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Social auditing key to healthy development of social services

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The Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, today (Tuesday) underlined the need to make social auditing a key component in the planning and delivering of services if Hong Kong was to maintain its healthy development of social services.

"Such auditing is a duty for the Government, so as to give account for its use of public funds. It is a necessity for Government if we are to keep our focus on the areas of real need.

"It is no less a duty and a necessity for the subvented organisations that receive so much from the public purse and which do so much to deliver services," he said.

Social auditing means the rigorous and regular review of objectives, priorities and the programmes for achieving them, to give assurance that resources are being deployed and redeployed to best effect.

Speaking at the spring reception of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, Mr Patten said it was the mark of a sensible community that it reflected on how it was changing, and adapted its systems to suit the changes.

It is sensible for a community to think prudently about its expenses and its liabilities before serious problems emerge, he added.

Pointing out that social auditing was not a new idea, Mr Patten said a start had already been made in the areas of social welfare, education, housing and medical and health services.

On social welfare, he said a thorough review of the Comprehensive Social Security Allowance system had begun.

The Household Expenditure Survey begun last October, covering households on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, will by the end of September this year give data on which to base an informed review of needs and rates of allowance.

The Social Welfare Advisory Committee is being consulted on these issues as the review progresses.

"I expect to start receiving recommendations by the end of this year," he said.

In the interim, the regular adjustment of rates in line with inflation continues and the special increases for children and single parent families promised last October will be made on April 1 this year.

On subvention arrangements, Mr Patten said consultants would be appointed in early March to decide how to simplify the system; measure the performance of the subvented sector; provide incentives to maintain and improve the service quality, and encourage non-governmental organisations to set priorities and redeploy resources to meet them.

"The consultants will be required to meet the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and a cross section of non-governmental organisations to collect your views." The aim is to complete the consultancy within 18 months.

On the education front, the Education Department introduced a schools management initiative in 1991 to encourage schools to set out their aims, progress towards which can be monitored by the schools and parents.

In December last year, an Education Commission Working Group issued a report for public consultation on "Quality in School Education".

It sets out ideas for improving the quality of the education system, for enhancing its social accountability, and for setting up an independent Quality Assurance Unit.

This unit would provide an external check or audit upon the performance targets that schools have set.

In the tertiary education field, by 1996 the University Grants Committee will have introduced academic audits to review the institutions' own programmes and academic targets.

Turning to housing, the Housing Authority has already begun to address the complex issue of better-off public housing tenants, especially those owning private property.

They are promoting Home Ownership Schemes and requiring better-off tenants to pay extra rent.

"But more is needed. Less than seven per cent of tenants actually pay extra rent. Our priority must be to reduce the waiting time for public rental housing.

"We must consider the interests of the 150,000 households waiting without adequate housing."

As to medical and health services, Mr Patten said the Hospital Authority had done a great deal since 1991 to re-examine and refocus medical services and resources.

"Much can be achieved by spending less on those with the ability to pay and redeploying resources to those without."

Outlining social programmes in the near future, Mr Patten said the Government was going full steam ahead on implementing the recommendations in last year's Report of the Working Group on Care for the Elderly.

For people with disabilities, a target of providing 7,700 extra residential and day care places by 1997 has been set. A White Paper on Rehabilitation is about to be published and in a couple of months tough new disability discrimination legislation will be introduced.

To help young people and families, in the next financial year additional staff will be provided to handle child abuse cases and help young drug abusers, and more family social workers will be provided.

For those on social security assistance, since 1990/91, payments have increased by 97 per cent, over double the overall inflation over the period. Next year apart from increases to cover inflation for all, the Government will provide specific extra payments of \$200 a month for single parent families, \$205 a month for children and make increases for students aged between 19 and 21.

Mr Patten attributed the growth of social programmes to market economics and prudent government management of public funds.

"A socially responsible market economy is more efficient as well as more decent," he said.

