP TO 185 TONNES EACH WILL BE INSTALLED TO BRACE THE TWO TOWER LEGS AS CONCRETE WORK PROCEEDS.

THE TRUSSES WILL EVENTUALLY BE ENCASED IN REINFORCED CONCRETE AND PRESTRESSED TO THE TOWER LEGS.

REINFORCED CONCRETE PLINTHS WILL BE CONSTRUCTED ON TOP OF THE TOWER AFTER THE SLIPFORMING OPERATION. STEEL SADDLES WILL THEN BE ERECTED ON THE PLINTHS TO CARRY THE MAIN SUSPENSION BRIDGE CABLES.

THE TSING MA BRIDGE IS BEING CONSTRUCTED UNDER A \$7.14 BILLION CONTRACT AWARDED IN MAY 1992 TO THE ANGLO-JAPANESE CONSTRUCTION JOINT VENTURE.

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HK-U.S. OFFICIALS MEET ON ILLEGAL TEXTILE TRANSHIPMENT

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THE DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TRADE MR TONY MILLER AND OFFICIALS OF THE DEPARTMENT MET REPRESENTATIVES OF THE UNITED STATES LED BY THE CHIEF TEXTILES NEGOTIATOR, MS JENNIFER HILLMAN TODAY (TUESDAY). FOLLOWING IS A JOINT STATEMENT ISSUED AFTER THE MEETING:

"REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG AND THE UNITED STATES MET ON SEPTEMBER 7 TO DISCUSS BILATERAL AND INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION TO CONTROL AND ELIMINATE ILLEGAL TEXTILE TRANSHIPMENT. MUTUAL EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH THIS PROBLEM WERE REVIEWED.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE UNITED STATES RECOGNISES AND APPRECIATES THE EFFORTS CURRENTLY BEING MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG TO ADDRESS THE TEXTILE TRANSHIPMENT PROBLEM.

THE CURRENT STATE OF CO-OPERATION TO DEAL WITH THE TRANSHIPMENT ISSUE, NEW PROCEDURES RECENTLY IMPLEMENTED TO ASSIST IN THESE EFFORTS WERE REVIEWED AND AN ON-SITE VISIT TO BORDER INSPECTION FACILITIES ASSISTED IN THESE EFFORTS.

THE TWO SIDES ACKNOWLEDGE THAT TRANSHIPMENT CONTINUES TO BE A SIGNIFICANT INTERNATIONAL PROBLEM AND BOTH GOVERNMENTS AGREE TO CONTINUE THEIR MUTUAL EFFORTS TO ADDRESS THE TEXTILES TRANSHIPMENT PROBLEM."

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RIVER AND MARINE WATER QUALITY REPORTS PUBLISHED

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THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT (EPD) HAS PUBLISHED TWO REPORTS TO GIVE A COMPREHENSIVE ACCOUNT OF THE RESULTS OF ITS MARINE AND RIVER WATER QUALITY MONITORING PROGRAMMES IN 1991.

THE 71-PAGE "RIVER WATER QUALITY IN HONG KONG FOR 1991" REVIEWS THE STATE OF RIVER WATER QUALITY OF 12 PRIORITY RIVERS AND 17 MINOR STREAMS IN THE TERRITORY.

MEANWHILE, THE 114-PAGE "MARINE WATER QUALITY IN HONG KONG FOR 1991" REVIEWS THE STATE OF MARINE WATER AND BOTTOM SEDIMENT QUALITY OF HONG KONG'S TERRITORIAL WATERS DURING THE YEAR.

AN EPD SPOKESMAN SAID: "THE DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN CONDUCTING WATER QUALITY SURVEYS SINCE 1986 TO PROVIDE A BASIS FOR PLANNING AND ASSESSING PROGRESS IN ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING WATER QUALITY OBJECTIVES.

"ON MARINE WATER, THE MONITORING PROGRAMME HELPS IDENTIFY, PLAN AND IMPLEMENT COST-EFFECTIVE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION MEASURES TO PROTECT THE SEA.

