



DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES
GARDEN ROAD, 5th-8th FLOORS, MURRAY BUILDING,
HONG KONG. TEL.: 2842 8777

Thursday, December 5, 1996

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Governor's Statement to Legislative Council

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The following is the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten's Statement to the Legislative Council today (Thursday):

Mr President, there has been considerable interest - and a good deal of misunderstanding - about consular protection for British Nationals in Hong Kong after 30 June 1997. I wanted to come to the Council today to set the record straight and to try to clear up some of the concerns which Honourable Members may have.

Can I straightaway express my gratitude to the Council for, as it were, accommodating me at short notice. I have just come from a summit this afternoon on disability and transport - the fourth one we have held. That stopped me coming to the Council earlier this afternoon and I would just like once again to express my gratitude to the Council for making it possible for me to come here, which is the right place to come to deal with some of the anxieties which have been expressed in the last few days.

I want to deal with four of the myths which have, I think, arisen in the last 48 hours.

First Myth: that British passports issued under the British Nationality Selection Scheme are second-class documents, and will be treated differently by British authorities from British citizen passports obtained in other ways. This is completely untrue. All British citizen passports are identical. There is only one form of British citizenship - I am not talking here about BNOs and BDTCs, but British citizens. The British Government draws no distinction whatsoever between British citizenship acquired under the British Nationality Selection Scheme or acquired in any other way. The BNSS is a means to a destination - British citizenship. Once you have reached that destination, it becomes utterly irrelevant how you got there.

Second Myth: that the British Consulate will not extend consular protection to holders of passports issued under the British Nationality Selection Scheme, but it will do so to those who have obtained their passports in other ways. That is not true. There are no differences between the documents. The British Government, and the future British Consulate-General, will offer consular protection to British Nationals in Hong Kong - BNSS and non-BNSS - irrespective of how that nationality was obtained, except in cases of dual nationality. Our consular officials will not be able to tell from a British citizen passport how it was obtained by its holder. Nor will China have any means of knowing.

Third Myth: that Britain accepts that international law limits the ability of the UK to provide consular protection to BNSS recipients who are dual nationals, but does not accept it in the case of other British Nationals. Again, untrue. Let me read to you the relevant sentence, based on international law, that is printed in every single British passport, BNSS or otherwise, including this passport, which happens to have a certain meaning for me since it is my own. Let me quote - if I can read it - I am getting short-sighted:

"British Nationals who are also nationals of another country cannot be protected by Her Majesty's representatives against the authorities of that country."

Britain accepts - that is my passport and it is the same as any other British passport - Britain accepts that international law limits the ability of the UK to provide full consular protection to dual nationals in the country or territory of their nationality. But it is a matter for the United Kingdom to decide what representations it makes in any individual case; and, crucially, Britain does not accept that the way in which a British citizen obtained his or her passport would of itself be evidence of dual nationality.

Fourth Myth: that Britain will regard any BNSS recipient seeking consular protection at the British Consulate as a dual national. Again, that is not true. British consular officials will not know from individual's passports whether they have obtained their passports under the BNSS scheme, and they will not ask them whether they have done so, because as far as Her Majesty's Government is concerned, that is completely irrelevant. A British citizen is a British citizen, full stop. British practice in Hong Kong will be exactly the same as it is in France, or Belgium, or the United States, or Canada or anywhere else in the world where British Nationals may be in difficulty. If an individual presented himself or herself at the British Consulate, claiming to be a solely British National, the British Consulate would accept that and act on his or her behalf, unless it was presented with acceptable evidence of dual nationality. The Consul-General would not seek such evidence. Even if Britain were persuaded that someone was a dual national, that would not in itself stop it from making representations on his or her behalf. That is something which Honourable Members know perfectly well we do already, including in cases in China.

The British Government takes seriously its responsibilities to all British Nationals in Hong Kong, irrespective of how their British nationality was obtained and of whether they hold Chinese nationality. Britain would not - repeat not - regard any claim by the local authorities that a British passport had been obtained under the British Nationality Selection Scheme as of itself relevant or acceptable evidence of dual nationality. It is for the British Government and the British Government alone to determine whether or not an individual holds British nationality. Britain cannot accept any suggestion that this can ever be a matter for any other government.

Finally, let me say this. Britain has a good record of standing up for its nationals in distress whether they come from Hong Kong or anywhere else. In the case of Hong Kong, we do so even in cases of dual nationality today, and we will continue to do so after the handover. Britain will not sit idly by if British Nationals are in trouble. I understand Honourable Members' concern and the community's concern about some of the reports they have heard, many of which have been misleading in recent days. Those concerns are ill-founded. I will be very happy to take any questions.

End

Transcript of Governor's question-and-answer session

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The following is the transcript of the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten's special question-and-answer session in the Legislative Council this (Thursday) afternoon:

Dr Yeung Sum (in Chinese): Thank you Mr President. Today the Governor is attending this sitting probably because a British official has said that holders of the BNSS passports will not be protected by the Consulate-General after 1997. I would like to ask a question about the credibility of the British and Hong Kong Governments. Now, when the BNSS was introduced to Hong Kong was it made clear to the people of Hong Kong that consular protection would not be accorded to those with dual nationality? If that was made clear then it is not necessary to hold this meeting. Why didn't the British and Hong Kong Governments make this clear to the people of Hong Kong? Is this a question of credibility?

Governor: I am sure the Honourable gentleman would accept that in every country, in every country in the world, under the Hague Convention and under international law people with a dual nationality have difficulty in claiming full consular protection, and it states that explicitly, as I mentioned earlier, in every British passport. Not passports issued under the British Nationality Scheme, but every passport. I would think it highly likely that it says it also in the passports issued by other governments and countries. The Honourable Member is nodding his head next to Dr Yeung Sum. I am sure that is the situation.

What I want to make clear is that people in Hong Kong will be treated in exactly the same way as they would be treated anywhere else. We will not accept that there is any distinction between one form of British passport for a British National and another. A British National, a British citizen, is a British National, is a British citizen.

There is something else I would like to say about consular protection. The fact that full consular protection cannot always be provided in certain cases does not mean that a British Consulate or a British Embassy turns those who are in trouble away.

Let me just tell the Honourable gentleman what it says in the Guide which is available to the public on consular protection. It tells the public what a consul can do: issue emergency passports, contact relatives and friends and ask them to help with money or tickets and so on and so on. And at the bottom of the list, the sort of things that are of concern to all Honourable Members: contact and visit British Nationals under arrest or in prison and in circumstances arrange for messages to be sent to relatives or friends; give guidance on organisations experienced in tracing missing-persons; make representations on your behalf to the local authorities in certain circumstances.

And then it says the things that a Consul can't do and it mentions intervening in court proceedings, getting you out of prison, etc. And it says at the bottom that a Consul cannot formally assist dual nationals in the country of their second nationality. Note the word "formally" assist - can't "formally" assist under the international convention. But certainly can assist and would assist as British Embassies, as British Consulates do all over the world, even where a British National has dual nationality. That happens already.

The point I want to stress, again, is that there is no difference between a passport acquired under the BNS Scheme and any other passport. As far as Britain is concerned, those passports give somebody full consular protection, unless, as I said, evidence could be established to the contrary. And we do not and could not accept that your holding of a passport which you may have acquired under the BNS Scheme is, as it were, adequate evidence of dual nationality. That is the point which I think there has been confusion about and that is the point that I want to make very clearly today.

Dr Yeung Sum (in Chinese): I think those who know the law will understand that dual nationals may not be protected by the British Consulate in the country of second nationality. But what I asked was why the British Government did not make clear to the people of Hong Kong that after acquiring a British passport under the BNSS they might not be offered consular protection after 1997? I just want to know why this point was not simply made clear to the people of Hong Kong and why is it that the Governor has to make clear the point now?

Governor: Let me, if the Honourable Member does not mind correcting on one point. The Honourable Member is suggesting that there is something particular about having a passport which is acquired under the BNS Scheme. That is not the case. The way you acquire a British passport does not affect the validity, does not affect the value, does not affect British authorities' attitudes to that passport in any way. The BNS is a route to acquiring a passport - like marriage can be a route to acquiring a passport, like birth can be a route to acquiring a passport. But once you have got that passport it is exactly the same for everyone. And for everyone, in whatever country they are in, the same rules apply regarding dual nationality.

I want to make it clear that we would provide consular protection, full consular protection for anyone with a British passport which they may have acquired under the BNS Scheme or under any other scheme, and we would provide that consular protection after 1997 unless there was evidence that dual nationality. And even where there was evidence of dual nationality, it does not mean we would wash our hands of whoever came to the British Consulate with a case about which they were concerned.

Miss Margaret Ng: Mr President, I do not have a written record but perhaps the Governor can obtain a written record of a meeting between a delegation of this Council to London - I think it was in February or March. I raised the matter with the Foreign Secretary. Subsequent to that, in Government House during the Prime Minister's visit I raised that same question with the Prime Minister on dual nationality. I was given the answer that dual nationality does not prevent a holder of a British passport from obtaining consular protection in Hong Kong. I must confess I was a little surprised at the time but that was the unequivocal answer I was given. I do not know whether it was because my question was not correctly asked or because I misunderstood the answer but may I ask the Governor to check the written record.

But my question really is pertaining to something the Governor has just told this Council which is that China has no way of telling how the passport was obtained, and presumably that includes whether the passport was obtained through the BNSS. Now may I ask the Governor to elaborate on why we could feel assured that this is the case?

