



# DAILY INFORMATION BULLETIN

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HONG KONG PEOPLE WILL COPE DESPITE CRISES

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HONG KONG HAS ENJOYED ANOTHER GOOD YEAR IN DOMESTIC EXPORTS DUE TO THE HONG KONG-U.S. DOLLAR LINK, WHICH BENEFITS BOTH EMPLOYERS AND EMPLOYEES, THE HON CHAN KAM-CHUEN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, MR CHAN SAID THAT RE-EXPORTS MIGHT MAKE HONG KONG THE NO. 1 CONTAINER PORT IN THE WORLD.

DESPITE THE DARK CLOUD OF PROTECTIONISM ON THE HORIZON, HE SAID, HONG KONG HAD PASSED THROUGH MANY CRISES AND OUR PEOPLE WOULD BE ABLE TO COPE WITH THEM.

ON THE STOCK MARKET, MR CHAN SAID THE SLUMP OF SHARE MARKETS AROUND THE WORLD HAD ALREADY TAKEN ITS TOLL AND MIGHT LEAD TO A DEPRESSION IN CONSUMER SPENDING.

HE SAID IF SMALL INVESTORS IN THE MARKET DID NOT TAKE THEIR PROFITS BY INSTALMENTS WHEN PRICES WENT UP AND SCRIP WAS SHORT, THEY WOULD BE UNABLE TO SELL THEM QUICKLY TO MINIMISE THEIR LOSS.

HE ALSO SAID THAT THE STOPPAGE OF THE STOCK MARKET REMINDED HIM OF THE IMPORTANT ISSUE RAISED IN HIS SPEECH ON NOVEMBER 27, 1985 - WHETHER "HOUSE RULES ARE ABOVE THE LAW OF THE LAND".

TURNING TO TRANSPORT, MR CHAN SAID ALTHOUGH MOST OF THE DENSELY POPULATED AREAS OF HONG KONG WERE OR WOULD SHORTLY BE SERVED BY SOME FORM OF RAPID, AIR-CONDITIONED AND SMOOTH-RIDING MASS TRANSIT SYSTEM, THE PUBLIC IN EAST KOWLOON HAD YET TO GET FOR SUCH SERVICE.

HE SAID IF ONE LOOKED AT A MAP OF EAST KOWLOON, ONE WOULD FIND FROM THE SOUTHERN TIP OF TSIM SHA TSUI TO THE AIRPORT AND BEYOND, FERRY TERMINALS, CULTURAL CENTRES, HOTELS, RESTAURANTS, TRAIN TERMINAL, AIRPORT AND COMMERCIAL CENTRES FREQUENTED BY TOURISTS AND LOCAL PEOPLE AS WELL AS RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

"NO DOUBT THE HEAVY CAPITAL INVOLVED IS A MAJOR CONSIDERATION," HE SAID. "FROM EXPERIENCE, A SYSTEM ON THE GROUND OR OVERHEAD IS SEVERAL TIMES CHEAPER THAN AN UNDERGROUND SYSTEM."

HOWEVER, MR CHAN SAID MODERN LOW NOISE SYSTEMS WERE AVAILABLE AND GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE THIS SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

ON THE MISUNDERSTANDING THAT THE KCRC AND MTRC WERE MAKING HUGE PROFITS AND YET INCREASED FARES, MR CHAN SAID IF ONE READ THEIR ANNUAL REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS CAREFULLY, THERE WERE STILL HEAVY DEBTS OR INTEREST WHICH REQUIRED PAYMENT.

"ON TOP OF THESE OBLIGATIONS, THERE IS THE ANNUAL INCREASE OF PAY, INFLATION FOR SUPPLIES AND SERVICES. IF ONE DOES NOT TAKE THESE FACTORS INTO SERIOUS CONSIDERATION, IT WOULD MEAN A DIMINISHING ANNUAL RETURN AND SOONER OR LATER IT WOULD RUN INTO FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES," HE SAID.

ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING, MR CHAN SAID SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1982 THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL HAD MADE RAPID PROGRESS IN TECHNICAL EDUCATION AND THE TOTAL NUMBER OF PLACES IN TECHNICAL INSTITUTES HAD BEEN DOUBLED.

"BUT EQUALLY IMPRESSIVE IS THE 18,000 OR SO PLACES FOR SKILL TRAINING WHICH THE COUNCIL HAS BROUGHT INTO BEING IN THE TRAINING CENTRES IT HAD ESTABLISHED," HE SAID.

"HAVING THE ABILITY TO BRING INTO EXISTENCE ADDITIONAL TRAINING PLACES IS IMPORTANT. BUT WHAT IS MORE IMPORTANT IN A RAPIDLY CHANGING ECONOMY, IN WHICH THE VARIOUS SECTORS WITHIN THE ECONOMY ARE CHANGING AT VARYING RATES, IS THAT THE MANPOWER TRAINING SYSTEM MUST, IF IT IS TO SERVICE THE ECONOMY, HAVE THE FLEXIBILITY TO REACT QUICKLY TO THE CHANGES."

