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THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 1993

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THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 1993

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PHASED PROGRAMME FOR ELIGIBLE PERSONS
TO APPLY FOR BNO PASSPORTS

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THE PROPOSAL FOR AN ORDERLY AND FAIR PROGRAMME FOR THE REGISTRATION AND ISSUE OF BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORTS BEFORE 1997 WAS FORMALLY PUT BEFORE THE BRITISH PARLIAMENT TODAY (THURSDAY).

IT GIVES LEGAL BACKING FOR A SERIES OF CUT-OFF DATES FOR APPLICATIONS BY AGE-GROUPS.

A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED THAT THIS PHASED PROGRAMME WAS NECESSARY TO MAKE SURE THAT ALL HONG KONG BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZENS WHO WISHED TO HAVE A BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) PASSPORT AFTER 1997 COULD GET ONE.

THE BN(O) PASSPORTS MUST BE ISSUED BEFORE JULY 1, 1997.

"SINCE THERE ARE ABOUT THREE MILLION APPLICANTS, IF WE LET THINGS DRIFT, IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT THERE WILL BE A LAST-MINUTE RUSH AND SOME PEOPLE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO OBTAIN THEIR PASSPORT," HE SAID.

"NO RIGHTS ARE BEING TAKEN AWAY. AS A RESULT OF THE HOME SECRETARY'S CONCESSION THIS WEEK, PEOPLE WILL BE ALLOWED TO KEEP THE BDTC PASSPORT UP TO ITS EXPIRY ON JULY 1, 1997 IF THEY WISH."

IN THE MEMORANDA ASSOCIATED WITH THE JOINT DECLARATION, THE BRITISH AND CHINESE GOVERNMENTS AGREED THAT THE BDTCS WILL BE ABLE TO TRAVEL ON ANOTHER BRITISH PASSPORT (SUBSEQUENTLY KNOWN AS BNO PASSPORT) AFTER JUNE 30, 1997, PROVIDED THAT THE NEW PASSPORT IS OBTAINED BEFORE JULY 1, 1997.

THE ONLY EXCEPTION IS CHILDREN BORN IN THE FIRST HALF OF 1997. THEY MAY APPLY FOR BNO PASSPORTS UP TO THE END OF SEPTEMBER 1997.

"WE HAVE TO HAVE THE ORDER-IN-COUNCIL IN ORDER TO MINIMISE THE PROBLEM OF A LAST-MINUTE RUSH," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

APPLICANTS WHO MISSED THEIR CUT-OFF DATES FOR GOOD REASONS WOULD BE TREATED SYMPATHETICALLY, THE SPOKESMAN ADDED.

"AS A MEASURE OF GOOD FAITH, THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW CONSIDERING AN APPEAL PANEL, WITH A MAJORITY OF LEGCO MEMBERS, TO ADVISE THE GOVERNOR ON LATE APPLICATIONS."

"BUT IF HONG KONG BRITISH DEPENDENT CITIZENS WANT A BNO PASSPORT, THEN THEY SHOULD COME FORWARD AT ANY TIME FROM NOW UNTIL THEIR CUT-OFF DATE."

/THE CUT-OFF

THE CUT-OFF DATES ARE:

| PHASE ----- | FINAL DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS ----- | BIRTH YEAR/ AGE GROUP ----- |
|----------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1 | END OF OCT 93 | 1967 - 71 (AGE 22 - 26) |
| 2 | END OF MAR 94 | 1962 - 66 (AGE 27 - 32) |
| 3 | END OF AUG 94 | 1957 - 61 (AGE 33 - 37) |
| 4 | END OF FEB 95 | 1947 - 56 (AGE 38 - 47) |
| 5 | END OF JUN 95 | BEFORE 1947 (AGE 48 +) |
| 6 | END OF OCT 95 | 1972 - 76 (AGE 19 - 23) |
| 7 | END OF MAR 96 | 1977 - 81 (AGE 14 - 18) |
| 8 | END OF JUN 96 | 1982 - 86 (AGE 10 - 13) |
| 9 | END OF SEPT 96 | 1987 - 91 (AGE 5 - 9) |
| 10 | END OF DEC 96 | 1992 - 95 (AGE 0 - 4) |
| 11 | END OF MAR 97 | BORN IN 1996 |
| 12 | END OF SEPT 97 | BORN IN 1997 |

"ONE SMALL EXCEPTION IS THAT PERSONS WHO ARE NATURALISED AS BDTCS AFTER THE CUT-OFF DATE WILL BE GIVEN AN ADDITIONAL THREE MONTHS WITHIN WHICH TO MAKE THE APPLICATION FOR REGISTRATION AS A BNO," HE SAID.

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GOVERNOR WELCOMES BNO ARRANGEMENT

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THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, SAID THIS (THURSDAY) AFTERNOON HE WAS DELIGHTED THAT THE DECISION ON THE BNO PASSPORT ISSUE WAS ANNOUNCED WHEN A GROUP OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS MET THE HOME SECRETARY YESTERDAY.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER ATTENDING THE LEGCO'S QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SESSION, THE GOVERNOR SAID: "I SPOKE TO MR HOWARD ON TUESDAY EVENING, ASKING HIM TO DO PRECISELY THAT."

"WE'VE BEEN PRESSING THE HOME OFFICE IN THE UK I'VE BEEN DOING THAT ON BEHALF OF THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL AND I AM DELIGHTED THAT THE DECISION WAS ANNOUNCED WHEN A GROUP OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS WENT TO PUT THE SAME POINT TO HIM YESTERDAY."

"I'VE SPOKEN TO HOME OFFICE OFFICIALS AND I KNOW THAT THE MINISTER OF STATE AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE, ALASTAIR GOODLAD, HAS DONE SO."

"IT'S AN ISSUE ON WHICH EXCO, LEGCO, THE GOVERNMENT AND THE COMMUNITY ALL HAPPILY SEE EYE TO EYE SO I HOPE WE CAN NOW GET AHEAD WITH THE SCHEME ON A BASIS THAT EVERYONE WILL AGREE."

ASKED ABOUT THE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES IF EVERYONE RUSHED TO APPLY FOR THE BNO PASSPORT IN 1997, MR PATTEN SAID: "THAT IS WHY WE STILL BELIEVE AND I HOPE THAT WILL NOW BE ACCEPTED BY THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL THAT A PROPER, A PHASED SCHEME IS ESSENTIAL BECAUSE WE WOULD BE, I THINK, ALL FEELING EXTREMELY GUILTY IF COME 1997, THERE ARE PEOPLE WHO COULDN'T GET THEIR PASSPORTS."

"SO WE NEED A PHASED SCHEME WITH THE STATUTORY BASIS."

"I AM VERY PLEASED THAT THE HOME OFFICE SAYS THAT NOW PEOPLE WON'T HAVE TO SURRENDER THEIR BDTCS BUT CAN CARRY THEM ALONG WITH THE BNO PASSPORTS. I THINK THAT WILL, PERHAPS, REMOVE SOME OF THE DIFFICULTIES AND WORRIES THAT PEOPLE HAVE."

ON THE CASE OF THE 7,000 PEOPLE OF THE MINORITY GROUP, THE GOVERNOR SAID: "I THINK THAT THE CASE HAS BEEN PUT NOT ONLY BY THE DELEGATION OF LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLORS BUT ALSO BY ME AND BY OTHERS AND WE WILL GO ON PUTTING THE CASE AND I HOPE THAT WE CAN GET SOME MOVEMENT ON THAT."

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BRITISH NATIONALITY (HK) (SELECTION SCHEME)
(AMENDMENT) ORDER 93 TABLED IN PARLIAMENT
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THE DRAFT BRITISH NATIONALITY (HONG KONG) (SELECTION SCHEME) (AMENDMENT) ORDER 1993, WHICH PROVIDES FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND PHASE OF THE BRITISH NATIONALITY SELECTION SCHEME, WAS LAID BEFORE PARLIAMENT TODAY (THURSDAY).

UNDER THE BRITISH NATIONALITY SELECTION SCHEME INTRODUCED ON DECEMBER 1, 1990, UP TO 50,000 HONG KONG RESIDENTS AND THEIR DEPENDANTS MAY BE REGISTERED AS BRITISH CITIZENS WITHOUT HAVING TO LEAVE THE TERRITORY.

ABOUT 38,000 PLACES WILL HAVE BEEN TAKEN UP BY THE END OF THE FIRST PHASE OF THE SCHEME WHICH CONCLUDES ON JANUARY 1 NEXT YEAR. THE BALANCE OF ABOUT 12,000 PLACES WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR ALLOCATION IN THE SECOND PHASE.

THE ORDER SETS OUT A REVISED SELECTION METHOD AMONG OTHER CHANGES FOR THE SECOND PHASE RUNNING FROM JANUARY 3, 1994 TO JUNE 30, 1997.

ANNOUNCING THIS TODAY, A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN SAID AMENDMENTS TO THE EXISTING SCHEME WERE PROPOSED IN THE LIGHT OF COMMENTS RECEIVED AND EXPERIENCE GAINED IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE SCHEME.

"THEY ARE INTENDED TO FACILITATE THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE SECOND PHASE AND TO MAKE SURE THAT THE REMAINING QUOTA WILL BE FULLY UTILISED AS FAR AS POSSIBLE BEFORE THE RELEVANT LEGISLATION EXPIRES IN 1997," HE SAID.

THE SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT THE BASIC FEATURES OF THE EXISTING SCHEME, SUCH AS THE FOUR CLASSES UNDER WHICH APPLICATIONS MIGHT BE MADE AND THE POINTS SYSTEM FOR ASSESSING APPLICATIONS UNDER THE GENERAL OCCUPATIONAL CLASS AND THE DISCIPLINED SERVICES CLASS, REMAINED LARGELY UNCHANGED.

"THE MAIN CHANGES ARE THE METHOD FOR ALLOCATING THE QUOTA FOR DIFFERENT OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS AND THE FLEXIBILITY TO TRANSFER UNUSED QUOTAS BETWEEN OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS AND CLASSES.

"UNDER THE DRAFT ORDER, THE QUOTA FOR VARIOUS OCCUPATIONAL GROUPS IN THE GENERAL OCCUPATIONAL CLASS WILL BE DETERMINED HAVING REGARD TO THEIR EMIGRATION RATE IN THE PAST FEW YEARS AND TO THEIR APPLICATION RATE IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE SCHEME. SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT IS EXPECTED TO PRODUCE A BETTER BALANCE BETWEEN SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR PLACES.

"THE PROVISION FOR THE TRANSFER OF UNUSED QUOTAS WILL ENABLE THE UTILISATION OF THE QUOTA TO BE MAXIMISED," THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

THE ORDER WILL BE CONSIDERED BY THE HOUSE OF COMMONS AND THE HOUSE OF LORDS WITHIN THE NEXT MONTH. SUBJECT TO THEIR APPROVAL, IT WILL BE SUBMITTED FOR ROYAL ASSENT SHORTLY AFTERWARDS.

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BNO PASSPORT ARRANGEMENT WELCOMED

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A HONG KONG GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN TODAY (THURSDAY) WELCOMED THE HOME SECRETARY'S DECISION TO ALLOW BRITISH DEPENDENT TERRITORIES CITIZENS (BDTCs) TO RETAIN THEIR CURRENT PASSPORTS IN ADDITION TO BRITISH NATIONAL (OVERSEAS) (BN(O)) PASSPORTS.

"WE ARE VERY PLEASED THAT THE HOME SECRETARY HAS BEEN ABLE TO TAKE THESE EXCEPTIONAL STEPS TO MEET THE CONCERNS EXPRESSED BY MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS," HE SAID.

THE PHASED CONVERSION PROGRAMME WILL NOW GO AHEAD, THE SPOKESMAN EXPLAINED.

PEOPLE WILL STILL BE ASKED TO COME FORWARD TO APPLY FOR A BN(O) PASSPORT ACCORDING TO THEIR AGE GROUP.

/"WE MUST

"WE MUST DO THIS IN ORDER TO ENSURE THAT WE ARE ABLE TO ISSUE PASSPORTS IN TIME. WE WOULD SIMPLY NOT BE ABLE TO DO THAT IF SEVERAL MILLION PEOPLE APPLIED FOR THEIR BN(O) PASSPORTS CLOSE TO 1997," HE SAID.

"HOWEVER, NOW NO ONE WILL HAVE TO GIVE UP THEIR BDTC PASSPORT IF THEY DO NOT WANT TO."

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FS EXPLAINS PROPOSAL FOR FURTHER PAA FUNDING
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THE MAIN PRIORITY OF THE GOVERNMENT AT THE MOMENT HAS TO BE TO GET THE PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY (PAA) FUNDED BEFORE THE END OF JUNE, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR HAMISH MACLEOD, SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

HE WAS SPEAKING TO THE MEDIA AFTER BRIEFING THE LEGCO SUB-COMMITTEE ON THE FINANCING OF THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME (ACP) ON FURTHER ADVANCE FOR THE PAA.

"WHETHER WE ARE LOOKING AT PAA PROJECTS OR GOVERNMENT PROJECTS UNDER THE ACP, THIS MUST BE ONE OF THE FEW MASSIVE PROJECTS IN THE WORLD WHERE WE HAVE CONTRACTS WHICH ARE COMING IN BELOW ESTIMATE AND WHERE WE ARE STILL SO FAR ON TARGET."

"WE ARE DEALING HERE WITH A SUCCESS STORY," HE SAID.

HE SAID HE ENTIRELY SYMPATHISED WITH LEGCO MEMBERS' WISH OR SHARED MEMBERS' WISH THAT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WE SHOULD HAVE THE FULL FINANCIAL PICTURE AND NOT HAVE TO KEEP GOING FORWARD WITH WHAT WAS DESCRIBED BY SOMEONE AS PIECEMEAL PROPOSALS.

"BUT WE HAVE TO FACE FACTS AND THE FACT IS THAT, ALTHOUGH WE'VE RESUMED TALKS WITH THE CHINESE SIDE, AND I AM SURE THE WILL IS THERE TO TRY AND REACH AGREEMENT, WE HAVEN'T REACHED AGREEMENT YET AND, MEANWHILE, IT'S VITAL THAT WE KEEP THE PAA GOING.

"EVERYONE KNOWS THAT THE LAST FUNDING DECISION ONLY TOOK THE PAA UP TO THE END OF JUNE SO WE HAVE TO GO FORWARD, WE'VE GONE FORWARD WITH WHAT WE THINK IS THE MINIMUM REQUIRED TO KEEP THE MOMENTUM UP," HE SAID.

