



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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EXPLANATION FROM CHINA SOUGHT ON RECENT SEA INCIDENTS

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS ASKED THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES FOR AN EXPLANATION OF RECENT INCIDENTS WHERE CHINESE OFFICIALS INTERCEPTED OR DETAINED OUTBOUND VESSELS WITHIN OR JUST OUTSIDE HONG KONG WATERS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MAN SAI-CHEONG, MR ASPREY SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD RECEIVED AN APOLOGY FOR ONE OF THE TWO INCIDENTS WHICH OCCURRED IN HONG KONG WATERS.

HOWEVER, THE GOVERNMENT HAS YET TO RECEIVE A REPLY ON THE OTHER INCIDENTS ALTHOUGH HE UNDERSTOOD THE VESSELS CONCERNED WERE SUSPECTED OF SMUGGLING.

"WE SHOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR A REPLY," THE SECRETARY SAID.

HE SAID ONLY TWO OF THE INCIDENTS TOOK PLACE IN HONG KONG WATERS.

"THESE WERE WELL WITHIN HONG KONG WATERS AND I DO NOT BELIEVE THERE COULD BE ANY QUESTION OF THE BOUNDARY BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CHINESE WATERS HAVING BEEN CONFUSED," HE SAID.

HE SAID THE SHIPOWNERS HAD BEEN ADVISED TO MAKE REPRESENTATIONS VIA THEIR FLAT STATE IF THEY FELT THEY HAD BEEN UNFAIRLY TREATED.

"THIS IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDARD INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID ALL THE INCIDENTS, APART FROM THOSE IN HONG KONG WATERS, OCCURRED IN THE LEMA CHANNEL WHICH WAS PROHIBITED BY THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES TO ALL BUT CHINESE VESSELS.

THE MARINE DEPARTMENT THEREFORE ISSUED A NOTICE ON SEPTEMBER 19 TO REMIND MARINERS OF THE PROHIBITION, WHICH WAS CLEARLY MARKED ON NAVIGATIONAL CHARTS.

"WE HAVE ALSO ASKED THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES TO INFORM US THROUGH THE APPROPRIATE CHANNELS IF THEY HAVE EVIDENCE OF ANY VESSELS BEING INVOLVED IN SMUGGLING, SO THAT WE CAN CO-OPERATE BY TAKING ACTION IN HONG KONG WATERS," HE SAID.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTED THAT THE CHINESE AUTHORITIES HAD A RIGHT TO TAKE ACTION AGAINST THOSE THEY SUSPECTED OF BREAKING THE LAW IN THEIR WATERS.

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GOVT MONITORS EFFECTIVENESS OF LAWS ON DANGEROUS GASES

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THE GOVERNMENT MONITORS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF EXISTING LAWS GOVERNING THE STORAGE AND CONVEYANCE OF DANGEROUS GASES MAINLY THROUGH REGULAR VISITS TO THE ESTABLISHMENTS AT WHICH DANGEROUS GASES ARE STORED TO VERIFY COMPLIANCE WITH THE RELEVANT LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS OR LICENSING CONDITIONS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ZACHARY WONG WAI-YIN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MRS CHAN SAID THE FREQUENCY OF INSPECTION VARIED ACCORDING TO THE SIZE AND AGE OF THE INSTALLATION AND THE RISK THAT IT WAS CONSIDERED TO PRESENT.

IN THE CASE OF INSTALLATIONS COVERED BY THE DANGEROUS GOODS ORDINANCE, SHE SAID A LICENCE WOULD NOT BE RENEWED IF THE ESTABLISHMENT CONCERNED DID NOT COMPLY WITH ALL OF THE SAFETY REQUIREMENTS.

IN RESPECT OF INSTALLATIONS COVERED BY THE GAS SAFETY ORDINANCE, IMPROVEMENT NOTICES WOULD BE ISSUED, SHE SAID.

VEHICLES USED FOR THE CONVEYANCE OF DANGEROUS GASES WERE INSPECTED BY THE FIRE SERVICES DEPARTMENT OR THE GAS STANDARDS OFFICE, AS APPROPRIATE, TO ENSURE COMPLIANCE WITH THE RELEVANT SAFETY STANDARDS, MRS CHAN SAID.

INSPECTIONS OF INSTALLATIONS OR VEHICLES WERE CARRIED OUT IN RESPONSE TO COMPLAINTS.

SHE SAID LEGAL ACTION WAS TAKEN WHERE APPROPRIATE IN CASES WHERE THE LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENTS WERE FOUND TO HAVE BEEN BREACHED.

THE PARKING OF VEHICLES USED TO CARRY CYLINDERS OF LIQUEFIED PETROLEUM GAS WAS CONTROLLED BY PERMIT CONDITIONS.

HOWEVER, MRS CHAN SAID THE RECENT EXPERIENCE HAD SHOWN THAT THE MONITORING AND CONTROL OF SUCH VEHICLES NEEDED TO BE IMPROVED.

SHE SAID CONSULTATIONS WITH THE INDUSTRY WERE UNDER WAY TO ESTABLISH HOW THESE IMPROVEMENTS COULD BEST BE ACHIEVED.

SHE SAID THE CRITERIA USED BY THE GOVERNMENT TO ASSESS THE IMPACT OF DANGEROUS GAS STORAGE FACILITIES ON THE SAFETY AND HEALTH OF NEARBY RESIDENTS, IN HONG KONG, ANY INSTALLATION WHICH STORED DANGEROUS GASES IN QUANTITIES EQUAL TO OR GREATER THAN A SPECIFIED LIMIT WAS CLASSIFIED AS A POTENTIALLY HAZARDOUS INSTALLATION.

"THE POTENTIAL RISK IT PRESENTS IS ANALYSED TAKING INTO ACCOUNT FACTORS SUCH AS THE SPECIFIC PROPERTIES OF THE GAS AND ITS POTENTIAL EFFECTS," MRS CHAN SAID.

/SHE SAID .....

SHE SAID IF THE APPROPRIATE RISK GUIDELINES COULD NOT BE MET, MITIGATION MEASURES TO REDUCE THE RISK LEVEL WERE IMPLEMENTED AS FAR AS PRACTICABLE.

"SUCH MEASURES INCLUDE, FOR EXAMPLE, IMPROVEMENTS TO STORAGE FACILITIES AND MORE EFFECTIVE SAFETY DEVICES AT THE PLANT.

"WHERE NECESSARY, RELOCATION OF THE PLANT WILL BE CONSIDERED," SHE ADDED.

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GOVT'S SHARE OF ACP ESTIMATED AT \$7.1B

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THE ESTIMATED EXPENDITURE THIS YEAR ON THE GOVERNMENT'S SHARE OF THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME (ACP) WORKS IS ABOUT \$7.1 BILLION, THE SECRETARY FOR THE TREASURY, MR K.Y. YEUNG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON SAMUEL WONG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR YEUNG SAID THIS WAS A LITTLE OVER 22% OF TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE FOR 1992-93, ESTIMATED AT \$31.8 BILLION.

HE SAID OF THE \$24.7 BILLION TO BE SPENT ON NON-ACP PROJECTS, ABOUT \$3 BILLION WAS EARMARKED FOR EXPENDITURE ON OVER 200 NEW WORKS PROJECTS TO BE LET CONTRACTS DURING 1992-93.

HOWEVER, MR YEUNG SAID THE FIGURE OF \$3 BILLION DID NOT INCLUDE THE EXPENDITURE TO BE INCURRED ON ACQUIRING LAND FOR THESE PROJECTS, AS THIS WAS MET FROM A SEPARATE BLOCK VOTE UNDER HEAD 701 LAND ACQUISITION.

"WHEN WE SAID IN THE PAST THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S FORECAST OF ITS SHARE OF WORKS EXPENDITURE ON THE ACP WOULD BE ABOUT A QUARTER OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FORECAST OF TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE, WE HAD IN MIND A FIGURE OF \$54.5 BILLION SPREAD OVER THE FIVE YEARS 1992-93 TO 1996-97.

"THIS REPRESENTS LESS THAN A QUARTER OF THE GOVERNMENT'S FORECAST OF TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE, ESTIMATED AT \$240.8 BILLION, OVER THE SAME FIVE YEAR PERIOD," MR YEUNG SAID.

"BUT ACTUAL WORKS EXPENDITURE ON THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME IN ANY ONE YEAR COULD BE HIGHER OR LOWER THAN A QUARTER OF ACTUAL TOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURE IN THAT YEAR," HE ADDED.

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PRICE OF TSING MA BRIDGE UNAFFECTED

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THE PRICE RANKING OF THE TSING MA BRIDGE TENDERS REMAINS UNAFFECTED BY SUBSEQUENT CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS EVEN THE TENDERED PRICE ACCEPTED INCLUDED A PART IN POUND STERLING, THE SECRETARY FOR TREASURY, MR K.Y. YEUNG, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARVIN CHEUNG KIN-TUNG, MR YEUNG SAID:

"THE ACCEPTED TENDER PRICE FOR THE TSING MA BRIDGE CONSTRUCTION WAS HK\$4,544 MILLION AND L88 MILLION. USING THE EXCHANGE RATE OF HK\$13.845 TO THE POUND PREVAILING ON 29 APRIL 1992 THIS YEAR WHEN THE TENDER RECOMMENDATION WAS APPROVED BY THE CENTRAL TENDER BOARD, THE HONG KONG DOLLAR EQUIVALENT OF THE TENDERED SUM WAS \$7,144 MILLION."

THIS WAS THE BASIS ON WHICH THE FINANCE COMMITTEE'S FUNDING APPROVAL WAS SOUGHT ON MAY 15 THIS YEAR, HE SAID.

MR YEUNG SAID WITHIN HALF AN HOUR OF RECEIVING FINANCE COMMITTEE'S FUNDING APPROVAL FOR THE PROJECT, THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF THE EXCHANGE FUND AT HIS REQUEST ARRANGED FOR THE FORWARD PURCHASE OF STERLING THROUGHOUT THE FIVE-YEAR CONTRACT PERIOD WHEN STERLING PAYMENTS WERE REQUIRED, AT A FIXED RATE OF HK\$13.4 TO THE POUND.

"THE CONTRACT IS THEREFORE PRUDENTLY IMMUNISED AGAINST CURRENCY FLUCTUATIONS," HE SAID.

THE SECRETARY EXPLAINED THAT AS A RESULT OF THE FORWARD COVER ARRANGED, THE HONG KONG DOLLAR EQUIVALENT OF THE TSING MA BRIDGE CONTRACT WAS AT PRESENT \$7,060 MILLION, OR \$84 MILLION LESS THAN THE ESTIMATE OF \$7,144 MILLION APPROVED BY FINANCE COMMITTEE.

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LAND GRANTED EXCEEDS SPECIFIED LIMIT

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THE AMOUNT OF LAND GRANTED ANNUALLY FOR DEVELOPMENT SINCE THE ENTRY INTO FORCE OF THE JOINT DECLARATION HAS EXCEEDED THE 50 HECTARE LIMIT SPECIFIED BY AGREEMENT IN THE SINO-BRITISH LAND COMMISSION, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR BOWEN LEUNG, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON ELSIE TU, MR LEUNG SAID THIS DEMONSTRATED THE CO-OPERATION AND UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES OF THE LAND COMMISSION IN MAKING SUFFICIENT LAND AVAILABLE TO MEET JUSTIFIABLE DEMANDS.

"A TOTAL OF 274 HECTARES OF LAND WAS VESTED IN THE HOUSING AUTHORITY FOR CONTROL AND MANAGEMNT UNDER SECTION 5 OF THE HOUSING ORDINANCE BETWEEN 1987/88 AND 1991/92," HE SAID.

OVER THE SAME PERIOD, THE AUTHORITY HAS PRODUCED 16,500 RENTAL TYPE FLATS FOR SALE UNDER THE HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME.

HOWEVER, HE SAID THESE WERE NOT NECESSARILY 'FLATS ORIGINALLY EARMARKED FOR RENTING'.