Governor: First of all on the important first point the Honourable lady made - and I have too much respect for the Honourable lady to be implying in what I say to her that she has not told us the situation as she recalls it and as she believes it to have been - but I would be extremely surprised if either the Prime Minister or the Foreign Secretary had stated that anyone with dual nationality could receive formal consular protection. They can certainly receive consular assistance and I would believe it as one of our moral responsibilities to go on showing concern for and providing assistance to people who had dual nationality. But I would be very surprised if they had said something which as the Honourable lady knows, as a lawyer, is made absolutely clear in international covenants to which we are all signed-up.

I do not believe that there is any way in which Chinese authorities will know how somebody acquired a British passport. But I must say that the Honourable lady has touched on the reason why this issue causes so much concern to people. There was a statement in the Hong Kong Standard this morning which I regard as particularly chilling. And I very much hope that the Xinhua News Agency will disclaim that statement. Let me read it out to the Legislative Council:

An official of the Xinhua News Agency, Beijing's representative office in Hong Kong, said that identified BNSS passport holders would be regarded as Chinese Nationals even if they had lived in Britain and returned to Hong Kong as British citizens. China would be able to trace such people even though their files were kept by Britain, the official said, on condition of anonymity.

What is it, what state of mind is it that brings people to make statements like that when what we are all attempting to do is to give people in Hong Kong reassurances about their future, about their future stability and about their future freedoms?

I can give this Legislative Council, this Honourable House, all the assurance - supported by the British Prime Minister and Cabinet - all the assurance at my command about the status of a British passport, however it was acquired, after 1997. What I cannot do is to pretend to this House that the way that Chinese nationality law is framed and the way it is often implemented does not cause worries and shocks. It does that now in China. I invite Members to consider the consular cases involving other countries. I invite them to consider the case of Mr James Pang(?) There is a case of somebody with an Australian passport who has the greatest consular difficulties because of the way that Chinese officials interpret their nationality law.

Now if that attitude obtains in Hong Kong after 1997 there will clearly be a large number of arguments on consular issues, not just with Britain - not just with Britain - but with other countries who have citizens holding a passport in Hong Kong. That is the truth of the matter and Members in this Legislative Council know that to be the case.

So I hope we can have less of this sort of chilling statement and a little more reassurance, and a little less of seeming to want to target people who have this particular passport or that. Those who are advising Chinese Mainland officials, those who are joining other organisations in Shenzhen, have a particular responsibility, in my judgment, to make sure that statements like that are not made.

Miss Margaret Ng: A little more assurance in that case. Leaving the Chinese Government aside - and I quite understand the Governor's frustration - but concentrating just on the Hong Kong Government and the British Administration in Hong Kong, at the time when people applied for British Nationality under the BNSS there were certain documents submitted to the Hong Kong Government. Now may I ask the Governor to inform this Council what happened to those documents, those applications, information contained anywhere within the government files in Hong Kong or in London about the names and the particulars of people who have applied and subsequently people who had obtained the British Nationality?

Governor: That is an extremely important point and I would not wish to mislead the Legislative Council in any respect in giving a comprehensive answer. So what I will do, I will give the Honourable lady a brief answer of what I understand the position to be and then I will make clear that we give this Council a statement on exactly what the position is, where exactly all the information is, and what is happening to the information.

As I understand it, the Immigration Department at present have some of this information; it is being sent back through the British Consulate-General to the UK and when the British Consulate-General take over all their responsibilities in relation to passport issues at the beginning of next year they will have all the information with them. But I do not want there to be any possibility of misleading the Council so that is a qualified and conditional answer and I will write to the Honourable lady and make sure the letter is published giving exactly what that information is.

We are not unaware - not least because of statements like that - of the sensitivity of this information and those documents and I want to assure everybody in Hong Kong that we will do everything humanly, technologically possible to keep that material secure and to keep that material confidential. The Honourable lady will know that it would be illegal for us to make information acquired under the BNS Scheme public.

Mr Bruce Liu (in Chinese): Mr President, I agree with the international law that dual nationals should not get full consular protection. Mr Governor, concerning Hong Kong people who applied for the BNS, most of them are trying to get political insurance. The insurance coverage should have covered British nationality, British consular protection. However, for those who have taken out such political insurance, all of a sudden discover today that concerning the British consular protection there is one rider in the insurance policy, that is if they have dual nationality then they will be regarded as exceptional cases. So now they have discovered this and this is my question for you Mr Governor.

Will the UK Government and/or the Hong Kong Government with regard to these policy holders of political insurance and who have been misled, will compensation be made to them? Say a refund, or compensation in other forms?

Governor: I don't know whether the Honourable gentleman is -- I don't know whether I am being inarticulate or whether perhaps the Honourable gentleman has not fully grasped what I am saying. The only qualification as far as British consular protection is concerned, for somebody who acquired a passport under the British Nationality Scheme, is exactly the same qualification as applies to the Governor of Hong Kong. Because of the international conventions which are referred to in a British passport we cannot give full consular protection when there is dual nationality. But the fact that somebody has a British passport under the British Nationality Scheme is not itself relevant to or evidence of dual nationality. It is an extremely important point that people should recognise and that people should accept.

I repeat one other point - or make it perhaps in more robust language. If somebody turns up at the British Consulate after 1 July 1997 and says, "I've got a British passport, I'm a British citizen, I want consular protection". Somebody at the British Consulate is not going to say, "Did you get your passport through the British Nationality Scheme? If you did I'm afraid that we can't offer you full consular protection." They are going to say, "You have got a British passport, we will offer you full consular protection." If the authorities then provided evidence of dual nationality, the British Consulate in those circumstances would not say, "Sorry, there is absolutely nothing we can do to help you", they would say, "Formally, under the Hague Convention we can't give you the assistance which we would otherwise have been able to provide but we can still help you as before 1997 we were helping people with dual nationality who got into consular difficulties in China".

So I want the Honourable gentleman to recognise that there is no concession that holding a passport under the British Nationality Scheme implies or explicitly makes the point that one has dual nationality.

Mr Bruce Liu (in Chinese): I have not misunderstood the situation because I really have looked into the exceptional cases very carefully. I would like to know why is it that four years ago when the UK Government was pushing the BNSS as a form of political insurance, why did it not then make it clear to Hong Kong citizens that consular protection would not be afforded in full in the situation of dual nationality? I would like to know whether any officials have been guilty of negligence of duty?

Governor: No, I don't believe they have. What I hope has been said at every stage is that a passport acquired under the British Nationality Scheme is the same as the passport that I have got and it gives you the same entitlements in Hong Kong as in Papua New Guinea, or Panama City or Patagonia. Anywhere, you have the right to full consular protection unless - unless - there is evidence, satisfactory evidence of dual nationality. If there is satisfactory evidence of dual nationality it does not mean that a British Embassy or British Consulate is not prepared to go in and bat for you, is not prepared to fight your corner. What it does mean is there are restrictions on the extent to which it can do that. That is the same in Hong Kong as everywhere else, Hong Kong is not being put in a special category.

Mr Albert Ho (in Chinese): Just now the Governor has already explained the legal situation very clearly but I think Hong Kong people now should know more about the political reality that we face after 1997, especially since the Chinese Government has already made clear its policy. In the past few years it has already said that it would not recognise British Nationality received under BNSS. Say, after 1997, there is a Hong Kong person holding a British passport and presenting himself to a British Consulate in Hong Kong asking for consular protection and the Hong Kong Government then, or the Chinese Government then says that this is a Chinese National. So, would the British Consulate do nothing unless it is clarified whether this person has got dual nationality, or would assistance be given at the same time when the Hong Kong Government or Chinese Government are producing evidence proving the dual nationality?

Or, say, the Chinese Government or Hong Kong Government releases a very clear piece of legislation stipulating that all these people who received British Nationality under BNSS would be presumed or regarded legally as Chinese Nationals, then in that case would the British Consulate not do any investigation and simply regard them as indeed having dual nationality and would not afford them full consular protection? I would like to know what would the political reality be?

Governor: It is an important question and I am going to have to be slightly repetitive in answering it because we tend to be circling the same passports or the same passport issue. But let me just make one point by way of introduction because it has been, I think, mis-stated in one of this morning's newspapers. It was said in the otherwise admirable South China Morning Post this morning in its editorial: Both countries - that is Britain and China - are agreed that Scheme passport holders are Chinese Nationals, as was made clear by both sides with reference to holders of British Dependent Territories Citizen and British National Overseas Documents in Memoranda attached to the Joint Declaration.

Well, the second part of the statement is true. The first part of the statement is not true and could not conceivably be true since the British Nationality Scheme came into being seven years after the Joint Declaration. There is no agreement between Britain and China that Scheme passport holders are Chinese Nationals.

Let me make the point the other way round. What would China think if Britain said it was going to tell China who was a Chinese National? China would think that was the most monstrous impertinence. It would think it was an attack on Chinese national sovereignty. Nobody can tell Britain or the British Government who is a British citizen and who is not. That is a matter within our sovereign gift and we are not going to throw it away for anyone.

The Honourable Member asked what would happen if somebody turned up with a passport which they had acquired under the British Nationality Scheme and asked for consular protection. Let me make the point once again that what will not happen is that there won't be any question at the British Consulate about how they got their scheme implying that if they got it through the British Nationality Scheme it somehow entitles them to less than if they got it through birth or marriage or in some other way. They will get full consular protection until it can be established or unless it is established that they are a dual national.

Now, what would be the sort of evidence that would establish that? It is always extremely dangerous to get involved in hypotheticals and I am not going to do that this evening, but I will give you one obvious example where it would be difficult to refute that the person was a dual national. Let me read what it says in an SAR passport - if it is in slightly larger letters. An SAR passport says, in the notes on page 2, number 2:

"The bearer of this passport is a Chinese citizen."