THE GOVERNMENT IS PROPOSING TO SEEK AN ADDITIONAL ADVANCE OF \$564 MILLION FROM THE CAPITAL INVESTMENT FUND TO THE PAA TO ENABLE IT TO MEET ITS SHORT-TERM HEAD OFFICE EXPENSES AND TO MEET THE FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS FOR EIGHT CRITICAL AIRPORT DESIGN PACKAGES.

MR MACLEOD NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAD ALSO TO WARN MEMBERS THAT THERE WOULD BE INEVITABLY OTHER SUMS OF MONEY REQUIRED IN THE COMING MONTHS, WHETHER FOR GOVERNMENT'S PROJECTS, GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS UNDER THE ACP, OR IN DUE COURSE, PAA.

ON THE TALKS WITH THE CHINESE SIDE, HE SAID: "WE ARE EXCHANGING VIEWS WITH THE CHINESE SIDE ON FINANCING OPTIONS WITH THE AIM OF HOPEFULLY REACHING ONE WHICH WE COULD AGREE ON."

/"AND, AS

"AND, AS I'VE SAID TO MEMBERS, OUR JUDGMENT IS THAT AT THE MOMENT TO START REVEALING THIS DETAIL OF THAT DETAIL OF POSSIBLE OPTIONS WOULD NOT BE HELPFUL TO THE TALKS," HE ADDED.

ON THE AIRPORT AUTHORITY BILL, HE NOTED THAT THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING SAID THAT "WE WOULD DISCUSS THE BILL WITH THE CHINESE SIDE, SO THAT IS WHAT WE WOULD DO."

HE SAID THE CHINESE SIDE HAD BEEN BRIEFED IN GENERAL TERMS SOME TIME AGO BUT IT WAS TRUE THAT THEY HAD NOT SEEN THE DRAFT BILL YET BECAUSE THE LATEST DRAFT HAD ONLY JUST BEEN PRODUCED.

"THAT HAS TO GO THROUGH A FEW OTHER STEPS. IT HAS TO GO FOR EXAMPLE TO THE PAA BOARD BEFORE WE CAN DISCUSS IT WITH THE CHINESE SIDE BUT OUR AIM IS TO GET ON WITH THAT IN THE RATHER NEAR FUTURE.

"THE MAIN AIM WHICH I PUT TO MEMBERS WAS THAT WE SHOULD GET THROUGH THESE OTHER STEPS AND BE IN A POSITION TO PUT THE BILL TO MEMBERS, TO LEGCO EARLY IN THE NEXT SESSION. THE NEXT SESSION OF COURSE STARTS IN OCTOBER," HE SAID.

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BUILDING FOR HONG KONG'S FUTURE PROSPERITY

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THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY, MR HAMISH MACLEOD, TODAY (THURSDAY) OUTLINED AN IMPRESSIVE LIST OF INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENTS WHICH WOULD ENABLE HONG KONG TO CONTINUE TO THRIVE AND GROW AND SUSTAIN ITS POSITION AS THE WORLD'S 10TH LARGEST TRADING ECONOMY.

HE WAS SPEAKING AT A LUNCHEON MEETING OF THE AUSTRALIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.

MR MACLEOD NOTED THAT THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS WOULD BRING "STAGGERING" ECONOMIC BENEFITS.

"THE AIRPORT ALONE IS ESTIMATED TO INCREASE HONG KONG'S GDP BY \$430 BILLION BETWEEN 1997 AND 2010.

"THERE WILL ALSO BE SUBSTANTIAL INCOME FOR THE GOVERNMENT FROM BOTH THE AIRPORT AND THE AIRPORT RAILWAY," HE SAID.

ON THE PROGRESS OF THE CONSTRUCTION, HE NOTED THAT MASSIVE LAND RECLAMATION WORK ON THE \$9 BILLION NEW AIRPORT PLATFORM CONTRACT WAS CLEARLY VISIBLE.

"ABOUT 100 HECTARES OF LAND HAVE ALREADY BEEN FORMED FOR THE PLATFORM, AND AN AVERAGE OF 300,000 CUBIC METRES OF MATERIAL WILL BE MOVED DAILY DURING THE 41-MONTH SITE PREPARATION WORK CONTRACT - THAT IS EQUIVALENT TO 367 EMPIRE STATE BUILDINGS," HE SAID.

THERE WERE ALSO THE RECLAMATION FOR TUNG CHUNG NEW TOWN, EARTHWORKS ALONG THE LINE OF THE NORTH LANTAU EXPRESSWAY, AND THE LANTAU FIXED CROSSING WHERE EXCELLENT PROGRESS WAS BEING MADE ON THE TSING MA BRIDGE, ONE OF THE WORLD'S LONGEST SUSPENSION BRIDGES, AND ALSO THE WEST KOWLOON RECLAMATION, HE ADDED.

"ALL THAT COMES UNDER THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME IN A SERIES OF INTERLINKED PROJECTS COSTING A TOTAL OF \$164 BILLION IN MONEY OF THE DAY," HE SAID.

AT THE SAME TIME, HE SAID, THE PORT WAS CONSTANTLY BEING EXPANDED TO ENSURE THAT HONG KONG MAINTAINED ITS RANKING AS THE BUSIEST CONTAINER PORT.

"WE ARE GEARING UP FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO BUILD CONTAINER TERMINAL 9 - AND THEN FOR CONTAINER TERMINAL 10 WHICH WILL BE ON LANTAU, AND SERVED BY THE HIGHWAYS AND BRIDGES THAT WE ARE CONSTRUCTING AS PART OF THE AIRPORT CORE PROGRAMME.

"WE ARE ALSO STARTING ON A SECTION OF ROUTE 3, A MAJOR HIGHWAY THAT WILL RUN RIGHT UP TO THE BORDER WITH CHINA," HE SAID.

IN ADDITION, THERE WAS THE NEW RAILWAY DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY, AND OTHER VAST INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS SUCH AS A SEWAGE STRATEGY AND THE MAJOR DEVELOPMENT THAT WOULD BE TAKING PLACE ON AND AROUND THE PRESENT AIRPORT SITE AT KAI TAK ONCE THE AIRPORT ITSELF HAD MOVED TO CHEK LAP KOK, MR MACLEOD POINTED OUT.

HE FURTHER NOTED THAT AIRPORT CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS WORTH OVER HK\$34 BILLION HAD BEEN AWARDED BY THE GOVERNMENT AND THE PROVISIONAL AIRPORT AUTHORITY (PAA) AND THEY WERE ALL WITHIN BUDGET ESTIMATES AND ON SCHEDULE FOR COMPLETION ON TIME.

"THAT SPEAKS WELL FOR THE FEASIBILITY AND COST-EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PROGRAMME," HE SAID.

AMONG THE MANY OVERSEAS CONTRACTORS WHO HAD WON THE CONTRACTS, JAPAN LED WITH THE LARGEST SHARE AT 21 PER CENT OF THE \$34 BILLION WHILE AUSTRALIA FIGURED IN THE TOP 10 COUNTRIES WITH NEARLY FIVE PER CENT, HE POINTED OUT.

"IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE MAINTAIN THE MOMENTUM, AS INDEED WE ARE REQUIRED TO DO BY THE SINO-BRITISH MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING, WHICH SAYS WE SHOULD COMPLETE THE PROGRAMME TO THE MAXIMUM EXTENT POSSIBLE BY JUNE 1997.

"TO THIS END WE ARE CURRENTLY PURSUING TWO PARALLEL LINES OF ACTION," HE SAID.

FIRST, HE SAID, WE WERE CONTINUING OUR PRIMARY TARGET OF REACHING AGREEMENT WITH THE CHINESE ON FINANCING ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE AIRPORT AND AIRPORT RAILWAY.

"THERE WAS A MEETING OF THE AIRPORT COMMITTEE LAST WEEK, AND INFORMAL CONTACTS ARE CONTINUING, FOCUSING ON VARIATIONS ON PREVIOUS FINANCING PROPOSALS.

"LET US HOPE WE CAN MOVE AHEAD IN THIS SERIES OF TALKS AND REACH THE AGREEMENT WE ALL WANT," HE SAID.

SECONDLY, PARALLEL WITH THAT, THE GOVERNMENT WAS ASKING THE FINANCE COMMITTEE TO VOTE FURTHER INTERIM FUNDING OF \$564 MILLION FOR THE PAA, HE SAID.

THE PAA NEEDED THE FUNDS BY THE END OF THIS MONTH TO COVER ITS HEAD OFFICE EXPENSES FOR A PERIOD OF NINE MONTHS FROM THE END OF THIS MONTH, AND TO PROCEED WITH EIGHT CRITICAL AIRPORT DESIGN PACKAGES.

"NINE MONTHS RUNS TO THE END OF THE PAA'S CURRENT FINANCIAL YEAR, AND IS, I HOPE, A SUFFICIENTLY LONG PERIOD TO SUSTAIN STAFF MORALE AND ENABLE THE PAA TO MAINTAIN ITS FINANCIAL AND CORPORATE MANAGEMENT ACTIVITY, AND PUSH AHEAD WITH ITS OPERATIONAL AND COMMERCIAL PLANNING," HE SAID.

THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY EMPHASISED THAT THE GOVERNMENT'S AIM WAS TO MAINTAIN THE LEVEL OF ACHIEVEMENT WE HAD HAD WITH THE AWARD OF CONTRACTS AND TO AVOID THE DELAYS AND RISING COSTS THAT WERE INEVITABLE IF WE DID NOT PRESS ON.

"TO THAT END, I HOPE THAT THE FINANCE COMMITTEE WILL IN DUE COURSE APPROVE THE FUNDING, AND THAT WE REACH AGREEMENT WITH CHINA," HE SAID.

EARLIER IN HIS SPEECH, THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY NOTED THAT THE RESULTS OF A REGULAR OPINION SURVEY CONDUCTED BY THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION IN MAY SHOWED THAT 65 PER CENT OF THE RESPONDENTS SAID THEY HAD CONFIDENCE THAT HONG KONG WOULD CONTINUE TO BE PROSPEROUS AND STABLE, COMPARED WITH 60 PER CENT IN MARCH.

A SECOND POINT WAS THAT 75 PER CENT OF THE RESPONDENTS WERE SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT SITUATION, COMPARED WITH 68 PER CENT IN MARCH, HE SAID.

"I DOUBT IF THERE ARE MANY PLACES IN THE WORLD THAT COULD ACHIEVE SUCH HIGH POSITIVE PERCENTAGES," HE SAID.

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GOVERNOR IN LEGCO

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FOLLOWING IS A STATEMENT BY THE GOVERNOR, THE RT HON CHRISTOPHER PATTEN, TO THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY):

MR PRESIDENT, HONOURABLE MEMBERS,

WE SPEND A GREAT DEAL OF OUR TIME IN THIS COUNCIL DISCUSSING CONSTITUTIONAL MATTERS. AND RIGHTLY SO. THEY ARE, OF COURSE, EXTREMELY IMPORTANT.

BUT SO TOO ARE OTHER SUBJECTS - NOT LEAST THE SUBJECT OF OUR ENVIRONMENT, WHICH IS ARGUABLY THE MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL. WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY LAST SATURDAY REMINDED US ALL THAT WE HAVE THIS PLANET ON TRUST - NOT TO PLUNDER, BUT TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE.

I MADE PLAIN MY PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO OUR ENVIRONMENT IN MY POLICY SPEECH LAST OCTOBER. I FEEL STRONGLY ABOUT IT. I AM KEEN THAT WHEN I LEAVE HONG KONG, THE TERRITORY SHOULD BE IN A BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL STATE THAN WHEN I ARRIVED AS GOVERNOR ALMOST A YEAR AGO. WE HAVE ALREADY MADE SOME PROGRESS. LET ME GIVE YOU SOME EXAMPLES. SINCE LAST JULY, WE HAVE:

- SHUT DOWN THE AIR POLLUTING INCINERATOR IN KENNEDY TOWN, MUCH TO THE RELIEF OF LOCAL RESIDENTS;
- IMPLEMENTED STATUTORY CONTROLS ON CHEMICAL WASTE AND OPENED THE LARGEST CHEMICAL WASTE TREATMENT FACILITY IN ASIA;
- BEGUN DETAILED DESIGN OF THE HIGH PRIORITY PROGRAMME FOR NEW SEWERAGE, WHICH WILL CUT POLLUTION IN THE HARBOUR IN DUE COURSE BY 70%;

WE HAVE ALSO:

- SPEEDED UP THE PROGRAMME FOR PROTECTING SCHOOLS AFFECTED BY EXCESSIVE LEVELS OF NOISE;
- INTRODUCED CONTROLS ON THE NOISIEST CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT LIKE COMPRESSORS AND HAND-HELD ROCK-BREAKERS;
- AWARDED THE CONTRACT FOR THE WESTERN NEW TERRITORIES LANDFILL;
- OPENED THE ISLAND EAST REFUSE TRANSFER STATION;
- DECLARED TWO FURTHER WATER CONTROL ZONES;
- LAUNCHED THE ENERGY EFFICIENCY ADVISORY COMMITTEE EDUCATION CAMPAIGN; AND
- MADE SURE THAT ALL POLICY PROPOSALS AND PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS ARE VETTED ENVIRONMENTALLY.

WE HAVE ALSO MADE IT A REQUIREMENT THAT ALL EXCO PAPERS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS MUST INCLUDE AN ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT. AND OF COURSE WE CONTINUE TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE CONCLUSIONS OF FULL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS. THESE HAVE A VERY PRACTICAL IMPACT. THE PROPOSAL TO DREDGE MIRS BAY, FOR EXAMPLE, WAS ABANDONED AFTER THE EIA SHOWED IT WOULD DO GRAVE ECOLOGICAL DAMAGE.

SO WE HAVE MADE A START. AND OUR PROGRAMMES ARE GATHERING PACE. BUT SOME OF THE STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES - FOR SEWAGE AND SOLID WASTE FOR EXAMPLE - WILL TAKE SEVERAL YEARS TO COMPLETE. SOME IN THE COMMUNITY ARE IMPATIENT FOR EARLIER RESULTS. THIS IS UNDERSTANDABLE.

IN THE COMING MONTHS, THEREFORE, I WANT THE GOVERNMENT TO DO MORE, ACROSS THE BOARD.