MR CHAN SAID HE WAS GLAD THAT THE VOCATIONAL TRAINING COUNCIL HAD BEEN ENDOWED WITH THIS FLEXIBILITY BY THE WAY WHICH THE GOVERNMENT IN ITS WISDOM HAD DECIDED TO FINANCE IT FROM THE VERY OUTSET.

ON THE NUCLEAR POWER PLANT, MR CHAN SAID HE WAS NOT SHOCKED BY THE MISSING STEEL RODS IN THE DAYA BAY PROJECT, AS HE HAD POINTED OUT IN HIS SPEECH ON JULY 16, 1986 "THAT DUE TO HUMAN ERRORS, COMPUTER FAULTS AND UNFORESEEN REASONS, THERE IS NO ABSOLUTE SAFETY".

"TO EXPLAIN AWAY THIS BLUNDER, IT WAS SAID THAT SIMILAR INCIDENTS HAD HAPPENED BEFORE IN SUCH PROJECTS.

"DOES THIS MEAN THAT ONE DOES NOT LEARN FROM PAST ERRORS BUT PERPETUATES THEM?

"IF SHAKESPEARE LIVES TO THIS DAY, HE MAY HAVE TO REWRITE JULIUS CAESAR, FOR THOSE WHO TOLD THE PUBLIC THAT NUCLEAR POWER IS SAFE, AS 'YET BRUTUS SAYS IT IS SAFE AND BRUTUS IS AN HONOURABLE MAN, SO ARE THEY ALL, ALL HONOURABLE MEN'."

MR CHAN SAID WE COULD NOW ONLY PRAY THAT NO HUMAN ERRORS AND DELAYED ADVICE AROSE WERE MADE IN OPERATIONS IN FUTURE.

ON TELECOMMUNICATIONS, HE SAID WE MUST GET THE ANSWER RIGHT IN RESPECT OF CABLE TELEVISION.

"THE HONG KONG PUBLIC WILL NOT RECEIVE KINDLY THE SERVICES OF A NEWCOMER WHO CANNOT EVEN RENDER A BILL CORRECTLY AND HAS BEEN OUT BY AS MUCH AS SIX FIGURES IN STERLING," HE SAID.

GOVT URGED TO IMPROVE PEOPLE'S QUALITY OF LIFE

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IT IS OF UTMOST IMPORTANCE THAT EVERY POSSIBLE MEASURE IS TAKEN TO MAINTAIN AND IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE VAST MAJORITY OF HONG KONG PEOPLE WHO WILL NOT LEAVE THE TERRITORY BUT WILL CONTINUE TO STAY HERE IN THE NEAR AND LONG-TERM FUTURE. THE HON EDWARD HO SAID TODAY (THURSDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ADDRESS IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, MR HO SAID IT WAS HEARTENING TO LISTEN TO THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON'S CLEAR MESSAGE THAT HE WAS RESOLVED TO PRESS ON WITH THE TASK OF MAKING HONG KONG A MORE PROSPEROUS HOME FOR ALL PEOPLE.

ON THE PROVISION OF HOUSING, MR HO NOTED THAT THE PATTERN OF DEMAND FOR HOUSING HAD BEEN CHANGING IN RECENT YEARS AS THE LOCAL POPULATION BECAME MORE AFFLUENT.

THERE WAS A GROWING NUMBER OF PEOPLE WHO WANTED TO OWN THEIR OWN HOMES OR LOOKED FOR BETTER QUALITY HOUSING, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE LONG TERM HOUSING STRATEGY WAS AIMED AT PROVIDING HOMES FOR AN ADDITIONAL ONE MILLION FAMILIES, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS COMBINED, BY 2001.

"THIS MAMMOTH TASK REQUIRES A HIGHLY EFFICIENT AND FLEXIBLE HOUSING AUTHORITY SO THAT IT CAN MONITOR AND DIRECT AN OVERALL HOUSING PROGRAMME IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR," HE SAID.

MR HO SAID IT WAS THEREFORE A LOGICAL AND REASONABLE STEP FORWARD TO ALLOW THE HOUSING AUTHORITY TO HAVE GREATER AUTONOMY AND FLEXIBILITY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS OBJECTIVE.

THE PROPOSED NEW FORMAT OF THE HOUSING AUTHORITY WAS THAT THE AUTHORITY WOULD BE CHAIRED BY AN UNOFFICIAL, INSTEAD OF THE SECRETARY FOR HOUSING AS IN THE PAST.

THIS, HE BELIEVED, WAS IN LINE WITH THE OPENING UP OF THE GOVERNMENT AND WOULD MAKE THE HOUSING AUTHORITY MORE ACCOUNTABLE TO THE PUBLIC.