End/Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Transcript of Governor's question and answer session

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Following is the transcript of the question and answer session of the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten, at the Hong Kong Council of Social Service meeting today (Tuesday):

Question 1: I raise the question that Mr Chris Patten, has promised in 1992, of your Policy Address that you would settle the problem of the hostels of the mentally handicapped - - - but actually in fact the speed of the setting up the day activity centre and hostel is so slow that I would like to quote an example of - - - . In 1994 the Social Welfare Department began to subvent projects but the primary base is not complete. In 1994, February and --- this department has promised to give the project to us in this last year but in fact after a series of follow-up actions and the project only --- of September, 1994. So there are six months slippage here and - - - .

So are you confident that you will complete, you will practice your promise before 1997 to settle the case of the mentally handicapped? So I would like you to answer this question. Thanks.

Governor: The problem goes wider than the mentally handicapped. Let me be as candid as possible. When we announced what amounted to a five year agenda for dealing with a number of Hong Kong's remaining areas of social need in 1992, we said that we would report each year on the progress that we made and we've been faithfully doing that. So we provide you with the bullets to shoot at us. I think it is extremely important that we demonstrate where we're making progress and where we're not because unless we do that I don't think we'll have the encouragement and the incentive to make up for failures in some areas.

If we look right across the board at that agenda that we set out in 1992, the area where we have had most difficulty is in the provision of facilities, particularly facilities for people with handicap. Now there are one or two reasons for that which don't redound greatly to the credit of the community. We know what they are and we know that we have to tackle them with public education but firmness and determination. But there are other problems as well, problems that we've had in finding, particularly for rental, the facilities that are required for day centres, for hostels and so on. We're going to propose what I hope will be some ways of tackling those problems in our White Paper on Rehabilitation in a few weeks' time. It still remains our determination to meet the targets which we set in 1992. I realise that we're going to be judged by that but we're obviously going to have to look at new ways, at different ways of getting the premises that we need in order to meet those objectives.

Question 2: I have one concern to raise. It's about the unification of pre-primary centres. In your opening address on the 1994 Legislative Council meeting you shared about the Government plan on the improvement of training and -- of kindergarten teachers. It is applauding that Government has a commitment to improve the service, however I think it's important to include child care services as well. Although child care service, they basically provide care for children, yet while children are in the centres, they are helped develop and prepared for schooling. Now, the present qualification requirement is lower for child care workers. It is unfair for the workers to have lower education in order to fulfil the responsibility of child care workers. The qualification has some implications on the salary. In turn, it would affect the switching over of child care workers with.... This is just a mention of some implications and of course the wastage of training facilities. In the Education Commission of 1996, unification was opposed and we do not observe so much workers have done.

Our concern is on the unification of primary education and services and how can it be ensured that staff from... training, salary and other requirements such as space, children/teacher ratio can be achieved. I hope you can understand the concern. I'd like you to make a comment.

Governor: Absolutely, I can understand the concern and I'm not sure whether you'd like me to speak as the Governor who's responsible for the work of the Director of Social Welfare or as the Governor who's responsible for the work of the Director of Education. I can manage an answer under both hats, but perhaps I could try to answer right down the middle. You're entirely right that we do need to look, as a matter of some urgency, at the relationship between childcare centres and childcare workers and kindergartens and trained kindergarten teachers, because clearly among other things those who work in those two sectors see the relationships themselves and are certainly going to see the relationships if salaries in one level get very far out of line with salaries in another sector.

I think I'm right in saying that at the moment each year we have a requirement for about 700 new kindergarten teachers, to take account of wastage and to take account of expansion and inevitably some of those who work in childcare centres, 60% of whom have the same educational qualifications as people being trained as kindergarten teachers, inevitably there's going to be some drifting across.

We've established, I hope this doesn't fill you with dread, they're quite often sort of 'Yes Minister' words, but we've established a committee which is going to, as you may know, look at the issues that are raised by the whole question of unification and I hope that it can report as soon as possible because candidly I think it's going to be extremely difficult to plan provision for pre-school children without looking at the relationships between kindergartens and childcare centres. I think to look at them separately would be wrong and would create a lot of real difficulties in social policy and in the provision of training for childcare workers and for kindergarten teachers. We've put a lot of emphasis on encouraging more trained kindergarten teachers in kindergartens and that has implications that we have to face up to.