IN PARTICULAR, I WANT US TO CONCENTRATE ON :

- ONE, CLEANING UP THE NEW TERRITORIES. THERE CAN BE NO EXCUSE FOR THE GROWING EYESORE OF SCRAP METAL AND RUBBISH DUMPS THAT CLUTTER AN EVER WIDER AREA. WE HAVE GOT TO CONTAIN THEM. WE WILL BRING FORWARD PROPOSALS IN THE AUTUMN ON THIS ISSUE.
- TWO, TACKLING AIR POLLUTION. YOU CAN UP TO A POINT CHOOSE WHICH WATER TO DRINK. BUT WE ALL HAVE TO BREATHE THE SAME AIR. WE HAVE MADE GOOD PROGRESS - SO2 LEVELS ARE DOWN 40% IN THE LAST 3 YEARS, AND ARE DOWN 90% IN THE WORST PLACES. BUT WE CAN DO MORE, AND WE MUST DO MORE.

- THREE, PREVENTING POLLUTION IN THE FIRST PLACE. I WANT US TO LOOK IMAGINATIVELY AT WAYS OF CUTTING DOWN ON POLLUTION, AT WASTE MINIMISATION, AT TIGHTER EMISSION CONTROLS, AT BETTER PUBLIC EDUCATION.

HONOURABLE MEMBERS ARE AWARE THAT WE WILL BE PUBLISHING THE SECOND REVIEW OF THE 1989 WHITE PAPER ON THE ENVIRONMENT LATER THIS YEAR.

THIS WILL BE A VERY IMPORTANT DOCUMENT. I WANT US TO USE IT TO CHART AN ENVIRONMENTAL AGENDA TO TAKE HONG KONG INTO THE NEXT CENTURY, AND TO BUILD ON THE GREEN FOUNDATIONS THAT WERE LAID IN THE 1989 WHITE PAPER. WE USED THAT WHITE PAPER TO TACKLE THE URGENT LEGACY OF YEARS OF NEGLECT AND DECLINE. NOW WE MUST MOVE ON, AND WORK TOGETHER - GOVERNMENT, BUSINESS, THE COMMUNITY - TO GIVE HONG KONG A WORLD CLASS ENVIRONMENT TO MATCH THE WORLD CLASS CITY WE HAVE BECOME. I WILL WANT TO SAY MORE ABOUT THIS IN MY POLICY ADDRESS TO THIS COUNCIL IN OCTOBER.

THERE IS ONE DIMENSION THAT I HAVEN'T MENTIONED, AND THAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF CO-OPERATION WITH GUANGDONG. ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS KNOW NO BOUNDARIES. THEY REQUIRE REGIONAL SOLUTIONS. THE SECRETARY FOR PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT AND LANDS HAS ESTABLISHED A LINK WITH HIS OPPOSITE NUMBER IN GUANGDONG AND THEY ARE BEGINNING TO LOOK AT THIS ISSUE TOGETHER. I HOPE WE WILL BE ABLE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH OUR COLLEAGUES IN GUANGDONG ON THESE MATTERS IN THE FUTURE. WITHOUT EFFECTIVE CO-OPERATION, THE VALUE OF OUR OWN EFFORTS WOULD BE SERIOUSLY DIMINISHED.

WE ARE - AS A COMMUNITY - RIGHTLY PROUD OF OUR ECONOMIC SUCCESS. FOR SOME IN OUR COMMUNITY IT HAS BROUGHT GREAT LUXURY. BUT IF WE WERE TO CARRY ON AS IF THE ENVIRONMENT DIDN'T MATTER, IT WOULD BE A LUXURY THAT NONE OF US COULD AFFORD.

GOVERNMENT CAN'T DO EVERYTHING. THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DEPARTMENT HAVE A MAJOR STRUGGLE ON THEIR HANDS. THEY WILL NEED THE HELP AND SUPPORT OF THE WHOLE COMMUNITY. AND CLEANING UP OUR ACT WILL REQUIRE SOME SACRIFICE. ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DOES NOT COME CHEAPLY. IT IS RIGHT AND FAIR THAT THOSE WHO POLLUTE MORE SHOULD HAVE TO PAY MORE.

IN TRUTH, WE HAVE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO TRY EVEN HARDER TO PROTECT OUR ENVIRONMENT; ABOVE ALL IN HONG KONG, WHERE SIX MILLION OF US SHARE A SPECK OF THE PLANET WITH EACH OTHER - AND WITH AS MANY VISITORS - EACH YEAR.

I HOPE MEMBERS OF THIS COUNCIL - AND OUR COMMUNITY OUTSIDE IT - WILL GIVE EVERY SUPPORT TO THE CAMPAIGN TO MAKE HONG KONG A CLEANER, BETTER PLACE TO LIVE IN TODAY AND FOR HONG KONG'S CHILDREN TO INHERIT TOMORROW.

/FOLLOWING IS

FOLLOWING IS A TRANSCRIPT OF THE GOVERNOR'S QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION IN LEGCO TODAY (THURSDAY):

MR MARVIN CHEUNG: GOVERNOR, CAN YOU PLEASE EXPLAIN TO THE COUNCIL WHY OTHER COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE HIGH ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS SUCH AS JAPAN, SINGAPORE AND SWEDEN CAN OPERATE ENVIRONMENTALLY ACCEPTABLE INCINERATORS IN A COST-EFFICIENT MANNER AND YET THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT HAVE CONSISTENTLY MAINTAINED THAT SUCH FACILITIES ARE NOT APPROPRIATE FOR HONG KONG?

GOVERNOR: I DON'T THINK THAT IT'S SENSIBLE TO REGARD THE DISPOSAL OF WASTE AS PRESENTING A STARK CHOICE BETWEEN, ON THE ONE HAND, INCINERATION AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, LANDFILL. THE TRUTH IS THAT EVEN WITH INCINERATION YOU NEED LANDFILL AND EVEN WITH LANDFILL YOU'LL ALMOST CERTAINLY NEED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF INCINERATION. BUT I DO THINK THAT HONG KONG PRESENTS PARTICULAR PROBLEMS AND THAT WE'VE - AND THIS IS LARGELY A QUESTION OF DECISIONS TAKEN IN THE PAST - GOT THE BALANCE RIGHT IN FACING OUR OWN PARTICULAR PROBLEMS. TWO PROBLEMS WHICH PARTICULARLY AFFECT US HERE IN HONG KONG ARE HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS AND THE PROBLEMS OF A LARGE COMMUNITY LIVING IN A SMALL GEOGRAPHICAL AREA. SO IF YOU ARE TRYING TO SITE INCINERATORS, YOU NEED TO SITE THEM IN FAIRLY REMOTE AREAS OF HONG KONG, AND THAT PRODUCES PROBLEMS OF TRANSPORT OF WASTE TO THOSE SITES. I THINK, IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES, THAT IT IS RIGHT FOR US TO HAVE DEPENDED, AS WE HAVE, ON LANDFILL BUT, I REPEAT, WE WILL NEED MORE INCINERATION. WE WILL NEED INCINERATION FOR WASTE LIKE MEDICAL WASTE. WE WILL ALSO, I AM SURE, NEED SOME INCINERATION CAPACITY TO COPE WITH OTHER FORMS OF WASTE IN THE YEARS AHEAD. I WOULD JUST ADD THAT THE COSTS, AS I UNDERSTAND IT, OF DISPOSAL TO LANDFILL ARE MUCH LOWER THAN THE COSTS OF INCINERATION. AND I WOULD ALSO ADD THAT I THINK THAT THE HONOURABLE MEMBER WOULD FIND QUITE A FEW MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY THOSE LIVING NEAR INCINERATORS, WOULD OBJECT TO THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW INCINERATORS, JUST AS PEOPLE UNDERSTANDABLY OBJECT TO THE OPENING UP OF LANDFILL.

MR PETER WONG: GOVERNOR, NOW THAT THE LEGAL ADVICE ON THE PROPRIETY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S ACTION OVER THE TEMPORARY BORROWING OF 18 HECTARES OF CLEAR WATER BAY COUNTRY PARK FOR THE SAID LANDFILL WAS THAT THE COUNTRY PARKS ORDINANCE DOES NOT APPLY TO THE CROWN, THEREBY CUTTING OUT THE ABILITY OF CONCERNED PUBLIC TO OBJECT. IS THAT THE WISH OF THIS YOUR GOVERNMENT TO CONTINUE WITH THIS DOUBLE STANDARD?

GOVERNOR: I AM PERFECTLY CONTENT TO REVIEW THE OPERATION OF THE COUNTRY PARKS ORDINANCE AND IF WE NEED TO TIGHTEN UP SOME ASPECTS OF THAT ORDINANCE, IF THAT IS THE VIEW OF THIS COUNCIL TO DO SO. THE GENERAL CONSERVATION LEGISLATION APPLIES AS MUCH TO THE GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES AS IT DOES TO PRIVATE. BUT IN RELATION TO LAND USE IN THE COUNTRY PARKS, I THINK THE HONOURABLE MEMBER IS RIGHT TO SAY THAT THE GOVERNMENT IS "OUT" WITH REGULATIONS WHICH WOULD APPLY TO A PRIVATE OWNER. I DON'T HONESTLY THINK THAT THAT IS THE MAIN ISSUE TO ARISE FROM THE CONTROVERSY ABOUT THAT LANDFILL, BUT I WOULD BE PERFECTLY HAPPY TO DEAL WITH QUESTIONS ON THAT PROPOSED LANDFILL FROM THE HONOURABLE MEMBER OR FROM OTHERS.

MR PRESIDENT : OVERLOOKED, MR PETER WONG HAS A FOLLOW-UP.

MR PETER WONG : THANK YOU. MR GOVERNOR, DOES THIS MEAN THAT YOU ARE WILLING TO LOOK AT ALL THE OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL LEGISLATION AS REGARDS THE BINDING OF THE CROWN, BECAUSE THE GOVERNMENT REALLY IS THE LARGEST POLLUTER IN HONG KONG AND WHETHER WE LIKE IT OR NOT, THAT IS A FACT?

GOVERNOR : I WOULD DISPUTE THAT ALLEGATION, WHICH IS I THINK MORE EASILY SAID THAN ARGUED WITH EVIDENCE BUT IF THE HONOURABLE GENTLEMAN HAS EVIDENCE I'D BE VERY HAPPY TO CONSIDER IT. WHAT MY ANSWER MEANS WHAT IT SAID. THE HONOURABLE MEMBER ASKED IN PARTICULAR ABOUT THE COUNTRY PARKS ORDINANCE AND I REPLIED THAT WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO CONSIDER THE TERMS OF THAT ORDINANCE AND AS FAR AS OTHER LEGISLATION ON POLLUTION AND ENVIRONMENTAL MATTERS IS CONCERNED, I THINK OVERWHELMINGLY THAT BINDS GOVERNMENT AS IT BINDS PRIVATE SECTOR OPERATORS AND SO IT SHOULD. GOVERNMENT OBVIOUSLY HAS TO GIVE A LEAD. IN DOING SO THAT SOMETIMES INVOLVES EXPENSE AND I'M SURE THAT THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL RECOGNISES THAT.

MR PETER WONG : I'M QUITE CONTENT WITH THAT ANSWER.

MR LAU WONG-FAT (IN CANTONESE) : THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT. RECENTLY SOME CHINESE ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICIALS POINTED OUT THAT HONG KONG IS ABOUT TO LAUNCH A VERY EXPENSIVE SEWAGE TREATMENT PROGRAMME BECAUSE IT'S GOING TO STRADDLE 1997, THAT'S WHY WE NEED CO-OPERATION FROM CHINA. SO THIS IS THE COMMENT FROM THE CHINESE SIDE, WHAT IS YOUR COMMENT ON THAT COMMENT?

GOVERNOR : I'VE GOT NO DOUBT THAT IF WE'RE TO COMPLETE OUR TOTAL SEWAGE STRATEGY IT WILL TAKE BEYOND 1997 AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SAR WILL BE FACED WITH A NUMBER OF TASKS AFTER 1997. BUT I DON'T THINK THIS COUNCIL WOULD REGARD IT AS SENSIBLE FOR US TO LEAVE THE JOB FOR THE SAR TO PICK UP WITH THE UNDOUBTED CONSEQUENCE OF THE QUALITY OF WATER IN OUR HARBOUR AND AROUND OUR SHORES BECOMING EVEN WORSE. THAT IS WHY WE HAVE LAUNCHED THE FREE STANDING PRIORITY PROGRAMME FOR COLLECTION AND TREATMENT AND PARTIAL DISPOSAL OF SEWAGE WHICH WILL BE COMPLETED BEFORE 1997. THE WORK WILL BE COMPLETED BEFORE 1997 AND THE COSTS WILL BE MET BEFORE 1997 AND THAT PROGRAMME WHICH AS I SAID IN MY OPENING STATEMENT SHOULD REDUCE THE POLLUTION IN THE HARBOUR BY ABOUT 70 PER CENT. THAT PROGRAMME IS I THINK A PROGRAMME WHICH THE COMMUNITY WANTS US TO EMBARK ON AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE. I VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SAR WILL BUILD ON THE PROGRAMME WHICH WE SHOULD HAVE COMPLETED BY 1997 BUT I CAN'T MAKE ANY COMMITMENT TO THAT, NOR I'M SURE WOULD CHINESE OFFICIALS WISH TO SAY THAT WE SHOULDN'T DO AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE BEFORE THAT YEAR.

MR NGAI SHIU-KIT : WHAT ACTION DOES GOVERNMENT PROPOSE TO PREVENT FURTHER WATER QUALITY DETERIORATION IN NORTH LANTAU AND ADVERSE EFFECTS ON THE CHINESE WHITE DOLPHIN?

GOVERNOR : OBVIOUSLY THE WORK THAT WE DO OVER THE NEXT FOUR YEARS TO PUT IN PLACE THE FIRST STAGES OF A PROPER SEWAGE TREATMENT STRATEGY FOR HONG KONG WILL BRING BENEFITS TO NORTH LANTAU AS THEY WILL TO OTHER AREAS. IT'S ALSO THE CASE THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF WATER CONTROL ZONES RIGHT ACROSS THE TERRITORY WILL RAISE THE QUALITY OF OUR WATER AS WELL. AS FOR THE IMPACT ON PARTICULAR SPECIES OF MARINE LIFE, I'D BE VERY HAPPY TO ANSWER THE HONOURABLE MEMBER IN A LETTER FOLLOWING THIS DISCUSSION. I'M AFRAID I CAN'T GIVE HIM THE ANSWER ON THAT PARTICULAR FORM OF SEA LIFE THIS AFTERNOON.

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MR PRESIDENT : FOLLOW-UP MR NGAI?

MR NGAI SHIU-KIT : WILL GOVERNMENT UPGRADE THE TUNG CHUNG AND URMSTON ROAD SEWAGE TREATMENT WORK BEFORE ADVERSE IMPACTS OCCUR?

GOVERNOR : I WILL CERTAINLY LOOK INTO THAT MATTER FOR THE HONOURABLE MEMBER AND LET HIM KNOW WHAT THE RESPONSE IS.