TURNING TO URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND RENEWAL, MR HO FELT THAT THERE WAS A LOT TO BE SAID IN THE HARBOUR RECLAMATION SCHEMES BEING PLANNED AT HUNG HOM, WESTERN KOWLOON, CENTRAL DISTRICT AND KENNEDY TOWN, AS THESE WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE PROXIMITY OF THE MAIN CITY FABRIC IN TERMS OF TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO IMPROVE THE DEPLORABLE PARTS OF OUR URBAN AREA WAS MOST WELCOME. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION WOULD SERVE AS A KEY MECHANISM TO REDEVELOP THE BLIGHTED AREAS IN THE URBAN DISTRICTS.

/HE NOTED, .....

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HE NOTED, HOWEVER, THAT THERE WERE CONCERNS THAT THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION MIGHT BECOME A BIG DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION COMPETING WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN AREAS WHERE PRIVATE DEVELOPERS COULD PERHAPS OPERATE MORE EFFICIENTLY.

"WE MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO ALLOW THE LAND DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION TO GROW MORE THAN IS NECESSARY," HE SAID.

HE NOTED THAT THE CORPORATION SHOULD BE KEPT SMALL AND EFFICIENT. "ITS MAJOR FUNCTION SHOULD BE CONFINED TO THE ASSEMBLY OF LAND WHERE AND WHEN PRIVATE DEVELOPERS ARE UNABLE TO DO SO. AFTER THIS IS DONE, INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS SHOULD BEST BE DELEGATED, WHERE POSSIBLE, TO PRIVATE DEVELOPERS OR BE UNDERTAKEN AS JOINT VENTURES WITH THEM.

"AS IN OUR HOUSING PROGRAMME, RESOURCES FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR SHOULD BE EXPLOITED TO THE FULL. THE CORPORATION SHOULD, HOWEVER, KEEP A MONITORING ROLE TO ENSURE THAT THE QUALITY AND OBJECTIVES OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS WILL BE MET."

ON NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT, MR HO SAID HIS OWN OBSERVATION WAS THAT HONG KONG'S TOWN PLANNERS HAD, ON THE WHOLE, ENJOYED CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS IN THE MASTER-PLANNING OF THE NEW TOWNS SO THAT THEY WERE SELF-CONTAINED COMMUNITIES WITH THE RIGHT MIX OF RESIDENTIAL, WORK PLACES, EDUCATIONAL AND PUBLIC FACILITIES.

SHORTCOMINGS, IF ANY, HAD BEEN IN THE TIMELY CO-ORDINATION OF VARIOUS FACILITIES AS RESIDENTS MOVED INTO THE NEW TOWNS, HE NOTED.

"I MUST ADMIT THAT THIS IS A VERY DIFFICULT PROCESS INVOLVING THE HIGHEST DEGREE OF SENSITIVITY IN PROGRAMMING AND CO-ORDINATION BETWEEN VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, THE HOUSING AUTHORITY, WHICH IS USUALLY THE PRIME MOVER OF RESIDENTS, AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR," HE SAID.

HE ADDED THAT THE RECENT DECISION TO GO AHEAD WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF BOTH PHASES OF JUNK BAY TO ACCOMMODATE ITS ULTIMATE POPULATION OF 325,000 PEOPLE MEANT THAT TIMELY PUBLIC TRANSPORT SYSTEM SHOULD BE PLANNED, IN ADDITION TO THE TWIN-TUBED JUNK BAY TUNNEL.

ON TRANSPORT SERVICES, MR HO SAID THIS WAS AN AREA WHICH NEEDED CONSTANT IMPROVEMENT TO KEEP PACE WITH HONG KONG'S DEVELOPMENT.

THE CURRENT CONGESTION AT THE LION ROCK TUNNEL WAS ANOTHER LESSON IN PLANNING THE FUTURE TRANSPORT SYSTEM, HE SAID.

"IF WE DO NOT HEED THIS LESSON, NOT MANY YEARS AWAY WE MAY HAVE TO SCRATCH OUR HEADS TO SOLVE TRAFFIC CONGESTION AT THE JUNK BAY TUNNEL OR ON THE TUEN MUN HIGHWAY."

/ANOTHER AREA .....

ANOTHER AREA OF PARTICULAR INTEREST TO HIM WAS THE LIGHT RAIL TRANSIT SYSTEM IN THE NORTHWESTERN PART OF THE NEW TERRITORIES.

HE SAID: "WE HAVE JUST LEARNED THE WELCOME NEWS THAT THE LRT WILL PROVIDE A LINK TO TIN SHUI WAI. WE SHOULD NOT BE CAUGHT UNPREPARED WHEN THE NEW TOWN DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME AT TIN SHUI WAI IS COMPLETE, WHICH WILL BOOST THE POPULATION SIZE TREMENDOUSLY IN THAT DISTRICT."