So it would be quite difficult to argue that somebody who had an SAR passport was not a dual national. But I repeat, that does not mean that that person, in the British Consulate, would not receive - not the formal consultation which I was reading out about earlier - but would not receive assistance in the way that people with dual nationality receive assistance today. We have a particular obligation to our citizens whether they are dual nationals or not. We have an enhanced obligation to those citizens where they are not dual nationals.

Mr Albert Ho (in Chinese): Was the Governor saying this: in future, be it the SARG or the Chinese Government, if it issues an announcement or an order to the effect that those who acquired the British passport under the BNSS will be regarded as a Chinese citizen, now in future if such a person goes to the British Consulate and asks for consulate protection, can the Governor tell us that the British Consulate will disregard the announcement or the order made by the SARG or the Chinese Government because there is no way to prove whether or not that particular person has obtained the British passport under the selection scheme, and therefore full consular protection would be offered to that person?

Governor: The Honourable gentleman is home in one. The point that I have been seeking to make is that no one else can tell Britain who is a British citizen, who has a British passport, and we would not accept it - to repeat myself - as relevant to or evidence of dual nationality whether somebody had acquired their passport under the British Nationality Scheme. So far as we are concerned - let me repeat again - a passport is a passport is a passport.

To go back to earlier questions, that does not of course mean that there may not be circumstances in which somebody who did acquire their passport under the BNS Scheme is actually, with good evidence, a dual national. That will happen. I gave an example a moment or two ago. But the Honourable gentleman's clear assessment of the situation was correct. You turn up at the British Consulate with a British passport - whatever Chinese officials have said, whatever any officials anywhere have said - if you have got a British passport, legally issued by the British Government, that's that.

Mrs Selina Chow (in Chinese): Thank you Mr President. I believe that many Members here will recall that in fact the LegCo has asked many, many times, questions about this issue of Hong Kong people holding British passports and whether or not they will be accorded British consular protection after 1997, and I think my colleagues will agree with me that never has there been a clear answer. And today the Governor makes it clear to us that a British passport obtained under the BNSS is no different from other British passports; they are all British passports, they enjoy the same status, there is no question of a second-class passport.

Well, our concern is when a Hong Kong person holds a British passport, whether it is a passport obtained under the BNSS or a passport obtained after residence in the United Kingdom, will he be accorded consular protection after 1997? Because yesterday we read a statement from the FCO and just now the Governor also mentioned that how the passport is obtained will not produce any different treatment to the holder. Now if a person holding this passport under the BNSS approaches the British Consulate, here it is said that 'without acceptable evidence of dual nationality'. The statement seems to be saying that if somebody is to come up with some other evidence of dual nationality then the consular protection offered may be different.

Now can the Governor tell us clearly what is meant by 'acceptable evidence of dual nationality'? For an ordinary person in Hong Kong, after 1997 he will be treated as a Chinese citizen, so is that an acceptable evidence of dual nationality? If that is the case, then does it mean that whoever, holding a British passport and approaching the British Consulate may be turned away?

Governor: I said earlier that it is not for the Chinese authorities to say who is or who is not a British citizen. And I also, earlier - I think the Honourable lady at the time - I don't say it critically - I think was studying the Basic Law - I said earlier that I could give one perfectly straightforward example of what would presumably be regarded by most fair-minded people as acceptable evidence of dual nationality, and that is the holding of an SAR passport, since an SAR passport declares very explicitly that the bearer of this passport is a Chinese citizen. If you actually have one of these passports and travel on it with that written inside, it would be quite difficult for a British Consul-General to argue that dual nationality did not apply. I am sure the Honourable lady would accept that point.

In those circumstances, even if formal support could not be provided, I am sure that the British Consulate would want to assist in every possible way, short of all that is provided for in the Hague Convention. But I repeat, it is not for China to say who is a British citizen any more than it is for Britain to say who is a Chinese citizen.

Mrs Selina Chow (in Chinese): Mr President, the Governor made it very clear just now that if a person holds another passport then it is evidence of dual nationality. But of course that particular person has to apply for another passport. If a Hong Kong person has not applied for any other passport, he is just holding the ID card proving that he is a permanent resident of Hong Kong, and he also holds a British passport, he does not have any other passport, then will he be considered as having dual nationality?

Governor: What I can't conceivably do, as the Honourably lady will know, is to say that the only case in which you could demonstrate dual nationality was one in which somebody was an SAR passport holder. Anybody would be exceptionally foolish who tried to define every conceivable circumstance which would provide evidence of dual nationality. What I am saying is as far as the British Government is concerned, as far as the British Consulate-General after 1997 is concerned, holding a British passport entitles you to formal consular protection unless there can be acceptable evidence to the contrary. If we did not take that view I am sure that many people would regard the consequences as being justiciable.

Dr C.H. Leong: Governor, in 1990 the former Foreign Secretary, Douglas Hurd, actually mentioned what you just said and that is, no matter where you get your British citizenship you will get the same consular protection. And I think you mentioned that just now quite succinctly. I think you used that to say that the two types of passport are similar in the sense that the holder of the passport, of British citizenship like yourself and those from the BNS Scheme are similar. But can I put it to you that there are basically some subtle difference or a little bit more than a subtle difference because people who acquired British citizenship like yourself, or anybody not from the BNS Scheme, will not have dual nationality. But those who apply through the BNSS Scheme will, according to what China has always said, will always have dual nationality.

Now of course the crux of the matter, therefore, is dual nationality itself. So, you mentioned just now repeatedly, you said that no one can tell the British Government who is a British citizen. Could I reverse the question and ask you, Governor, who can tell the British Government that a person has dual nationality, and using what method? You mentioned one as an SAR passport but in your mind are there other areas that you would consider?

Governor: Let's follow through a likely course of events. Mr X goes to the British Consulate-General and says, "I'm in trouble, I'm a British citizen, I have a British passport, I want consular protection". The British Consul says, "Fine. I will take up your problem with the authorities, with the government". He goes to the government and somebody says to him, "You can't make formal representations on behalf of Mr X because we don't think that he is a solely British citizen, we think he has got dual nationality". The Consulate-General would presumably then say, "Where is your evidence? Show me your evidence". If the evidence that was shown seemed satisfactory to the Consul-General in the circumstances, he would still presumably wish to go on giving the person who had come to his door as much assistance as he conceivably could. If he disagreed with the authorities about the evidence of dual nationality then he would presumably argue about it and there would be a row.

A point I was seeking to make earlier is, if the sort of attitude expressed in that Xinhua statement, if the sort of attitude that one saw in the case of Mr James Pang, if that prevails in Hong Kong after 1997 there are going to be - if you will excuse my demotic - a hell of a lot of rows on issues like this. And not just with the British Government and the British Consulate but with other consulates as well.

Dr C.H. Leong: Mr President, I would like to change the question a little bit if I may and ask the Governor whether he could inform this Council what prompted the high-ranking British official to make that statement two days ago that caused all this problem?

Governor: Well, I think it is fair to say - and this is not a criticism of the media and it is not a criticism of legislators - these issues are invested with huge sensitivity. I wish they weren't. The sensitivity with which they are invested is itself in a sense an expression of concern about civil liberties and related matters in the future. In those circumstances an attempt, honestly, to answer what would be the consequences if someone held dual nationality turned into a misunderstanding that what was being said was that nobody who had got a passport under the BNS Scheme could get consular protection. That is not, as I hope - perhaps I have made heavy weather with the point, repeating it over and over again - but that is not the case.

But again to repeat myself. From Patagonia to Papua, New Guinea, if you are a dual national then the help you can get from a British Consulate or a French Consulate or a German Consulate or any Consulate is limited because of the international conventions and because of the international law. I think that it is understandable why the issue came up. The Chief Secretary and I were extremely keen to give as much and as clear reassurance as soon as possible, as comprehensively as possible, that is why we asked the Foreign Office to put out a statement yesterday and that is why that statement having been made, I wished to come to this Council as soon as possible to go through all the arguments again myself.

Miss Emily Lau: First of all I want to thank the Governor for agreeing with such alacrity to come to this Council to answer questions on this deeply controversial subject; a subject which stirs up not only high emotions but feelings of resentment, bitterness and abandonment in many Hong Kong people. And it touches on the question of Britain's honour, integrity and credibility.

Mr President, in spite of what the Governor has just told us earlier this afternoon, I think what is implicit in what Mr Cornish said two days ago and implicit in the Foreign Office statement, is that the British Government probably suspects that the Chinese Government have already got a list of all the beneficiaries of the Nationality Selection Scheme and now what you want to do is to abdicate your responsibility for looking after those people as long as they are in Hong Kong after 1997.

I want the Governor to demonstrate to us that that is not the case. But I can assure you that is the feeling of many people in Hong Kong, and not just the beneficiaries because there are about only 140,000 of those, but it is a very widely shared view that you found out that is the case - whether that is to do with Lawrence Leung or whatever - and you say this is going to be an unholy mess and we are going to walk away from it. Can you tell us, what sort of assurance are you going to give not just to the beneficiaries of the BNSS but to all the other British Nationals too? How will Britain look after them when they come under Communist rule?

Governor: Can I first of all assure the Honourable lady - and I don't know how, if one's veracity is suspected, how one can put the point more strongly than I am going to - I know of no evidence, have no evidence that Chinese officials have lists of those people who are beneficiaries under the British Nationality Scheme. I have no evidence whatsoever of that. I am not surprised, when things like this are said, that people worry. I can understand it, I would worry myself. But I want to make it absolutely clear that we have no evidence of that whatsoever. I would not, I hope, even if I was a liar, put the point as explicitly, as comprehensively as I have just put it.