REV FUNG CHI-WOOD (IN CANTONESE) : MR GOVERNOR, CONCERNING VICTORIA HARBOUR WHICH IS A WATER CONTROL ZONE TO BE DESIGNATED LATER THIS YEAR, BUT UNFORTUNATELY THE DESIGNATION HAS BEEN DELAYED. ACTUALLY IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN DESIGNATED IN 1991 BUT NOW IT WAS DELAYED AND IT WILL BE DESIGNATED IN THREE STAGES IN '95, '96 AND '97 AND SO IT WILL BE DESIGNATED AS A FULL WATER CONTROL ZONE ONLY IN 1997. SO I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW, DOES IT MEAN THAT THE ADMINISTRATION AS FAR AS ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION IS CONCERNED HAS NOT DONE ITS BEST AND WOULD YOU THINK OF MEASURES TO BRING FORWARD THE DESIGNATION OF THE ENTIRE VICTORIA HARBOUR SO THAT THE ENTIRE HARBOUR CAN BE DESIGNATED EARLIER?

GOVERNOR : WE ARE PROCEEDING WITH THE DESIGNATION OF WATER CONTROL ZONES AS RAPIDLY AS WE CAN. THERE IS NO POINT IN DESIGNATING A ZONE AND NOT BEING ABLE TO POLICE THE REGULATIONS WHICH ENSURE A RISE IN THE QUALITY OF WATER IN THAT PARTICULAR AREA. WE'VE DESIGNATED, AS THE HONOURABLE MEMBER WILL KNOW, RECENTLY WATER CONTROL ZONES IN THE EAST AND THE WEST AND WE TOOK THE VIEW THAT WE COULDN'T INCLUDE PART OF THE DISTRICT WHICH THE HONOURABLE MEMBER REPRESENTS AND THAT THAT WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A WATER CONTROL ZONE IN VICTORIA HARBOUR. WE WILL TRY TO ENSURE THAT IN THAT DESIGNATION WE DEAL FIRST WITH THE AREA IN WHICH THE HONOURABLE MEMBER IS PARTICULARLY CONCERNED. I HAVE MADE A HABIT OF CHECKING WHETHER WE'RE MOVING AS RAPIDLY AS WE CAN, WHETHER THE CONSTRAINTS ON PROGRESS ARE FINANCIAL. I'M ASSURED THAT WE ARE MOVING AS RAPIDLY AS WE CAN, THAT THE CONSTRAINTS AREN'T FINANCIAL, THAT THE CONSTRAINTS ARE THOSE OF HAVING PEOPLE, HAVING ENOUGH PEOPLE TO IMPLEMENT THE REGULATIONS AND TO MAKE THE WATER CONTROL ZONES REALLY EFFECTIVE. SO I'M AFRAID THE HONOURABLE MEMBER WILL HAVE TO BE A LITTLE PATIENT. IF WE CAN MAKE MORE PROGRESS WE WILL.

/DR CONRAD

DR CONRAD LAM : MR GOVERNOR, MR PRESIDENT, THROUGH YOU I WOULD LIKE TO REFLECT A POINT TO THE GOVERNOR. IT'S FROM WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT BOARD AND WONG TAI SIN RESIDENTS. IT IS IN RELATION TO THE ENVIRONMENT. THE GOVERNOR HAS BEEN TO WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT. I AM SURE HE IS AWARE OF TWO VERY FAMOUS AREAS OR SPOTS. ONE IS THE WONG TAI SIN TEMPLE WHERE YOU HAVE ALL YOUR WISHES GRANTED, AND THE SECOND ONE IS THE RATHER NOTORIOUS KAI TAK NULLAH. THIS AFTERNOON THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT BOARD MEMBERS CAME TO SEE US IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND THEY TELL US ABOUT THE PROBLEMS OF THE KAI TAK NULLAH. ACTUALLY EVER SINCE THE SETTING-UP OF THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT BOARD, THE QUESTION OF THE KAI TAK NULLAH HAS BEEN DISCUSSED TIME AND AGAIN AT THE ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE AND RELEVANT GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS DO AGREE THAT THERE IS A VERY STRONG STENCH AFFECTING THE ENVIRONMENT AND ALSO AFFECTING THE WATER QUALITY OF KOWLOON BAY. THE MOST IMPORTANT QUESTION ACTUALLY IS IN RELATION TO FINANCE, EVEN THOUGH MANY OFFICIALS DO AGREE THAT IN ORDER TO DECK-- THAT DECKING THIS NULLAH WILL BE ABLE TO IMPROVE THE ENVIRONMENT AND TAKE AWAY SOME OF THE STENCH AND IMPROVE TRAFFIC CONDITIONS, AND YET SINCE THEY CANNOT MAKE THE DECISION, IN OTHER WORDS, THEY CANNOT GET THE MONEY TO DECK THIS NULLAH. TECHNICALLY WE HAVE BEEN TOLD IT IS POSSIBLE. SO WE HOPE THAT YOU, MR GOVERNOR, WILL TAKE THIS UP WITH YOUR OFFICIALS AND LOOK AT THE AMOUNT OF MONEY INVOLVED AND TO SEE WHETHER, BALANCED AGAINST ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT, IT IS A SUM WORTH SPENDING.

GOVERNOR : FIRST OF ALL, THE HONOURABLE MEMBER IS QUITE RIGHT TO DRAW ATTENTION TO THE SMELL CAUSED BY THAT NULLAH. ALL TOO OFTEN, AS THE HONOURABLE MEMBER WILL KNOW, IT'S THE FIRST THING WHICH GREET'S VISITORS TO HONG KONG AND I DON'T THINK IT GIVES THEM AN IDEAL WELCOME TO THE FRAGRANT HARBOUR. SO THE SOONER WE CAN TAKE ACTION TO DEAL WITH THAT NOISOME, NOXIOUS SMELL THE BETTER. I'M SURE EVERYBODY INVOLVED, NOT ONLY IN REPRESENTING RESIDENTS BUT IN REPRESENTING THE TOURIST INDUSTRY, WOULD AGREE WITH THAT. WE HAVE, I THINK THE HONOURABLE MEMBER KNOWS, INCREASED SUBSTANTIALLY THE FUNDS AVAILABLE FOR DISTRICT BOARDS FOR LOCAL WORKS, IN PARTICULAR FOR LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL WORKS. WE HAVE PRETTY WELL DOUBLED THOSE FUNDS FOR THIS YEAR, BUT OBVIOUSLY, IN THE CASE OF THE KAI TAK NULLAH, THE COSTS OF DEALING WITH THE PROBLEM ARE VERY CONSIDERABLE INDEED. I WOULD LIKE TO CHECK, IF I MAY, HOW THAT NULLAH WILL BE AFFECTED BY THE EARLY STAGES OF THE HIGH PRIORITY PROGRAMME ON SEWAGE AND WASTE WATER, BECAUSE I THINK THAT THE IMPACT OF THAT PROGRAMME IN KOWLOON SHOULD HELP TO AFFECT THE NULLAH IN AN ENVIRONMENTALLY BENIGN WAY. IF I AM WRONG ABOUT THAT, I WILL COME BACK TO THE HONOURABLE MEMBER. AND I WILL ALSO LOOK AT THE QUESTION OF COVERING THE NULLAH WHICH MAY, AS THE HONOURABLE MEMBER SAID, HELP TO DEAL WITH THE SMELL. BUT THE OVERALL IMPORTANT THING IS TO SEPARATE SEWAGE AND WASTE WATER AND TO ENSURE THAT WE DON'T HAVE TOO MANY NOXIOUS FLUIDS IN THE OPEN AIR, CREATING A SMELL AND CREATING AN ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD.

MR HENRY TANG : GOVERNOR, AS WE ALL KNOW, DIESEL VEHICLE EMISSION IS A MAJOR CAUSE OF AIR POLLUTION HERE IN HONG KONG. WOULD YOU TELL US WOULD THE GOVERNMENT IMPOSE MORE STRINGENT EMISSION STANDARDS ON DIESEL VEHICLE EMISSION SOON?

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GOVERNOR : IT IS OUR INTENTION TO INTRODUCE TOUGHER STANDARDS - I THINK THEY'RE CALLED EURO-1 STANDARDS - ON HEAVY DIESEL VEHICLES WHICH SHOULD HAVE, I THINK, A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON DIESEL EMISSIONS. WE ALSO WANT TO GO RATHER FURTHER THAN THAT. WE WANT TO TRY TO IMPROVE AND TIGHTEN UP TESTING STANDARDS AND, SPEAKING FOR MYSELF AND SPEAKING FOR THE GOVERNMENT, I WOULD LIKE US TO ENCOURAGE SOME OF THOSE WHO AT PRESENT RUN DIESEL VEHICLES WHEN THEY REPLACE THEM TO MOVE OVER TO VEHICLES WHICH USE UNLEADED PETROL. SO I THINK BY THOSE THREE INDIVIDUAL ROUTES - FIRST OF ALL, TIGHTENING UP ON THE EMISSION STANDARDS; SECONDLY, TIGHTENING UP ON TESTING AND, THIRDLY, PERSUADING THOSE WHO RUN FLEETS OF VEHICLES WHEN THEY BUY NEW ONES TO MOVE FROM DIESEL TO UNLEADED PETROL - I HOPE IN THOSE THREE WAYS WE CAN HAVE A SIGNIFICANT IMPACT ON OUR AIR QUALITY HERE IN HONG KONG.

MR HENRY TANG : GOVERNOR, I OWN A DIESEL STATION WAGON. YOU WANT TO KNOW WHEN I SHOULD GET RID OF IT. DO YOU HAVE A TIME SCHEDULE ON THOSE STAGES WHICH YOU HAVE OUTLINED EARLIER?

GOVERNOR : I'M NOT QUITE SURE HOW LARGE THE HONOURABLE MEMBER'S WAGON IS, BUT I CAN TELL HIM THAT WE'LL BE...

MR HENRY TANG : IT'S A SEVEN PASSENGER STATION WAGON.

GOVERNOR : I DON'T HAVE THAT LARGE A FAMILY.

MR HENRY TANG : I DO.

GOVERNOR : WE WILL BE INTRODUCING THE SO-CALLED EURO-1 STANDARD, AN ADVANCED EMISSION STANDARD FOR LARGE DIESEL VEHICLES TOGETHER WITH THE INTRODUCTION OF A HIGHER QUALITY AUTOMOTIVE DIESEL FUEL WITH A REDUCED SULPHUR CONTENT FROM 0.5 TO 0.2 PER CENT IN 1995. I THINK THAT WILL BE DEALING WITH RATHER LARGER DIESEL VEHICLES THAN EVEN THE ESTATE CAR OWNED BY THE HONOURABLE MEMBER. BUT MAYBE WHEN HE IS CHANGING OVER - I DON'T KNOW HOW OFTEN HE BUYS A NEW CAR - BUT MAYBE WHEN HE IS CHANGING OVER, HE WOULD CONSIDER BUYING A CAR WHICH RAN ON UNLEADED PETROL.

MR MAN SAI-CHEONG : ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT HAS BEEN MANDATED IN MANY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES SUCH AS USA, TO INVESTIGATE THE EXTENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL DEGRADATION AND IMPACT ON PUBLIC HEALTH WHEN A PROJECT IS TO BE BUILT. IN HONG KONG, HOWEVER, THE EIA ONLY FOCUSES ON SIGHTING, CONSTRUCTION AND OPERATION OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS OR PROJECTS WHICH MAY BE LOCATED IN SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENTS. CAN THE GOVERNOR INFORM US WHETHER THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT WOULD CONSIDER TO BROADEN THE APPLICATION OF EIA AND WHETHER THIS ASSESSMENT CAN BE MADE MANDATORY?

/GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR : I THINK WE'RE MAKING RATHER MORE PROGRESS WITH THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT THAN THE HONOURABLE MEMBER WAS SUGGESTING. WE NOW ARE UNDERTAKING EIA'S ON ALL OUR MAJOR PROJECTS AND IN SOME CASES, FOR EXAMPLE, THE PROPOSAL THAT WE SHOULD DREDGE IN MIRS BAY, IT WAS THE APPLICATION OF EIA WHICH DETERED US FROM DOING SO. I'M VERY HAPPY TO LOOK AT HOW WE CAN BROADEN THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENTS AND MAKE THEM MORE EFFECTIVE IF THAT IS THE DIRECTION IN WHICH THE COMMUNITY THINKS WE SHOULD WORK. IN MY EXPERIENCE THE FIRST THING TO DO IS TO ESTABLISH THAT ONE IS CARRYING OUT EIA'S IN ALL THE CASES THAT THEY'RE REQUIRED AND DOING SO IN A WAY WHICH IS EFFECTIVE AND INTERNALLY CONSISTENT. QUITE A FEW OF THE EIA'S THAT I'VE SEEN IN THE PAST HAVE FAILED IN THAT RESPECT BUT IF THE HONOURABLE MEMBER HAS PARTICULAR PROPOSALS ON HOW WE SHOULD DEVELOP THIS VERY IMPORTANT AND RATHER SOPHISTICATED INSTRUMENT, I'D BE HAPPY TO LOOK AT THEM.

MR MAN SAI-CHEONG : FOLLOW-UP MY SECOND QUESTION IS WHETHER WE ARE GOING TO MAKE THIS EIA A LEGISLATIVE REQUIREMENT?

GOVERNOR : THAT'S CERTAINLY SOMETHING WHICH THE COUNCIL MAY HAVE A VIEW ABOUT WHEN WE COME TO DISCUSS IN DUE COURSE BRINGING OUR LEGISLATION ON LAND USE PLANNING UP TO DATE. I THINK THE TWO ARE CLOSELY RELATED AND THE COUNCIL MAY WISH TO WRITE INTO THAT LEGISLATION THAT PROJECTS ABOVE A CERTAIN SCALE REQUIRE A PARTICULAR FORM OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT, BUT I THINK THAT WOULD BE THE BEST CONTEXT IN WHICH TO CONSIDER THAT ISSUE.

DR SAMUEL WONG : GOVERNOR, WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ON THE EXCESSIVE AND MOSTLY UNNECESSARY USE OF PLASTIC BAGS AND WILL YOU AGREE TO MAKE THEM EXPENSIVE ARTIFICIALLY SO THAT PEOPLE WOULD NOT THROW THEM AWAY THAT READILY?