"DECISIONS TO DESIGNATE CERTAIN BLOCKS FOR HOME OWNERSHIP SCHEME (HOS) USES ARE TAKEN AT AN EARLY STAGE IN PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT BECAUSE INCLUSION OF THE RENTAL BLOCK DESIGN IN THE HOS PROGRAMME GIVES A WIDER MIX OF FLAT SIZES AND PRICES FOR HOS PURCHASERS," HE ADDED.

MR LEUNG ALSO SAID LAND FOR CONSTRUCTION OF HOS BLOCKS WAS ACCOUNTABLE UNDER THE ANNUAL 50 HECTARE LIMIT. THIS ALSO INCLUDED TRANSFERS OF SITES FROM RENTAL PURPOSES TO HOS USES.

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#### UNDERGROUND ECONOMY HAS LITTLE IMPACT ON GOVT REVENUE

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IT IS VERY DIFFICULT TO MAKE AN ASSESSMENT OF THE SIZE OF UNDERGROUND ECONOMY, THE SECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC SERVICES, MRS ANSON CHAN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY DR THE HON HUANG CHEN-YA IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MRS CHAN SAID SUCH ACTIVITIES WERE DIFFICULT TO IDENTIFY, LOCATE AND MEASURE DUE TO THEIR PETTY AND DISPERSED NATURE.

"IN THE CASE OF ILLEGAL ACTIVITIES, SUCH AS DRUG TRAFFICKING AND SMUGGLING, THE DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING CREDIBLE STATISTICAL INFORMATION IS SELF-EVIDENT," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN SAID EXAMPLES OF PETTY ACTIVITIES INCLUDED PRIVATE TUITION, PART-TIME DOMESTIC HELP, FORTUNE TELLING, AND SOME SEGMENTS OF HAWKING AND PERSONAL SERVICES.

MRS CHAN NOTED THAT ALTHOUGH THE INCOMES OF THE RESPECTIVE SERVICE PROVIDERS WERE GENERALLY UNRECORDED, THE VOLUME OF ACTIVITIES CONCERNED AND THE TOTAL INCOME GENERATED WERE BELIEVED TO BE RELATIVELY SMALL COMPARED WITH THE SIZE OF THE ENTIRE ECONOMY.

"THE ADMINISTRATION HAS INFORMATION ON SOME OF THESE PETTY ACTIVITIES BUT IT TENDS TO BE FRAGMENTARY AND NOT VERY RELIABLE.

"IMPROVING OUR INFORMATION BASE WOULD, HOWEVER, REQUIRE DISPROPORTIONATE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES," SHE ADDED.

ON THE IMPACT OF UNDERGROUND ECONOMY ON GENERAL REVENUE, MRS CHAN SAID AS THESE PETTY ACTIVITIES WERE USUALLY PERFORMED BY INDIVIDUALS WITH INCOME BELOW THE TAX THRESHOLD, THEY WERE LIKELY TO HAVE LITTLE BEARING ON GENERAL REVENUE.

"TAXES ON SUCH ACTIVITIES ARE LEVIED WHERE FEASIBLE AND LEGITIMATE BUT THE ADMINISTRATION WILL CONTINUE TO FACE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES IN IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING THEM FOR TAX PURPOSES," SHE SAID.

MRS CHAN SAID THE ADMINISTRATION WAS, HOWEVER, COMMITTED TO CONTINUE ITS PROGRAMME OF LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES AIMED AT TAX EVASION AND AVOIDANCE.

"AS AN ILLUSTRATION, THE COMMISSIONER FOR INLAND REVENUE INVESTIGATED 571 CASES IN 1991-92 AND RECOVERED EVADED TAXES AND PENALTIES AMOUNTING TO ABOUT \$438 MILLION," SHE SAID.

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ADEQUATE FUNDING SECURED TO IMPLEMENT  
MAJOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES

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THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, REAFFIRMED THAT THE IMMEDIATE CAPITAL INJECTION OF \$2.3 BILLION INTO THE LOTTERIES FUND AS ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNOR IN HIS POLICY ADDRESS WILL ENSURE ADEQUATE PROVISION FOR THE TIMELY IMPLEMENTATION OF ALL THE MAJOR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES SET OUT IN THE WHITE PAPER ON SOCIAL WELFARE FOR THE YEARS 1993/94 TO 1996/97.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY), MRS WONG ASSURED MEMBERS THAT THIS ARRANGEMENT WOULD NOT PRECLUDE GOVERNMENT FROM ALLOCATING ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR IMPLEMENTING OTHER SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES IN FUTURE.

THE GOVERNMENT WILL ALSO PROVIDE THE NECESSARY RESOURCES TO ENSURE THAT THE INTERIM TARGETS, AS OUTLINED IN THE WHITE PAPER, WILL BE IMPLEMENTED AS SCHEDULED.

"AS MENTIONED EARLIER, FUNDING HAS ALREADY BEEN SECURED FOR MEETING THE KEY TARGETS, NOT ONLY FOR THE YEAR 1995/96, BUT FOR THE PERIOD UP TO 1996/97," MRS WONG ADDED.

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SUFFICIENT GENERAL WARD BEDS TO BE PROVIDED

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SUFFICIENT GENERAL WARD BEDS WOULD STILL HAVE TO BE PROVIDED TO MEET DEMAND EVEN THOUGH "B CLASS BEDS" WERE TO BE INTRODUCED.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HEALTH AND WELFARE, MRS ELIZABETH WONG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HUI YIN-FAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

/MRS WONG .....

MRS WONG SAID PROVISION OF "B CLASS BEDS" WAS BEING CONSIDERED AS ONE OF THE OPTIONS IN AN OVERALL REVIEW OF THE POLICY ON FEES AND WAIVER.

"PROPOSALS FROM THIS REVIEW WOULD BE PRESENTED AS OPTIONS IN A GREEN PAPER FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION.

"IT IS EARLY DAYS YET TO PROVIDE DETAILS ON CHARGES TO BE ADOPTED," SHE SAID, ADDING THAT MUCH WOULD HAVE TO DEPEND ON PUBLIC COMMENTS AND ON THE OUTCOME OF A PILOT SCHEME, IF INTRODUCED.

HOWEVER, SHE ASSURED MEMBERS THAT UNDER THE HOSPITAL AUTHORITY ORDINANCE, "NO PERSON SHOULD BE PREVENTED, THROUGH LACK OF MEANS, FROM OBTAINING ADEQUATE MEDICAL TREATMENT".

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CURRENT MONITORING SYSTEM ON RENTAL POLICIES WORKS WELL  
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THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR BOWEN LEUNG, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT THE CURRENT MONITORING SYSTEM ON RENTAL POLICIES OF THE HONG KONG HOUSING AUTHORITY HAD WORKED WELL, AND THERE WERE NO PLANS TO INTRODUCE ADDITIONAL LEGISLATIVE AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES TO SET UP MONITORING MECHANISMS.

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MAN SAI-CHEONG, MR LEUNG SAID THERE WAS ADEQUATE AND EFFECTIVE MONITORING OF THE RENT POLICIES OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, THE LARGEST STATUTORY PUBLIC HOUSING AGENT IN HONG KONG, WHICH MANAGED OVER 642,000 RENTAL FLATS.

"OVER THE YEARS, THE AUTHORITY'S RENT POLICIES, RENT REVIEWS FOR EXISTING ESTATES AND RENT SETTING FOR NEW ESTATES HAVE BEEN CLEARLY EXPLAINED TO THE OMELCO STANDING PANEL ON HOUSING, DISTRICT BOARDS, THE MEDIA, INTEREST GROUPS AND THE TENANTS CONCERNED.

"ALL MAJOR CHANGES TO THE EXISTING RENT POLICIES ARE THOROUGHLY DEBATED WITHIN THE AUTHORITY WHOSE MEMBERSHIP COMPRISE MAINLY OF NON-OFFICIALS REPRESENTING A GOOD CROSS SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT ALL IMPORTANT POLICY PROPOSALS WERE SUBJECT TO WIDE PUBLIC CONSULTATION AND THE APPROVAL OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL.

MR LEUNG SAID THE HONG KONG HOUSING SOCIETY WAS A MUCH SMALLER INDEPENDENT BODY INCORPORATED BY STATUTE AND MANAGING ABOUT 33,000 RENTAL FLATS, ITS ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING RENT POLICIES, WERE DETERMINED BY AN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

MEMBERSHIP OF THIS COMMITTEE IS DRAWN FROM PROFESSIONALS AND BUSINESSMEN, AS WELL AS CIVIL SERVANTS, SERVING IN THEIR PERSONAL CAPACITY.

/HE SAID: .....

HE SAID: "THE DOMESTIC RENTS CHARGED BY THE SOCIETY ARE SET HAVING REGARD TO THEIR AFFORDABILITY TO THE TENANTS AND ARE BELOW MARKET RENT.

"THEY ARE DESIGNED TO COVER THE CAPITAL AND RECURRENT EXPENDITURE OF THE ESTATE, TO CROSS-SUBSIDISE THE RENTAL UNITS FOR THE ELDERLY AND TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARD THE SOCIETY'S ON-GOING HOUSING PROJECTS."

HE SAID OVER THE YEARS, THE RENTS HAD BEEN GENERALLY ACCEPTABLE TO ITS TENANTS.

MR LEUNG SAID THE SOCIETY WAS AN AUTONOMOUS BODY, OPERATING IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS CONSTITUTION AND WOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING TO THE COMMUNITY ON A NON-PROFIT-MAKING BASIS.

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SETTLEMENT OF SPOUSES OF FORMER SERVICEMEN IN UK

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ASSURANCES WERE GIVEN THAT THE WIVES AND WIDOWS OF FORMER SERVICEMEN WOULD BE ALLOWED TO SETTLE IN THE UNITED KINGDOM AT ANY TIME IN THE FUTURE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

REPLYING TO A QUESTION BY THE HON J D MCGREGOR, MR ASPREY SAID THE CONCERNS OF THE EX-SERVICEMEN AND THEIR WIVES AND WIDOWS WERE APPRECIATED.

"THE GRANT OF BRITISH CITIZENSHIP IS, HOWEVER, A MATTER FOR HMG TO DECIDE," MR ASPREY SAID.

THE IMMIGRATION AND NATIONALITY STATUS OF THE SPOUSES OF BRITISH CITIZENS AND FORMER SERVICEMEN WAS DEBATED IN THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT VERY FULLY DURING THE PASSAGE OF THE BRITISH NATIONALITY (HONG KONG) ACT 1990.

THE SECRETARY SAID PARLIAMENT DECIDED THAT THEY SHOULD NOT BE EXEMPT FROM THE RESIDENTIAL REQUIREMENTS PRESCRIBED BY THE BRITISH NATIONALITY ACT 1981.

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NEW ANCHORAGE FOR DETAINED CRAFT  
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A NEW ANCHORAGE WILL BE ESTABLISHED IN SAI KUNG TO PROVIDE MOORING FACILITIES FOR DETAINED CRAFT.

THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, SAID THIS IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON GILBERT LEUNG KAM-HO IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"WE WILL, IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS, ESTABLISH A NEW DETAINED CRAFT ANCHORAGE AT SHAM TUK, SAI KUNG WHICH WILL EVENTUALLY PROVIDE MOORING FACILITIES FOR 200 DETAINED CRAFT," HE SAID.

MR ASPREY SAID THIS NEW ESTABLISHMENT WOULD DO AWAY WITH THE NEED TO MOOR SUCH CRAFT AT POLICE PIERS OR AT BUOYS IN SCATTERED LOCATIONS.

AS AT THE END OF LAST MONTH, THERE WERE 79 DETAINED VESSELS MOORED ALONGSIDE MARINE POLICE PIERS OR TIED UP TO BUOYS, MOST OF THEM AT ABERDEEN, TAI LAM CHUNG, TUI MIN HOI, MA LIU SHUI AND SAI WAN HO.

"THE LENGTH OF TIME THESE VESSELS ARE DETAINED VARIES GREATLY DEPENDING ON THE NATURE OF THE CASE AND THE TIME TAKEN WITH ANY COURT PROCEEDING. AN AVERAGE PERIOD WOULD BE SIX TO 12 MONTHS," MR ASPREY SAID.

ON WHETHER OR NOT A VESSEL WAS RETURNED TO THE OWNERS, MR ASPREY SAID THIS WAS UP TO THE COURT TO DECIDE.