The second point I want to make - with equal passion - the second point I want to make is this. I am not unaware of the vital importance of Britain being seen to discharge its obligations, whether one likes the way it does it or not, as honourably as possible. It would be thoroughly dishonourable for Britain to walk away from its responsibilities to those who hold a British passport as a British National in Hong Kong. They are entitled, I repeat, to full consular protection however they acquired that passport. And they will get the same full consular protection in Hong Kong as they would get anywhere else in the world. The terms in which that is provided or the conditions on which that can be provided are those that I referred to earlier and the question of dual nationality, a question of international law, applies in Hong Kong and everywhere else.

Let me go on from that. Even in those cases - even in those cases where there was dual nationality, I believe that a British Government and a British Consulate would still feel obliged to provide as much assistance as they possibly could, even if they were not able under the Hague Convention and so on to provide "full consular protection". We can't simply walk away from those responsibilities and we will not do so. And if the Honourable lady ever has any evidence to the contrary in years to come, she can come and hang those words around my neck wherever she finds me.

Miss Emily Lau: Mr President, just a very brief follow-up. I want to ask the Governor - because earlier Mrs Chow referred to the statement issued by the Foreign Office and said something about "until you are presented with acceptable evidence of dual nationality". If the Chinese authorities should come to the British Consulate in future and show you that list - the famous 50,000 people list - would that be accepted as an acceptable evidence of dual nationality? And also, given the unique situation of Hong Kong, do you not think Britain should do a bit more than what you normally do for other nationals in terms of protecting their safety after 1997, within the confines of international law?

Governor: We have a record of doing more than is formally required of us in dealing with consular cases. There is a Member of this Council who has good reason to know that. There are other people who know that very well. So the answer is that we will do more and do do more, and I am glad we do.

And on the Honourable lady's first point, the Honourable lady, asking a dramatic question, is overlooking the point that I keep on making. The fact that you have a passport which was acquired under the British Nationality Scheme is not relevant to nor is it evidence of dual nationality. So even if a Chinese official came with the list that the Honourable lady referred to, it would not be evidence of dual nationality. But I do not believe - I have no evidence to suppose - that Chinese officials have such a list.

There are Honourable Members here today listening to the suggestions that Chinese officials may have such a list in a sort of poe-faced way, as though that is the sort of thing they do, as though that is the sort of thing they might be considering doing. And some of those Members looking in that poe-faced way are Honourable Members who advise Chinese officials on what should happen in Hong Kong. I hope that they will express some of the anxieties which are represented by this controversy when they next talk to Mainland officials. And I hope, in particular, that they will join me in deploring the remarks made by this anonymous Xinhua official sometime yesterday.

End

Governor's opening remarks at summit

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The following is the transcript of the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten's opening remarks at the Summit on Transport Facilities for the Disabled this (Thursday) afternoon:

Good afternoon to everyone.

Can I say straightaway how delighted I am to welcome you all here today. It does not seem, I am bound to say, four years since the first of these summits. But it is the fourth in the series that we have held since December 1992 to discuss how we might make public transport facilities more accessible and more user-friendly for people with a disability.

I am particularly glad to see that our colleague, Charles Leung from Rehab Power, who suggested that these summits be held at one of my first public meetings in October 1992, is again with us today. And I am sure that the report that Rehab Power have recently done will be one of the subjects that comes up in some of our discussions.

As with previous summits, our aim this afternoon will be first of all to review progress since our last meeting, and second, to take into account any new suggestions for further improvements.

It has been some 18 months since we last met. Over that period, as a result of the commendable efforts of everyone concerned, there have been further significant improvements which have enabled disabled people to use public transport facilities more conveniently.

At our last meeting I picked out a few key areas on which I hoped we would see some progress and perhaps I could briefly review the achievements in these and in other areas.

As you may recall, one of our targets was that the 'Guide to Public Transport for People with a Disability' should be updated. I am very glad to say that this has been done and the latest edition has been issued. It is full of useful, clearly presented information about facilities on public transport for people with a disability. And if I may say so, I think it is a credit to all those who were involved in the production.

Turning to the two rail corporations, we shared the hope at our last summit that they would be able to expand their existing programmes and to introduce more facilities to improve access for those with a disability.

In the case of the MTRC, there has been a good deal of renovation work; additional ramps at stations have been provided; staff lifts have been converted for use by wheelchair users, and the Wheelchair Aid scheme has been put to good use. As a result, all but three MTR stations are now accessible - from street to platform - to wheelchair users. I think this is an extremely welcome development.

For those with visual problems, the MTR is providing 'tactile guide paths' at all of its stations and it plans to install audible warning devices at all escalators. Passenger information display units are also being installed at all station entrances and I think that should be particularly helpful to those who are audibly impaired.

The MTRC has also established clear design guidelines for new stations and new trains. This will ensure that in future, purpose-built facilities will automatically be provided to facilitate travel by those with a disability.

In the case of the KCRC, at all but one of the LRT and KCR stations, all passengers, including wheelchair-users, may gain access to the platform from the street, either directly or by means of a lift or a ramp.

The KCR's recent efforts have therefore focused on improving the facilities at its stations and on its trains. Improvements include the provision of audible devices for escalators, induction-loop intercom systems, tactile guide paths, audible door-opening signals on trains, and door-closing signals on platforms.

On the LRT system the installation of digital announcement and electronic information displays inside vehicles is well under way and should be completed early next year. Plans are also being made to widen LRT platforms for easier access by wheelchair users and the general public.

Moving on now to bus services. At our last meeting we expressed the hope that a trial scheme for the introduction of low-floor buses could be devised as soon as possible.

Both Kowloon Motor Bus and Citybus have taken delivery of their first super low-floor single-decker buses which are fitted with access ramps for use by wheelchair passengers. These have been operating on a trial basis on selected routes. Indeed, they are outside this building today and we will have the opportunity to have a good look at them later this afternoon.

Both companies plan to expand their services with this type of bus and they will be introducing more such buses to their routes in the new year. They have also ordered a prototype super low-floor double-decker bus for trial operation on their routes.

Whilst China Motor Bus and North Lantau have no immediate plans to introduce super low-floor buses, CMB has indicated an interest in seeing the low-floor double-decker bus, when it arrives, in order to consider whether it is suitable for introduction on its own routes.

Since the last summit Rehabus has expanded its service considerably. By next March scheduled routes will have increased from 41 to 53. Rebus has also strengthened its full dial-a-ride service by adding two more vehicles to its fleet of nine. Three larger and better designed vehicles will also be delivered in March next year to further improve the services.

In response to a suggestion that the Rebus services should provide connections to more MTR stations, a scheduled Rebus route connecting Ngau Tau Kok Station to the United Christian Hospital has been on trial since August 1996.

Many other suggestions made at previous meetings have also been considered by the Commissioner for Transport's Working Group and where it has proved possible, they have been implemented or are being tried. For example:

Membership of the Working Group has been expanded to include representatives of taxi and mini-bus operators. Dropped kerbs have been on trial at a number of taxi stands and consideration is being given to expanding the scheme to include more taxi stands.

The taxi permit scheme, which permits the pick-up and drop-down in restricted zones of passengers with a disability has been improved and extended to cover disabled private car passengers.

All new buses operated by Citybus are fitted with a PA system and drivers are being encouraged in its use. KMB is testing the use of such equipment on its own buses.

KMB, CMB and Citybus have agreed to provide training programmes for ex-mentally-ill persons on how to make use of their bus services. Two sessions have already been provided by CMB.

An additional 34 reserved parking spaces have been designated over the territory for disabled drivers.

To make ferries even more user-friendly for disabled people the ferry companies have installed more call bells at pier entrances to enable disabled passengers to obtain staff assistance.

Clearly, this catalogue of improvements together with other improvements that have been made or are planned, constitute a very welcome move forward.

The transport operators, the Commissioner for Transport's Working Group, the concerned departments, the representatives of disabled groups who have put forward their suggestions, and everyone else involved, are to be warmly congratulated and thanked for their efforts in bringing these improvements about.

In a moment I look forward to hearing the views of the representatives of disabled groups on the plans made and on the actions that have been taken so far. I would also welcome, I am sure we would all welcome, any suggestions that they may have for further improvements.

As for the transport operators, again the two railway corporations have prepared some videos to explain what they have been doing. The bus companies and the ferry and tram companies have also prepared photo displays of their own improvement projects. I will be inviting them to make their reports a little later.

We will then have some time for questions and comments from the floor. After that, I will try to draw the discussion together with a few concluding remarks and I will then invite you all to view the exhibition and demonstrations in the car-park outside.

Can I now invite Karen Mak to speak on behalf of the Federation of Handicapped Youth.

End

Governor's media session after summit

Following is a transcript of the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten's media session after attending the Summit on Transport Facilities for the Disabled at the Central Government Offices this (Thursday) afternoon:

Governor: This is the seventh summit that we have had to discuss disability issues since the first one at the end of 1992. We have had four to discuss the transport needs of people with a disability and we have had three to discuss the employment needs of people with a disability.

Let's be absolutely clear what our community's objective is and should be, and that is to make sure that everybody with a disability is able to make a contribution to the rest of society, is able to develop to their full potential. And that requires assistance and help and understanding from both the public and the private sectors.