GOVERNOR : I THINK THAT ALL OF US WHO'VE SEEN PLASTIC BAGS FLOATING ACROSS OUR HARBOUR OR DECORATING SOME OF OUR BEACHES, EVEN IN THE MOST DISTANT PARTS OF THE TERRITORY, WOULD SYMPATHISE CONSIDERABLY WITH THE HONOURABLE MEMBER. BUT I BELIEVE THAT THE QUESTION OF PLASTIC BAGS IS PART OF A RATHER LARGER QUESTION AND THAT IS THE EXTENT TO WHICH EXCESSIVE PACKAGING CREATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. SOME COMMUNITIES HAVE DEALT WITH THIS ISSUE. IT'S HAPPENED IN GERMANY FOR EXAMPLE BY PUTTING A SUBSTANTIAL FINANCIAL BURDEN ON THOSE MANUFACTURERS OR RETAILERS WHO USE EXCESSIVE PACKAGING. I DON'T THINK WE'RE AT QUITE THAT STAGE IN HONG KONG AND I DON'T THINK THAT WOULD BE WELCOME IN THE COMMUNITY. BUT I HOPE THAT EVERYBODY AS CUSTOMERS WILL MAKE CLEAR WHAT THEIR ENVIRONMENTAL PREFERENCES ARE AND I HOPE THAT WE WON'T FEEL IT NECESSARY THAT EVERY PURCHASE WE MAKE EVERYWHERE SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY A PLASTIC BAG.

DR PHILIP WONG (THROUGH INTERPRETER) : THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT. MR GOVERNOR, I THINK I'M A VERY KEEN DIVER AND I ADMIRE THE BEAUTY OF THE UNDERWORLD AND THE MARINE LIFE AND I'VE ALWAYS BEEN IN SUPPORT ON ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AND BECAUSE THEY MAKE HONG KONG MORE BEAUTIFUL. TODAY I WOULD LIKE TO BRING UP A QUESTION IN RELATION TO URBAN ENVIRONMENT. IN THE URBAN AREA WE SEE POLITICAL PARTIES PUTTING UP THEIR POSTERS AND BANNERS AND BOARDS AND IT'S GETTING MORE NUMEROUS AND THEY STAY THERE MUCH LONGER THAN USUAL AND THEY BECOME AN EYESORE BECAUSE THEY BECOME WORN OUT AND DILAPIDATED. AND SO DON'T YOU THINK THAT THIS WILL HAVE AN ADVERSE EFFECT ON OUR TOURIST INDUSTRY AND WHAT IS THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE TO THIS PHENOMENON?

GOVERNOR : I MUST SAY THAT IN THE DAYS WHEN PEOPLE USED TO PUT UP POSTERS WITH MY NAME OR FACE ON THEM I USED TO TAKE THE VIEW THAT MY POSTERS WERE ENVIRONMENTALLY BENIGN AND OTHER PEOPLES' POSTERS WERE ENVIRONMENTALLY HOSTILE. IT MAY BE THAT OTHERS TAKE THE SAME VIEW. I HOPE THAT ALL THEIR PARTIES OR INDIVIDUALS AND PERHAPS THIS IS SOMETHING WITH COMING ELECTIONS OVER THE HORIZON WE SHOULD BEAR IN MIND, I HOPE THAT ALL PARTIES AND INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE CAMPAIGNING WILL RECOGNISE THAT IF THEY'RE SERIOUS ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENT, ONE THING THEY COULD USEFULLY DO SHORTLY AFTER THE ELECTION CAMPAIGN IS OVER IS TO GO ROUND AND TAKE DOWN ALL THE POSTERS AND BOARDS WHICH THEY ENTHUSIASTICALLY PUT UP IN THE PRECEDING TWO OR THREE WEEKS. I THINK THAT WOULD BE SOMETHING WHICH THEY COULD VERY USEFULLY DO, QUITE APART FROM THE FACT THAT FOR THOSE WHO LOSE, THE SOONER, I'M SURE THEY'RE ABLE TO STOP REMINDING PEOPLE OF THE FACT THE BETTER. IT'S IMPORTANT TO LOOK BEYOND POLITICAL CAMPAIGNING AS WELL. I THINK FLY POSTING AND GRAFITTI CAN HAVE AN APPALLING EFFECT ON THE ENVIRONMENT. FORTUNATELY, AND LONG MAY IT REMAIN SO, HONG KONG HAS LARGELY, THOUGH NOT ENTIRELY, AVOIDED THE APPALLING SIN OF SCRAWLING ALL OVER WALLS WHICH WE SEE IN TOO MANY EUROPEAN AND NORTH AMERICAN URBAN AREAS. I HOPE WE CAN GO ON AVOIDING THAT HERE. I THINK THAT BY AND LARGE WE SHOW RATHER GREATER RESPECT FOR OUR PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT THAN IS THE CASE ELSEWHERE AND I HOPE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE WILL CONTINUE TO DO THAT.

ANNA WU: GOVERNOR, I WONDER IF YOU CAN TELL US WHAT ARE THE AREAS ON WHICH COOPERATION CAN BE SOUGHT FROM GUANGDONG. PERHAPS YOU CAN HIGHLIGHT SOME OF THE PRIORITIES.

GOVERNOR: I THINK THAT ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PRIORITIES IS IN DEALING WITH WATER POLLUTION, AND I COMMEND A VERY USEFUL SEMINAR THAT WAS HELD UNDER I THINK THE AUSPICES OF THE BRITISH COUNCIL WHICH DEALT LARGELY WITH THAT ISSUE A FEW MONTHS AGO, BRINGING TOGETHER EXPERTS FROM GUANGDONG, EXPERTS FROM HONG KONG AND EXPERTS FROM EUROPE AS WELL. ALL ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS HAVE, IN A SENSE, A LOCAL CAUSE, BUT ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS ARE THE AGGREGATE OF LOCAL CAUSES EITHER ON THE REGIONAL OR ON THE GLOBAL LEVEL. IT WOULDN'T MAKE VERY MUCH SENSE IF WE MANAGED TO CLEAN UP ALL OUR OWN WATERS AT CONSIDERABLE EXPENSE OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS BUT FOUND THAT POLLUTION COMING DOWN FROM THE PEARL RIVER AND COMING DOWN THE PEARL RIVER ESTUARY WAS NEGATING SOME OF THE GOOD EFFECTS THAT WE'D HAD FROM OUR OWN INVESTMENT. EQUALLY, IT'S TRUE THAT AIR POLLUTION IS AN ISSUE THAT HAS TO BE DEALT WITH REGIONALLY AND NOT JUST BY ONE COMMUNITY SITTING BEHIND ITS BORDER. A THIRD AREA WHERE THE WHOLE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL RECOGNISES THAT WE NEED TO COOPERATE IS OVER THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION AND THE TAKING OF PRECAUTIONS IN RELATION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF NUCLEAR POWER STATIONS, AND THAT IS AN ISSUE THAT WE ARE DISCUSSING WITH THE GUANGDONG AUTHORITIES, AS THE HONOURABLE LADY WILL I AM SURE KNOW, AT THE MOMENT. SO THOSE ARE THREE AREAS WHERE COOPERATION IS ESSENTIAL AND THEY ARE THREE AREAS WHERE I HOPE THAT WE WILL BE ABLE TO SEE VERY EFFECTIVE COOPERATION IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS SO THAT ONE OF THE FASTEST GROWING PLACES IN THE WORLD, THE PEARL RIVER ESTUARY AND THE PEARL RIVER BORDERS, DOESN'T BECOME AN ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD.

MR TAM YIU-CHUNG (THROUGH INTERPRETER): MR GOVERNOR, IN YOUR INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT YOU SAID THAT IN THE PAST YEAR YOU HAVE SEEN SOME PROGRESS MADE IN THE ENVIRONMENT OF HONG KONG, FOR INSTANCE, SHUTTING DOWN THE INCINERATOR IN KENNEDY TOWN. BUT HAVE YOU, MR GOVERNOR, NOTICED THAT THE MARINE LIFE HAS BEEN GREATLY DAMAGED AND THE SEABED HAS BEEN DAMAGED AND, THEREFORE, THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF FATALITY IN OUR FISH AND SOME SPECIES MIGHT DISAPPEAR FOR DECADES AND WE WILL HAVE TO SPEND A LOT OF MONEY TO COMPENSATE OUR FISHERFOLKS SO THAT THEY WILL BE ABLE TO MAINTAIN A LIVELIHOOD? LAST MONTH I LEFT HONG KONG AND WENT TO TAIWAN AND THEN COMING BACK ON THE PLANE I WAS ABLE TO SEE THE DREDGERS AND THEN AROUND THE DREDGERS, WELL, WE HAVE A WHOLE SHEET OF YELLOW MUD, THE SEA IS NO LONGER GREEN. AND SO, MR GOVERNOR, ARE YOU PLANNING TO PAY A VISIT TO THE AREA SO THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND THE IMMENSE DAMAGE DONE IN THE PAST YEAR AND TO SEE WHETHER ADMINISTRATIVELY WE HAVE DONE ANYTHING AMISS AND TO SEE WHETHER ANY REMEDIAL MEASURES CAN BE PUT IN PLACE?

GOVERNOR: THE HONOURABLE MEMBER HAS RAISED AN ISSUE WHICH IS OF QUITE PROPER CONCERN TO A LOT OF PEOPLE AND NOT ONLY THE FISHING FAMILIES WHO HAVE SEEN THEIR PRINCIPAL MEANS OF INCOME SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED. BUT WHAT THE HONOURABLE MEMBER IS DOING IS POINTING TO A DIFFICULT CHOICE WHICH WE HAVE TO MAKE IN HONG KONG. I DOUBT WHETHER THERE ARE MANY MEMBERS, IF ANY AT ALL, IN THIS COUNCIL WHO WOULD ARGUE AGAINST THE LAND RECLAMATIONS WHICH ARE HELPING TO ENSURE THAT WE COPE WITH ONE OF THE MAIN CONSTRAINTS ON OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, THAT IS, A SHORTAGE OF LAND. WE ALL KNOW WHAT HAS QUITE PROPERLY BEEN DONE AND WE ALL KNOW WHAT REMAINS TO BE DONE IN THE NEXT FEW YEARS. DREDGING, EVEN THOUGH IT HAS SOME OF THE CONSEQUENCES TO WHICH THE HONOURABLE MEMBER REFERRED, IS I THINK LESS ENVIRONMENTALLY DAMAGING THAN TAKING SOIL FROM THE LAND. AND I THINK WE WOULD BE GETTING PROBABLY MORE COMPLAINTS IF WE WERE DOING THAT THAN WE ARE GETTING FROM DREDGING. THE HONOURABLE MEMBER WILL KNOW THAT WE HAVE CONDUCTED STUDIES OF THE IMPACT OF DREDGING OR POTENTIAL DREDGING BEFORE IT TAKES PLACE, AND THAT HAS ENABLED US TO BOTH RESTRICT DREDGING AND TO MONITOR IT CLOSELY. WE HAVE INTRODUCED, FOR EXAMPLE, IN RELATION TO THE WORK THAT IS TAKING PLACE IN EAST LAMMA, WE HAVE INTRODUCED A NUMBER OF PRETTY TOUGH REGULATIONS TO MAKE SURE THAT ENVIRONMENTAL DAMAGE ISN'T CAUSED. BUT THERE IS DAMAGE TO MARINE LIFE AND THAT DOES HAVE AN EFFECT ON FARMERS, ON FISHERMEN'S LIVELIHOOD. THEREFORE, WE HAVE INTRODUCED, AS THIS COUNCIL KNOWS, WE HAVE INTRODUCED COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS FOR FISHERMEN. FISHERMEN HAVE TALKED TO ME ABOUT THOSE COMPENSATION ARRANGEMENTS AND THEY HAVE TALKED TO THE COUNCIL WHICH, I THINK, DEBATED THEM VERY FULLY IN THE FINANCE COMMITTEE. SO WE HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES, WE HAVE OBLIGATIONS TO THOSE FISHING FAMILIES TO TRY TO HELP THEM DURING WHAT IS A DIFFICULT PERIOD, BUT I DON'T THINK THAT WE ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO DEVELOP HONG KONG IN THE WAY THAT ALL OF US WANT WITHOUT SOME CONTINUING DREDGING AT LEAST FOR THE NEXT FEW YEARS.

TAM YIU-CHUNG: (THROUGH INTERPRETER): A FOLLOW-UP QUESTION, MR PRESIDENT. I AM NOT AGAINST RECLAMATION, I AM NOT AGAINST COMPENSATION TO THE FISHERMEN, BUT THE QUESTION HERE IS WHEN WE GO ABOUT THE PROJECT IN RELATION TO ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDIES, HAVE WE DONE ENOUGH? IN OTHER WORDS, IS IT REALLY NECESSARY THAT WE DREDGE SAND FROM OUR SEABED? COULD WE ACTUALLY BUY MARINE SAND FROM NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES OR ARE THERE OTHER ALTERNATIVES TOO THAT WOULD HELP US TO REDUCE OUR IMPACT ON OUR MARINE ECOLOGY? HAVE WE DONE ENOUGH IN THIS AREA?

GOVERNOR: WELL, IT'S ALWAYS A CHALLENGING QUESTION TO BE ASKED WHETHER WE HAVE DONE ENOUGH, AND I DON'T WANT TO SOUND COMPLACENT, I HOPE THAT WE HAVE DONE ENOUGH. WHAT I WOULD BE VERY HAPPY TO DO, FOR EXAMPLE, IS TO SEND THE HONOURABLE MEMBER A FULL LIST OF ALL THE STRICT PARAMETERS WHICH SOME OF THE RECENT DREDGING OPERATIONS HAVE HAD TO OBSERVE SO THAT HE KNOWS THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE ASSESSMENTS THAT WE MAKE OF THE LIKELY IMPACT OF DREDGING ACTIVITIES. THE HONOURABLE MEMBER SAID THAT THERE ARE OTHER POSSIBILITIES FOR FINDING THE SOLID, FOR FINDING AN INERT MATERIAL FOR RECLAMATION. THAT'S PERFECTLY TRUE. BUT THE HONOURABLE MEMBER SHOULD PERHAPS BEAR IN MIND HOW SOME ALTERNATIVES COULD AFFECT COST AND THAT SOME ALTERNATIVES WOULD BE NO MORE ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY OR NO LESSER ENVIRONMENTALLY FRIENDLY THAN WHAT WE ARE DOING AT THE MOMENT. IT'S NOT AN EASY DECISION. I HOPE WE'VE GOT IT RIGHT AND I CAN ASSURE THE HONOURABLE MEMBER THAT WE WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE CAREFUL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENTS AND TO POLICE DREDGING WHEN IT TAKES PLACE AS CAREFULLY AS POSSIBLE.