"LIKEWISE, FOR RIVER WATER, THE PROGRAMME GIVES AN UNDERSTANDING OF THE PRESENT STATE OF RIVER WATER QUALITY AND ENABLES AN ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE VARIOUS POLLUTION ABATEMENT MEASURES," HE SAID.

THE WATER MONITORING PROGRAMMES IN 1991 COVERED A TOTAL OF 75 RIVER AND 101 MARINE SAMPLING STATIONS.

AT EACH LOCATION, A WIDE RANGE OF PHYSICO-CHEMICAL AND BIOLOGICAL PARAMETERS HAVE BEEN MEASURED TO PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE COVERAGE OF ESSENTIAL INFORMATION ON WATER AND SEDIMENT QUALITY.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID: "THE RIVER REPORT SHOWS THAT THE WATER QUALITY OF SOME RIVERS, WHERE LEGISLATIVE CONTROLS HAVE BEEN SUCCESSFUL, HAVE IMPROVED.

"HOWEVER, FOR THOSE RIVERS WHICH ARE STILL HEAVILY POLLUTED, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN THE NORTH AND NORTHWEST OF THE TERRITORY, IT IS UNLIKELY TO HAVE MUCH IMPROVEMENT UNTIL EFFECTIVE CONTROL OVER LIVESTOCK WASTE DISPOSAL IS POSSIBLE AND PLANNED NEW SEWERAGE WORKS ARE COMPLETED," HE ADDED.

HE SAID THE MARINE REPORT HIGHLIGHTED THE CONTINUED AND SERIOUS WATER POLLUTION PROBLEMS IN VICTORIA HARBOUR AND OTHER AREAS WHICH RECEIVED SIGNIFICANT INPUTS OF LIQUID WASTES FROM NEARBY POPULATION CENTRES.

"INDUSTRIAL POLLUTION IN VICTORIA HARBOUR IS EVIDENT FROM THE HIGH LEVELS OF CHEMICAL POLLUTANTS AND HEAVY METALS PRESENT IN THE SEDIMENT," HE NOTED.

THE SPOKESMAN SAID: "SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENTS IN MARINE WATER QUALITY WILL ONLY COME ABOUT WITH THE FULL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SEWERAGE MASTER PLANS AND THE STRATEGIC SEWAGE DISPOSAL SCHEME, COUPLED WITH EFFECTIVE LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL AND COMPREHENSIVE ENFORCEMENT OF THE WATER POLLUTION CONTROL LEGISLATION IN ALL 10 WATER CONTROL ZONES IN HONG KONG."

THE REPORTS CONTAIN USEFUL INFORMATION FOR PROFESSIONALS SUCH AS SCIENTISTS, ENGINEERS AND TOWN PLANNERS WHOSE WORK RELATES TO THE WATER ENVIRONMENT.

THEY ALSO SERVE AS A USEFUL REFERENCE FOR RESEARCHERS, TEACHERS AND STUDENTS AS WELL AS THE PUBLIC WHO ARE INTERESTED IN WATER POLLUTION PROBLEMS.

THE TWO REPORTS, BOTH COMPILED IN ENGLISH, ARE NOW AVAILABLE AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE AT THE GROUND FLOOR, GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING, CONNAUGHT PLACE, CENTRAL.

THE RIVER WATER QUALITY REPORT IS SOLD AT \$32 A COPY WHILE THE MARINE WATER QUALITY REPORT AT \$42 A COPY.

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ATTENTION NEWS EDITORS:

FURTHER ENQUIRIES CAN BE DIRECTED TO EPD'S PRINCIPAL ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION OFFICER (WATER POLICY), DR MALCOLM BROOM ON TEL 835 1234.

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JOB BAZAARS IN SHEUNG WAN
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A LARGE-SCALE JOB BAZAAR WILL BE HELD TOMORROW (WEDNESDAY) IN SHEUNG WAN TO HELP WORKERS AND LOCAL RESIDENTS LOOK FOR JOBS UNDER THE ON-THE-JOB TRAINING SCHEME (OJT) SET UP BY THE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING BOARD (ERB).