HE ALSO NOTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT HOPED TO REACH A DECISION CONCERNING THE PROVISION OF A FIXED RAIL LINK BETWEEN THE NORTHWESTERN PART OF THE NEW TERRITORIES WITH THE MAIN URBAN AREA BEFORE THE END OF NEXT YEAR. HE CONSIDERED THIS SHOULD BE TREATED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.

ON PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENTS, MR HO SAID IT WAS DISAPPOINTING TO HEAR THAT THE JOINT PORT AND AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT STUDY WOULD ONLY BE COMPLETED BY THE LATE SUMMER OF 1989, ALMOST TWO YEARS AWAY. ONLY THEN THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE SOME 'FUNDAMENTAL DECISIONS'.

KAI TAK AIRPORT, WITH ITS SINGLE RUNWAY, DEFINITELY COULD NOT MEET THE FUTURE DEMAND FOR AIR TRAFFIC. THE ONLY QUESTION WAS HOW LONG COULD IT HOLD ON BEFORE IT REACHED ITS FULL CAPACITY, AND ADVERSE EFFECTS BEGAN TO EMERGE, HE SAID.

"THE URGENCY FOR A REPLACEMENT AIRPORT IS AUGMENTED BY THE FACT THAT THE PRESENT KAI TAI AIRPORT HAS BEEN CREATING NUMEROUS NOISE POLLUTION PROBLEMS, NOT TO MENTION THE HINDRANCE TO THE DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF KOWLOON," HE SAID.

FINALLY, HE POINTED OUT THAT AS 1997 DREW NEAR, THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HONG KONG AND CHINA WOULD INEVITABLY BECOME CLOSER.

ALL OUR LARGE SCALE PROJECTS IN THE YEARS AHEAD WOULD HAVE TO BE CONSIDERED AGAINST THE IMPACT OF, AND THE RELATIONSHIP WITH, DEVELOPMENT IN CHINA, PARTICULARLY IN THE PEARL RIVER DELTA AREA. THIS WAS ESPECIALLY SIGNIFICANT IN AREAS LIKE TRANSPORT, COMMUNICATION, AVIATION AND TRADE.

THE CHINA FACTOR WAS THEREFORE SOMETHING WHICH WE MUST TAKE INTO ACCOUNT IN MAPPING OUT THE PLANS FOR OUR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS, HE NOTED.

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CLOSED CAMP POLICY MUST REMAIN

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HONG KONG MUST RETAIN ITS CLOSED CAMP POLICY ON THE VIETNAMESE REFUGEE ISSUE UNTIL AN EFFECTIVE WAY CAN BE FOUND TO STOP THESE PEOPLE FROM LANDING IN THE TERRITORY, THE HON RITA FAN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, MRS FAN SAID: "WE CANNOT AFFORD TO ABOLISH THE CLOSED CAMP POLICY BECAUSE THE PROSPERITY OF OUR CITY ECONOMY, COUPLED WITH THE FREEDOM OF OPEN CAMP, MAY WELL BE TOO STRONG A MAGNET FOR ECONOMIC IMMIGRANTS FROM VIETNAM."

"THE CONSEQUENCE CAN EASILY BE AN INFLUX WHICH WILL BE TOO MUCH FOR HONG KONG TO HANDLE," SHE ADDED.

MRS FAN SAID THE ADMINISTRATION SHOULD CONTINUE TO PURSUE THE MATTER OF REPATRIATION, WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT AND OTHER COUNTRIES.

SHE REPORTED THAT THE LEGCO AD HOC GROUP ON VIETNAMESE REFUGEES HAD ASKED THE SECRETARY FOR SECURITY FOR A REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF REPATRIATION IN SIX MONTHS' TIME.

MINDFUL OF THE POSSIBILITY THAT SATISFACTORY PROGRESS MIGHT NOT ACHIEVED BY THE END OF THAT PERIOD, MRS FAN SAID THE GROUP HAD ALSO SUGGESTED TO THE ADMINISTRATION THAT THE PRESENT POLICY OF HONG KONG BEING A PLACE OF FIRST ASYLUM SHOULD BE CAREFULLY REVIEWED.

ON EDUCATION, MRS FAN URGED THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT TO TAKE MORE POSITIVE MEASURES TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN TEACHERS AND PARENTS OF PRIMARY SCHOOL STUDENTS.

SHE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER THE GROWING TREND AMONG SOME PRIMARY STUDENTS TO BECOME LESS RESPONSIVE TO TEACHERS' INSTRUCTIONS, MORE MATERIALISTIC, AND INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT TO TEACH.

"AS THESE STUDENTS MOVE INTO THE SECONDARY SECTOR, IT WILL BE EVEN MORE DIFFICULT TO CHANGE THEIR WAYS," SHE POINTED OUT.

MRS FAN BELIEVED THAT AN EFFECTIVE WAY TO PREVENT CHILDREN FROM DEVELOPING BAD HABITS AND UNDESIRABLE TRAITS WAS FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO WORK TOGETHER AND PROVIDE MUTUAL SUPPORT.