DR C H LEONG: GOVERNOR, YOU MENTIONED THAT YOU'RE MOVING TOWARDS DESIGNATING WATER CONTROL ZONE AND YOU RIGHTLY PUT IT THAT IT TAKES TIME. BUT ARE YOU AWARE OF THE FACT THAT IN THE LAST FEW YEARS THERE'S ALMOST A THREEFOLD INCREASE IN HEPATITIS A IN HONG KONG, AND WE ALL KNOW THAT HEPATITIS A IS A RESULT OF CONTAMINATION OF FOOD, MAINLY THROUGH SEAFOOD AND SHELLFISH. NOW ARE THERE ANY SORT OF SHORT TERM MEASURES THAT THE GOVERNMENT WOULD DO TO ENSURE THAT THE POLLUTION OF OUR COASTAL WATERS COULD BE CONTROLLED ON THIS PARTICULAR ISSUE? AND I DO FEEL THAT THIS IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN THE WHITE DOLPHINS, THANK YOU.

GOVERNOR: WELL I DON'T WANT TO BE UNFAIR TO THE WHITE DOLPHINS, BUT I AGREE THAT WE NEED TO THINK EVEN MORE ABOUT OUR OWN HEALTH AND THE HEALTH OF OUR CHILDREN. I THINK WE HAVE TO FACE THE RATHER DEPRESSING FACT THAT IT IS GOING TO TAKE US SOMETIME AND A GOOD DEAL OF EXPENDITURE TO STABILISE OUR WATER QUALITY, LET ALONE TO START TO SEE AN IMPROVEMENT. BUT THE EXPECTATION IS THAT THE HPP, THE HIGH PRIORITY PROGRAMME, ON WHICH WE'RE NOW EMBARKED AT A COST OF OVER \$7 BILLION, SHOULD REDUCE THE PROBLEMS IN OUR HARBOUR BY 70 PER CENT. WHETHER WHEN THAT HAPPENS BY 1997 OR SHORTLY AFTERWARDS PEOPLE WILL FEEL THAT THEY CAN RETURN TO SWIMMING IN THE HARBOUR IS A NICE QUESTION I'LL LEAVE TO OTHERS. THERE AREN'T MANY SHORT TERM MEASURES THAT ONE CAN TAKE, I THINK, OUTSIDE THAT PROGRAMME, THOUGH WE DO WHAT WE CAN AND WE WILL PRESS AHEAD WITH COLLECTION AND TREATMENT AND PARTIAL DISPOSAL AS RAPIDLY AS WE CAN. THE TOTAL COST OF DEALING WITH OUR SEWAGE AND WASTE WATER PROBLEMS IS ABOUT \$17 BILLION BUT WE WON'T BE ABLE TO MOVE ON TO THE OCEANIC OUTFALL FOR EXAMPLE UNTIL WE'VE DEALT WITH THE COLLECTION AND EARLY STAGES OF TREATMENT.

MRS ELSIE TU: THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT. FROM THE GOVERNOR'S ANSWER TO MARVIN CHEONG I HAD THE IMPRESSION THAT, AND I'D LIKE TO ASK YOU GOVERNOR TO CONFIRM THAT IMPRESSION, THAT YOU ARE UNAWARE THAT THE LATEST TYPE OF INCINERATOR CAN REDUCE WASTE, RECYCLE METALS, COULD PRODUCE ITS OWN POWER FOR OPERATION AND IT DOESN'T PRODUCE THE DANGEROUS METHANE GAS FOUND IN LANDFILLS? MAYBE SIR YOU WOULD SOMETIME VISIT THE ONE IN JAPAN WHICH IS RIGHT AT A VERY BUSY BUILT-UP AREA AND PRODUCES NO ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. IF YOU ARE CONVINCED SIR, MAYBE YOU WOULD JOIN US IN THE LEGCO AND URBAN COUNCIL IN PERSUADING THE EPD TO TRY THAT KIND OF INCINERATOR.

GOVERNOR: I'M NOT UNAWARE OF THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF INCINERATION AND INDEED AS I'M SURE THE HONOURABLE LADY WOULD CONCEDE, SAID THAT WE WOULD NEED INCINERATION IN HONG KONG. FOR EXAMPLE, I MADE IT PERFECTLY CLEAR THAT WE WOULD NEED TO USE INCINERATORS FOR DEALING WITH MEDICAL AND SOME OTHER WASTES. THE POINT THAT I MADE IS THAT EVEN THE MOST MODERN INCINERATOR, FIRST OF ALL REQUIRES YOU STILL TO HAVE SOME LANDFILL BECAUSE YOU'RE STILL LEFT WITH RESIDUE AT THE END OF INCINERATION AND I ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE PARTICULAR PROBLEMS IN HONG KONG THAT I DO THINK THAT THE CLOSENESS OF OUR URBAN COMMUNITY MAKES SITING DIFFICULT, EVEN FOR A VERY MODERN PIECE OF EQUIPMENT. AND I ALSO THINK ONE HAS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF HEIGHT RESTRICTIONS IN A COMMUNITY LIKE THIS FOR ALL SORTS OF REASONS, NOT LEAST OUR SITING OF A NEW AIRPORT, SO THAT WHEN WE'VE LOOKED IN THE PAST AT SITES FOR INCINERATORS, WE'VE LOOKED, WE'VE BEEN LOOKING AT FAIRLY REMOTE AREAS WHERE YOU RUN INTO PROBLEMS OF TRANSPORTATION WHICH THEMSELVES PRODUCE ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. SO I DON'T BELIEVE THAT IT'S RIGHT, AS I SAID EARLIER, TO THINK THAT THE CHOICE IS ENTIRELY ONE BETWEEN LANDFILL AND INCINERATION. I THINK WHAT ONE HAS TO DO IS TO STRIKE A PROPER BALANCE AND I HOPE WITH THE CONSTRUCTION OF REFUSE TRANSFER STATIONS AND WITH THE USE OF NEW LANDFILL SITES WE'LL HAVE MANAGED TO DO THAT.

IF I CAN ADD TWO OTHER POINTS IN REPLYING TO THE HONOURABLE LADY'S IMPORTANT QUESTION. FIRST OF ALL, WE DO, THE HONOURABLE LADY IS ENTIRELY RIGHT, HAVE TO LOOK AT OUR OLD AND EXISTING LANDFILL SITES TO MAKE SURE THAT WE DON'T RUN INTO THE PROBLEMS OF METHANE BUILD-UP AND LEACHATE TO WHICH SHE REFERRED AND WE ARE AT PRESENT LOOKING AT OUR OLD AND EXISTING SITES TO ENSURE THAT WE DON'T HAVE THOSE SORT OF PROBLEMS, BECAUSE THE HONOURABLE LADY WILL KNOW FROM HER EXPERIENCE OF SOME OF THE DISASTERS THAT HAVE OCCURRED, PARTICULARLY BECAUSE OF THE BUILD-UP OF METHANE. SECONDLY, WE HAVE TO LOOK AT HOW THE LANDFILL SITES ARE USED. I'M SURE THE WHOLE OF THIS COUNCIL WOULD ONLY WANT US TO USE LANDFILL SITES WHERE IT WAS ESSENTIAL. WHERE YOU CAN DEAL WITH INERT MATERIAL IN OTHER WAYS, ONE SHOULD DO SO AND THERE ARE PARTICULAR PROBLEMS CAUSED BY THE AMOUNT THAT'S DUMPED IN LANDFILL SITES BY THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY. IT POSES US SOME PROBLEMS WHICH WILL IN DUE COURSE REQUIRE, AND REALLY REQUIRE THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY NOW TO SEPARATE INERT FROM OTHER SORTS OF WASTE ON SITE SO THEY CAN DEAL WITH INERT MATERIAL ON PUBLIC DUMPS WHICH CAN BE THEN USED FOR EXAMPLE FOR RECLAMATION AND WON'T REQUIRE AS MUCH SAND OR MUD TO BE TAKEN FROM OUR SEA-BEDS.

MRS ELSIE TU: IF I MAY JUST FOLLOW-UP MR PRESIDENT. I AM QUITE AWARE SIR THAT LANDFILLS ARE A NECESSARY IN ANY CASE BUT WE ARE RUNNING SHORT OF LANDFILLS AND I DON'T AGREE THAT THE NEW TYPE OF INCINERATOR NEEDS TO BE IN A REMOTE AREA. I THINK IF YOU WERE TO VISIT THE ONE IN SINGAPORE AND THE ONE IN JAPAN YOU WOULD FIND THAT THERE IS NO ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEM AND A REMOTE AREA IS NOT NECESSARY.

/GOVERNOR

GOVERNOR: I WILL OF COURSE, PROVIDED NOBODY ACCUSES ME OF TRYING TO INTERNATIONALISE WASTE AS A RESULT, I WILL OF COURSE BE PERFECTLY HAPPY TO VISIT INCINERATING CAPACITIES, INCINERATORS AND INCINERATING CAPACITY IN JAPAN AND SINGAPORE. IN MY EXPERIENCE IT'S QUITE DIFFICULT EVEN WITH THE MOST MODERN EQUIPMENT TO CONVINCING RESIDENTS OF A NEIGHBOURHOOD THAT LIVING NEXT DOOR TO AN INCINERATOR ISN'T GOING TO CAUSE THEM ANY ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS. I'VE HAD THE EXPERIENCE OF TRYING TO CONVINCING PEOPLE OF THAT IN THE PAST AND I HAVEN'T ALWAYS FOUND IT AN ENTIRELY DOWNHILL BUSINESS SO I DO THINK ONE HAS TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE CONCERNS OF RESIDENTS ABOUT THIS MATTER, EVEN THOUGH THE HONOURABLE LADY IS ENTIRELY RIGHT TO SAY THAT THE TECHNOLOGY OF INCINERATION HAS MOVED ON HUGELY IN THE LAST FEW YEARS.

MR ALBERT CHAN (IN CANTONESE): THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT. MR GOVERNOR, SO WE ARE NOW TALKING ABOUT ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS IN HONG KONG AND ONE OF THE MOST LONG-STANDING ONE AND MOST SERIOUS ONE WOULD BE THE NOISE GENERATED BY KAI TAK AIRPORT BECAUSE OVER 350,000 PEOPLE UNDER THE FLIGHT PATH ARE NOW AFFECTED DAILY BY NOISE AND THESE RESIDENTS HOPE THAT WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE NEW AIRPORT THEY WOULD BE FREE FROM THE NOISE NUISANCE. BUT NOW THAT THE SINO-BRITISH GOVERNMENTS ARE NOW STILL ARGUING ABOUT THE FINANCING PROGRAMME FOR THE AIRPORT AND SO A LOT OF PROBLEMS ARE AWAITING SOLUTION AND SO PROBABLY THE AIRPORT WOULD BE DELAYED. AND SO I WOULD LIKE TO KNOW FROM YOU, WHAT EXACTLY ARE YOU DOING RIGHT NOW TO ENSURE THAT THE FINANCING PROBLEMS WOULD BE SOLVED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE SO THAT THESE 350,000 PEOPLE LIVING UNDER THE FLIGHT PATH RIGHT NOW WOULD BE FREE FROM NOISE AFTER 1997?

GOVERNOR: WELL WHAT I'M DOING RIGHT NOW IS ANSWERING QUESTIONS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL AND IF THAT MAKES A CONTRIBUTION TO SORTING OUT OUR REMAINING DIFFICULTIES THEN NOBODY WOULD BE MORE PLEASED THAN ME. THE HONOURABLE MEMBER WHO KNOWS SO MUCH ABOUT THIS SUBJECT IS ENTIRELY RIGHT TO UNDERLINE THE ENVIRONMENTAL, NOT JUST THE ECONOMIC AND COMMERCIAL, IMPORTANCE OF GETTING THE NEW AIRPORT COMPLETED. I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THAT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IT IS ONE OF THE GREATEST CIVIL ENGINEERING PROJECTS IN THE WORLD, INDEED IT'S ONE OF THE GREATEST CIVIL ENGINEERING PROJECTS EVER UNDERTAKEN ANYWHERE BY ANYONE, AND IF THERE IS ONE COMMUNITY WHICH CAN BRING IT IN RAPIDLY, ON TIME, BELOW COST, IN THE MOST EFFECTIVE IMAGINABLE WAY, IT'S THIS COMMUNITY WHICH DOESN'T, THOUGH IT'S FULL OF PEOPLE WHO ARE VERY HAPPY TO TAKE ADVICE FROM OTHERS, WHICH DOESN'T ON THE WHOLE HAVE MANY EXAMPLES TO LOOK TO AROUND THE WORLD OF OTHER PEOPLE DOING THESE THINGS BETTER THAN WE HAVE MANAGED THEM. WE HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN A LENGTHY SERIES OF DISCUSSIONS WITH OUR CHINESE COLLEAGUES TO TRY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF AGREEING A FINANCING PACKAGE FOR THE AIRPORT. IN THE MEANTIME WE'VE GOT AHEAD WITH SUCH WORK AS WE CAN DO BEFORE AN OVERALL AGREEMENT IS REACHED AND WE'VE DONE A GREAT DEAL OF WORK AND ALL THAT WORK IS BEING DONE ON TIME AND WITHIN COST. I HOPE THAT WE WILL MOVE MORE RAPIDLY TO AN AGREEMENT WITHIN THE CONTEXT AND WITHIN THE TERMS OF THE MOU, NOBODY COULD WANT THAT TO HAPPEN MORE THAN ME. I DON'T THINK ANYBODY CAN DOUBT OUR SINCERITY OR OUR CONSTRUCTIVE ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THESE PROBLEMS. I HOPE THAT THEY CAN BE SOLVED. I CERTAINLY THINK THAT EVERYONE IN HONG KONG WANTS TO SEE THAT HAPPEN AND IS ASTONISHINGLY PATIENT AT THE FACT THAT IT HASN'T HAPPENED ALREADY.