ORGANISED BY THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S LOCAL EMPLOYMENT SERVICE (LES) AND SPONSORED BY THE ERB, THE BAZAAR WILL BE THE THIRD IN A SERIES WHICH AIMED AT PROVIDING AN OPPORTUNITY FOR EMPLOYERS AND POTENTIAL EMPLOYEES TO MAKE DIRECT CONTACT AND DISCUSS ABOUT JOB VACANCIES AND EMPLOYMENT.

SENIOR LABOUR OFFICER (EMPLOYMENT SERVICE), MR RAYMOND CHAN, SAID TODAY (TUESDAY):

"IT IS MOST ENCOURAGING THAT THE FIRST TWO JOB BAZAARS HELD IN TSUEN WAN AND SHA TIN RECENTLY ATTRACTED MORE THAN 2,700 JOB-SEEKERS RESULTING IN ABOUT 1,500 REFERRALS BEING MADE ON THE SPOT," MR CHAN SAID.

IT ALSO SHOWED THAT SIMILAR BAZAARS WILL BE HELPFUL TO JOB-SEEKERS WISHING TO SECURE EMPLOYMENT UNDER THE OJT AND THOSE WHO WISH TO KNOW MORE ABOUT THE SCHEME, HE SAID.

THE BAZAAR WILL BE HELD FROM 11 AM TO 6 PM AT THE EXHIBITION HALL OF THE SHEUNG WAN CIVIC CENTRE. 18 EMPLOYERS PARTICIPATING COME FROM VARIOUS TRADES INCLUDING CATERING, FAST FOOD, HOTEL, SUPERMARKETS, PROPERTY MANAGEMENT, SECURITY, LAUNDRY, BANKING AND RETAIL SALES.

THE EMPLOYER REPRESENTATIVES WILL ALSO GIVE BRIEFING TO INTERESTED PEOPLE ABOUT THEIR TRADES AND CONDUCT ON-THE-SPOT INTERVIEWS OR ARRANGE INTERVIEWS AT OTHER DATES.

MEANWHILE, VACANCIES OF THE 230 EMPLOYERS PARTICIPATING IN OJT WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE BY LABOUR DEPARTMENT'S LES STAFF TO HELP JOB-SEEKERS SELECT THEIR PREFERRED JOBS.

"SOME EMPLOYERS WILL ALSO GIVE TALKS ON RELATED TRADES TO ACQUAINT JOB-SEEKERS WITH INFORMATION ON JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

"LES STAFF WILL CONDUCT GROUP COUNSELLING SESSION FOR THE POTENTIAL RETRAINEES," HE ADDED.

MR CHAN SAID APPLICANTS FOR THE OJT SHOULD BE HONG KONG RESIDENTS, INCLUDING HOUSEWIVES, WHO ARE 30 YEARS OLD OR ABOVE, AND HAVE WORKED IN A PARTICULAR TRADE FOR NOT LESS THAN TWO YEARS.

HE ALSO NOTED THAT ANOTHER BAZAAR OF A SIMILAR NATURE IS SCHEDULED TO BE HELD FROM 11 AM TO 6 PM ON SEPTEMBER 21 AT THE EXHIBITION GALLERY OF THE HONG KONG CULTURAL CENTRE.

EMPLOYERS WHO ARE INTERESTED TO PARTICIPATE CAN CONTACT THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT ON TEL 399 2230, 345 2832 OR 338 9943 FOR DETAILS.

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HEALTH STAFF RECOGNISED FOR LONG SERVICE
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A RECORD NUMBER OF 233 STAFF MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WERE TODAY (TUESDAY) AWARDED CERTIFICATES FOR THEIR LONG AND MERITORIOUS SERVICE IN THE GOVERNMENT.

ANOTHER 144 STAFF MEMBERS WHO WILL RETIRE THIS YEAR AFTER 20 YEARS OF SERVICE WERE PRESENTED PEWTER PLATES AS SOUVENIRS.

THEY INCLUDED DOCTORS, NURSES AND OTHER SUPPORTING STAFF.

AT A PRESENTATION CEREMONY, THE DIRECTOR OF HEALTH, DR S H LEE, THANKED THE RECIPIENTS FOR THEIR DEDICATED AND LOYAL SERVICE, NOTING THAT THEIR HARD WORK HAD CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROVISION OF QUALITY MEDICAL AND HEALTH SERVICES AND THE LOW LEVEL OF NOTIFICATION OF THE MAJOR COMMUNICABLE DISEASES.