Question 3: My name is Joyce Chan (phonetic). I'm going to ask a question on behalf of the Social Welfare Manpower Training Committee. The existing social welfare manpower planning prompts to be very uncoordinated. In the past few years, when there was a short fall in welfare manpower service provision, blister programmes were created... and this was introduced to increase the required manpower. In coming years, the use of blister programmes will continue to be a means to alleviate the existing manpower short fall. There seems to be a lack of long term forward looking planning, direction in relevance of social welfare manpower policy.

Another sore point which troubles our.. is the manpower wastage among our professionals. The Council has the opinion that one of the contributing 3 factors is the poor fringe benefit package. Compared to our counterparts in the government, or other government funded institutes such as training institute, Hospital Authority, fringe benefits of practising workers in... are ... low. The Council would like to know the government's position and plan for increasing the parity of benefit between employees of Social Welfare Department or Hospital Authority and the.. staff.

Governor: Two slightly separate questions there. First of all there is certainly a shortfall, a projected shortfall of social work diploma graduates. I think the calculations, though they're inevitably a bit rule of thumb are that they'll be a shortfall of over 400 by the end of the decade and we are looking at a number of options to deal with that, including and you mentioned it yourself, the possibility of setting up a blister programme to produce, not only enough social work diploma graduates to meet the shortfall but to cover the wastage that you mentioned as well, with we hope a bit of room to spare. We're also, which I imagine will have some effect on the recruitment and retention, improving salaries for social workers at diploma level from April this year and I hope, to repeat myself, that that has some effect on shortage.

On the relationship between fringe benefits for those working for the subvented sector and those by and large working for Government departments, we did as you know make some effort to bridge the gap, for example in help with mortgage payments. I have to say that there is, I suspect always going to remain a difference between the subvented sector and Government and I'm a little leery about the idea of, in effect, nationalising the subvented sector. I think we do have to leave the subvented sector, the non-governmental sector with a bit of elbow room which both gives opportunities and in some cases may mean that career development and career benefits aren't quite the same but obviously we must be mindful of the importance of not allowing career opportunities to fall so far short of what is available in the Government sector that people aren't prepared to work in the subvented sector.

Question 4: My name is ... Chan. I am the Chairman of the Council ... Child Abuse. Everybody knows that Hong Kong government has over the years confiscated a large amount of asset from convicted drug traffickers. In many other countries, such as the UK, Australia, Malaysia and some parts of the United States, there are lots of examples that the respective governments earmark certain seized assets will be invested into drug education, prevention, treatment and rehabilitation. Now we have already had a trust fund for AIDS presentation and education. My question is : would the government consider using such ...money to set up a trust fund

Governor: Thank you very much indeed. I'm sure you will know that we've organised for the beginning of March, a summit of all those who were involved in the campaign against drug abuse, particularly drug abuse by the young, to try to ensure that we develop even more comprehensive and effective campaigns in Hong Kong than already exist. If you look at all the social statistics in Hong Kong and certainly if you look at the crime statistics, almost the area, in my judgement, for greatest concern is the increasing trend of drug abuse by youngsters, particularly by youngsters, which we've seen in the last few years. In some other communities there are often excuses paraded or reasons paraded for the increase in drug abuse by the young which don't exist in Hong Kong. People will point, for example, to high levels of unemployment, in North America and Europe, which isn't a problem in Hong Kong and yet we've got albeit at a much lower level the same indications of growing drug abuse by young people. So we do need to tackle it more imaginatively and more effectively and I'm sure your idea is one that we should examine when we have our summit in early March and give proper attention to.