IN THE EVENT THAT THE COURT DIRECTS ITS RETURN, THE PROCESS IS CARRIED OUT AS QUICKLY AS POSSIBLE, THOUGH DELAYS CAN OCCUR WHEN OWNERSHIP IS IN DISPUTE.

"IF THE VESSEL IS CONFISCATED BY ORDER OF THE COURT, IT IS EITHER RETAINED FOR USE BY THE GOVERNMENT, SOLD THROUGH THE GOVERNMENT SUPPLIES DEPARTMENT OR DESTROYED BY THE MARINE DEPARTMENT," HE ADDED.

MR ASPREY SAID THE NUMBER OF DETAINED VESSELS THAT WENT AGROUND IN PORT SHELTER IN THE LAST THREE YEARS WAS UNKNOWN AS SUCH STATISTICS WERE NOT KEPT.

AS TO THE POSSIBLE POLLUTION PROBLEMS CAUSED, THE SECRETARY SAID THE MAIN POTENTIAL POLLUTION PROBLEM IN SUCH CASES WOULD BE WATER POLLUTION FROM THE DISCHARGE OF OIL AND FUEL.

"ANY FUEL OR OIL SPILLS WOULD BE DEALT WITH IN THE USUAL MANNER BY THE POLLUTION CONTROL UNTIL OF THE MARINE DEPARTMENT," HE SAID.

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WORKING GROUP TO MONITOR PROGRESS OF  
TRIAL ROAD-OPENING CHARGING SCHEME

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THE WORKING GROUP SET UP TO MONITOR THE PROGRESS OF THE TRIAL SCHEME TO CHARGE UTILITY COMPANIES LANE RENTAL FOR ROAD OPENINGS AND TO RESOLVE PROBLEMS HAS MET TWICE.

A REPORT WOULD BE PRODUCED, AND CONCLUSIONS DRAWN ON THE MERITS OF THE SCHEME IN ABOUT SIX MONTHS TIME.

IT WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON HENRY TANG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR BLAKE SAID A TOTAL OF 50 UTILITY WORKS HAD BEEN IDENTIFIED AS BEING SUITABLE AND HAD BEEN SELECTED FOR THE TRIAL, WHICH STARTED IN JULY.

SO FAR, ONE HAD BEEN COMPLETED, 31 WERE IN PROGRESS AND THE REMAINING WOULD START SOON.

HE SAID NO PROBLEM HAD BEEN ENCOUNTERED TO DATE.

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FLEXIBLE USE OF GOVT LAND

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DISTRICT BOARDS ARE NORMALLY CONSULTED ON LAND USES WHICH AFFECT THE WELL-BEING OF PEOPLE IN THEIR DISTRICTS, PARTICULARLY IF THE PROPOSED USES ARE CONSIDERED TO HAVE SIGNIFICANT PLANNING, TRAFFIC, SOCIAL OR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR BOWEN LEUNG, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON LEE WING-TAT IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HOWEVER, AS SHORT-TERM USES ARE OF A TEMPORARY NATURE AND OFTEN SMALL IN SCALE, NOT EVERY PROPOSAL IS PRESENTED TO THE BOARDS, HE SAID.

"DISTRICT OFFICERS' ADVICE IS, NEVERTHELESS, SOUGHT ON ALL PROPOSALS," MR LEUNG ADDED.

HE SAID GOVERNMENT LAND WHICH COULD NOT BE DEVELOPED IMMEDIATELY INTO THEIR PLANNED PERMANENT USES MIGHT BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR VARIOUS TEMPORARY USES IN THE SHORT TERM.

/"IF THE .....

"IF THE PLANNED PERMANENT USES ARE NOT LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE FOR MANY YEARS TO COME AND IF THERE ARE SUITABLE REPLACEMENT SITES, THE TOWN PLAN IS REVIEWED TO SEE WHETHER IT IS DESIRABLE FOR AND THE LAND CONCERNED TO BE REZONED FOR MORE URGENT USES WHICH CAN BE DEVELOPED EARLIER," MR LEUNG SAID.

HE FURTHER EXPLAINED THAT TEMPORARY USES OF LAND INCLUDED TEMPORARY HOUSING AREAS, PUBLIC CAR PARKS, OPEN STORAGE AREAS, PLANT NURSERIES, WORKS AREA, AND SO ON.

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LOCAL OFFICERS GIVEN NECESSARY EXPOSURE AND EXPERIENCE

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN PLANNING FOR MANY YEARS NOW TO ENSURE THAT LOCAL OFFICERS HAVE THE NECESSARY EXPOSURE AND EXPERIENCE TO TAKE OVER SENIOR POSTS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

REPLYING TO A QUESTION FROM THE HON FUNG KIN-KEE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY), ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR STUART HARBINSON, SAID THE RESULTS HAD ON THE WHOLE BEEN ENCOURAGING.

CITING EXAMPLES, HE SAID THE PERCENTAGE OF LOCAL DIRECTORATE OFFICERS HAD GROWN FROM 35 PER CENT IN 1982 TO 65 PER CENT IN 1992, AND THAT OF LOCAL POLICY SECRETARIES HAD INCREASED FROM 23 PER CENT TO 53 PER CENT DURING THE SAME PERIOD.

"IN PART THIS REFLECTS THE INCREMENTAL RESULTS OF OUR LONG STANDING LOCALISATION POLICY," SAID MR HARBINSON.

"BUT WE HAVE NOT HESITATED TO TAKE ADDITIONAL MEASURES WHERE NECESSARY.

"ONE EXAMPLE IS THE INTRODUCTION IN 1986 OF THE GUIDELINE THAT OVERSEAS ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS SHOULD USUALLY RETIRE THREE YEARS EARLY, AT THE AGE OF 57."

FOR POSTS IDENTIFIED IN THE BASIC LAW TO BE FILLED ONLY BY CHINESE CITIZENS, MR HARBINSON SAID THEY WOULD CONTINUE TO BE FILLED PROGRESSIVELY BY TALENTED LOCAL OFFICERS.

HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT THE GOVERNMENT COULD MEET THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE BASIC LAW BOTH IN FULL AND IN GOOD TIME TO ALLOW THOSE SELECTED TO ACQUIRE SUFFICIENT EXPERIENCE BEFORE 1997.

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COMPANIES PROVIDE DATA FOR PAY TREND SURVEY  
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SIXTY-NINE COMPANIES PARTICIPATED IN THE 1991/92 PAY TREND SURVEY CARRIED OUT BY THE STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE, MR STUART HARBINSON, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

HE SAID THESE COMPANIES WERE FROM THE MANUFACTURING, WHOLESALE AND RETAIL, FINANCE AND BUSINESS SERVICES, TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATION, CONSTRUCTION AND ELECTRICAL INSTALLATIONS, AND ELECTRICITY AND GAS SECTORS.

AMONG THEM, 25 WERE SMALL ESTABLISHMENTS EMPLOYING BETWEEN 100 AND 499 WORKERS; 27 WERE MEDIUM-SIZED ESTABLISHMENTS EMPLOYING BETWEEN 500 AND 1,499 WORKERS; AND 17 WERE LARGE ESTABLISHMENTS WITH 1,500 STAFF OR MORE.

MR HARBINSON WAS REPLYING TO A QUESTION RAISED BY THE HON EDWARD HO.

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AIR QUALITY IN TUNNELS CLOSELY MONITORED  
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ALL TUNNELS ARE INSPECTED REGULARLY AND RECORDS ARE SCRUTINISED TO ENSURE THAT AIR QUALITY IN THE TUNNELS IS MAINTAINED WITHIN THE APPROVED STANDARD.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR TRANSPORT, MR MICHAEL LEUNG, IN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON STEVEN POON, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR LEUNG SAID LEVELS OF CARBON MONOXIDE WERE USED AS AN INDICATOR OF OVERALL AIR POLLUTION IN TUNNELS. CARBON MONOXIDE WAS MONITORED CONTINUOUSLY IN ALL TUNNELS, USING AUTOMATIC EQUIPMENT.

"IF CONCENTRATIONS RISE TO BETWEEN 50 AND 100 PARTS PER MILLION, WHICH IS WELL WITHIN THE STANDARD SET, AUDIBLE AND VISUAL ALARMS ARE AUTOMATICALLY ACTIVATED IN THE TUNNEL CONTROL ROOM.

"THE VENTILATION SYSTEM IS IMMEDIATELY ADJUSTED TO IMPROVE THE AIR QUALITY," HE SAID.

MR LEUNG SAID THE MAXIMUM LEVELS OF CARBON MONOXIDE ALLOWED WERE 250 PARTS PER MILLION DURING ANY 30-MINUTE PERIOD FOR THE CROSS HARBOUR TUNNEL, 125 PARTS PER MILLION AT ANY TIME FOR THE EASTERN HARBOUR CROSSING AND 150 PARTS PER MILLION FOR THE TATE'S CAIRN TUNNEL.

/"THE DIFFERENCES .....

"THE DIFFERENCES REFLECT CHANGES IN INTERNATIONAL PRACTICE OVER THE YEARS. IN FACT, CARBON MONOXIDE LEVELS IN ALL TUNNELS ARE ALWAYS KEPT WELL BELOW 125 PARTS PER MILLION," HE SAID.

MR LEUNG SAID TRAFFIC CONDITIONS WITHIN THE TUNNELS WERE MONITORED CONTINUOUSLY BY STAFF USING CLOSED CIRCUIT TELEVISION.

"IN THE EVENT OF TRAFFIC CONGESTION OR VEHICLE BREAKDOWN, PARTICULAR ATTENTION IS PAID TO MAINTAINING AIR QUALITY.

"WHERE NECESSARY, EXTRA FANS ARE SWITCHED ON TO IMPROVE VENTILATION AND VEHICLES ARE STOPPED FROM ENTERING THE TUNNEL UNTIL THE TRAFFIC STARTS MOVING AGAIN," HE SAID.

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536 VISITORS PROSECUTED FOR ILLEGALLY WORKING LAST YEAR  
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THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT PROSECUTED 536 VISITORS FOR WORKING IN THE TERRITORY ILLEGALLY LAST YEAR, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TAM YIU-CHUNG, MR ASPREY SAID OF THESE, 521 CAME FROM CHINA, SEVEN FROM PAKISTAN, THREE FROM THE PHILIPPINES, THREE FROM AUSTRALIA, ONE FROM THAILAND AND ONE FROM INDIA.

HE SAID THE DEPARTMENT PROSECUTED SOME 410 SUCH VISITORS IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR.

"OF THESE, 366 CAME FROM CHINA, 15 FROM BANGLADESH, 14 FROM PAKISTAN, SEVEN FROM THAILAND, FIVE FROM INDIA, TWO FROM THE PHILIPPINES AND ONE FROM SINGAPORE," HE SAID.

HE SAID SENTENCES HAD RANGED FROM FINES OF BETWEEN \$500 AND \$2,000, SUSPENDED PRISON SENTENCES OF BETWEEN ONE AND THREE MONTHS, AND IMPRISONMENT FAR BETWEEN SEVEN DAYS AND TWO MONTHS.

HE ALSO SAID THE IMMIGRATION DEPARTMENT PROSECUTED 271 EMPLOYERS FOR EMPLOYING VISITORS LAST YEAR AND ONE WAS ACQUITTED.

IN THE FIRST NINE MONTHS OF THIS YEAR, THE DEPARTMENT PROSECUTED 208 SUCH EMPLOYERS AND ALL WERE CONVICTED, THE SECRETARY SAID.

"SENTENCES HAVE INCLUDED FINES OF BETWEEN \$1,000 AND \$6,000; SUSPENDED PRISON SENTENCES OF BETWEEN ONE AND FOUR MONTHS; AND, IN ONE CASE, IMPRISONMENT FOR SIX WEEKS," HE ADDED.

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LAW ON CAISSON WORK UNDER REVIEW

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THE FEASIBILITY OF BANNING HAND-DUG CAISSON OPERATIONS WILL NEED TO BE CAREFULLY CONSIDERED IN VIEW OF ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR THE LIVELIHOOD OF EXISTING CAISSON WORKERS AND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER, MR JOHN CHAN, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON TIK CHI-YUEN IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL MEETING TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MR CHAN POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE OCCASIONS WHEN CAISSONS WERE THE SAFEST ENGINEERING SOLUTION, FOR EXAMPLE, ON NARROW OR STEEP SITES WHERE THE USE OF HEAVY PLANT WOULD BE DANGEROUS.

"THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IS REVIEWING THE RELEVANT STATUTORY PROVISIONS WITH A VIEW TO FURTHER IMPROVING THE STANDARDS OF SAFETY FOR WORKERS WORKING IN CAISSONS AND OTHER CONFINED SPACES," HE SAID.

"THE DEPARTMENT IS ALSO SEEKING VIEWS FROM RELEVANT GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS AS WELL AS EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES ORGANISATIONS."

MR CHAN SAID ACCIDENTS RELATING TO HAND-DUG CAISSON OPERATION BETWEEN 1987 AND 1991 TOTALLED 1,491.

THESE HAD RESULTED IN SEVEN DEATHS, OF WHICH THREE WERE DIRECTLY RELATED TO CAISSON WORK.

STATISTICS ALSO SHOWED THAT PNEUMOCONIOSIS IS A COMMON OCCUPATIONAL DISEASE CONTRACTED BY CAISSON WORKERS.

OF THE 252 PNEUMOCONIOTICS INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAD CONTRACTED SILICOSIS FOUND BETWEEN 1989 AND 1991, 90 HAD BEEN ENGAGED IN CAISSON WORK.

MR CHAN SAID CAISSON WORKERS WERE AT PRESENT PROTECTED FROM THE HAZARDS OF SILICA UNDER THE FACTORIES AND INDUSTRIAL UNDERTAKING ORDINANCE AND ITS REGULATIONS.

THE LAW PRESCRIBES THE NECESSARY PRECAUTIONS WHICH MUST BE TAKEN TO SAFEGUARD PERSONS ENTERING OR REMAINING IN CONFINED SPACES SUCH AS CAISSONS, INCLUDING WEARING BREATHING APPARATUS OF AN APPROVED TYPE AND WEARING A SAFETY BELT ATTACHED TO A LIFELINE SO THAT HE MAY BE PULLED TO SAFETY IN CASE OF EMERGENCY.

A CONTRACTOR HAS ALSO TO TAKE ALL REASONABLE STEPS AS ARE NECESSARY TO PREVENT THE INHALATION OF DUST BY THE WORKMAN, EITHER BY PROVIDING ADEQUATE VENTILATION OR BY THE PROVISION AND USE OF SUITABLE RESPIRATORS OR OTHER EFFECTIVE MEANS.

"A SPECIAL ENFORCEMENT CAMPAIGN IS BEING CARRIED OUT BY FACTORIES INSPECTORS TO CHECK ON ALL CONSTRUCTION SITES WITH CAISSON WORK TO ENSURE THAT SAFETY REQUIREMENTS ARE COMPLIED WITH," MR CHAN ADDED.

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PILOT INFORMATION COMMUNAL SYSTEM A CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS

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THE PILOT STATION INFORMATION COMMUNAL SYSTEM (SICS) IN THE WANCHAI POLICE DISTRICT HAS IMPROVED SIGNIFICANTLY THE EFFICIENCY AND ACCURACY OF INCIDENT REPORTING AND PROCESSING OF INFORMATION, THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, INFORMED THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON JAMES TO KUN-SUN, MR ASPREY SAID THE SYSTEM, IN PARTICULAR, HAD ACHIEVED:

- \* INSTANT RETRIEVAL OF UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON CRIME TRENDS, THUS PERMITTING MORE EFFECTIVE DEPLOYMENT OF MANPOWER;
- \* AUTOMATIC MATCHING OF PROPERTY ITEMS REPORTED LOST AND FOUND ANYWHERE IN THE TERRITORY;
- \* IMPROVED MANPOWER PLANNING AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF OFFICERS ON THE BASIS OF UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION ON PERSONAL DETAILS, PREVIOUS POSTINGS, TRAINING RECEIVED AND SKILLS; AND
- \* SWIFT AND ACCURATE DISSEMINATION OF INTERNAL GUIDELINES AND INSTRUCTIONS.

IN VIEW OF THE SUCCESS OF THE PILOT SYSTEM, MR ASPREY SAID IT WAS INTENDED THAT, SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY OF FUNDS, SICS SHOULD BE EXTENDED TO ALL POLICE DISTRICTS ON A PHASED BASIS, BETWEEN 1995 AND 1997.

"SINCE THE POLICE ARE STILL REVIEWING THE PILOT SICS TO DEFINE MORE PRECISELY THE FULL SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS AND COMMUNICATION LINKS BETWEEN POLICE FORMATIONS, IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO DETERMINE ACCURATELY AT THIS STAGE THE COST OF EXTENDING SICS THROUGHOUT THE TERRITORY," HE ADDED.

THE SICS WAS DESIGNED TO REDUCE THE REPETITIVE ADMINISTRATIVE WORK WHICH POLICE OFFICERS UNDERTAKE IN RECORDING AND UPDATING CRIME DATA AND MANAGEMENT INFORMATION; AND HENCE TO ENABLE POLICE OFFICERS TO DEVOTE MORE TIME TO ACTIVE POLICE DUTIES.

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NO PRIORITY TO FORMER ARMY EMPLOYEES TO CHANGE JOB

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THE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT HAVE ANY SPECIAL SCHEMES FOR GIVING PRIORITY ENTRANCE TO FORMER EMPLOYEES OF THE BRITISH FORCES FOR VACANCIES EITHER IN THE ROYAL HONG KONG BRITISH FORCES OR ELSEWHERE IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ALISTAIR ASPREY, IN A WRITTEN REPLY TO A QUESTION BY THE HON MARVIN CHEUNG KIN-TUNG IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

"THEY ARE WELCOME TO APPLY, AND TO COMPETE WITH OTHER APPLICANTS," MR ASPREY SAID.

THE BRITISH FORCES IN HONG KONG EMPLOY SOME 3,800 HONG KONG RESIDENTS OF WHOM 1,500 ARE SERVING MEMBERS OF THE ROYAL NAVY AND THE ARMY. THE REMAINDER ARE CIVILIANS WHO PROVIDE SUPPORT SERVICES.

THE SECRETARY SAID THE HEADQUARTERS BRITISH FORCES, AS THEIR EMPLOYER, HAD ESTABLISHED A RESETTLEMENT TEAM TO ASSIST IN MANAGING THE RUNDOWN IN EMPLOYMENT OF THESE PEOPLE AND IN IDENTIFYING EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEM WHEN THEY LEAVE.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT ASSISTS BY NOTIFYING HEADQUARTERS BRITISH FORCES OF VACANCIES IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

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BILL TO BETTER PROTECT TRAVELLERS INTRODUCED

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NO TRAVEL AGENT HAS ABSCONDED AND THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS AGAINST TRAVEL AGENTS HAS DROPPED SINCE 1988, THE SECRETARY FOR TRADE AND INDUSTRY, MR T. H. CHAU, TOLD THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF TRAVEL AGENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, A BILL WHICH WOULD HELP CONSOLIDATE THESE EFFORTS, MR CHAU SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD COME A LONG WAY SINCE THE DAYS WHEN SOME TRAVEL AGENTS DEFAULTED AND LEFT THOUSANDS OF HOLIDAY-MAKERS UNPROTECTED.

THE PURPOSE OF THE BILL IS TO IMPLEMENT A PACKAGE OF REFORMS WHICH WILL, ON THE ONE HAND, ENHANCE THE REGULATORY REGIME FOR THE OUTBOUND TRAVEL INDUSTRY AND, ON THE OTHER, OFFER INCREASED PROTECTION TO CONSUMERS.

A REVIEW OF THE REGULATORY REGIME FOR THE OUTBOUND TRAVEL INDUSTRY WAS COMPLETED LAST YEAR. AFTER MUCH NEGOTIATION AND CONSULTATION WITH CONCERNED PARTIES, A PACKAGE OF REFORMS, ENDORSED BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON TRAVEL AGENTS, WAS AGREED WITH THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL AND THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL RESERVE FUND LAST JUNE.

SOME OF THESE REFORMS HAVE SINCE BEEN IMPLEMENTED.

OTHER FEATURES OF THE REFORM PACKAGE AWAITING ENACTMENT OF THIS BILL INCLUDED:

\* A STATUTORY COMPENSATION FUND, TO BE CALLED THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COMPENSATION FUND, WILL BE ESTABLISHED FOR OUTBOUND TRAVELLERS. IT WILL TAKE OVER THE ASSETS AND LIABILITIES OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL RESERVE FUND AND WILL BE MANAGED BY AN INDEPENDENT BOARD TO BE APPOINTED BY THE GOVERNOR;

\* THE SPLITTING OF THE PRESENT LEVY ON OUTBOUND PACKAGE TOUR FARES INTO TWO DISCRETE LEVIES: A FUND LEVY AND A COUNCIL LEVY, BOTH TO BE PAID BY LICENSED TRAVEL AGENTS ON THE BASIS OF THE OUTBOUND PACKAGE TOUR FARES. THE FUND LEVY WILL GO TO THE NEW TRAVEL INDUSTRY COMPENSATION FUND FOR THE COMPENSATION OF TRAVELLERS, WHILE THE COUNCIL LEVY WILL GO TO THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL TO HELP FINANCE ITS SELF-REGULATORY EFFORTS.

"WITH INCOME FROM THE COUNCIL LEVY, THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL WOULD HAVE A SECURE AND STABLE SOURCE OF FINANCE FOR THE FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF A DURABLE SELF-REGULATORY STRUCTURE," MR CHAU SAID.

TO ENSURE THE PROPER USE OF THE COUNCIL LEVY, A SET OF RULES HAVE BEEN AGREED WITH THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL. THEY INCLUDE:

\* THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY COUNCIL MAY ONLY RETAIN RESERVES UP TO A LIMIT;

\* THE COUNCIL MUST SUBMIT ITS ANNUAL ESTIMATES TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY;

\* THE COUNCIL WILL BE SUBJECT TO INDEPENDENT VALUE-FOR-MONEY AUDITS; AND

\* THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY MAY REQUIRE THE COUNCIL TO CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS A CERTAIN PERCENTAGE OF ITS ANNUAL RECURRENT EXPENDITURE WITH INCOME FROM MEMBERSHIP FEES AND OTHER NON-LEVY SOURCES, INITIALLY PROPOSED TO BE SET AT 20 PER CENT.

THE BILL ALSO PROVIDES THAT THE RATES OF THE TWO LEVIES MAY BE SPECIFIED BY THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY FROM TIME TO TIME.

IF THIS BILL WAS ENACTED, THE SECRETARY SAID RECOMMENDATION WOULD BE PROPOSED TO THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO SET THE FUND LEVY AT 0.35 PER CENT AND THE COUNCIL LEVY AT 0.15 PER CENT.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

TOUGHER LICENSING CONDITIONS FOR AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES

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A NEW LICENSING SCHEME FOR AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES WAS ANNOUNCED BY THE SECRETARY FOR HOME AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SUEN, IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON.

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES BILL, MR SUEN SAID THIS WOULD ENABLE THE AUTHORITIES TO HAVE BETTER CONTROL OVER THEM.

THE NEED FOR THE NEW LEGISLATION, MR SUEN SAID, WAS BECAUSE THESE GAME CENTRES HAVE INCREASINGLY BEEN OPERATED IN A MANNER WHICH CONFLICTED WITH THE FORMER LICENSING CONDITIONS UNDER THE MISCELLANEOUS LICENCES ORDINANCE.

"CONSEQUENTLY, UNAPPROVED MACHINES AND GAMES OF INDECENT NATURE CAN BE FOUND IN MANY CENTRES, AGE LIMITS ARE ALSO IGNORED," HE NOTED.

THEREFORE, MR SUEN SAID, THERE WAS A NEED FOR MORE EFFECTIVE AND STRICTER CONTROL OVER AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES, COUPLED WITH MUCH TIGHTER SUPERVISION OF LICENSEES OCCASIONED BY THE RAPID CHANGES IN GAMES MACHINE TECHNOLOGY AND THE INCREASING COMPLEXITY OF THE INDUSTRY.