Transport is particularly important because if you are to open up educational and employment prospects for people with a disability, let alone access to shopping and recreation and entertainment, then it is vital that people who are in a wheelchair or on crutches or who are visually impaired or have hearing impairment should be able to move around as easily as possible.

We have made a very considerable amount of progress on transport issues in the last four years, which is not to sound complacent, there is still a great deal to do. But I think the progress made has been agreed and accepted by the groups representing people with a disability and I think it marks the value of co-operating constructively in trying to deal with the sort of problems that we have faced.

I would like to pay a particular tribute to the groups representing those with a disability, for their patience but determination to get things done. They have been consistently intelligent and forceful in the agenda that they have pursued but they have also been reasonable, they have been persuasive and they have had the good grace to say thank you to the public transport operators when we have seen progress.

I was delighted that since the last summit we have been able to bring up to date our Guide for Public Transport for People with a Disability. I am very pleased at the further progress that the MTRC and KCRC have made in ensuring that people with a disability have, in most of the stations and facilities operated by our rail companies, much better access; they really have made very considerable progress in the last four years and I am grateful to them for their commitment to these objectives.

I am also pleased that we have seen, today, the determination of KMB and Citybus to purchase new buses to add to their existing fleet, with low floor - giving easier access for people with a disability. They, too, have committed themselves wholeheartedly to this project. And I am delighted, as well, that we have seen a continuing increase in the number of routes provided by Rehabus from 41 at the time of the last summit to 53.

Now, we all know that there is still more to do - and there were a number of other improvements that were discussed today and a number of other proposals for the future which were brought forward - but I think that if we can build on what has been achieved so far, then we will give people with a disability the deal which they deserve.

Obviously, it is not for me to say what should happen after July 1, 1997, but I am sure that the Government will in future continue to give these issues a high priority and I am sure that groups with disability will continue to lobby hard and energetically and eloquently for a cause in which all of us believe.

Question: Governor, what do you think about the CMB and the bus (company) on Lantau Island; they did not do much about work for the disabled?

Governor: I think you should probably put those questions to them. Representatives from both companies expressed their views at the summit. The representative of the Lantau bus company pointed out that the topography of Lantau made it questionable how much they could introduce low-floor buses but they are hoping to borrow one of the vehicles from one of the other companies to give it a few trial runs on Lantau.

The CMB which you mentioned, their representative said that because of the withdrawal of some of their routes they did not have as much of a requirement for single-decker buses any more but they were prepared to look at the double-decker low-floor buses when they are brought in by other companies. But I think it is fairest if you put the points to them.

What I can tell you is that KMB and Citybus who have made a considerable effort to help in this field do, I think, reckon that it improves the quality of their service, it improves the quality of their provision for their customers and passengers, and I am sure is therefore good for business overall and good for their profits.

Question: ...(inaudible)... to provide facilities for the disabled ...(inaudible)...

Governor: I think it is best to proceed as we have been doing, by consultation and agreement. I think if you talk to the bus companies themselves you will discover just how many low-floor buses they are going to be purchasing over the coming months and years. I think their heart is very much in the right place and obviously we want to get them to move forward as rapidly as possible. I think we are achieving results through co-operation and I hope that will continue.

Any other questions?

Question: Are there any substantial agreements made in the meeting by?

Governor: Well, I said in my earlier remarks the progress that we have made since the last summit. There were a number of other additional ideas that were produced this afternoon, some by groups representing those with a disability - and I am sure that they will be happy to mention those points to you - and we will, as we have done at other summits, review all those points, review all those arguments, and tell the groups with disabilities where we think we can take things forward, where it is more difficult, so that by the time of the next summit - if there is one and I hope there is - we will be able to report yet another move forward.

Okay, I must go to the Legislative Council. Thank you very much indeed.

End

Governor's closing remarks at summit

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Following is the Governor, the Rt Hon Christopher Patten's closing remarks at the Summit on Transport Facilities at Central Government Offices this (Thursday) afternoon:

At the last summit I referred to the goodwill and constructive spirit that has always characterised our meetings. I am very pleased that this afternoon's meeting has followed in the same mould.

It is obviously fair to say that we are making good progress. The public transport system is becoming more accommodating and accessible to people who have a disability.

Further improvements are, as you have heard, either planned or are under way. This is good news and I am sure we very much welcome it. I am grateful for the new and sensible suggestions that have been made this afternoon. I can assure you that I and my colleagues, and I am sure the Chief Executive Designate in due course, will follow all these up.

We really cannot afford to slacken our efforts. We need to press on with the formula which has been instrumental to our success so far. This has been our willingness to move ahead, look for common ground and co-operate with each other to bring about the improvements we all want to see.

We know, of course, that not everything can be achieved overnight. Sometimes, financial, technical or operational considerations may mean that certain improvements are going to take a bit longer than others. There is a limit, for example, to how much we can do in the short term about the topography of Lantau. Though we were doing quite a lot about the topography of Lantau to the northern side. I am particularly grateful to the disabled groups represented here today for combining intelligent patience with their quite proper determination to get things done as rapidly as they can get done.

And I would also like to thank again our public transport operators who have risen to the challenges and have done so much to improve the facilities on their systems to assist those with a disability.

As I have said, with regard to the future, while I cannot speak for the future Chief Executive, I am quite certain that he will appreciate the benefits that flow from a thorough and open discussion of these issues between all the concerned parties, and I hope that he will wish to continue this process.

In the meantime both the Secretary for Transport and the Secretary for Health and Welfare will, through their contacts with the transport operators and representatives of the disabled groups, ensure that the momentum we have built up continues.

May I once again thank you for coming this afternoon. It has been a privilege for me to chair these meetings and to see the progress we have made. I hope you will all now join me at the exhibition downstairs.

It has been a real pleasure to see the genuine progress that's been made over the last few years. I think, to repeat myself, I think that is a tribute to our ability to work together intelligently without too much rhetoric but a lot of determination to ensure that all our citizens in Hong Kong gets as fair a deal as possible and get the maximum opportunity to make full use of their abilities and talents.

Thank you very much indeed.

End

Chief Secretary's question-and-answer session

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The following is the transcript of the Chief Secretary, Mrs Anson Chan's question-and-answer session after receiving the International Association of Business Communicators Hong Kong Chapter's Communicator of the Year Award today (Thursday):

Question: (inaudible)

Chief Secretary: I think I would take as my starting point the provisions in the Basic Law and Joint Declaration which guarantee the future SAR Government all forms of freedom. And of course, one of the most precious freedoms we have in Hong Kong is freedom of the press - of expression, of assembly and others.

I think that there are two parties to this particular issue. On the part of the Government, we have always recognised, and indeed particularly in recent years we have done our very best to review all our legislation to make sure that they conform with the Bill of Rights Ordinance, that our legislation does not in any way inhibit or prevent freedom of expression of the press. And to that extent, we have made suitable amendments to the law, we have removed certain restrictions, but at the same time having very much regard to the need to balance on the one hand the rights of the individual, of the press, to the way that they operate, against the rights of the public for protection of privacy, etc. And I believe that we have struck the right balance.

This review of our legislation and everything that we are doing in the context of that review, we will complete before July 1, 1997. So, insofar as the Government is concerned, we have done and will continue to ensure that these freedoms are protected and defended after 1997. But that said, I think that the practitioners, whether it is proprietors of newspapers, reporters, journalists, communicators like yourself, also have a very, very important role to play.

Now, we do not wish to see self-censorship creeping into the press, the media, after 1997, and this is where I think the practitioners themselves do have a role to play in preserving and protecting the integrity of their own professions.

Question: I would like to ask you as a woman in the work place in 1996, how do you manage to balance your home life and your work life?

Chief Secretary: By trial and error. I can tell you that it isn't easy, but I have, after all, had 34 years of experience. I joined the Hong Kong Government in 1962. And I do often feel that it is much harder for a woman to hold down a career and at the same time still be able to perform reasonably well your other roles as a wife and as a mother. But I think it is a choice that each of us has to make. And that choice does not necessarily lead, in my view, to coming down in favour of a career and neglecting your other duties. If you choose a career then I think both partners to a marriage have a responsibility of ensuring that the other responsibilities are discharged and discharged well.

I think in Hong Kong, women are probably in a better position to balance a career with the demands of a wife and mother because first of all we do have the availability of domestic-help. But more importantly, the extended family system in Hong Kong does provide very immediate support for the working mother, particularly when the children are young.

I have to say that when my children were young it was sometimes extremely difficult, particularly in certain jobs - for example, when I was in the Finance Branch and having to work on estimates until near enough midnight. It was a very, very difficult period. So in that context, I also believe that it is crucially important to have a very understanding and supportive husband. A husband who understands and who will not try and make you feel that you are always having to make very, very hard choices, and a husband who is willing to share family responsibilities with you. I don't think I could have survived so far without the understanding and support of my husband, so I think that that is crucially important.

But at the end of the day, I think it also depends on the individual woman organising her time in such a way that you try reasonably to balance all your responsibilities. I don't think you can expect to get the best of all worlds but if you manage your time well and with a degree of support, I think you can probably manage to discharge most of your responsibilities reasonably well. But it is very much by trial and error and learning to adjust your time and your priorities.

Question:under way to accommodate and deal with the 6,000-plus journalists that are coming to Hong Kong to cover 1997? And perhaps also as a follow-up to that, what we might be able to do as professionals - what we might be able to help with as professional communicators?

Chief Secretary: We do anticipate that the degree of media interest in Hong Kong and everything that happens in Hong Kong will increase very rapidly in the remaining months of the transition. And as you say, it is anybody's guess as to how many journalists and reporters and whatnot will actually descend on Hong Kong round about June 30. We estimate that it will be at least probably several thousand - 4,000 or 5,000. We are going to deal with these journalists in exactly the same way as we deal with journalists now and if there is an accreditation system it will be according to international standards.