"AS A MATTER OF POLICY, ALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS SHOULD AT LEAST SET ASIDE ONE DAY, A NORMAL SCHOOL DAY, FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO DISCUSS INDIVIDUALLY THE PROGRESS OF EACH PUPIL," SHE SAID.

/"THE STRENGTHENING .....

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"THE STRENGTHENING OF TEACHER-PARENT COMMUNICATION AND CO-OPERATION WILL HELP TO REDUCE UNRULY BEHAVIOUR AMONG PUPILS IN THE PRIMARY SECTOR, WHICH WILL, IN TURN, BENEFIT THE SECONDARY SECTOR," SHE SAID.

TURNING TO THE GOVERNMENT'S TAXATION POLICY, MRS FAN REQUESTED THE FINANCIAL SECRETARY TO RE-EXAMINE THE MERITS OF SEPARATE TAXATION FOR MARRIED COUPLES IN THE NEXT BUDGET.

SHE FOUND IT GROSSLY UNFAIR THAT A PARTICULAR GROUP OF TAXPAYERS SHOULD SUFFER A HIGHER TAX LIABILITY SIMPLY BECAUSE THEY HAD MARRIED AND CONTINUED TO WORK.

"IF SEPARATE TAXATION COMES INTO BEING, AND WITH THE PRESENT LABOUR SHORTAGE, HOUSEWIVES WHO ARE NOT WORKING NOW MAY WELL BE ATTRACTED INTO EMPLOYMENT, AS THEY CAN BENEFIT FROM THE SALARY THEY EARN WITHOUT PUSHING THEIR HUSBAND'S TAX INTO A HIGHER BRACKET," SHE SAID.

THE MOVE OF THESE PEOPLE INTO THE LABOUR FORCE MIGHT WELL RESULT IN AN INCREASE IN TAX INCOME WHICH COULD COMPENSATE FOR THE ESTIMATED LOSS OF \$400 MILLION PER ANNUM IN GOVERNMENT REVENUE.

SHE URGED THE ADMINISTRATION, IN CONSIDERING THE MATTER, TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF THE PREVAILING TREND TOWARDS SEPARATE TAXATION IN OTHER COUNTRIES AS WELL AS THE LOCAL LABOUR SHORTAGE.

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#### EDUCATION SEEMS TO HAVE LOST SACRED AIM

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THE HON PAULINE NG SAID TODAY (THURSDAY) THAT SHE WAS SURPRISED THAT THE GOVERNOR HAD SUGGESTED THAT THE AIM OF OPEN EDUCATION WAS TO PROVIDE QUALIFIED PROFESSIONALS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY.

SPEAKING DURING THE ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, SHE SAID IT WAS MORE PREFERABLE TO SHIFT THE EMPHASIS TO "EDUCATION FOR EDUCATION'S SAKE", THAN TO EMPHASISE TOO MUCH THE ECONOMIC ROLE OF EDUCATION.

"EDUCATION SEEMS TO HAVE LOST ITS SACRED AIM TO EDUCATE A PERSON AND HAS GIVEN WAY TO TRAINING UP A TOOL FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT," SHE SAID.

/"IT IS .....

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"IT IS EVEN MORE DANGEROUS IF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM ONLY PRODUCES TRAINED PROFESSIONALS WHO STAND BETTER CHANCES OF LEAVING HONG KONG AS 1997 APPROACHES," SHE ADDED.

MRS NG SAID SHE WAS WORRIED THAT THE ENTIRE HONG KONG ECONOMY WOULD SUFFER FROM THE LOSS OF THE PROFESSIONAL PEOPLE.

SHE CRITICISED THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS FOR LACKING AN OVERALL AND THOROUGH PLAN FOR THE DEVELOPMENT AND IMPROVEMENT OF THE ENTIRE EDUCATION SYSTEM.

SHE SAID THAT THE ADDRESS ONLY DEALT WITH THE TERTIARY EDUCATION SECTOR BUT NO MENTION HAD BEEN MADE ABOUT THE SECTOR'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LOWER, BUT FUNDAMENTAL, AND THEREFORE IMPORTANT STAGES OF EDUCATION.

SHE FELT THAT INSTEAD OF PUTTING TOO MUCH EMPHASIS ON THE PROVISION OF MORE HIGHER EDUCATION PLACES, STEPS SHOULD BE TAKEN TO DEAL WITH THE URGENT NEED TO PRODUCE A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE NINE-YEAR FREE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE UPPER SECONDARY SYSTEM.

SHE SAID THE QUESTION OF SUBSIDISING AND IMPROVING THE SERVICE PROVIDED BY PRE-PRIMARY INSTITUTIONS AS WELL AS THE NEED FOR PROVISION OF PROFESSIONAL TRAINING FOR PERSONS ENGAGED IN THIS SERVICE SHOULD HAVE BEEN GIVEN CONSIDERATION.