MR CHIM PUI-CHUNG (IN CANTONESE): THANK YOU MR PRESIDENT. MR GOVERNOR, UP TO THIS POINT YOU HAVE BEEN HERE FOR ELEVEN MONTHS AND ONE DAY AND WE HAVE HEARD PROPOSALS IN RELATION TO CONSTITUTIONAL PACKAGE AND I'M AGAINST THAT AND YET IN RELATION TO 'GREENING' HONG KONG I'M IN FULL SUPPORT. MR GOVERNOR YOU HAVE ANSWERED A LOT OF QUESTIONS AND FIFTEEN MEMBERS HAVE ASKED QUESTIONS ACTUALLY AND IT HAS SHOWN US THAT YOU ARE VERY KNOWLEDGEABLE, MR GOVERNOR, AND THIS IS WITHOUT DOUBT. NOW HONG KONG IS AMONG THE FOUR DRAGONS IN ASIA, OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IS IN NO WAY BEHIND THE OTHER THREE DRAGONS AND YET IN RELATION TO THE CLEANLINESS OF OUR STREETS WE ARE BEHIND SINGAPORE AND WE ARE ALSO BEHIND OTHER COUNTRIES SUCH AS CANADA AND AUSTRALIA. SO MR GOVERNOR WOULD YOU ASK THE URBAN COUNCIL TO MAKE OUR STREETS MUCH CLEANER AND USE MORE RESOURCES TO DO SO, SO THAT OUR STREETS CAN BE CLEANER AND APART FROM OUR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WE WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO GIVE A BETTER IMPRESSION TO VISITORS TO HONG KONG? THAT IS ACTUALLY YOUR RESPONSIBILITY, MR GOVERNOR, TO MAKE THE URBAN COUNCIL TO DO A BETTER JOB AND IT'S AN EASY TASK AFTER ALL.

GOVERNOR: THE HONOURABLE MEMBER IS QUITE RIGHT TO SAY THAT ONE OF THE FIRST IMPRESSIONS THAT VISITORS GET OF ANY COMMUNITY IS THE QUALITY OF ITS STREETS AND THE CARE WHICH PEOPLE TAKE OF THEIR URBAN ENVIRONMENT. I THINK THAT WE HAD BETTER RECOGNISE THAT THE FIRST RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ENVIRONMENT, IN THAT SENSE, BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG. LITTER ISN'T PUT THERE BY SOME UNKNOWN MALIGN HAND, IT'S PUT THERE BY ALL OUR HANDS. IT'S PUT THERE BY SMOKERS WHO ARE, ACCORDING TO MOST INDEPENDENT SURVEYS, AND I DON'T WISH TO INSULT ANY SMOKERS PRESENT IN THE CHAMBER, AMONG THE WORST LITTERERS BECAUSE OF CIGARETTE STUBS AND EMPTY PACKETS. IT'S PUT THERE BY PEOPLE WHO DROP THE WRAPPINGS FROM FOOD THEY BUY IN THE STREETS, IT'S THERE FROM PEOPLE WHO DROP THEIR PLASTIC BAGS WHICH FETCH UP FLOATING IN THE HARBOUR OR DECORATING THE BEACHES OF THE TERRITORY AND NOT JUST THE STREETS. SO THERE ARE A COLLECTION OF GUILTY PARTIES AND THEY MAY NOT NUMBER ALTOGETHER SIX MILLION BUT THEY AT LEAST NUMBER A PROPORTION OF SIX MILLION. IN ORDER NOT TO HAVE LITTER, THERE IS ONE VERY SIMPLE, BOTH NECESSARY AND SUFFICIENT CONDITION, AND THAT IS THAT PEOPLE SHOULDN'T DROP LITTER. AND I HOPE THAT WE CAN BEGIN BY BETTER PUBLIC EDUCATION ABOUT HOW AWFUL LITTER IS. WE DO A LOT OF THINGS MUCH, MUCH BETTER THAN OTHER PEOPLE BUT I DON'T THINK WE'RE YET AS GOOD AS SOME ABOUT LITTER, THOUGH IN MY EXPERIENCE WE ARE BETTER THAN THE UNITED KINGDOM ABOUT LITTER BUT THAT IS NO GREAT SHAKES I CAN ASSURE THIS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL. I WILL CERTAINLY BE HAPPY TO TALK TO THE URBAN COUNCIL ABOUT WHAT MORE WE CAN DO TOGETHER, GOVERNMENT AND URBAN COUNCIL, TO DEAL WITH THE LITTER PROBLEM BUT I SUSPECT THAT SOME OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED REPRESENTATIVES OF THE URBAN COUNCIL WOULD BEGIN BY AGREEING WITH ME THAT THE FIRST THING TO DO IS TO STOP PEOPLE DROPPING IT IN THE FIRST PLACE. I HOPE THAT WHENEVER ALL OF US SEE ANYBODY DROPPING LITTER WE VERY POLITELY TAP THEM ON THE SHOULDER AND ASK THEM WHETHER THEY'VE LOST SOMETHING. IT SOMETIMES INTRODUCES ONE TO NEW AND MEANINGFUL SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS. IT'S CERTAINLY A VERY GOOD WAY I THINK OF STOPPING LITTERING AND I HOPE WE CAN ALL DO IT.

MR PRESIDENT: THE GOVERNOR WILL TAKE A SPECIAL QUESTION FROM MR LAU CHIN-SHEK.

MR LAU CHIN-SHEK (IN CANTONESE): I'D LIKE TO ASK A QUESTION ABOUT WORKING ENVIRONMENT. LAST WEEK AT NORTH POINT, JAVA ROAD, THERE WAS A VERY BAD INDUSTRIAL ACCIDENT INVOLVING TWELVE DEATHS AND MR GOVERNOR RACED TO THE SCENE IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS AND HE EMPHASISED THAT HONG KONG'S PROSPERITY SHOULD NOT BE BUILT UPON THE 'LIFE AND BLOOD' OF OUR WORKERS AND SO I WOULD LIKE TO ASK YOU MR GOVERNOR, WHAT CONCRETE MEASURES AND WHAT EFFECTIVE MEASURES WILL YOU BE TAKING TO IMPROVE INDUSTRIAL SAFETY IN HONG KONG IN A CONCRETE WAY SO THAT OUR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS CAN WORK IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT?

GOVERNOR: I'D LIKE JUST TO REMIND THE COUNCIL, TO BEGIN WITH, HOW SERIOUS THE PROBLEM IS. WE HAD ABOUT 66 INDUSTRIAL FATALITIES LAST YEAR, 48 OF THOSE FATALITIES WERE IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY. I THINK I'M RIGHT IN SAYING THAT THERE ARE FIVE TIMES, THERE'S FIVE TIMES AS LARGE A CHANCE OF HAVING AN ACCIDENT IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AS THERE IS IN INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE AND THAT THERE IS A 30 PER CENT CHANCE OF ACTUALLY HAVING AN ACCIDENT IN ANY ONE YEAR IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY. NOW THOSE FIGURES ARE SIMPLY NOT ACCEPTABLE IN A CIVILISED COMMUNITY LIKE THIS. IT'S NOT ESSENTIAL IN ORDER TO BUILD, AS WE HAVE TO BUILD IN ORDER TO ACHIEVE OUR RATES OF ECONOMIC GROWTH, TO HAVE PEOPLE RUNNING THOSE SORT OF APPALLING RISKS. WE HAVE TO WORK TOGETHER IN ORDER TO DEAL WITH THE PROBLEM. IT IS PARTLY, AS I THINK THE HONOURABLE MEMBER WOULD CONCEDE, A MATTER OF PUBLIC EDUCATION. IT'S PARTLY A MATTER OF GETTING BOTH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES SERIOUS ABOUT SAFETY AT WORK. WHY DID PEOPLE CROWD INTO ALREADY OVERCROWDED LIFTS? WELL MAYBE WE'LL LEARN AS A RESULT OF THE INVESTIGATIONS THAT ARE BEING TAKEN FORWARD BUT I STRONGLY SUSPECT THAT THE DAY THAT THAT ACCIDENT TOOK PLACE IN NORTH POINT ONE COULD HAVE FOUND MANY OTHER LIFTS EQUALLY OVERCROWDED IN OTHER PARTS OF THE TERRITORY. SO, PUBLIC EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT, ONE WAY THAT WE'D KNOW THAT PUBLIC EDUCATION WAS ACTUALLY HAVING SOME EFFECT IS IF WHEN WE PASSED CONSTRUCTION SITES WE SAW ALL THOSE WORKING ON THEM WEARING HELMETS WHICH ALAS ISN'T MY EXPERIENCE OR I GUESS THAT OF MANY MEMBERS OF THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL HERE. SECONDLY, WE DO HAVE TO WORK WITH BOTH UNIONS AND EMPLOYERS TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS IN PLACE A SENSIBLE SET OF SAFETY REGULATIONS IN THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND IN OTHER INDUSTRIES AND WE HAVE TO MAKE SURE THAT WHERE THOSE REGULATIONS ARE BROKEN, WHERE THOSE REGULATIONS ARE IGNORED, THERE ARE SUBSTANTIAL PENALTIES FOR THOSE WHO IGNORE THEM. THE HONOURABLE MEMBER WILL KNOW THAT THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT, THAT THE COMMISSIONER OF LABOUR, HAS BEEN LOOKING AT PENALTIES WITH A VIEW TO INCREASING A NUMBER OF THEM AND THAT IS SOMETHING THAT WE MUST CARRY FORWARD RATHER MORE ENERGETICALLY, EVEN MORE ENERGETICALLY. SO WE SHALL HAVE TO LOOK AT SAFETY REGULATION AND WE SHALL HAVE TO LOOK AT PUBLIC EDUCATION AND WE'LL HAVE TO LOOK AT PENALTIES. I HOPE THAT THE WHOLE COMMUNITY WILL MAKE IT CLEAR THAT IT IS NOT ACCEPTABLE IN ONE OF THE GREATEST COMMUNITIES IN THE WORLD WITH FIRST WORLD LIVING STANDARDS TO GO ON SETTLING FOR THIRD WORLD SAFETY STANDARDS AT THE WORKPLACE, THAT IS NOT AN ACCEPTABLE WAY FOR US TO BEHAVE AND I THINK THAT OVERWHELMINGLY THAT'S THE VIEW OF THIS COMMUNITY.

MR PRESIDENT: IN ACCORDANCE WITH STANDING ORDERS I NOW ADJOURN THIS SITTING UNTIL WEDNESDAY 30TH JUNE, 1993.

THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 1993

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PUBLIC CONFIDENT ABOUT FUTURE PROSPERITY - POLL

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A RECENT OPINION POLL CONDUCTED BY THE CITY AND NEW TERRITORIES ADMINISTRATION FOUND THAT 75 PER CENT OF THE RESPONDENTS WERE SATISFIED WITH THE PRESENT SITUATION IN HONG KONG, COMPARED WITH 68 PER CENT IN MARCH THIS YEAR.

RELEASING THE FINDINGS OF THE MAY 1993 TELEPHONE OPINION SURVEY TODAY (THURSDAY), A GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN POINTED OUT THAT PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE FUTURE ALSO SHOWED IMPROVEMENT.

"A GREATER PERCENTAGE OF RESPONDENTS WERE CONFIDENT THAT HONG KONG WOULD CONTINUE TO BE PROSPEROUS AND STABLE - 65 PER CENT IN MAY COMPARED WITH 60 PER CENT IN MARCH."

"AND MORE RESPONDENTS - 22 PER CENT - EXPECTED THE SITUATION TO IMPROVE IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS, COMPARED WITH 16 PER CENT RECORDED IN MARCH," HE ADDED.

THE SURVEY WAS THE 46TH IN A SERIES OF BIMONTHLY POLLS DESIGNED TO GAUGE THE TREND OF PUBLIC OPINION IN RESPECT OF PERCEIVED PROBLEMS IN HONG KONG, THE GOVERNMENT'S OVERALL PERFORMANCE AND THE COMMUNITY'S EXPECTATION OF THE GENERAL SITUATION.

IN THIS SURVEY, THE THREE MOST MENTIONED PROBLEMS WERE "HONG KONG FUTURE", "HOUSING" AND "TRANSPORT", THE SPOKESMAN SAID.

FORTY-EIGHT PER CENT OF THE RESPONDENTS MENTIONED "HONG KONG FUTURE" IN MAY, COMPARED WITH 64 PER CENT IN MARCH.

"HOUSING-RELATED PROBLEMS" WERE MENTIONED BY 36 PER CENT OF THE RESPONDENTS, WHICH IS HIGHER THAN THE FIGURE OF 28 PER CENT RECORDED IN MARCH. 22 PER CENT MENTIONED "TRANSPORT-RELATED PROBLEMS", ALSO HIGHER THAN THE 15 PER CENT RECORDED IN MARCH.

AMONG THE RESPONDENTS WHO MENTIONED THE "HONG KONG FUTURE" PROBLEM, 28 PER CENT TALKED ABOUT "CHINA-HONG KONG RELATIONS" - A DECREASE FROM THE 52 PER CENT IN THE LAST SURVEY. 28 PER CENT WERE CONCERNED ABOUT "RETURN OF SOVEREIGNTY/1997" - SLIGHTLY HIGHER THAN THE 21 PER CENT RECORDED IN MARCH 1993.

AS FOR THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE OF THE GOVERNMENT, 55 PER CENT OF THE RESPONDENTS SAID THEY WERE SATISFIED, THE SAME AS THE FIGURE OBTAINED IN MARCH.

FOR THIS SURVEY, A TOTAL OF 1,513 RESPONDENTS WERE SUCCESSFULLY CONTACTED BY TELEPHONE DURING THE PERIOD MAY 17 TO 21.

TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS WERE BASED ON A SYSTEMATIC RANDOM SAMPLE OF RESIDENTIAL TELEPHONE NUMBER CONTAINED IN THE TELEPHONE DIRECTORIES. WITHIN THE HOUSEHOLD OF A SELECTED TELEPHONE NUMBER, A RESPONDENT AGED BETWEEN 15 AND 64 WAS RANDOMLY CHOSEN FOR INTERVIEW.

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THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 1993

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TRADE DEPARTMENT DELEGATION VISITS CHINA

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A DELEGATION OF SENIOR TRADE OFFICIALS, LED BY DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF TRADE, MR TONY MILLER, HAS LEFT HONG KONG TODAY (THURSDAY) FOR A WEEK-LONG VISIT TO BEIJING AND TIANJIN.

"THE MAIN PURPOSE OF OUR VISIT IS TO BUILD ON THE CLOSE WORKING RELATIONSHIP WE HAVE ESTABLISHED WITH OUR COUNTERPARTS IN THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN TRADE AND ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION IN BEIJING," MR MILLER SAID.

THE DELEGATION WILL SPEND THE FIRST THREE DAYS IN BEIJING WHERE THEY WILL BE RECEIVED BY OFFICIALS FROM VARIOUS DEPARTMENTS OF THE MINISTRY AND DISCUSS MATTERS OF INTEREST TO BOTH SIDES.

THEY WILL ARRIVE IN TIANJIN ON SUNDAY (JUNE 13) TO VISIT THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AREA (EDA) AND TO SEE THE PROGRESS OF ITS FOREIGN TRADE AND PORT DEVELOPMENT.