FOR THIS REASON, IT WAS ALSO DECIDED TO SEPARATE THE AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES LICENCES FROM THE MISCELLANEOUS LICENCES ORDINANCE, HE SAID.

MR SUEN SAID THE BILL WOULD EMPOWER THE COMMISSIONER FOR TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING (CTEL) TO IMPOSE LICENCE CONDITIONS.

ONE OF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT CONDITIONS IS THAT IT WILL BE AN OFFENCE TO INSTALL ANY GAMES WHICH HAVE NOT BEEN APPROVED BY CTEL.

ANOTHER IMPORTANT STIPULATION IS THAT ENTRY TO ADULT CENTRES BE RESTRICTED TO PEOPLE AGED 16 AND ABOVE WHILE ENTRY TO CHILDREN CENTRES BE CONFINED TO THOSE UP TO THE AGE OF 16 ONLY.

"TO ENSURE THAT OPERATORS OBSERVE THE LICENCE CONDITIONS CONSCIENTIOUSLY, THE CTEL WILL BE EMPOWERED TO SUSPEND, REVOKE OR REFUSE TO RENEW A LICENCE UNDER SPECIFIED CIRCUMSTANCES IF LICENCE CONDITIONS ARE BREACHED," MR SUEN SAID.

AND, IN THIS CONNECTION, HE SAID, AN INDEPENDENT APPEAL BOARD, TO BE CHAIRED BY A PERSON QUALIFIED FOR APPOINTMENT AS A DISTRICT JUDGE, WILL BE SET UP TO CONSIDER APPEALS ARISING FROM ENFORCEMENT OF THE LEGISLATION.

MEANWHILE, THE TELEVISION AND ENTERTAINMENT LICENSING AUTHORITY WILL BE EXPANDED BY THE CREATION OF AN INSPECTION TEAM WHICH IS TASKED TO MONITOR AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES.

MR SUEN SAID THE NEW STANDARDS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED TO PROTECT PATRONS, LEGITIMATE OPERATORS AND THE PUBLIC ALIKE.

BUILDINGS POSING THREAT TO SAFETY BE GIVEN PRIORITY

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PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO BUILDINGS THAT POSE A POTENTIAL THREAT TO SAFETY UNDER THE BUILDINGS (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1992, THE ACTING SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS, MR BOWEN LEUNG, SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

SPEAKING AT THE RESUMED DEBATE ON THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, MR LEUNG SAID THE PARTICULAR CONCERN OF THE BUILDING AUTHORITY WOULD BE MADE KNOWN TO BUILDING OWNERS UNDER THE TERMS OF AN INVESTIGATION ORDER.

"CONCERN HAS BEEN EXPRESSED AT THE POTENTIALLY LARGE NUMBER OF BUILDINGS WHICH WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE BILL AND ITS EFFECT ON BUILDING OWNERS.

"I WOULD LIKE TO EMPHASISE THAT THE PROPOSED SECTION 26A WILL INITIALLY BE APPLIED SELECTIVELY TO COMPLEMENT THE ON-GOING SURVEY ACTIVITIES BY THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE," MR LEUNG SAID.

DILAPIDATION WHICH ONLY AFFECTED THE APPEARANCE OF THE BUILDING WOULD THEREFORE NOT BE ON THE TOP HIS PRIORITY LIST, THE SECRETARY SAID.

"HOWEVER I SHOULD ADD THAT IT IS IN THE BUILDING OWNERS' INTEREST TO ENSURE THAT ANY DILAPIDATION IS ATTENDED TO PROMPTLY, LEST IT DETERIORATES TO STRUCTURAL DANGER," HE ADDED.

ON THE APPROPRIATE PUBLICITY TO FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BILL, MR LEUNG SAID A FRESH PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN ON BUILDING SAFETY HAD BEEN LAUNCHED SINCE LAST MONTH.

A PRESS CONFERENCE WOULD ALSO BE HELD AFTER THE BILL WAS PASSED INTO LAW TO EXPLAIN ITS PROVISIONS FURTHER.

IN ADDITION, THE PROVISIONS OF THE BILL WILL BE INCLUDED IN THE INFORMATION PAMPHLETS PREPARED BY THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE, WHICH COULD BE OBTAINED FROM DISTRICT OFFICES.

FINALLY, A NEW 24-HOUR "BUILDING SAFETY HOTLINE" HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED TO FURTHER IMPROVE THE ENQUIRY SERVICE AND DISSEMINATE INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC, HE SAID.

AS REGARDS FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, THE SECRETARY SAID THE PRIME RESPONSIBILITY FOR ENSURING THE PROPER MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF BUILDINGS LAY WITH THEIR OWNERS.

"NONETHELESS, THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE WILL GIVE DUE REGARD TO THE ABILITY OF BUILDING OWNERS IN ORGANISING AND PAYING FOR THE PROFESSIONAL SERVICES REQUIRED.

"IN THE CASE OF ORDERS WHICH GO INTO DEFAULT, SYMPATHETIC CONSIDERATION WILL BE GIVEN TO REQUESTS FOR PAYMENT BY INSTALMENTS WHEN FINANCIAL HARDSHIP IS PROVEN," HE SAID.

/MOREOVER, MR .....

MOREOVER, MR LEUNG SAID THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE WOULD PROVIDE AS MUCH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE AS POSSIBLE TO BUILDING OWNERS TO CARRY OUT THE REQUIRED WORK.

FOR INSTANCE, AN EXPLANATORY LETTER WOULD ACCOMPANY THE ORDERS ISSUED.

THE SECRETARY SAID A LIST OF AUTHORISED PERSONS AND REGISTERED STRUCTURAL ENGINEERS, AS WELL AS A LIST OF REGISTERED CONTRACTORS WHO WERE PREPARED TO PROVIDE SERVICES IN RESPECT OF BUILDING SAFETY, WERE AVAILABLE FOR PUBLIC INSPECTION IN ALL DISTRICT OFFICES AS WELL AS THE BUILDINGS ORDINANCE OFFICE.

IN ADDITION, THE ADMINISTRATION WAS DISCUSSING WITH THE RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS ON WHETHER SAMPLE CONTRACTS AND A SCALE OF FEES COULD BE MADE AVAILABLE FOR THE REFERENCE OF BUILDING OWNERS, HE ADDED.

THE BILL WAS PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS.

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WATERWORKS (AMENDMENT) BILL INTRODUCED

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THE WATERWORKS (AMENDMENT) BILL WHICH SEEKS TO BETTER SUPERVISE WATERWORKS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE SECRETARY FOR WORKS, MR JAMES BLAKE, SAID AMENDMENTS HAD BEEN MADE TO CERTAIN SECTIONS OF THE WATERWORKS ORDINANCE TO:

- \* MAKE IT CLEAR THAT THE CONSUMER AND THE AGENT ARE RESPONSIBLE NOT ONLY FOR "CUSTODY" BUT ALSO FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF THESE IMPORTANT SERVICES;
- \* EMPOWER THE WATER AUTHORITY TO DISCONNECT THE SUPPLY IF THE CONSUMER FAILS TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE WATER AUTHORITY TO ENTER PREMISES OR CARRY OUT ANY REQUIRED FUNCTION;
- \* REQUIRE THE CONSUMER TO PAY ALL CHARGES IN CONNECTION WITH A METERED SUPPLY BUT DOES NOT EMPOWER THE WASTER AUTHORITY TO DEMAND CHARGES IN CONNECTION WITH THE COMMUNAL SERVICE; AND
- \* STATE THAT ANY PERSON WHO CONTRAVENES THE SECTION BY UNLAWFULLY TAKING WATER SHALL BE GUILTY OF AN OFFENCE. THE AMENDMENT PROVIDES THAT THE UNLAWFUL TAKING OF WATER SHALL NOT ONLY BE AN OFFENCE BUT THAT THAT PERSON SHALL ALSO BE LIABLE TO PAY A CHARGE FOR THE WATER SO TAKEN.

DEBATE ON THE BILL WAS ADJOURNED.

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OATHS AND DECLARATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 INTRODUCED

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A BILL SEEKING TO MODERNISE THE WORDING OF THE OATH OF FIDELITY FOR EXECUTIVE COUNCILLORS WAS INTRODUCED INTO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (WEDNESDAY).

MOVING THE SECOND READING OF THE BILL, THE CHIEF SECRETARY, SIR DAVID FORD, SAID THESE CHANGES FOLLOWED SIMILAR AMENDMENTS TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL OATH.

"THE OATH OF FIDELITY IS PRESCRIBED IN PART III OF THE SECOND SCHEDULED TO THE ORDINANCE AND CONTAINS REFERENCE TO 'THIS COLONY' AND 'HER MAJESTY'S EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IN THIS COLONY'."

THE BILL REPEALS THE WORDS "HER MAJESTY'S" AND REPLACES THE WORDS "THIS COLONY" WITH "HONG KONG".

HE ALSO SAID THE CHINESE TEXT WAS AMENDED ACCORDINGLY.

AT PRESENT, A PERSON APPOINTED TO THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL IS REQUIRED, UNDER SECTION 18 OF THE OATHS AND DECLARATIONS ORDINANCE, TO TAKE THE OATH OF FIDELITY AND EITHER THE OATH OF ALLEGIANCE OR THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL OATH AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AFTER HIS OR HER APPOINTMENT.

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MOTION ON ELECTION COMMITTEE PASSED IN LEGCO

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THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TONIGHT (WEDNESDAY) PASSED A MOTION MOVED BY THE HON J D MCGREGOR ON ELECTION COMMITTEE FOR THE 1995 ELECTIONS.

A TOTAL OF NINETEEN COUNCILLORS SPOKE FOR MORE THAN TWO HOURS IN THE DEBATE. THE SECRETARY FOR CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS, MR MICHAEL SZE, SPOKE ON BEHALF OF THE GOVERNMENT.

TO EFFECT THE DEBATE, THE LEGCO HAS CARRIED A MOTION TO SUSPEND ITS STANDING ORDERS SO AS TO ENABLE MR MCGREGOR TO MOVE THE SUBSEQUENT MOTION. NINE COUNCILLORS SPOKE IN THE FIRST MOTION.

MEANWHILE, TWO BILLS WERE PASSED WITH AMENDMENTS. THEY WERE EMPLOYEES RETRAINING BILL AND BUILDING (AMENDMENT) (NO.2) BILL 1992.

FOUR WERE INTRODUCED FOR FIRST AND SECOND READINGS AND DEBATES ON THEM WERE ADJOURNED. THEY WERE: OATHS AND DECLARATIONS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992, AMUSEMENT GAME CENTRES BILL, WATERWORKS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992 AND TRAVEL AGENTS (AMENDMENT) BILL 1992.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1992

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TRANSCRIPT OF GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS  
IN EUROPE-EAST ASIAN ECONOMIC FORUM  
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"PROFESSOR, PRIME MINISTER, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN, THERE IS AS YOU PROBABLY KNOW, A PROHIBITION IN THE AMERICAN CONSTITUTION AGAINST CRUEL AND UNUSUAL PUNISHMENTS. I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT AFTER DINNER SPEECHES MIGHT QUALIFY UNDER THAT HEADING. I'M CERTAIN THAT PRE-DINNER SPEECHES QUALIFY, SINCE THEY'RE BOTH UNUSUAL AND PARTICULARLY CRUEL. BUT I WILL TRY TO CURTAIL THE CRUELTY THIS EVENING, SO THAT YOU CAN THEN ENJOY HONG KONG'S CUISINE.

I WANT TO WELCOME YOU BUT I HOPE THAT YOU'LL EXCUSE ME IF, FOLLOWING WHAT YOU SAID, PROFESSOR, ABOUT NETWORKING POWER, I BEGIN BY PAYING A PARTICULARLY WARM WELCOME TO MY FRIEND AND FORMER COLLEAGUE, NORMAN TEBBIT, ONE OF YOUR CO-CHAIRMEN. NORMAN TEBBIT AND I HAVE LINKS WHICH ARE PARTICULARLY STRONG FOR THREE REASONS. FIRST OF ALL BECAUSE WHILE BEING IN THE SAME PARTY, WE HAVE OCCASIONALLY, ONLY VERY OCCASIONALLY, FOUND OURSELVES ON DIFFERENT SIDES OF THE ARGUMENT. AND SINCE I'M NOW GOVERNOR OF HONG KONG AND BEYOND MATTERS POLITICAL, I CAN ADMIT GRACIOUSLY THAT I HAVEN'T ALWAYS BEEN RIGHT.