"AS THE GOVERNMENT IS AIMING AT BETTER CO-ORDINATION AND STREAM-LINING OF PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES, IT IS CERTAINLY PERPLEXING TO HAVE PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION DEALT WITH BY TWO DEPARTMENTS, NAMELY, EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT," SHE SAID.

MRS NG REPEATED HER CALL FOR CENTRALISING THE CO-ORDINATION AND SUPERVISION OF PRE-PRIMARY SERVICES UNDER ONE DEPARTMENT, SO THAT THE PROVISION OF SERVICES COULD BE STANDARDISED.

SHE ALSO SUGGESTED THE FORMATION OF A WORKING PARTY TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF PRE-PRIMARY EDUCATION.

ON THE SUBJECT OF MEETING THE FINANCIAL NEEDS OF THE ELDERLY, MRS NG EXPRESSED HER STRONG OBJECTION TO THE INCOME DECLARATION REQUIREMENT FOR NEW OLD AGE ALLOWANCE APPLICANTS.

SHE SAID THE NEW PRACTICE WOULD TURN THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE INTO A WELFARE HANDOUT INSTEAD OF A TOKEN OF RESPECT AND APPRECIATION OF ELDERLY PEOPLE'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO SOCIETY.

MOREOVER, IT WOULD TREAT DIFFERENTLY TWO GROUPS OF PEOPLE WITH THE SAME NEEDS, SINCE INCOME DECLARATION WOULD ONLY APPLY TO NEW APPLICANTS.

/THEREFORE, SHE .....

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THEREFORE, SHE URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO RETAIN THE NON-MEANS TESTED OLD AGE ALLOWANCE FOR THOSE AGED 70 AND ABOVE.

ON THE LABOUR SHORTAGE QUESTION, MRS NG FELT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER OTHER MEASURES TO HELP ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM, RATHER THAN LEAVING IT TO ADJUSTMENT BY MARKET FORCES.

"IN MY VIEW, THE PROBLEM CAN BE PARTIALLY SOLVED BY ATTRACTING MORE HOUSEWIVES TO JOIN THE LABOUR FORCE.

"IT IS THEREFORE TIME FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO RECONSIDER INTRODUCING SEPARATE TAX ASSESSMENT FOR COUPLES AND SPECIAL TAX ALLOWANCE FOR WORKING WOMEN," SHE SAID.

MRS NG ALSO COMMENTED THAT THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS FAILED TO INCLUDE SUFFICIENT DETAILS.

SHE RECOMMENDED THAT FUTURE POLICY SPEECHES SHOULD INCLUDE APPENDICES TO PROVIDE BACKGROUND INFORMATION AND RELEVANT STATISTICS.

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BILINGUAL TRAINING SHOULD BE CONTINUED

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THE LANGUAGE ISSUE IS A MAJOR CHALLENGE FACING SCHOOLS IN HONG KONG, THE HON YEUNG PO-KWAN SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE, MR YEUNG SAID THE EDUCATION COMMISSION STRONGLY BELIEVED THAT BILINGUALISM WAS ESSENTIAL IF HONG KONG WAS TO RETAIN ITS POSITION AS A LEADING INTERNATIONAL CENTRE OF FINANCE, TRADE AND INDUSTRY. THEREFORE OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM SHOULD CONTINUE TO PROVIDE BILINGUAL TRAINING IN ORDER TO MEET SOCIAL NEEDS.

HE SAID AS THE LEGAL DEPARTMENT EMBARKED ON BILINGUAL LEGISLATION, HONG KONG WOULD INEVITABLY EVOLVE INTO A SOCIETY WITH A BILINGUAL LEGAL SYSTEM.

THERE WOULD ALSO BE A DEFINITE TREND FOR THE COURTS TO USE CHINESE MORE WIDELY. HOWEVER, HONG KONG WAS SHORT OF LEGAL PROFESSIONALS WHO WERE PROFICIENT IN BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE.

"IN THE INTEREST OF HONG KONG, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD MAKE EVERY EFFORT TO DEVELOP THE LANGUAGE ABILITY OF OUR YOUNGER GENERATION, SO THAT THEY CAN HAVE A GOOD COMMAND OF BOTH ENGLISH AND CHINESE," HE ADDED.

/MR YEUNG .....

MR YEUNG SAID, AT PRESENT, KNOWLEDGE ON THE USE OF COMPUTERS HAD PENETRATED INTO THE LIFE OF PEOPLE IN ALL SECTORS. ADULTS AND CHILDREN ALIKE HAD COME INTO CONTACT WITH A COMPUTER IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

"PERHAPS THE GOVERNMENT MAY CONSIDER EXTENDING COMPUTER STUDIES TO THE PRIMARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM SO THAT PRIMARY STUDENTS CAN HAVE A PROPER KNOWLEDGE OF COMPUTER SCIENCE, APART FROM USING IT TO PLAY VIDEO GAMES," HE SAID.