They're always produced by bureaucracies, I'm sure in good faith, there are always arguments against the hypothecation of revenues. Those arguments aren't always very good ones and for instance in our recent consultation document on transport and traffic management we've proposed one hypothecation of resources which I offer to you as an argument to use at the seminar at the beginning of March.

Question 5: Mr Patten I think you said that you were going to tell us the story about the Valentine card that your wife however we all very much aware of your appreciation of family life. At the end of the introduction of the Year of the Family the administration rejected the call by legislators for a family policy. However in 1991 in the social welfare white paper it is promised that the policy branches would be asked to look at the implication of their policy on the family. I wonder if you would give guidance to the various areas so that in the formulation of policy it would consider the impact on families -----

Governor: Both in previous incarnations as well as in this one, I have always found it difficult to describe a family policy without describing most of the sensible things that any decent government tries to do, and giving a sharp enough focus to family policy is I think always a difficulty.

You and I know that you're not just talking about things that have the word family in them, you are talking about some aspects of economic policy, for example, the economic policy that provides people with jobs rather than provides them with unemployment. You're talking about an education systems that gives youngsters the opportunity to develop their full potential, you are talking about a system of benefits which is more likely to hold the family together than splinter it, you are talking about welfare payments to enable people to live in independence and with dignity. You're also talking about advice services which help families to stay together and which help to care for those who are the victims of the breakdown of family life, whether you're talking about those who suffer from abuse, from violence in the home, whether you are talking about those who suffer and it is something which is much in the papers these days from the fact that the old man has another family somewhere else.

There is a whole range of issues which need to be brought together. But I'm certainly prepared to look again at the suggestion that you have made. But I repeat that I have always myself seen family policy as infusing the whole of government in a sensible public administration from, if you like, tax policy to benefit policy and I think that I would be loathe to try to ring fence family policy into a small number of areas.

Question 6: Sir, I am Peter Chan of the Rehabilitation Alliance, In view of the large population of disabled persons, and their rising aspiration is self evident, the 1992 Green Paper on rehabilitation has recognised the importance of participation of the disabled persons in concerned Government advisory body. However no concerted progress has been noted, so far only the Rehabilitation Development Co-ordinating Committee has had participation of disabled persons and their parents. Sir, would you inform us what measure the government has taken or will take to ensure direct participation of disabled persons and their parents in concerned policy making mechanism, for example, the Social Welfare Advisory Committee, Transport Advisory Committee, Education Admission and Hospital Authority. Thank you.

Governor: I believe very strongly, as I think you know that one of the areas in which Hong Kong was falling behind the levels of provision which one would expect in a community as wealthy as Hong Kong, was in provision for those with disability of every sort and I just perhaps should dwell on that thought for a moment.

We have a first world economy, and we have in many respects first world social provision. We've certainly got in most areas first world social indicators, better health indicators than most OECD countries, but there are some areas of second world provision and occasionally we even have, for example in the area of industrial safety, third world statistics and what I want to try to do is to concentrate on those areas where we're not doing as well as we should be and try to bring them up to the level we all want to see: one of those, is in the provision for the disabled and in providing opportunities for the disabled.

Now we have gone about that in a variety of ways. We have gone about that, I was answering a question earlier, we have gone about that by trying to provide more extensive services with some difficulties, we are attempting to address those. We have gone about that by trying to isolate particular areas where there are real problems for those with physical disability, and you have attempted and taken a leading part in three seminars that we have held on transport for the disabled and employment for the disabled, both of which I think have managed to bring this attention on important areas and begin to make progress.

I think that I would much prefer to involve the disabled in that sort of way on their own terms and on their own merits, rather than say look at every public committee, look at every area of social administration and say that there has to be in this or that area a person with a disability on the committee. I'd like people to be on committees involved in the dialogue because of what they can contribute, whether they are disabled or not. I'm happy to look at specific examples if you have them of areas where you don't think there is enough policy input from the disabled, from those representing disability organisations, but your contribution is, as good as it is because you are creative and intelligent and know what you're talking about, and you also have a disability, but your contribution is because of who you are and I think that is the best way of way of tapping into knowledge and expertise of people.