We do intend to provide a press and broadcasting centre that will cater to the needs of the different media groups - the electronic media, the press and whatnot - and we are busily sorting out the details. And from that point of view we would welcome communication and discussions with - including your association, so that we can on the one hand tell you what we have in mind but also get very important feedback from you as to how you think the demands of your particular members can be met nearer the time.

Question: Do you remember the one time in 1996 that was very interesting, amusing, as a communicator?

Chief Secretary: I think I need notice of that question. So much has happened to me in the year. I will give you an answer later.

Question: (inaudible)

Chief Secretary: No, quite. I promise to give you a reply before the end of 1996.

End

FS: Government continues to support business

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The Financial Secretary, Mr Donald Tsang, today (Thursday) vowed to continue providing the incentives, infrastructural support and information that small and medium enterprises (SMEs) needed to compete effectively and to succeed.

Speaking at the Hong Kong Export Credit Insurance Corporation's 30th Anniversary Celebration, Mr Tsang said that the Government saw its responsibility as providing a favourable, modern and business-friendly environment to business enterprises - some 98 per cent of which was classified as SMEs.

"We provide a sound framework within which businesses are well rewarded when the risks they take are successful. We encourage our SMEs to try new ideas when existing ones do not seem to work.

"At the end of the day, the onus of creating successful enterprises rests with the SMEs themselves," the Financial Secretary said.

While elaborating on Hong Kong fundamental economic philosophy, Mr Tsang emphasised that central economic planning had no place in Hong Kong.

"We leave commercial decisions to our entrepreneurs. They are far more sensitive to market forces than we are within Government, and they are set to gain or lose according to the decisions they make," Mr Tsang said.

Putting the free market policy into practice, Mr Tsang said that the Government role was to maintain a low, simple and predictable tax regime so as to encourage creation of wealth; create a level playing field for all enterprises; maintain an impartial legal and judicial system and to provide a clean and efficient civil service.

"At the same time, we invest heavily in human and physical infrastructure to meet the needs of enterprises, small, medium or large," Mr Tsang added.

In highlighting the many endeavours that the Government provided for SMEs, the Financial Secretary said that the Government had provided support to SMEs in areas concerning training, industrial support funding, marketing information, industrial consultancy and export insurance.

He said that funding was made available to many different support groups to enable them to provide training and skill-upgrading programmes at affordable prices. The Government had injected \$250 million into the Industrial Support Fund this year to finance projects that were beneficial to the industrial and technological development of Hong Kong.

"In 1996-97, the Government injected another \$50 million to set up a Services Support Fund to assist services-related projects," he added.

In addition to the infrastructural support rendered by the Government, Mr Tsang also said that when SME's access to market had been unreasonably restricted by unjustified actions of foreign governments, the Government would go all out to ensure that they got a fair hearing and adjudication.

"Our independent membership in the World Trade Organisation gives us the channel to do so, and we do not shy away from using it," Mr Tsang said.

In response to the globalisation of economic activities, intense competition in the market and rapid technological changes, Mr Tsang said the Government had established a Small and Medium Enterprises Committee to listen more closely to their views, and to strengthen the partnership with them to compete in the global market.

Mr Tsang said: " We are always there to support our SMEs in generating profit, creating prosperity, and providing new employment opportunities for Hong Kong."

End

Whitehead Detention Centre to close next month

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The Whitehead Detention Centre for Vietnamese migrants (VMs) will be closed on January 3, 1997, the Refugee Coordinator, Mr Brian Bresnihan, said today (Thursday).

Since 1989, over 61,000 VMs have been repatriated to Vietnam under the voluntary (volrep) and orderly repatriation programmes (ORP). As at December 4, about 7,700 VMs remained in Hong Kong, of whom approximately 1,700 are in Whitehead.

Mr Bresnihan said that the rate of repatriation had been successfully accelerated over the past few months.

"In November alone, a total of 2,155 VMs were repatriated (including voluntary and orderly repatriation), the highest monthly figure since repatriation began in 1989," he said.

"Should the current rate of repatriation continue, it should be possible to close all VM camps in the territory by mid 1997."

Mr Bresnihan said that in view of the declining VM population, the authorities had decided to consolidate the remaining VMs in the High Island Detention Centre.

"The main camp in Whitehead will be closed down, leaving only the two voluntary repatriation centres, 267 Ex-China Vietnamese Illegal Immigrants, and possibly the security unit in the camp to provide temporary holding facilities for some VMs immediately prior to their repatriation under ORP," he said.

The Whitehead Detention Centre was first opened in January 1989 when the VM population in Hong Kong stood at about 11,000. When the VM population reached its height of nearly 60,000 in October 1991, the centre provided accommodation for about 25,000.

"The closure of the Whitehead Detention Centre is a watershed in the whole VM saga, signalling the beginning of the end of the problem," Mr Bresnihan said.

End

Campaign to promote public knowledge on film classifications

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The Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority (TELA) will step up publicity efforts to promote public knowledge of the film classification system in Hong Kong.

A spokesman for TELA said the campaign aimed to increase the awareness of the public and youngsters in particular of Cat. IIA[mc1] (Not Suitable for Children) and Cat. IIB (Not Suitable for Young Persons and Children) classifications and their significance in the choice of films.

Another objective of the exercise is to enhance a better understanding among parents of the film classification system and a greater awareness of their role in providing guidance for their children.

An animated television API will be screened tomorrow (Friday) to encourage parents to advise their children when watching Cat. IIA or IIB films which may contain elements not suitable for children. Two versions of radio APIs along similar themes will be broadcast on radio stations.

TELA will also produce an information kit for distribution to secondary schools, parent/teacher associations and other interested parties for their reference. The kit contains pamphlets, posters and fact sheets on the current three-tier film classification system.

In addition, film censors will visit secondary schools and parent-teacher associations to give talks on the film classification system. The talks will be followed by the viewing of a demonstration video, question-and-answer sessions and group discussions.

The spokesman also called on the public to join the statutory Panel of Advisers to assist in the classification process.

"There are at present about 280 such advisers drawn from a wide cross-section of the community," he said. "Their views are vital in ensuring that our classification standards reflect the expectations of the society."

Those who have reached the age of 18 and are fluent in both English and Chinese are eligible to apply. Application forms are available at TELA, 39th floor, Revenue Tower, 5 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai and at various District Offices.

End

Findings of surveys on manufacturing industries released

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A continued growth in external investment in Hong Kong's manufacturing sector reflects the continued attractiveness of Hong Kong as a manufacturing base, the Director-General of Industry, Mr Francis Ho, said today (Thursday).

Mr Ho made the remarks at a press conference to announce the findings of the latest surveys conducted by the Industry Department on external investment in Hong Kong's manufacturing industries and regional representation by overseas companies in Hong Kong.

He also gave an account of the actions taken by the department to promote inward investment in the services sector.

On external investment in the manufacturing sector, Mr Ho said the value of external investment in Hong Kong's manufacturing industries was \$48 billion at original cost at the end of 1995.

"This is a 10 per cent growth (by \$4.3 billion) over that of 1994, and a four-fold increase on the external manufacturing investment of \$11.4 billion in 1984, when the first survey was conducted," Mr Ho said.

Japan kept its position as the leading source country of investment in Hong Kong's manufacturing industries, accounting for 39 per cent of the total. The US (with 28 per cent) was the second largest investor, followed by China (seven per cent) and the UK (five per cent).

For the two leading countries, Japan and the US, their investment had increased by 27 per cent and 13 per cent respectively when compared with 1994.

Electronics, textiles and clothing, electrical products and chemical products were the industries receiving the lion's share of the external investment, accounting for about 60 per cent of the total external investment in 1995.

"One reason for the Industry Department to promote inward investment in Hong Kong's manufacturing sector is that this can help bring in new product, technology and management techniques to Hong Kong," Mr Ho said.

"In this regard, our survey reveals that 35 per cent of the companies with external investment were joint ventures with local partners, which is a form of co-operation that facilitates technology transfer.

"Forty-one per cent of the companies with external investment also reported that they had benefited from the managerial, professional and technical skills of experts sent to work in Hong Kong by the parent overseas companies," he added.

On the attractiveness of Hong Kong as a manufacturing base, more than 80 per cent of the respondents considered Hong Kong's banking and financial facilities and infrastructure as favourable factors, Mr Ho said. Other favourable factors included Hong Kong's tax regime, rule of law, availability of managerial skill, government economic policy and clean government.

Commenting on the 1996 Survey of Regional Representation by Overseas Companies in Hong Kong, Mr Ho said: "The survey reaffirmed the increasing importance of Hong Kong as a major regional business centre for overseas companies."

The survey identified 2,307 regional operations in Hong Kong as at June 1, 1996. They included 816 regional headquarters and 1,491 regional offices. This represents a 12 per cent increase in the total number of regional operations since 1995.

The US had the largest number of regional headquarters in Hong Kong, with 188 companies, followed by Japan (with 122), the UK (90) and China (85). As for regional offices, Japan had the largest number of regional offices (338), followed by the US (226), China (128) and the UK (123).

On the perception of Hong Kong as a regional centre, more than 90 per cent of the respondents considered banking and financial facilities and infrastructure to be the most important and favourable factors. Other important and favourable factors mirrored those identified in the survey on external manufacturing investment.

On promotion of inward investment in Hong Kong's services industries, Mr Ho said the Industry Department was given the task in the Addendum to the 1996/97 Budget.