MR YEUNG SAID COMPUTER STUDIES HAD BEEN INCLUDED IN THE SENIOR SECONDARY EDUCATION CURRICULUM AND IN UNIVERSITY COURSES, YET NONE OF THE SCHOOLS IN HONG KONG OFFERED COMPUTER STUDIES FOR THEIR SIXTH FORM STUDENTS, RESULTING IN A PROBLEM OF COVERGENCE.

"HENCE THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER INTRODUCING COMPUTER STUDIES INTO THE MATRICULATION COURSE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND ACCEPTING IT AS A SUBJECT IN THE UNIVERSITY ENTRANCE EXAMINATIONS. ONLY BY DOING SO CAN COMPUTER EDUCATION BE PROMOTED IN A FULL SCALE," HE NOTED.

MR YEUNG ALSO SAID THAT HE WAS IN SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PLAN TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE TO 23 PRIVATE SCHOOLS. HE ADDED THAT IN LINE WITH SUCH A PLAN, THE PRIVATE SCHOOLS THEMSELVES SHOULD TAKE CONCERTED ACTION TO WORK FOR A HIGHER QUALITY OF EDUCATION.

ON ARTS AND CULTURE, MR YEUNG SAID THAT TO INDUCE GREATER AWARENESS ON THE PART OF STUDENTS TOWARDS THEIR SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT AS WELL AS TOWARDS A BETTER WAY OF LIFE, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD PROVIDE MORE VENUES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ARTS.

HE ADDED THAT VISUAL ARTS EDUCATION SHOULD BE ACCEPTED AS A SUBJECT IN SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND IN THE MATRICULATION COURSE.

AS FOR PERFORMING ARTS, HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD WORK OUT A POLICY SO THAT VARIOUS GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS COULD REACH A CONSENSUS TO MAKE THE BEST USE OF THE RESOURCES, WHEREBY THERE WOULD BE MORE PERFORMING COMPANIES, WITH BETTER STANDARDS.

MOREOVER, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD GIVE DUE CONSIDERATION TO THE EMPLOYMENT PROSPECTS OF GRADUATES FROM THE HONG KONG ACADEMY FOR PERFORMING ARTS TO ALLAY THEIR FEAR ABOUT JOB OPPORTUNITIES.

TURNING TO JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, MR YEUNG SAID IN ORDER TO CONTAIN THE PROBLEM OF JUVENILE CRIME IN PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES, THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD FIRSTLY IMPROVE THE MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC HOUSING ESTATES; SECONDLY STRENGTHEN THE FUNCTION OF MUTUAL AID COMMITTEES; AND THIRDLY INCREASE THE MANPOWER OF AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR THE YOUTH CENTRES RUN BY VOLUNTARY BODIES IN THE HOUSING ESTATES, SO THAT THEY COULD EFFECTIVELY PROVIDE RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES FOR RESIDENTS.

EDUCATION AN IMPORTANT FOUNDATION FOR SOCIETY

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HONG KONG WILL NEED TO PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION IN THE NEXT 10 YEARS FOR A SOCIETY WHICH WILL BE BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF "HONG KONG PEOPLE GOVERNING HONG KONG", DR THE HON DANIEL TSE SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

SPEAKING DURING THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY ADDRESS, DR TSE DESCRIBED MANPOWER AS THE IMPORTANT ASSET "ON WHICH OUR EXISTENCE DEPENDS AND WITH WHICH WE DEVELOP OUR ECONOMY".

IN THE EARLY DAYS BEFORE THE 1960'S, DR TSE SAID, HONG KONG'S EDUCATION SYSTEM HAD DEVELOPED IN A HAPHAZARD WAY, AND THOUGH SIGNIFICANT CHANGES TOOK PLACE IN THE 1970'S, SYSTEM-WIDE PLANNING WAS STILL LACKING.

"IF OUR PRESENT EDUCATION STRUCTURE STILL PREVENTS US FROM PLANNING OUR FUTURE EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACCORDING TO THE CLEARLY DEFINED SOCIETAL GOALS ON A SYSTEM-WIDE BASIS, THEN IT IS TIME FOR US TO FIND OUT WHY AND TO CLEAR THE OBSTACLES," HE SAID.

"OTHERWISE, NO MATTER HOW GOOD IS THE PROMISE OF THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION, OR HOW SECURELY IS THE LEGAL GUARANTEE ENSHRINED IN THE BASIC LAW, OR HOW WELL DEVELOPED IS OUR FUTURE POLITICAL SYSTEM, IT WOULD STILL BE VERY DIFFICULT FOR US TO REALISE THE IDEAL OF 'HONG KONG PEOPLE GOVERNING HONG KONG'."

DR TSE SAID THE LLEWELLYN COMMITTEE, IN ITS REPORT IN 1982 ENTITLED "A PERSPECTIVE ON EDUCATION IN HONG KONG", MADE A SERIES OF RECOMMENDATIONS TO REMEDY DEFECTS IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM.