Question 7 (In Chinese): I think, as a colonial government, you may not be welcome, But, Governor, on the contrary, you are welcomed by the people, because many people think that you are a person of political ideals. That's why we expect a lot from you. You have submitted three policy statements since your arrival in Hong Kong. Some of them were good and some were not. But to us, there were some inadequacies in these reports.

One of the reasons is that in the UK, proper housing rights had already been introduced in the 80's. Governor, you have done very well in the UK to improve peoples' living conditions and the environment. That's why you're highly regarded by us all. However, in you past policy statements, you widely publicised your efforts to fight with China over things which you well knew could not be achieved, while not showing much interest in things which could be done such as the introduction of housing rights. According to the resolution made in a United Nations document on December 12, 1991, Britain was one of the signatories. But, unfortunately, the Hong Kong Government had not sent any representatives to sign this covenant on housing rights. This results in the absence of any reasonable protection of Hong Kong peoples' living conditions. Therefore, I would like to see that you, the Governor, introduce the above International Covenant into Hong Kong in your fourth policy statement to protect the housing rights of the Hong Kong people, so that they can really live happily.

Governor: I think as you probably know, the International Covenant on Social and Economic rights does ensure that the Hong Kong Government is properly examined and properly questioned about its social policies including housing, just as reporting to the UN on the International Covenant on Human and Political rights, ensures that we are questioned about issues like progress of democratisation, rule of law and so on. I don't think that there is any lack of International interest in and scrutiny about our welfare policies and our social policies, and in that respect we are in exactly the same position as Canada, or Australia, or Japan or other well off communities. But let me without getting involved in a discussion on the responsibilities of the last Colonial Governor and you're in luck because I am the last one, without getting involved in that can I just say a word about public housing, the campaigns to ensure that people have a decent roof over their head and egalitarianism.

I've got very little doubt that the main social ambition of any family is to be decently housed and I have very little doubt for our improvement in health statistics for example in Hong Kong is the improvement in public housing. People very often say that Hong Kong is a great example of free market economics, well up to a point, but it is also a great tribute to social intervention by government in improving peoples' housing conditions, great social revolution in the sixties and seventies and eighties. I do think that in pressing for better housing for everyone it is important to remember a number of factors, some of which I mentioned in my speech.

First a community is unlikely to be as well housed and as appropriately housed as all of us would like, if people only pay a tiny fraction of their incomes for having a decent roof over their head that is likely to distort housing provision, it is likely to be that there is perhaps less money for good housing than one would like. Secondly I'm always surprise when an argument about housing concentrates on have's rather than have-nots. I'm not saying that one area where I want to achieve as much as possible before I leave Hong Kong is in the elimination of temporary housing areas, but when I go to temporary housing areas, I went without the attentions of friends from the press the other day to three in the eastern district. When I go to temporary areas and see the pretty bad conditions in which people live. When there others living in worse housing and paying more for it, and paying more out of a lower income, so I don't think that lobbying on public housing should avoid those rather difficult questions, I also think that, something I feel very strongly about, the increasing involvement of people who live in public housing estates in the management of their estates, and the decision that are taken about their estates doesn't mean that those decisions can always avoid taking any account of financial implications or implications for our social programmes, so I commend all those who argue for and fight for better public housing, I commend those who argue and fought for better public housing in the past, and I very much hope that in arguing for better public housing in the future we won't avoid noting that Hong Kong now has a per capita GDP higher than most OECD countries and that the profile of its housing needs has changed over the years and that the last Colonial Government speech without hat. One more.