SECONDLY, WE WERE BOTH CHAIRMEN OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY. THIRDLY, WE WERE BOTH CHAIRMEN OF THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, RESPONSIBLE FOR SUCCESSFUL ELECTION CAMPAIGNS WHICH ALL THE EXPERTS TOLD US WE WOULD LOSE. SO I SUSPECT THAT NORMAN TEBBIT AND I TAKE THE SAME VIEW OF EXPERTS.

I'D LIKE TO WELCOME ALL OF YOU TO HONG KONG, AS I'VE SAID ON A NUMBER OF OCCASIONS, ONE OF THE ECONOMIC WONDERS OF THE WORLD. TO WELCOME YOU BOTH BECAUSE YOU ARE SUCH A PRESTIGIOUS GATHERING, AND BECAUSE IT SEEMS TO ME, THAT WHAT HONG KONG REPRESENTS AND WHAT HONG KONG HAS ACHIEVED, AND THE REASONS FOR THAT ACHIEVEMENT AND SUCCESS, ARE VERY CLOSELY RELATED TO SOME OF THE ISSUES WHICH HAVE DOMINATED YOUR AGENDA OVER THE LAST MANY YEARS AT MEETINGS OF THE FORUM.

FIRST OF ALL, WE'VE BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN HONG KONG BECAUSE THE ENTREPRENEURIAL ABILITY AND SKILL AND NOUS OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG HAS BEEN GIVEN FREE REIN. IN OTHER WORDS, WE'VE PRACTISED WITH ENTHUSIASM, MARKET ECONOMICS IN THE CONTEXT OF PRUDENT FINANCIAL POLICIES. OUR ATTITUDE TO BUSINESS, TO INDUSTRY, TO COMMERCE, IS PERFECTLY SIMPLE: MINIMUM INTERFERENCE, MAXIMUM SUPPORT. WE'VE HAD LOW AND PREDICTABLE TAXES, THE BEST CONCEIVABLE INVESTMENT INCENTIVE. WE'VE KEPT THE GROWTH IN PUBLIC EXPENDITURE YEAR BY YEAR, BELOW THE INCREASE IN THE RATE OF GROWTH OF THE ECONOMY, AND THAT MEANS THAT NOW, ONE OF MY MAJOR POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC PROBLEMS IS WHAT TO DO ABOUT THE SCALE OF OUR SURPLUS. THIS IS NOT A PROBLEM WHICH COMMONLY FEATURES, I'M TOLD, ON THE AGENDA OF FINANCE MINISTERS IN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICA. AND WE'VE PRACTISED WHAT WE'VE PREACHED, THIS HAS BEEN A VERY COMPETITIVE ECONOMY.

/SECONDLY, WE'VE .....

SECONDLY, WE'VE INVESTED IN WHAT - AS I RECALL FROM MY DAYS AS BRITAIN'S AID MINISTER, FROM WHAT DEVELOPMENT ECONOMISTS CALL "SOCIAL EQUITY PROGRAMMES" - WE'VE INVESTED ENORMOUSLY AND SUCCESSFULLY IN PUBLIC HOUSING, SO THAT THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF ORDINARY FAMILIES IN HONG KONG HAS IN MOST CASES BEEN TRANSFORMED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS. WE'VE INVESTED IN EDUCATION. MOST OF MY SENIOR CIVIL SERVANTS WERE AT UNIVERSITY WHEN ONLY A FEW HUNDRED YOUNG PEOPLE FROM HONG KONG WERE ABLE TO GO INTO TERTIARY EDUCATION. WE'RE NOW MOVING RAPIDLY TO A SITUATION IN WHICH ALMOST 1 IN 5 OF THE 17 TO 20 AGE GROUP WILL GO INTO TERTIARY EDUCATION. WE'VE INVESTED SUBSTANTIALLY IN HEALTH PROVISION, SO THAT NOW FOR EXAMPLE WE HAVE BETTER HEALTH INDICATORS THAN A LARGE NUMBER OF MEMBERS OF THE OECD, LOWER CHILD MORTALITY RATES THAN, DARE I SAY, THE UNITED STATES, AUSTRALIA AND THE UNITED KINGDOM. ALL THOSE CONSIDERABLE MARKS OF SOCIAL PROGRESS MADE POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF A SUCCESSFUL MARKET ECONOMY OPERATING IN A SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE WAY.

THIRDLY, WE'VE HAD IN HONG KONG, POLITICAL STABILITY AND THE RULE OF LAW. FOR A GATHERING LIKE THIS, THOSE THINGS SPEAK FOR THEMSELVES. IT IS OF COURSE ONE OF MY TASKS, ONE OF MY RESPONSIBILITIES, TO CONVINCING OTHERS ABOUT THE CRUCIAL IMPORTANCE OF THE RULE OF LAW TO ECONOMIC WELL BEING. AND IT'S ALSO ONE OF MY TASKS TO CONVINCING OTHERS THAT RESPONDING TO PEOPLE'S MODEST BUT LEGITIMATE DEMANDS AND AMBITIONS FOR A RATHER GREATER SHARE IN SHAPING THEIR OWN DESTINY, IS A WAY OF SECURING GREATER POLITICAL STABILITY RATHER THAN UNDERMINING POLITICAL STABILITY.

AND FOURTH, AND RELATED IN PARTICULAR TO THE FIRST OF THOSE PROPOSITIONS, FOURTH, WE'VE BELIEVED AND ARGUED FOR, WHEREVER IT MATTERED, FREE TRADE. THIS IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE BENEFITS OF AN OPEN ECONOMY AND FREE TRADE, PROBABLY BETTER THAN ANY OTHER THAT ECONOMISTS COULD POINT TO. AS A RESULT OF FREE TRADE WE ARE NOW THE 10TH TRADING COMMUNITY IN THE WORLD. AS A RESULT OF OPEN MARKETS AND FREE TRADE, HONG KONG'S ECONOMY REPRESENTS ABOUT 18% OF THE GNP OF CHINA. AS A RESULT OF FREE TRADE, AS VICTOR WAS SAYING A FEW MOMENTS AGO, WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO PLAY - WITH THE OPENING UP OF THE ECONOMY OF CHINA, THAT MOST IMPORTANT AND EXCITING DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAST 20 YEARS - WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO PLAY A KEY ROLE IN THE ADVANCE OF THE ECONOMIES OF ASIA.

SO WHAT THREE CONCLUSIONS DO I DRAW FROM THAT? BINDING THEM ALL IS THAT WHEREVER THERE IS AN ARGUMENT ABOUT FREE TRADE OR PROTECTIONISM, YOU CAN EXPECT THE GOVERNOR OF HONG KONG AND THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG TO BE ARGUING PASSIONATELY, FROM OUR OWN EXPERIENCE, FOR PULLING DOWN BARRIERS TO TRADE, FOR OPENING UP TRADE WHEREVER WE POSSIBLY CAN. FIRST THEN, WE WANT TO SEE A SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE URUGUAY GATT ROUND; ARGUABLY, IN DAYS WHEN WE'RE QUITE PROPERLY CONSCIOUS OF THE POVERTY AND DIFFICULTIES OF SO MANY PARTS OF THE WORLD, THE MOST IMPORTANT SINGLE THING THAT WE COULD DO TO IMPROVE THE WELL BEING OF EVERYONE IN THE WORLD.

/SECONDLY, YOU'LL .....

SECONDLY, YOU'LL FIND US ARGUING PASSIONATELY TO AVOID TRADE FRICTIONS AND TRADE WARS, NOT LEAST, IF I MAY SAY SO, BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND CHINA. I WAS AS DELIGHTED AS VICTOR AT THE SUCCESSFUL OUTCOME OF THE 301 TALKS. I HOPE THAT NEXT YEAR, FOR ONCE AND FOR ALL, WE CAN PUT BEHIND US THE ANNUAL ARGUMENTS ABOUT MFN, BECAUSE ALL OF US KNOW THAT FREE TRADE IS ON THE SIDE OF ECONOMIC PROGRESS, AND THAT TRADE WARS DESTROY GROWTH, DESTROY JOBS, PUT UP PRICES, AND ABORT PROGRESS - SOCIAL PROGRESS, POLITICAL PROGRESS, ECONOMIC PROGRESS.

AND THIRDLY, YOU CAN FIND US ALSO, I HOPE, ARGUING THE CASE FOR FREE TRADE IN EUROPE AS WELL. I BELIEVE VERY STRONGLY THAT THERE ARE MANY ISSUES IN EUROPE WHICH CAN BEST BE SERVED AT THE COMMUNITY LEVEL. I BELIEVE VERY STRONGLY THAT IT'S IMPERATIVE THAT WE COMPLETE THE SINGLE MARKET, THAT WE OPEN UP EUROPE TO CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPEAN COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE RECENTLY DISCOVERED DEMOCRACY THE MOST PAINFUL AND HARD WAY. BUT I DO THINK THAT THERE IS A DANGER IN EUROPE WHICH WE NEED TO BE AWARE OF, AND THE DANGER IS SIMPLY THIS: THE FEELING WHICH MANY POPULIST EUROPEAN POLITICIANS HAVE, THAT BECAUSE OF THE DIFFICULTIES OF COMPETITION, NOT LEAST FROM SUCCESSFUL ASIAN ECONOMIES, THE ONLY WAY THAT EUROPE CAN SAVE AND PROTECT ITS WELFARE SERVICES IS BY SHUTTING OUT COMPETITION FROM ASIA. IN MY VIEW THAT WOULD BE A CERTAIN ROUTE, IN EUROPE, NOT ONLY TO THE MEANEST, NASTIEST, PROTECTIONIST POLITICS, BUT ALSO TO UNDERMINING EUROPE'S STANDARD OF LIVING, AND ULTIMATELY UNDERMINING ITS WELFARE SERVICES AS WELL. PROTECTIONISM ISN'T JUSTIFIED, WHATEVER THE ARGUMENTS THAT ARE PUT FOR IT, AND WELFARE PROTECTIONISM IS NO MORE JUSTIFIED THAN ANY OTHER SORT.

IN COMMUNITY AFTER COMMUNITY IN ASIA - AND THIS IS ONE OF THEM, WHICH I'M LEARNING TO LOVE - WE'VE DEMONSTRATED THAT IT IS POSSIBLE TO BELIEVE IN OPEN MARKETS AND FREE TRADE, AND ON THE BACK OF THAT, TO IMPROVE THE COLLECTIVE COMMUNITY STANDARDS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE, TO INCREASE NOT ONLY THEIR INDIVIDUAL PROSPERITY BUT TO IMPROVE THEIR QUALITY OF LIFE AS WELL. I THINK THAT IF THERE IS ANY LESSON WHICH HONG KONG HAS FOR THE WORLD, IT'S THAT, AND IT'S THAT LESSON WHICH I'M VERY PROUD TO BE IN A POSITION TO PUT TO YOU THIS EVENING, ALBEIT AT THE EXPENSE OF YOUR FIRST COURSE."

GOVERNOR WELL AWARE OF GENERAL MOOD

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SAID TODAY (WEDNESDAY) HE WAS VERY WELL AWARE THAT FEELINGS EXPRESSED TO HIM IN HONG KONG ABOUT THE PROPOSALS IN HIS POLICY ADDRESS HAD BEEN OVERWHELMINGLY FAVOURABLE.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER A VISIT TO SOUTHERN DISTRICT, MR PATTEN SAID WHILE THERE HAD BEEN SOME PEOPLE WHO MADE CRITICISMS, THERE HADN'T BEEN MANY PEOPLE WHO OFFERED ALTERNATIVES.

"IN ANY DEBATE ABOUT THE FUTURE OF A COMMUNITY, IT'S IMPORTANT NOT JUST TO STRIKE POSES OR ATTITUDES; NOT JUST TO SHOUT SLOGANS BUT TO PUT FORWARD SENSIBLE, POSITIVE PROPOSALS. THAT'S WHAT I'VE DONE; THAT'S WHAT I THINK THE COMMUNITY EXPECTED OF ME AND I'LL LOOK FORWARD TO A RESPONSE IN DUE COURSE," HE SAID.