MEMBERS OF THE DELEGATION ARE: MR CLEMENT MAK AND MS MARIA KWAN, ASSISTANT DIRECTORS-GENERAL OF TRADE; MR RAYMOND CHAN, PRINCIPAL TRADE OFFICER; MS MARILYN HUNG, TRADE OFFICER; MISS IRENE TANG AND MR RAYMOND CHEN, ASSISTANT TRADE OFFICERS AND MS SARAH LOY, INTERPRETER.

THE DELEGATION WILL RETURN TO HONG KONG ON WEDNESDAY (JUNE 16).

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UPGC VITAL IN THIS PERIOD OF CHANGE

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THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY AND POLYTECHNIC GRANTS COMMITTEE (UPGC) AS AN INDEPENDENT BODY TO ADVISE THE GOVERNMENT ON HIGHER EDUCATION MATTERS HAS NEVER BEEN MORE IMPORTANT THAN IT IS NOW.

THIS IS BECAUSE HONG KONG IS IN A PERIOD OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL CHANGE.

THIS WAS STATED BY THE NEW UPGC CHAIRMAN, MR ANTONY K C LEUNG, AT A PRESS CONFERENCE TODAY (THURSDAY).

LIKE HIS PREDECESSOR MR ANDREW LI, MR LEUNG IS OF THE VIEW THAT THE COMMITTEE IS A BUFFER BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE INSTITUTIONS THAT SEEKS TO ENSURE VALUE FOR PUBLIC MONEY AND TO SAFEGUARD INSTITUTIONAL AUTONOMY AND ACADEMIC FREEDOM.

HE ALSO SHARED MR LI'S VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF HONG KONG'S TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS: THAT THEY SHOULD BECOME CENTRES OF EXCELLENCE AND STRIVE TO RANK AMONGST THE BEST IN CHINA.

"I MUST SAY THAT I AM EXCITED AT THE PROSPECT OF WORKING WITH THE COMMITTEE, THE INSTITUTIONS AND THE GOVERNMENT TO ACHIEVE IT," MR LEUNG SAID.

/ON TERTIARY

ON TERTIARY EXPANSION, THE CHAIRMAN SAID THE AMBITIOUS EXPANSION PLAN ANNOUNCED BY THE GOVERNMENT IN 1989 WAS PROCEEDING ON SCHEDULE.

BY 1994/95, HONG KONG SHALL BE PROVIDING A FIRST-YEAR, FIRST-DEGREE PLACE FOR ALMOST ONE IN FIVE OF THE RELEVANT AGE GROUP, HE SAID.

MR LEUNG SAID HE HAD RECENTLY SUBMITTED TO THE SECRETARY FOR EDUCATION AND MANPOWER THE UPGC'S INTERIM REPORT ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION UP TO AND BEYOND 1994/95.

THIS REPORT, ENTITLED "HIGHER EDUCATION 1991/2001", SEEKS AN INFORMED DEBATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT AND, SUBJECT TO THE GOVERNMENT'S AGREEMENT, MORE WIDELY WITH THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE.

HE SAID HE HAD ALSO SUBMITTED TO THE SECRETARY THE UPGC'S ADVICE AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOLLOWING THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEWS OF THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC, CITY POLYTECHNIC OF HONG KONG, AND THE HONG KONG BAPTIST COLLEGE IN JANUARY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE UPGC ACCEPTED, AS A MATTER OF PRINCIPLE, THAT IT WAS ACADEMICALLY DESIRABLE FOR THE NON-UNIVERSITY INSTITUTIONS TO REACH A POINT WHERE SELF-ACCREDITATION COULD OCCUR.

ON THE NON-LOCAL STUDENT ISSUE, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD RECENTLY APPROVED RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE UPGC REGARDING THE DEFINITION OF NON-LOCAL STUDENTS, THE TREATMENT OF SUCH STUDENTS FOR STUDENT NUMBER AND GRANT CALCULATION PURPOSES, AND THE PERMITTED LEVELS OF ENROLMENT FOR NON-LOCAL STUDENTS AS PUBLICLY FUNDED COURSES.

"A RATIONALISATION OF GOVERNMENT AND INSTITUTIONAL POLICY IN THIS MATTER IS TIMELY," HE SAID.

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LABOUR DEPARTMENT ENHANCES PHONE ENQUIRY SERVICE

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THE GENERAL ENQUIRY TELEPHONE SERVICE (GETS) OF THE LABOUR DEPARTMENT HAS BEEN ENHANCED TO PROVIDE BETTER SERVICE TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC ON LABOUR LEGISLATION.

SPEAKING AT A PRESS CONFERENCE THIS (THURSDAY) MORNING TO INTRODUCE THE ENHANCED SERVICE, THE ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR LABOUR, MR ALFRED CHAN, SAID:

"THE GETS HAS BEEN UPGRADED TO A DUAL SYSTEM COMPRISING AN INTERACTIVE VOICE PROCESSING SYSTEM (IVPS) AND A STAFF-MANNED SERVICE TO ANSWER ENQUIRIES ON LABOUR LEGISLATION."

"THE IVPS IS A NEWLY INSTALLED COMPUTER OPERATED SYSTEM WHICH CAN AUTOMATICALLY RECEIVE INCOMING CALLS."

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"AS THE SYSTEM IS PROGRESSING SMOOTHLY, WE EXPECT THE GETS WILL HANDLE 1.5 MILLION ENQUIRIES IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS," MR CHAN NOTED.

"ACCESS TO THE SYSTEM IS VERY SIMPLE, ALL YOU NEED IS TO DIAL OUR GETS HOTLINE NUMBER WHICH IS 717 1771.

"ONCE CONNECTED, INSTRUCTIONS WILL BE GIVEN TO THE CALLERS BY A DIGITISED HUMAN VOICE SO THAT THEY CAN CHOOSE A SELECTION OF PRE-RECORDED MESSAGES OR SWITCH TO OPERATORS FOR CONSULTATION BY SIMPLY PRESSING THE DIGITS ON THEIR TOUCH-TONE TELEPHONE."

CALLERS USING ROTARY OR PULSE DIAL TELEPHONES WILL BE TRANSFERRED DIRECTLY TO OPERATORS FOR ENQUIRIES.

MR CHAN POINTED OUT THAT THERE WERE SEVERAL ADVANTAGES IN THE INSTALLATION OF THE IVPS.

"IT OPERATES 24 HOURS A DAY AND SEVEN DAYS A WEEK SO THAT CALLERS CAN GAIN ACCESS TO THE BILINGUAL PRE-RECORDED MESSAGES AT ANY TIME," HE SAID.

IF THE CALLERS HAVE FURTHER QUESTIONS TO RAISE AFTER LISTENING TO THE MESSAGES ON SOME COMPLICATED MATTERS, THEY WILL BE ABLE TO SPEAK DIRECTLY TO OUR OPERATORS FOR FURTHER ENQUIRIES.

"THE MOST SIGNIFICANT FEATURE OF THE IMPROVED SYSTEM IS THE DELIVERY OF INFORMATION AND FORMS ON LABOUR LEGISLATION BY FACSIMILE TO SAVE ENQUIRERS' JOURNEYS TO AND FROM OUR OFFICES," HE SAID.

"THE SYSTEM ALSO HAS THE FUNCTION TO TRANSFER PUBLIC CALLS TO HOTLINES OF RELEVANT SERVICES OF THE DEPARTMENT IF THE CALLERS NEED SPECIFIC INFORMATION ON INDUSTRIAL SAFETY, OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND PRESSURE EQUIPMENT," HE ADDED.

MR CHAN SAID AT PRESENT ABOUT 40 PRE-RECORDED MESSAGES ON CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT, EMPLOYEES' COMPENSATION AND FOREIGN DOMESTIC HELPERS ARE AVAILABLE FOR CLIENTS.

"IN ADDITION, MORE THAN 20 DIFFERENT GUIDANCE NOTES AND FORMS ARE ALSO AVAILABLE FOR FACSIMILE TRANSMISSION TO CALLERS.

"ADDITIONAL MESSAGES AND FAX ITEMS WILL CONTINUE TO BE PUT INTO THE IVPS ONCE AVAILABLE WHILE EXISTING ITEMS WILL BE REVISED REGULARLY TO PROVIDE THE MOST UP-TO-DATE INFORMATION FOR THE PUBLIC," HE ADDED.

MR CHAN NOTED THAT BEFORE THE INSTALLATION OF THE IVPS, ENQUIRY OFFICERS OF THE GETS HANDLED AN AVERAGE OF ABOUT 1,300 CALLS A WORKING DAY.

"PRELIMINARY SURVEYS REVEALED THAT AFTER THE INSTALLATION OF THE SYSTEM, THE IVPS AND OUR OFFICERS ARE NOW HANDLING 3,700 AND 1,000 CALLS PER WORKING DAY RESPECTIVELY," MR CHAN ADDED.

THURSDAY, JUNE 10, 1993

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SAI KUNG DRAGON BOAT RACES SET FOR JUNE 24

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THE ORGANISING COMMITTEE FOR THE SAI KUNG DISTRICT DRAGON BOAT RACES DECIDED TODAY (THURSDAY) THAT THIS YEAR'S RACES WOULD BE HELD AS SCHEDULED ON JUNE 24.

THE DECISION WAS MADE AFTER MEMBERS HAD A THOROUGH DISCUSSION ON A RECENT INCIDENT IN WHICH A MAN WAS REPORTEDLY KILLED BY A SHARK IN SAI KUNG WATERS.

THE MEMBERS ALL SUPPORTED THE HOLDING OF THE EVENT BECAUSE IT HAD BEEN WELL RECEIVED BY RESIDENTS AND ORGANISATIONS.

THE COMMITTEE'S CHAIRMAN, MR GEORGE NG, SAID SPECIAL MEASURES WOULD BE ADOPTED TO ENSURE THE SAFETY OF THE PARTICIPANTS.

IN ADDITION TO POLICE ASSISTANCE, MR NG SAID A NUMBER OF RESCUE BOATS WITH LIFEGUARDS WOULD BE STATIONED AT THE RACE COURSE TO PROVIDE RESCUE SERVICES.

FURTHERMORE, MEMBERS OF THE ST JOHN AMBULANCE BRIGADE AND THE CIVIL AID SERVICES WILL ALSO BE DEPLOYED TO PROVIDE MEDICAL AND CROWD CONTROL SERVICES.

MR NG URGED PARTICIPANTS NOT TO SWIM IN THE RACING AREA AND TO LEAVE THE SEA AS SOON AS POSSIBLE IF THEY DROP INTO THE WATER.

A TOTAL OF 54 TEAMS WILL TAKE PART IN THE RACES, WHICH WILL BE HELD ALONG THE SEAFRONT OF SAI KUNG TOWN.

OFFICIATING GUESTS AT THE PRIZE-PRESENTATION CEREMONIES WILL INCLUDE THE SECRETARY FOR RECREATION AND CULTURE, MR JAMES SO; CHAIRMAN OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, MR CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, DISTRICT OFFICER OF SAI KUNG, MR PARRISH NG; AND THE POLICE EAST KOWLOON REGIONAL COMMANDER, MR CHING KWOK-HO.

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CARGO WORKING AREAS REMAIN OPEN ON PUBLIC HOLIDAYS

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THE MARINE DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES TODAY (THURSDAY) THAT ALL PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREAS WILL REMAIN OPEN FROM 7 AM TO 9 PM DAILY DURING THE QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HOLIDAYS (SATURDAY, JUNE 12 AND MONDAY, JUNE 14) AND THE DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL (THURSDAY, JUNE 24).

THE PUBLIC CARGO WORKING AREAS ADMINISTERED BY THE DEPARTMENT ARE AT THE WESTERN DISTRICT, SHEUNG WAN, WAN CHAI, CHAI WAN, SHAM SHUI PO, YAU MA TEI, KWUN TONG, CHA KWO LING, TSUEN WAN AND RAMBLER CHANNEL.

THE SENIOR MARINE OFFICER (CENTRAL REGION) OF THE DEPARTMENT, MR LO KWOK-TAI, SAID: "THE TUEN MUN PUBLIC WATERFRONT WILL ALSO BE OPEN FROM 7 AM TO 9 PM DURING THE HOLIDAYS."

/DURING THE

DURING THE HOLIDAY PERIOD, THE MACAU FERRY TERMINAL WILL REMAIN OPEN 24 HOURS DAILY, AND THE CHINA FERRY TERMINAL IN TSIM SHA TSUI WILL BE OPEN AS NORMAL BETWEEN 6 AM AND 10 PM DAILY.

ON JUNE 13 (SUNDAY), THE VICTORIA MARINE OFFICE IN ROOM 314 ON THE THIRD FLOOR OF HARBOUR BUILDING AT 38 PIER ROAD, CENTRAL, WILL BE OPEN FROM 9 AM TO 11 AM TO FACILITATE ENTRY AND OUTWARD CLEARANCE FOR SHIPS ONLY.

AS FOR THE PORT FORMALITIES OFFICE IN ROOM 318 AT HARBOUR BUILDING, IT WILL BE OPEN ON JUNE 13 (SUNDAY) FROM 9 AM TO 11 AM TO HANDLE APPLICATIONS FOR PERMITS NORMALLY ISSUED BY THE OFFICE.

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HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND
MONEY MARKET OPERATIONS

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| | \$ MILLION |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|
| | ----- |
| OPENING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT | 1,649 |
| REVERSAL OF LAF | +1,151 |
| BALANCE AFTER REVERSAL OF LAF | 2,800 |
| NET INJECTION/WITHDRAWAL TODAY | NIL |
| EFFECT OF LAF TODAY | NIL |
| CLOSING BALANCE IN THE ACCOUNT | 2,800 |
| LAF RATE 2.00 BID/4.00 OFFER | TWI 111.9 *+0.0* 10.6.93 |

HONG KONG GOVERNMENT EXCHANGE FUND

| EF BILLS | | EF NOTES/HONG KONG GOVERNMENT BONDS | | | | |
|-----------|----------|-------------------------------------|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| TERMS | YIELD | TERM | ISSUE | COUPON | PRICE | YIELD |
| 1 WEEK | 2.17 PCT | 15 MONTHS | 2408 | 4.375 | 100.65 | 3.84 |
| 1 MONTH | 2.76 PCT | 18 MONTHS | 2411 | 4.625 | 100.89 | 4.02 |
| 3 MONTHS | 3.05 PCT | 21 MONTHS | 2502 | 4.75 | 100.94 | 4.21 |
| 6 MONTHS | 3.37 PCT | 24 MONTHS | 2505 | 3.75 | 98.91 | 4.39 |
| 12 MONTHS | 3.69 PCT | | | | | |

TOTAL TURNOVER OF BILLS AND BONDS - 18,820 MN

CLOSED JUNE 10, 1993

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