Question 8 (In Chinese): I would like to ask the Governor, we, the Hong Kong elderly had fought for the public assistance money for three years. In 1993, according to Mr MacPherson's study, old people should get HK\$2,300 monthly allowances. The Legislative Council had already approved it, but you, the Hong Kong Governor had retrieved the proposal. Everyone knows that the elderly have been working industriously in Hong Kong for years. Now the inflation is so high, housing and everything are very expensive, even vegetables are sold at \$HK10 per catty. Several hundred thousand Hong Kong people are now living miserably. The elderly in Hong Kong are not better dealt with as compared with the two dogs living in Government House. I believe the Governor's two dogs are better treated and fed. The elderly have been either directly or indirectly taxed for years. Now the Government should pay back to them. But the Government only allows one thousand and a few hundred dollars for the elderly. It is just insufficient. That's all I want to say.

Governor: I'll leave my dogs out of it because they always get me in trouble.

I talked earlier about areas of social policy where we needed to do better and I think that most of you are aware that one such area about which I feel strongly is in the provision of services and financial support for the elderly. You described, very eloquently, the responsibilities which the community should discharge towards its elderly who have helped to create today's prosperity in Hong Kong. The matter is both one of services and one of financial support.

Services, we established under Libby Wong when she was Secretary for Health and Welfare a working party on services for the elderly. It made a large number of recommendations, it reported last August, and we've undertaken to implement all its recommendations in health and welfare fields so that the provision for the elderly is improved.

But there is also the question of financial care. A question which the community has been debating in one way or another for about thirty years. We debated it a good deal in Government and we came to the conclusion that the right way, the best way forward was to introduce an old age pension scheme for Hong Kong, paid for by direct though limited contributions from employers and employees. We put that idea in a consultation document, it was debated in the Legislative Council and it was debated in the wider community. I wish some of those who have been out and about in the last week or so with petitions and making encouraging and supportive remarks about the pension scheme had been around during the months when it was being slagged off by virtually every newspaper in Hong Kong by most of the Legislative Council and by all the chambers of commerce, plus one or two officials from China as well.

I don't need any convincing about the merits of the pension scheme but there are a lot of other people in Hong Kong who apparently do. We've been discussing the way forward, the best way forward with legislators, with chambers of commerce and with others over the last couple of weeks because I do still want to find a consensus for a way of providing better for the elderly in their old age.

Now you may well be right that CSSA's should make a contribution to that. I'll only make this point about CSSA's. As I said earlier, since I came to Hong Kong, since the Summer of 1992, we've increased benefits for single people by 70% in cash terms and by 38% in real terms. Some people accuse me of being a socialist for having done that. It means for the elderly that the average payment of benefit under CSSA's is \$2,490. You may be interested in this, it's above the level of \$2,300, the average payment is \$2,490. So if we were only to take \$2,300 as the guide, then I'm not sure it would actually meet the needs of a lot of people who are getting more among the retired in the community. That figure of \$2,490 will be increased by about a couple of hundred dollars after April.

How do we act now? What do we do about CSA's? How do we best take it forward? I find it difficult to believe that the right approach isn't to look at the household expenditure survey, at what it tells us about the real needs of people like you, about the real needs of families and individuals who are in need who may be facing up to hardship and then deal with the consequences of that review towards the end of this year. But I hope that we won't focus on one single figure, particularly if that figure is less than the average payments that people are getting. And I hope that when agencies give their examples of social need and there are examples of social need, to newspapers, I hope that when newspapers write up those examples of those in need, they won't just look at the basic welfare payments or look at the aggregate amounts that people are getting, their special grants as well as their basic level payments, because we very often find that when we read harrowing stories about people who very often are in need, reported in the newspapers, the actual figures given for what they are getting, don't take account of the grants and other help that they're supporting as well. None of that is to suggest that there aren't real pockets of need and poverty in Hong Kong that we need to address. But I hope we can address those issues in a way which takes account of the facts and doesn't simply bury them.

I'm afraid that's all I've got time for this afternoon but I hope that I'll be able to come back again.

Question (by media after the meeting): There are some people criticising that 8.5 increase on the public assistance money is too low and say Government should not give up on the elderly plan. Your reaction.