He said the department had been conducting an inward investment promotion programme in respect of Hong Kong's manufacturing sector for more than 20 years.

"As demonstrated by the results of the two surveys on industrial investment and regional representation, the promotion work has been producing results," he added.

In consultation with government policy branches and other departments, the department has identified a number of service industries for its investment promotion programme. They include: services for production, retail, maritime transport, reinsurance and captive insurance, environmental management, building management, project development and management, and regional headquarters and offices.

On the basis of the existing promotional framework and methods, the department will strengthen the service components of the business plans of its overseas Investment Promotion Units.

"The Industry Department will step up its overseas marketing efforts in the promotion of inward investment in Hong Kong's service industries. Within Hong Kong, it will certainly involve the Government and public-sector agencies in such efforts to achieve better synergy," Mr Ho said.

End

Aiming at zero fatality and minimal accidents in workplace

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The Labour Department will join hands with other concerned parties to achieve zero fatality and minimal accidents in workplace.

Speaking at the opening ceremony of the 12th Annual Seminar on Boilers and Pressure Vessels Safety and Technical Development today (Thursday), the Commissioner for Labour, Miss Jacqueline Willis, said these parties included equipment makers, engineering contractors and professionals, competent persons and owners.

She said the Labour Department on its part would play an enforcement and facilitator role in ensuring high standards of installation and maintenance consistent with the best international practice.

"We will organise events for the exchange of ideas to promulgate the concept of self-regulation and for the protection of workers safety and the public against any potential hazards," Miss Willis said.

She said the launching of the Occupational Safety Charter in September this year and the introduction of a new Occupational Safety and Health Bill into the Legislative Council yesterday were milestone events.

"The seminar today shows our commitment, as well as your commitment, to promote a better safety culture through involvement and participation of all those who have a duty of care," Miss Willis said.

"This year, we are honoured to have the largest number of overseas and local speakers. Many of them are international experts or authorities in their own right from the United States, the United Kingdom, the People's Republic of China and Japan," she added.

The aim of the seminar is to facilitate the exchange of safety and technical experience among boilers and pressure vessels professionals.

This year's seminar is jointly organised by the Labour Department and the Occupational Safety and Health Council; and supported by China Light and Power Co Ltd, The Hong Kong Electric Co Ltd, Hong Kong Land Boiler and Pressure Vessel Inspectors Association Ltd, Hong Kong Oxygen and Acetylene Co Ltd, Hong Kong Institution of Engineers and the American Society of Mechanical Engineers International.

End

Two nominations received for Wong Tai Sin DB by-election

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A total of two nominations were received for the Wong Tai Sin District Board by-election in respect of San Po Kong constituency to be held on January 5, after the two-week nomination period closed today (Thursday).

Details of the nominations are as follows:

<u>Name (Age)</u>	<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Tel No</u>
Mak Hoi-wah	Lecturer 2712 0195 (night)	2788 8981 (day)
Lee Tat-yan	Executive	2350 2455 (day) 7116 3399 - 1943 (pager)

End

Crown rents due on December 25

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Demand Notes have been issued for Crown rents for the half year ending on December 25 in respect of an amount exceeding \$100 per year, a spokesman for the Treasury said today (Thursday).

Payment can be made by using the Payment by Phone Service (PPS) or by post addressed to the Director of Accounting Services, P O Box 8000, GPO, Hong Kong, or in person at any of the following Offices:

- a) the Treasury Headquarters Collection and Payment Office, Immigration Tower, first Floor, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong;
- b) the Central Sub-Treasury, Central Government Offices (West Wing), 11 Ice House Street, Hong Kong;
- c) the North Point Sub-Treasury, Max Share Centre, first Floor, 373 King's Road, North Point, Hong Kong;
- d) the Sai Wan Ho Sub-Treasury, Eastern Law Courts Building, ground floor, 29 Tai On Street, Sai Wan Ho, Hong Kong;

- e) the Yau Ma Tei Sub-Treasury, Kowloon Government Offices, fourth Floor, 405 Nathan Road (Market Street entrance), Kowloon;
- f) the Kowloon City Sub-Treasury, Man Sang Commercial Building, first Floor, 348-352 Prince Edward Road (corner of Prince Edward Road and Junction Road), Kowloon;
- g) the District Office at Sai Kung, Sha Tin, Tai Po, North, Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, Tsuen Wan or Kwai Tsing.

Crown rent payers who have not received their demand notes should bring along Crown rent demand notes for any previous period to any of the six Treasury collection offices listed above.

Duplicate Crown rent demand notes will be issued to them. Payment can then be made at any of these offices.

If the payers cannot produce Crown rent demand notes for any previous period, they should inquire at the Crown Rent Unit of the Treasury at Immigration Tower, 30th floor, 7 Gloucester Road, Wan Chai, Hong Kong. Non-receipt of the demand note does not alter the requirement that the Crown rents must be paid on or before December 25.

Crown rent payers who have submitted a valid direct debit authorisation should note that if the wording "Payment To Be Made By Autopay" is shown on the demand notes, payment of Crown rents will be made by direct debit to their bank accounts on December 27. They should then ensure that their bank accounts contain the necessary funds on that date.

If the above wording is not shown on the demand notes, Crown rent payers should make payments according to the payment instructions as stipulated in the demand notes.

To avoid the possible inconvenience of queueing, the spokesman urged Crown rent payers use the Payment by Phone Service, or pay by post using cheques or cashier orders, or by early personal attendance at any of the collection offices.

However, the most convenient method for payment of Crown rents is autopay under which Crown rent payers' bank accounts will only be debited on Crown rent due dates, he added.

Applications for autopay are obtainable from Treasury Collection Offices, District Offices and all major banks in Hong Kong or by telephoning 2829 4998.

For additional information regarding the Payment by Phone Service, please call 900 00 222 329.

The spokesman advised Crown rent payers to note the following points:

- a) To avoid legal action for re-entry of a property the owner for the time being of that property is obliged to pay Crown rent including any arrears as demanded.
- b) The Crown rent payable under a lease of a property which has been renewed under the Crown Leases Ordinance and re-developed, will be 3% of the rateable value of that property as assessed following the redevelopment. Pending completion of the assessment and other related procedures, Crown rent demands will be based upon the pre-redevelopment rateable value. In due course, Crown rent for the difference between the rent based upon pre and post redevelopment rateable values will be demanded and the owner for the time being is obliged to pay the rent as demanded. If he does not, legal action for re-entry of the property may be instituted.
- c) Demand or acceptance of Crown rent in respect of any property with unauthorised structures does not imply in any way that the unauthorised structures are authorised or otherwise recognised by Government. Government expressly reserves the right to take whatever action in respect of such unauthorised structures it considers appropriate, including demolition or removal of the structures or re-entry of the property.

He also advised purchasers of property to instruct their solicitors to ensure that at the time of purchase the Crown rent is paid up to date.

If a property is subject to the Crown Leases Ordinance and has been re-developed but the rental paid up to the date of the purchase is not based upon an assessment of the rateable value of the property since its redevelopment, appropriate steps should be taken by the purchaser or his solicitors to protect the purchaser.

Enquiries on outstanding accounts in respect of Crown rent may be addressed to the Director of Accounting Services. The fee is \$80 for each enquiry per property.

End

Sha Tin Water Treatment Works open day on Saturday

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Members of the public will have a chance to see and know more about the water treatment process by visiting Hong Kong's largest water treatment works in Sha Tin this Saturday (December 7).

The Sha Tin Water Treatment Works supplies almost half of the water consumed in the territory, serving mainly Sha Tin, Ma On Shan, Central Kowloon and part of the Hong Kong Island.

It will be open to public from 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday as one of the events organised by the Water Supplies Department during the Serving the Community Week.

By joining the guided tour on site, visitors can have a close look at various strategic components of the treatment works, which include the "clarifiers" for settlement of suspended particles in water, and the "filter beds" where more finely divided suspensions are retained on sand layers while colour and odour in water are removed by the filtration process.

After touring around the plant, visitors can see eight display panels outlining the functions of the Water Supplies Department, the current and future sources of our water and other treatment works in the territory.

They can also visit the largest waterworks laboratory in the territory - the Mainland East Laboratory - and be briefed on the water quality monitoring system of chemical, bacteriological and biological examinations of water samples taken at various points of the water supply system.

The Sha Tin Water Treatment Works, located at 12 Keng Hau Road, Hin Tin, is within walking distance from the Hin Keng Estate bus terminus.

Visitors can also make use of the free shuttle bus service running between the Kowloon Canton Railway Tai Wai Station and the treatment works.

End

Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works open to public on Saturday

The Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works, one of the largest of its kind in South-east Asia, will be open to the public this Saturday (December 7) between 9.30 am and 5 pm.

The open day, organised by the Drainage Services Department (DSD) to tie in with the Serving the Community Week, will give the community a better understanding on how sewage is treated and how the process will help protect our environment.

It also serves to introduce to members of the public the various facilities and services of DSD, which include flood prevention works in the New Territories and regular maintenance of the public sewers, drains and streamcourses to avoid blockages and flooding.

Apart from joining the guided tours around the plant, visitors can also look at models and display panels or view demonstrations on the use of safety equipment and removal of blockages in sewers with high pressure jetting.

Visitors may also have a chance to win souvenirs by try their hands at the games stalls during the visit.

Free shuttle bus service will be available at the Kowloon Canton Railway University Station, Sha Tin Centre Street fronting Sha Tin Plaza in Sha Tin and near the Kowloon Tong MTR Station at Kent Road.