DR LEE SAID HE WAS IMPRESSED BY THEIR ENTHUSIASM AND DEDICATION DURING HIS VISITS TO CLINICS INCLUDED IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE DEPARTMENT'S PERFORMANCE PLEDGE PROGRAMME.

"THE SECOND PHASE OF THE PROGRAMME WHICH INCLUDES ANOTHER 13 GENERAL OUT-PATIENT CLINICS HAS BEEN LAUNCHED IN LATE AUGUST.

"I FIRMLY BELIEVE ALL COLLEAGUES, WITH THEIR CONTINUOUS OUTSTANDING PERFORMANCE, WILL HELP TO FURTHER DEVELOP THIS PROGRAMME," HE SAID.

NOTING THAT THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH WAS A CARING DEPARTMENT, DR LEE URGED HIS COLLEAGUES TO EXTEND THIS CARING SPIRIT TO EVERY PATIENT BY STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION WITH THE PUBLIC.

UNDER THE LONG AND MERITORIOUS SERVICE CERTIFICATE AWARD SCHEME, CERTIFICATES ARE AWARDED TO CIVILIAN STAFF WHO HAVE SERVED THE GOVERNMENT FOR 20 OR 30 YEARS AND WHO HAVE RECEIVED GOOD APPRAISAL REPORTS IN THE PAST 10 YEARS.

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1993

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217 VM'S RETURNED TODAY

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A GROUP OF 217 VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS TODAY (TUESDAY) RETURNED TO VIETNAM UNDER THE UNHCR'S VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION PROGRAMME.

COMPRISING 85 MEN, 57 WOMEN, 38 BOYS AND 37 GIRLS, THEY WERE THE 162ND BATCH TO GO BACK UNDER THE PROGRAMME.

THIS GROUP BROUGHT TO 5,383 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF VIETNAMESE MIGRANTS WHO HAVE RETURNED VOLUNTARILY THIS YEAR, AND TO 31,695 THE TOTAL NUMBER OF RETURNEES SINCE THE PROGRAMME STARTED IN MARCH 1989.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
TENDER RESULTS

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TENDER DATE	7 SEPT 93	7 SEPT 93
PAPER ON OFFER	EF BILLS	EF BILLS
ISSUE NUMBER	Q336	Y393
AMOUNT APPLIED	HKD 2,850 MN	HKD 1,630 MN
AMOUNT ALLOTTED	HKD 1,000 MN	HKD 300 MN
AVERAGE YIELD ACCEPTED	2.89 PCT	3.29 PCT
HIGHEST YIELD ACCEPTED	2.90 PCT	3.31 PCT
PRO RATA RATIO	ABOUT 88 PCT	ABOUT 14 PCT
AVERAGE TENDER YIELD	2.94 PCT	3.39 PCT

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

TENDERS TO BE HELD IN THE WEEK BEGINNING 13 SEPT 1993 -

TENDER DATE	14 SEPT 93	14 SEPT 93
PAPER ON OFFER	EF BILLS	EF BILLS
ISSUE NUMBER	Q337	H373
ISSUE DATE	15 SEPT 93	15 SEPT 93
MATURITY DATE	15 DEC 93	16 MAR 94
TENOR	91 DAYS	182 DAYS
AMOUNT ON OFFER	HKD 1,000 + 200 MN	HKD 400 + 80 MN

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TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 7, 1993

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION

OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,000
REVERSAL OF LAF	NIL
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	2,000
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	+200
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	2,200
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER	TWI 112.0 *+0.0* 7.9.93

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	3.01 PCT	14 MONTHS	2411	4.625	101.47	3.38
1 MONTH	2.90 PCT	17 MONTHS	2502	4.75	101.68	3.57
3 MONTHS	2.87 PCT	20 MONTHS	2505	4.75	98.98	3.80
6 MONTHS	3.00 PCT	23 MONTHS	2508	4.625	101.40	3.91
12 MONTHS	3.26 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 14,157 MN

CLOSED SEPTEMBER 7, 1993

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