Governor: Since the Summer of 1992, since I became Governor of Hong Kong, benefit levels under the CSA have increased for a family of four by about 70%, that's 38% in real terms. They've increased for a single person by 58% since I became Governor of Hong Kong, that's 29% in real terms. So we have been increasing and increasing substantially ahead of the rate of inflation the benefits for those who are in need. This April we're giving special extra assistance to single parents and to children. We're also undertaking a comprehensive review of CSSA rates, basing that review on the household expenditure survey so that the community as a whole, not just the Government, because it's the community that will pay through it's taxes. So the community as a whole can take some rational decisions about whether we need to make further substantial increases in CSSA rates. But I do think in addressing the issue people should take account of what's been done in the last couple of years. We have responsibilities as we get better off as a community to look after more comprehensively those who are in need. I want to see us do that in a prudent and sensible and rational way.

We agreed one question and I'm going to add to what I said. Not a follow-up. I've been answering questions for 40 minutes up there. If you want to get my views on social policy you should have been up there listening to my answers with great respect.

Just let me add one other thing about pensions. We are at the moment consulting all those interest groups. We're consulting Legislative Councillors, we're consulting businesses and we're consulting others about the best way forward for pensions. I'm only sorry that some of those who are now saying they're in favour of our pension scheme weren't out shouting in favour of it during the discussion period and I'm sorry that they weren't arguing for it in the Legislative Council. When it was debated in the Legislative Council there was only one speech by Jimmy McGregor which was wholly in favour of our scheme. We want, I repeat, to come forward at the end of the day with the best scheme which can get the widest degree of support. That's what we're intent on doing because we owe it to the elderly to give them not only better services but a decent level of financial provision in their old age.

Thank you very much.

End/Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Route 3 franchise award

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Commenting on the proposed franchise to build and operate the Tai Lam Tunnel and Yuen Long Approach Road sections of the Route 3 - Country Park Section, a Government spokesman said today (Tuesday):

"A common view has been reached in the Sino-British Joint Liaison Group on the proposed award of the franchise to the Route 3 (CPS) Company Limited (led by Sun Hung Kai Properties Ltd). The Government welcomes this agreement.

"The Tai Lam Tunnel and Yuen Long Approach Road sections of the Route 3 - Country Park Section will form an integral part of the territory's strategic road network.

"Early completion of the new road will greatly alleviate traffic congestion in Tuen Mun Road and the Container Terminal area, facilitate cross-border traffic, and enhance further development of the north-western part of the New Territories. "The next step will be to put the draft bill to the Executive Council and then to the Legislative Council for the award of the franchise. Government's aim is that the new road should open to traffic by mid-1998."

End/Tuesday, February 14, 1995

New MTRC chairman appointed

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The Governor has appointed Mr Jack So Chak-kwong the next Chairman and Chief Executive of the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTRC) with effect from April 1 this year.

Mr So is well known to both Government and the private sector. He served as Executive Director of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council from 1986 to 1992. Since then he has been Managing Director of Sun Hung Kai Development (China) Ltd. He has extensive experience in business and corporate affairs.

An executive search agency was engaged last year to conduct a recruitment exercise. Advertisements were also placed in a number of major local and overseas publications.

A selection panel chaired by the Financial Secretary unanimously recommended that Mr So should be appointed. The Governor has approved the appointment under section 4 of the Mass Transit Railway Corporation Ordinance.

Mr So's appointment will be for two years. Under section 4 of the ordinance, the Chairman of the Corporation may be reappointed upon the expiry of his present term of appointment.

Mr Hamish Mathers, the incumbent Chairman and Chief Executive of the MTRC, announced last year that he would retire at the expiry of his contract on March 31, 1995. Mr Mathers is 61.

End/Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Access to child abuser files strictly controlled

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In response to press enquiries regarding the running of its new computerised Child Protection Registry (CPR), a Social Welfare Department spokesman today (Tuesday) refuted allegations that files on child abusers would be open to abuse.

The spokesman said only authorised officers of the department who were involved in the running of the CPR would have access to this independent computer system. Access is strictly controlled.

"No personal data of any individuals would be disclosed to others, including 'registered users'," he added.