Serving the Sha Tin New Town, the Ma On Shan New Town and the surrounding villages, the Sha Tin Sewage Treatment Works is designed on a three-stage approach.

Commissioned in 1982 and 1986 respectively, Stages I and II of the treatment works can now treat a dry weather flow of about 200,000 cubic metres per day serving an equivalent population of more than half a million.

Stage III development is being planned to meet the increasing sewage flow in the area.

End

Royal Commonwealth Essay Competition 1996/97 invites entries

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Primary and secondary students are encouraged to enter the Commonwealth Essay Competition 1996/97. This international contest is open to some 50 countries and territories worldwide.

The competition is organised in four age bands and entrants must not exceed 18 years old on December 31, 1996.

A local committee has been set up for entries to be judged by a panel of examiners for the purpose of awarding local prizes and selecting meritorious entries to the international competition, an Education Officer, Mr Paul Lui, said today (Thursday).

"Local prizes in the form of book coupons ranging from \$4,000 to \$750 will be awarded to the first three winners in each of the four groups by the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce and the Royal Commonwealth Society in Hong Kong.

"Furthermore, the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce will present 10 consolation prizes to entrants commended by local examiners.

"The success achieved by Hong Kong students in this competition over the past years reflects their high standard of literacy and creativity as compared with their counterparts from all parts of the Commonwealth," Mr Lui said.

Schools are requested to return the reply slip to the Education Department on or before Wednesday, December 18.

The essays for the local competition should be sent to the department's Information and Public Relations Section at Room 1645, Wu Chung House, 213 Queen's Road East, Wan Chai, Hong Kong not later than January 18, 1997.

For enquiries, please call 2892 6192.

End

Hong Kong students do well in mathematics

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Hong Kong students have quite a flair for mathematics, with student teams winning more than 140 awards in international mathematics contests at primary and secondary school levels over the last three years.

The Deputy Director of Education, Mr T F Kwan, noted that at the secondary school level, Hong Kong teams have brought home five silver and 11 bronze medals from the International Mathematical Olympiad in 1994 in Hong Kong, 1995 in Toronto and 1996 in Mumbai.

At the primary school level, Hong Kong teams put up a splendid performance at the Primary Mathematics Olympiad in China between 1994 and 1996 and in the First Po Leung Kuk Asian Cities Primary Mathematics Contest 1996.

In these primary school international contests, Hong Kong teams won a total of three Group Championships, two Group First-runner Ups, three Group Fourth Place Awards, 16 First Class Awards, 65 Second Class Awards and 36 Third Class Awards.

Mr Kwan also welcomed the results of the widely reported Third International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), which recently put Hong Kong fourth in Mathematics among 41 participating countries and territories worldwide. The target group of the study was the two grades with the largest population of 13-year-olds, which in the Hong Kong context corresponds to Secondary 1 and 2 students.

Mr Kwan noted that Hong Kong students' mean achievement score was 564, way above many mathematically advanced countries such as the USA (476), United Kingdom (476), France (492), Germany (484) and Russian Federation (501), and was very close to the three highest scores in the study (Singapore at 601, Korea at 577 and Japan at 571).

"In fact, according to the summary report issued by the researchers for TIMSS, the differences between the scores of Hong Kong, Korea and Japan are statistically insignificant," Mr Kwan said.

"And although we did not come first in the world in this particular study, we can nevertheless take pride in a school system that aims to reduce pressure on students. We try our best to avoid a highly competitive and selective school system. Young students are offered general subjects at primary and junior secondary levels. There is no public examination at these levels and they are not streamed until they reach senior secondary levels.

"We know that some countries may stream their students at an earlier age," Mr Kwan said.

"The Hong Kong system strikes a more rational balance between achievement on the one hand and pressure on students on the other. We implement nine years' free and compulsory universal education, with the same core curriculum in Mathematics offered to all students all the way to Secondary Three."

Mr Kwan said the Hong Kong system aims to reduce pressure on students to a minimum and encourage pleasurable learning.

"Our senior secondary students did come first in Chemistry and Physics, and fifth in Biology at the Second International Mathematics and Science Study published in 1988, although performance of our junior secondary students in science was less satisfactory at the recent as well as in the 1988 study. That is because our young students are offered general education at primary and junior secondary level and are streamed into science and other groups only at senior secondary classes," he said.

In the Second International Science Study, Hong Kong was only significantly better than a few countries. However, in the newly completed third study, the mean science achievement for Hong Kong junior secondary students (522) is above the international average (516).

"It is therefore wrong to assume that performance of science among our junior secondary students has not progressed," Mr Kwan said.

"We shall nevertheless request the Curriculum Development Council to take the research findings into consideration in revising our junior secondary science curriculum. Also, we shall promote science education through the informal curriculum, such as inter-school competitions and public lectures on science topics of current interest to familiarise teachers and students with latest scientific developments.

"From our contacts overseas, it has been reflected to us that Hong Kong students pursuing further studies there have received a lot of praises in respect of their achievements in Mathematics and science subjects."

Mr Kwan paid tribute to Mathematics and science teachers in Hong Kong schools for their dedication and professionalism, adding that we will by no means be complacent and that the teaching of these subjects is under constant review with a view to seeking further improvements.

End

HK Chinese sailors to take part in last naval divisions

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More than 160 Hong Kong Chinese sailors will be on parade tomorrow (Friday) when they take part in their final Royal Naval Divisions at HMS Tamar.

The parade will also provide the opportunity for the ships' companies of HMS Tamar, the Royal Navy's shore establishment, and of Her Majesty's ships Peacock and Plover, to applaud the hard work and loyalty of the Locally Enlisted Personnel (LEP) over the years.

There to take the salute at Stonecutters Island will be Chief of Staff and Senior Naval Officer, Commodore Peter Melson. Also present will be the Commanding Officer of HMS Tamar, Commander Ross Thoburn, who will bid his Chinese sailor a ceremonial farewell before he leaves the territory in a few weeks time to take up a new post in the United Kingdom.

Music for the occasion will be provided by the Cape Collinson Marching Band.

LEP are known to have served in warships from the very early days of the Royal Navy in Hong Kong, but were not the organised, uniformed force of today.

They saw service throughout the whole of the British Fleet until 1974 when, for the first time, the LEP no longer had any commitment other than that of the immediate policing and defence of Hong Kong. The only opportunity for service outside the territory in recent years has been a deployment in one of the three ships of the Hong Kong Squadron, although a small number have been drafted to the United Kingdom to undergo professional courses to enhance their technical knowledge.

As their history illustrates, the Hong Kong LEP have long been a loyal group of Royal Naval personnel.

End

Two-day exhibition of statistical work and data

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As part of the Serving the Community Week programme organised by the Government during the week of December 1 to 7, the Census and Statistics Department will hold an exhibition of Statistical Work and Data tomorrow (Friday) and on Saturday (December 7).

"We provide quality statistics. We serve the community." is the main theme of the event.

A spokesman for the Census and Statistics Department said today (Thursday):
"Through the exhibition, we hope to inform the general public about:

- * the work of the department and the statistics compiled;
- * the publications and services that are available; and
- * the roles of the general public in the statistical process, both as data suppliers and users of statistics."

The exhibition will particularly focus on those statistics which are able to relate closely to the daily life of the general public.

Visitors at the exhibition can also try to access the Homepage of the Census and Statistics Department on the World Wide Web.

Launched in March this year, this Homepage signifies a major step in the electronic dissemination of information. Internet users in Hong Kong and world-wide can, through the Homepage, access up-to-date statistics and press releases covering major social and economic aspects of Hong Kong.

Key publications released will also be displayed for sale at the exhibition. To facilitate the general public in understanding the exhibits, professional statisticians will be on site to give explanations and to answer questions.

All those who are interested are welcome to visit the exhibition to be staged on the ground floor of Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

The opening hours of the exhibition are from 10 am to 5.30 pm tomorrow and from 10 am to 4 pm on Saturday.

Those who are interested in more details relating to the exhibition, can call the staff of Census and Statistics Department on 2582 5041 or 2582 5025.

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority tender results

Tender date : 5 December 1996
Paper on offer : EF Bills
Issue number : Q063
Issue : 6 December 1996
Maturity date : 3 January 1997
Amount applied : HK\$11,950 MN
Amount allotted : HK\$10,000 MN
Average yield accepted : 4.44 PCT
Highest yield accepted : 4.52 PCT
Pro rata ratio : About 45 PCT
Average tender yield : 4.46 PCT

End

Hong Kong Monetary Authority money market operations

	<u>\$ million</u>	<u>Time (hours)</u>	<u>Cumulative change (\$ million)</u>
Opening balance in the account	3,356	0930	+1177
Closing balance in the account	4,112	1000	+1177
Change attributable to:		1100	+1177
Money market activity	+1,018	1200	+1090
LAF today	-262	1500	+1090
		1600	+1018

LAF rate 4.00% bid/6.00% offer TWI 125.0 *-0.1* 5.12.96

Hong Kong Monetary Authority

EF Bills		EF Notes/MTRC Notes				
Terms	Yield	Terms	Issue	Coupon	Price	Yield
1 week	4.00	2 years	2811	5.72	100.36	5.60
1 month	4.25	3 years	3910	6.28	100.99	5.98
3 months	4.57	5 years	5109	7.32	103.57	6.53
6 months	4.78	7 years	7311	6.80	100.30	6.86
12 months	5.09	10 years	1610	7.37	102.83	7.09
		5 years	M503	7.35	102.38	6.86

Total turnover of EF Bills and Notes - \$29,985 million

Closed December 5, 1996

End