"MY RESOLVE IS TO DO WHAT IS IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG. THE PROPOSALS I PUT FORWARD LAST WEEK WERE MADE IN HONG KONG; THE PROPOSALS I PUT FORWARD REPRESENT MY BEST JUDGMENT OF THE BALANCE OF OPINION IN HONG KONG," HE ADDED.

COMMENTING ON HIS VISIT TO PEKING NEXT WEEK, THE GOVERNOR SAID HE WAS PARTICULARLY LOOKING FORWARD TO HIS FIRST MEETING WITH THE DIRECTOR OF THE HONG KONG AND MACAU AFFAIRS OFFICE OF CHINA'S STATE COUNCIL, MR LU PING.

"I THINK THAT IT WOULD BE WRONG TO THINK THAT ONE CAN ACCOMPLISH TOO MUCH IN A FIRST TRIP, BUT I'LL LOOK TO ESTABLISHING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH MR LU PING AND HIS COLLEAGUES.

"I'LL LOOK FORWARD TO MY FIRST DISCUSSION ABOUT A NUMBER OF MATTERS WHICH ARE OF GREAT CONCERN TO HONG KONG, SUCH AS THE GREAT IMPORTANCE OF WORKING IN A MORE EFFECTIVE, CO-OPERATIVE WAY TO DEAL WITH CRIME AND SMUGGLING," MR PATTEN SAID.

"I'LL ALSO OF COURSE BE DISCUSSING THE PROPOSALS THAT I MADE IN MY LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL SPEECH LAST WEEK ABOUT THE 1995 ELECTIONS, AND I'LL LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING ANY PROPOSALS WHICH MR LU PING AND HIS COLLEAGUES HAVE TO MAKE," HE ADDED.

"MR LU PING IS A HIGHLY INTELLIGENT MAN WHO KNOWS A GREAT DEAL ABOUT HONG KONG, AND I'M SURE THAT HE WILL WANT TO HAVE AN INTELLIGENT DISCUSSION AS WELL," HE SAID.

MR PATTEN SAID HIS VISITS TO THE DISTRICTS WERE A VERY IMPORTANT WAY OF KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH THE COMMUNITY, OF KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS WHO DID SUCH AN IMPORTANT JOB.

"AND I AM ANXIOUS, AS I THINK YOU KNOW FROM MY POLICY SPEECH TO SHARE WITH THEM MORE OF THE BUSINESS OF GOVERNMENT. I THINK IT'S IMPORTANT THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE MORE SAY IN MATTERS THAT DIRECTLY AFFECT THEIR COMMUNITIES," HE SAID.

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GOVERNOR VISITS SOUTHERN DISTRICT

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, VISITED SOUTHERN DISTRICT THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON, TOURING TWO PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES AND SEEING FOR HIMSELF THE LIVING ENVIRONMENT OF BOAT DWELLERS.

MR PATTEN WAS ACCOMPANIED BY THE ACTING REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR HONG KONG AND KOWLOON, MR PHILIP CHOK; SOUTHERN DISTRICT OFFICER, MRS ROSANNA URE AND SOUTHERN DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR HUI YUNG-CHUNG.

HE FIRST WENT TO WAH KWAI ESTATE, THE LATEST PUBLIC HOUSING DEVELOPMENT IN THE DISTRICT, AND MET A FAMILY THERE BEFORE TOURING A SOCIAL CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY.

LATER, HE INSPECTED 13,000-PEOPLE SHEK PAI WAN ESTATE WHICH WAS BUILT IN THE LATE 60'S. THE GOVERNOR ALSO TOURED THE ST PETER'S PRIMARY SCHOOL.

MR PATTEN THEN VISITED A DWELLING BOAT FAMILY IN THE ABERDEEN TYPHOON SHELTER TO UNDERSTAND BETTER THEIR LIVING CONDITIONS.

BEFORE CONCLUDING HIS VISIT, THE GOVERNOR MET DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS AND OTHER PERSONALITIES IN A FLOATING RESTAURANT IN THE TYPHOON SHELTER.

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GREEN GROUPS BRIEFED ON PROPOSALS TO CLEAN UP HK WATERS

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MAJOR ENVIRONMENTAL GROUPS WERE BRIEFED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) BY DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND PLANNING (ENVIRONMENT), MR TONY COOPER, ON THE NEW INITIATIVES TO CLEAN UP HONG KONG'S WATERS AND TO DEAL WITH SOLID WASTES ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNOR IN HIS POLICY ADDRESS LAST WEEK.

AT TODAY'S MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE FRIENDS OF THE EARTH, CONSERVANCY ASSOCIATION, WORLD WIDE FUND FOR NATURE AND THE GREEN POWER, MR COOPER EXPLAINED THE URGENCY TO EMBARK ON A SEWAGE STRATEGY PROGRAMME TO DEAL WITH THE HUGE VOLUME OF UNTREATED SEWAGE AND INDUSTRIAL WASTE DISCHARGED INTO THE HARBOUR WHICH AT PRESENT STOOD AT 1.5 MILLION CUBIC METRES EACH DAY.

THE PROGRAMME WILL INVOLVE EXTENSIVE ENGINEERING WORKS TO COLLECT SEWAGE FOR TREATMENT BEFORE DISCHARGE THROUGH AN OCEANIC OUTFALL SYSTEM WHICH WILL SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCE THE POLLUTION IN THE HARBOUR AND GREATLY IMPROVE WATER QUALITY OF THE HARBOUR AND SWIMMING BEACHES.

THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTRIBUTE AT LEAST \$3 BILLION TO ENABLE THE STRATEGY TO GET OFF THE GROUND QUICKLY.

/UNDER THE .....

UNDER THE "POLLUTERS PAY PRINCIPLE", WIDELY ADOPTED IN MANY COUNTRIES, THE STRATEGY WILL ALSO REQUIRE CONTRIBUTION FROM THE PUBLIC. DETAILS OF THE CHARGING SCHEME ARE BEING WORKED OUT AND WILL BE ANNOUNCED TOWARDS THE END OF THIS YEAR FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION.

ON SOLID WASTE DISPOSAL, MR COOPER REITERATED THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS COMMITTED TO SPENDING \$7.3 BILLION OVER THE NEXT FIVE YEARS ON BUILDING A CHEMICAL WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY ON TSING YI, THREE LARGE STRATEGIC LANDFILLS IN THE NEW TERRITORIES AND ASSOCIATED NETWORK OF REFUSE TRANSFER STATIONS.

ON TOP OF THIS, THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO COMMITTED TO A LIVESTOCK WASTE CONTROL SCHEME TO CLEAN UP RIVERS AND STREAMS WHICH ARE BADLY POLLUTED BY LIVESTOCK WASTES.

"THESE BROAD ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAMMES WILL CONTRIBUTE TOWARDS A CLEANER AND GREENER ENVIRONMENT WHICH HONG KONG BADLY NEEDS TO SUSTAIN ITS PROSPERITY," MR COOPER SAID.

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HK HAS MUCH EXPERTISE ON HIGH-SPEED CRAFT  
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THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE, MR TONY MILLER, TODAY (WEDNESDAY) SAID THE TERRITORY HAD MUCH EXPERIENCE TO OFFER IN REVISING THE INTERNATIONAL CODE ON DYNAMICALLY SUPPORTED CRAFT.

MR MILLER SAID: "WE PROBABLY HAVE THE LARGEST HIGH-SPEED CRAFT OPERATION ANYWHERE IN THE WORLD. WE HAVE HYDROFOILS, HOVERFERRIES, JETFOILS, HIGH-SPEED WATERJET CATAMARANS AND MONOHULLS PLYING SOME 35 ROUTES BETWEEN HONG KONG, MACAU, GUANGZHOU AND NUMEROUS SMALLER PORTS IN THE PEARL RIVER DELTA."

ADDRESSING THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANISATION (IMO) INFORMAL MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON REVISION OF THE DYNAMICALLY SUPPORTED CRAFT (DSC) CODE, MR MILLER STRESSED THE NEED FOR EARLY AGREEMENT ON A NEW INTERNATIONAL SAFETY CODE WHICH TOOK ACCOUNT OF CHANGES IN TECHNOLOGY.

MR MILLER SAID: "HONG KONG HAS AN ENVIABLE SAFETY RECORD. EVEN SO WE HAVE HAD TO LEARN FROM SOMETIMES PAINFUL EXPERIENCE.

"THE DEMAND IS FOR BIGGER AND FASTER. IT MUST ALSO BE FOR SAFER. OURS IS THE WORLD'S BUSIEST PORT. WE HAVE A CLEAR INTEREST IN ENSURING SAFE DESIGN, SAFE CONSTRUCTION AND SAFE OPERATING PRACTICES."

WELCOMING DELEGATES FROM SEVEN ADMINISTRATIONS, MR MILLER INVITED MEMBERS TO SPEND SOME TIME AWAY FROM THE TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS SO THAT THEY COULD LEARN MORE ABOUT HONG KONG.

/MR MILLER .....

MR MILLER SAID: "THIS INFORMAL MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON HIGH-SPEED CRAFT IS THE FIRST SUCH IMO MEETING TO BE HELD IN HONG KONG. WE ARE PROUD TO PLAY HOST TO SUCH A DISTINGUISHED GROUP OF EXPERTS. WE WELCOME YOU ALL TO HONG KONG AND LOOK FORWARD TO SHOWING YOU SOMETHING OF THE TERRITORY AND PORT OPERATIONS."

THE INFORMAL MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP ON REVISION OF THE DSC CODE IS PART OF A SERIES OF TECHNICAL MEETINGS CONVENED BY THE IMO.

THE MEETING IS BEING ATTENDED BY 25 OVERSEAS DELEGATES REPRESENTING AUSTRALIA, CHINA, JAPAN, LIBERIA, MACAU, NORWAY AND SWEDEN. IT IS ALSO ATTENDED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF ALL THE COMPANIES CURRENTLY OPERATING HIGH-SPEED CRAFT IN THE DELTA REGION.

THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVE OF THIS INFORMAL MEETING IS TO FINALISE THE SAFETY STANDARDS RELATING TO THE FIRE PROTECTION ASPECTS OF THE CODE.

MEMBERS WILL ALSO PAY A VISIT TO CHINA AND MACAU AND WILL WITNESS A JOINT SEARCH AND RESCUE EXERCISE BY PARTICIPANTS FROM CHINA, MACAU AND HONG KONG INVOLVING RESCUE FROM A HIGH-SPEED VESSEL IN THE PEARL RIVER DELTA.

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SHIPOWNERS ASSOCIATION MEMBERS VISIT  
MARITIME RESCUE CO-ORDINATION CENTRE

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ELEVEN MEMBERS OF THE HONG KONG SHIPOWNERS ASSOCIATION THIS (WEDNESDAY) AFTERNOON HAD A FIRST-HAND LOOK AT THE "STATE-OF-THE-ART" GLOBAL MARITIME DISTRESS AND SAFETY SYSTEM (GMDSS) OF THE MARINE DEPARTMENT.

THEY WERE BRIEFED BY THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE, MR TONY MILLER.

HEADED BY THE CHAIRMAN OF THE HONG KONG SHIPOWNERS ASSOCIATION, MR PETER COWLING, THE GROUP VISITED THE MARINE DEPARTMENT'S MARITIME RESCUE CO-ORDINATION CENTRE WHICH IS MANNED 24 HOURS A DAY BY SPECIALLY TRAINED MARINE OFFICERS.

MR MILLER TOLD THE LOCAL SHIPOWNERS THAT THE MARINE DEPARTMENT IS THE MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE CO-ORDINATOR FOR ABOUT 400,000 SQUARE MILES OF THE SOUTH CHINA SEA NORTH OF LATITUDE 10 DEGREES NORTH AND WEST OF 120 DEGREES EAST, EXCLUDING THE IMMEDIATE COASTAL WATER OF NEIGHBOURING STATES.