The registered users are social workers providing family casework service and senior medical practitioners who are handling child abuse cases. The only information obtainable from the CPR is whether a particular case they come across is registered and if so, which social worker is handling the case, so that timely intervention and follow-up service can be rendered.

The spokesman also said all data input forms would be kept in safe custody before they were properly destroyed after use.

The department opined that the operating procedures of the CPR complied with the Bill of Rights and legal advice had confirmed this earlier on, the spokesman said.

The objective of the computerised programme of the CPR is to facilitate better communication among government departments and non-governmental organisations which handle child abuse cases and which are registered users of the registry.

It also aims to collect and compile statistical information on the abused children and their abusers in all known or suspected cases of child abuse for the purpose of ascertaining the magnitude of the problem and thus to facilitate the planning and development of services which prevent child abuse.

The Social Welfare Department has introduced a computer filing system to its Child Protection Registry since last July to achieve such objectives, the spokesman said.

End/Tuesday, February 14, 1995

New human rights video available

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A new video tape covering several areas of human rights is now being distributed to schools and community groups in order to enhance the public's understanding of the rights of the individual.

The 25-minute tape is produced by the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education as part of the committee's ongoing human rights education efforts.

The areas covered include privacy; right of protection against discrimination; freedom of expression and presumed innocence; personal liberty, as well as human rights in schools.

To stimulate interest and discussion in these basic human rights concepts, dramatic portrayal of real life situations is interlaced with recent news clips and introductory comments by academics.

More than 400 secondary schools will be receiving the tapes with a question-and-answer guide for teachers.

The videos will also be sent to tertiary institutions, public libraries, voluntary agencies and community groups in the territory.

Members of the public who wish to watch or borrow the tape are also welcome to contact the Civic Education Resource Centre on the second floor of Tung Sun Commercial Centre, 194-200 Lockhart Road, Wan Chai (tel: 2802 0131).

The tape is a continuation of the "Human Rights Education Teaching Kit" first produced by the committee's Human Rights Education Sub-committee in 1993.

End/Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

Tender date	14 Feb 95	14 Feb 95
Paper on offer	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	Q507	H558
Amount applied	HK\$2,260 mn	HK\$1,720 mn
Amount allotted	HK\$1,500 mn	HK\$800 mn
Average yield accepted	6.51 PCT	6.79 PCT
Highest yield accepted	6.57 PCT	6.84 PCT
Pro rata ratio	About 40 PCT	About 70 PCT
Average tender yield	6.55 PCT	6.85 PCT

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

Tenders to be held in the week beginning February 20, 1995

Tender date	20 Feb 95	21 Feb 95	21 Feb 95
Paper on offer	EF notes	EF bills	EF bills
Issue number	2702	Q508	Y586
Issue date	21 Feb 95	22 Feb 95	22 Feb 95
Maturity date	21 Feb 97	24 May 95	22 Feb 96
Tenor	2 years	91 days	365 days
Amount on offer	HK\$500+100mn	HK\$1,500+300mn	HK\$500+150mn
Coupon	7.50 PCT		

End/Tuesday, February 14, 1995

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	1,847	0930	+648
Closing balance in the account	1,404	1000	+638
Change attributable to :		1100	+669
Money market activity	+668	1200	+668
LAF today	-1,111	1500	+668
		1600	+668

LAF rate 4.25% bid/6.25% offer TWI 121.1 *+0.0* 14.2.95

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF bills		EF notes/Hong Kong Government bonds				
Terms	Yield	Term	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	6.03	15 months	2605	6.35	99.07	7.25
1 month	6.20	21 months	2611	6.90	99.21	7.52
3 months	6.47	29 months	3707	6.95	98.46	7.79
6 months	6.75	35 months	3801	8.00	100.28	8.04
12 months	7.10	58 months	5912	8.15	99.37	8.48

Total turnover of bills and bonds - \$13,890 million

Closed February 14, 1995

End/Tuesday, February 14, 1995