"HONG KONG HAS DEVELOPED AN EXCELLENT REPUTATION IN THE FIELD OF MARITIME SEARCH AND RESCUE AND EARLIER THIS YEAR HAS COMPLETED THE FINAL STAGES IN IMPLEMENTING THE GMDSS WHICH IS PART OF THE INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION ON THE SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA.

/"WE WERE .....

"WE WERE THE FIRST IN ASIA TO IMPLEMENT THE NAVTEX SERVICE, COVERING SOUTH CHINA SEA AND PROVIDING MARITIME SAFETY INFORMATION, METEOROLOGICAL INFORMATION AND A WARNING AND DISTRESS ALERTS.

"WE WERE ALSO THE FIRST TO COMMISSION A SATELLITE TRACKING STATION IN THE COSPAS-SARSAT PROGRAMME FOR DETECTING EMERGENCY POSITION INDICATOR RADIO BEACONS WITHIN A 4,000-KILOMETRE RADIUS," MR MILLER SAID.

THE GMDSS PROVIDE WORLDWIDE TWO-WAY RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN MERCHANT SHIPS AND SEARCH AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES ASHORE, MAKING RAPID ALERTING AND RESPONSE TO SHIPS IN DISTRESS POSSIBLE.

THIS IS ACHIEVED BY MEANS OF SATELLITE COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVANCED LAND-BASED AND SHIP-BORNE RADIOCOMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT, AND ALSO PROVIDES FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF SAFETY INFORMATION, INCLUDING NAVIGATION AND STORM WARNINGS, TO SHIPS AT SEA. DISTRESS SIGNALS ARE ACTIVATED MANUALLY, BUT WOULD ALSO BE TRANSMITTED AUTOMATICALLY FROM ANY SHIP WHICH SANK.

"THE RAPID ALERTING OF SEARCH AND RESCUE AUTHORITIES WILL FACILITATE MORE RAPID DEPLOYMENT OF RESCUE SERVICES AND THEREBY ENHANCE THE SAFETY OF LIFE AT SEA," MR MILLER SAID.

THE SHIPOWNERS ARE MR ANDREW CHEN OF GRAND SEATRADE SHIPPING AGENCIES LTD, MR CHEUNG KING-WA OF HONG KONG MING WAH SHIPPING CO LTD, MR ROBERT A. HO FAIRMONT SHIPPING (HK) LTD, MR STEVE HSU OF OAK STEAMSHIP CO LTD, MR A.T. RADICA OF ORIENT SHIP MANAGEMENT LTD, MR FRANK W.K. TSAO OF INTERNATIONAL MARITIME CARRIERS LTD, MR C.C. TUNG OF ISLAND NAVIGATION CORPORATION INTERNATIONAL LTD, MR FERNANDO FOK OF WAH KWONG & CO (HK) LTD, CAPTAIN W.A. CODRINGTON OF WORLDWIDE SHIPPING AGENCY LTD AND MR MICHAEL FARLIE OF HONG KONG SHIPOWNERS ASSOCIATION.

MR FARLIE SAID: "WE CAN BE JUSTIFIABLY PROUD OF THE MARITIME RESCUE CO-ORDINATION CENTRE OF THE MARINE DEPARTMENT.

"ITS EQUIPMENT IS THE VERY BEST AND ITS STAFF ARE TOP CALIBRE. THEY HAVE ALREADY EARNED A WELL DESERVED REPUTATION FOR SPEED AND EFFICIENCY IN SEVERAL READL LIFE OR DEATH SITUATIONS."

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#### GOVT OFFICIALS TO VISIT CHINA

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MR DOMINIC S.W. WONG, DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, WILL BE VISITING PEKING AND SHANGHAI FROM OCTOBER 18 TO 27 AT THE INVITATION OF CHINA'S STATE EDUCATION COMMISSION. MR WONG WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY SEVEN OTHER HONG KONG GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS.

THIS IS ONE OF A SERIES OF VISITS WHICH STARTED A FEW YEARS AGO FOR GENERAL FAMILIARISATION.

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WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 1992

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NEW FOOTBRIDGE OPENS AT CAUSEWAY BAY

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A COVERED FOOTBRIDGE ACROSS HENNESSY ROAD WITH LANDINGS AT PERCIVAL STREET IS OPENED TODAY (WEDNESDAY) AS PART OF A TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SCHEME IN CAUSEWAY BAY TO IMPROVE THE TRAFFIC AT THE JUNCTION OF THE TWO ROADS.

FOR CONVENIENCE AND COMFORT, ESCALATORS ARE PROVIDED FOR PEDESTRIANS TO GO UP TO THE MAIN DECK OF THE FOOTBRIDGE.

THE FOOTBRIDGE WILL SEPARATE PEDESTRIANS FROM VEHICLES AND THUS ALLOWING A SMOOTHER TRAFFIC FLOW ON BOTH HENNESSY ROAD AND PERCIVAL STREET.

WITH THE OPENING OF THE FOOTBRIDGE, VEHICLES WILL BE ALLOWED TO TURN LEFT FROM PERCIVAL STREET TO HENNESSY ROAD IN MID-NOVEMBER.

IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE FOOTBRIDGE, THE SECTIONS OF HENNESSY ROAD AND PERCIVAL STREET AT THE ROAD JUNCTION ARE ALSO RECONSTRUCTED.

THE OPENING CEREMONY WAS OFFICIATED BY LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR AND WANCHAI DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MRS PEGGY LAM; THE CHAIRMAN OF THE TRAFFIC AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE OF WANCHAI DISTRICT BOARD, MR STEPHEN NG KAM-CHUN; WANCHAI DISTRICT OFFICER, MR PETER MANN; DIRECTOR OF SUN FOO KEE (CIVIL) LTD., MR FAN CHUN-WAH AND REGIONAL HIGHWAY ENGINEER/HONG KONG, MR WONG WAH-LUN.

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NOMINATIONS INVITED FOR LAB ELECTION

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THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT IS INVITING NOMINATIONS FROM TRADE UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS FOR REPRESENTATIVES TO SIT ON THE LABOUR ADVISORY BOARD (LAB) FOR A NEW TERM OF OFFICE.

LETTERS WERE SENT TO ALL 477 REGISTERED TRADE UNIONS TODAY (WEDNESDAY) INVITING THEM TO NOMINATE CANDIDATES FOR ELECTION AS EMPLOYEES' REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BOARD IN ITS NEXT SESSION FROM JANUARY 1, 1993 TO DECEMBER 31, 1994.

SEPARATELY, LETTERS WERE ALSO SENT TO FIVE MAJOR EMPLOYERS' ASSOCIATIONS REQUESTING THEM TO NOMINATE THEIR REPRESENTATIVES.

"THE LAB COMPRISES 12 MEMBERS, SIX EACH ON EMPLOYEES' AND EMPLOYERS' SIDES, WITH THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR OR HER DEPUTY AS THE EX-OFFICIO CHAIRMAN," SAID THE BOARD'S SECRETARY, MRS TERESA LO.

"FIVE SEATS ON THE EMPLOYEES' SIDE WILL BE FILLED BY ELECTION TO BE HELD ON DECEMBER 5 ON THE BASIS OF ONE UNION ONE VOTE," MRS LO SAID.

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"ON THE EMPLOYERS' SIDE, FIVE SEATS WILL BE FILLED BY A NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE EACH FROM THE HONG KONG GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE, THE EMPLOYERS' FEDERATION OF HONG KONG, THE FEDERATION OF HONG KONG INDUSTRIES, THE CHINESE MANUFACTURERS' ASSOCIATION OF HONG KONG AND THE CHINESE GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE," SHE ADDED.

"THE REMAINING EMPLOYERS' AND EMPLOYEES' REPRESENTATIVES WILL BE APPOINTED DIRECTLY BY THE GOVERNMENT," SHE WENT ON.

MRS LO SAID EACH REGISTERED TRADE UNION MIGHT NOMINATE UP TO FIVE CANDIDATES WHO MUST BE PAID-UP MEMBERS.

NOMINATION OF EMPLOYEES' REPRESENTATIVES SHOULD BE MADE IN A SPECIFIED FORM TO REACH THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT BY NOVEMBER 7.

AS FOR NOMINATION OF EMPLOYERS' REPRESENTATIVES, MRS LO SAID THE CLOSING DATE WAS DECEMBER 5.

THE LAB IS A TRIPARTITE CONSULTATIVE BODY WHICH ADVISES THE COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR ON LABOUR MATTERS INCLUDING LEGISLATION AND THE APPLICATION OF INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONVENTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

STARTING FROM THE NEW TERM, MEMBERS OF THE BOARD WILL BE ABLE TO PUT FORWARD SUGGESTIONS FOR INCLUSION IN THE AGENDA OF THE BOARD MEETINGS, SO AS TO ALLOW FREER EXCHANGES OF VIEWS IN THE LAB.

AN ALLOWANCE OF \$4,000 PER TERM WILL ALSO BE GIVEN TO EACH MEMBER OF THE BOARD TO HELP MEET THEIR EXPENSES INCURRED ON ACTIVITIES RELATING TO LAB FUNCTIONS.

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GOVT LAND TO LET BY TENDER  
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THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT IS INVITING TENDERS FOR THE SHORT-TERM TENANCY ON A PIECE OF GOVERNMENT LAND IN HING FAT STREET, NORTH POINT, HONG KONG.

THE SITE WITH AN AREA OF ABOUT 940 SQUARE METRES IS INTENDED FOR WORKS AREA AND/OR OPEN STORAGE (EXCLUDING DANGEROUS GOODS, AGGREGATE, SAND, CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS AND CONTAINERS) AND/OR FEE-PAYING PUBLIC VEHICLE PARK FOR THE PARKING OF MOTOR VEHICLES (EXCLUDING CONTAINER VEHICLES).

THE TENANCY IS FOR NINE MONTHS AND RENEWABLE MONTHLY THEREAFTER.

/CLOSING DATE .....

CLOSING DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDERS IS NOON ON OCTOBER 30.

FORM OF TENDER, TENDER NOTICE AND CONDITIONS MAY BE OBTAINED FROM AND TENDER PLAN INSPECTED AT, THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICE, HONG KONG EAST, 19TH FLOOR, SOUTHORN CENTRE, 130 HENNESSY ROAD, HONG KONG, THE BUILDINGS AND LANDS DEPARTMENT, 14TH FLOOR, MURRAY BUILDING, GARDEN ROAD, HONG KONG AND THE DISTRICT LANDS OFFICES KOWLOON, 10TH FLOOR, YAU MA TEI CAR PARK BUILDING, 250 SHANGHAI STREET, KOWLOON.

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FINANCE COMMITTEE TO MEET ON FRIDAY

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THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL HOLD A MEETING AT 2.30 PM ON FRIDAY (OCTOBER 16) IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL CHAMBER.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO OBSERVE THE PROCEEDINGS FROM THE CHAMBER'S PUBLIC GALLERY. THEY MAY RESERVE SEATS BY CALLING 869 9492.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

ADVANCE COPIES OF THE COMMITTEE'S PAPERS WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR THE MEDIA FROM 4 PM TOMORROW (THURSDAY) AT THE PRESS ROOM ON THE FIRST FLOOR IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BUILDING. PLEASE NOTE THAT THE PAPERS WILL BE EMBARGOED FOR USE UNTIL THE MEETING ENDS.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND  
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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	\$ MILLION -----
OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,500
REVERASL OF LAF	NIL
BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF	1,500
NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY	NIL
EFFECT OF LAF TODAY	NIL
CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT	1,500
LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER TWI 110.6 *-0.2* 14.10.92	

/HONG KONG .....

## HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

EF BILLS		HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS				
TERMS	YIELD	TERM	ISSUE	COUPON	PRICE	YIELD
1 WEEK	2.62 PCT	13 MONTHS	2311	6.25	103.05	3.41
1 MONTH	2.70 PCT	16 MONTHS	2402	5.50	102.55	3.56
3 MONTHS	2.78 PCT	19 MONTHS	2405	5.502	102.58	3.85
6 MONTHS	2.85 PCT	22 MONTHS	2408	4.375	100.68	4.03
12 MONTHS	3.33 PCT					

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 2,727 MN

CLOSED 14 OCTOBER 1992