"FIVE YEARS HAVE PASSED; IT IS NOW TIME FOR US TO HAVE AN INTERIM ASSESSMENT TO SEE WHETHER THE DEFECTS WHICH HAD BEEN POINTED OUT BY THE COMMITTEE IN OUR EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM HAVE BEEN CORRECTED," HE SAID.

"I FIRMLY BELIEVE THAT AN ASSESSMENT OF THIS KIND AT THIS TIME IS VERY CRUCIAL BECAUSE THERE ARE ONLY 10 YEARS BEFORE 1997."

DR TSE SAID THE NEW DEVELOPMENTS MENTIONED BY THE GOVERNOR IN HIS POLICY ADDRESS ALSO REPRESENTED A CHALLENGE TO THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL STRUCTURE, AND PROVIDED THE BEST REASON AND A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY FOR AN OVERHAUL.

HE SAID THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY HAD A UNIQUE EDUCATION MISSION AND WOULD BRING ABOUT A HIGHER LEVEL OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENT FOR HONG KONG.

THE OPEN LEARNING INSTITUTE, HE ADDED, WAS A NEW ATTEMPT TO PROVIDE, ON A LARGE SCALE, WORKING ADULTS WITH A SECOND CHANCE FOR EDUCATION.

THE COUNCIL FOR ACADEMIC ACCREDITATION WOULD GUARANTEE THAT OUR FUTURE ACADEMIC AND PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND LEVELS WOULD GAIN INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION.

"THESE MONUMENTAL EFFORTS PLUS YOUR OWN ESTIMATE OF THE DOUBLING OF DEGREE PLACES BY THE 1990'S HAVE CREATED A NEW HORIZON FOR HONG KONG HIGHER EDUCATION," HE SAID.

ON THE LENGTH OF UNIVERSITY COURSES, DR TSE SAID IT WAS RELATED TO THE LEVEL OF ENTRY, AND THE ENTRY REQUIREMENTS HAD A DIRECT BEARING ON THE STRUCTURE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION.

HE SAID THE OPPORTUNITY SHOULD BE TAKEN TO REVIEW THE LENGTH OF DEGREE COURSES TOGETHER WITH THE STRUCTURE OF SECONDARY EDUCATION AND ITS GOALS ON A SYSTEM-WIDE BASIS.

DR TSE URGED THE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS RESPONSIBLE, STATUTORY EDUCATIONAL BODIES, INSTITUTIONS ENGAGED IN EDUCATION, AND ALL SECTORS OF THE COMMUNITY WHICH HAD A CONCERN FOR EDUCATION, TO MAKE A JOINT EFFORT, NOT ONLY TO SOLVE THE THORNY PROBLEM OF THE LENGTH OF DEGREE COURSES, BUT ALSO TO REMEDY THE DEFECTS IN THE EDUCATION STRUCTURE.

"ONLY THEN WILL A PROPERLY DEVELOPED GOOD EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM BE ESTABLISHED AND WHICH WILL, IN TURN, LEAD TO A MORE PROSPEROUS AND CIVILISED SOCIETY," HE CONCLUDED.

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#### MEANS TEST FOR OLD AGE ALLOWANCE CRITICISED

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS TODAY (THURSDAY) PRAISED FOR REVISING UPWARD THE LEVELS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, OLD AGE ALLOWANCE OR SUPPLEMENT AND DISABILITY ALLOWANCE; EXPANDING BY PHASES THE SCOPE OF OLD AGE ALLOWANCE AND INTRODUCING A MEAL ALLOWANCE FOR CHILDREN IN FULL-TIME EDUCATION.

SPEAKING DURING THE ANNUAL POLICY DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL, DR THE HON HO KAM-FAI SAID IMPROVEMENTS IN THOSE FORMS OF SOCIAL SECURITY PAYMENTS WOULD CERTAINLY ENABLE NEEDY PEOPLE TO LIVE IN DECENCY AND COMFORT.

HOWEVER, HE CRITICISED THE PROPOSED INCOME AND ASSET DECLARATION REQUIREMENT FOR THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE BY APPLICANTS WHO WERE 70 YEARS OLD AND ABOVE AND URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO RE-CONSIDER THAT REQUIREMENT.

DR HO SAID MOST OF THOSE APPLICANTS WERE NOT ACTIVE IN THE LABOUR FORCE AND THAT THE MEANS TEST HAD NO ECONOMIC JUSTIFICATION.

/"RATHER, IT .....

"RATHER, IT IS HUMILIATING TO OUR SENIOR CITIZENS WHO HAVE DONE THEIR PART IN BUILDING UP OUR ECONOMY AND COMMUNITY," HE NOTED.

DR HO POINTED OUT THAT SUCH A REQUIREMENT HAD A NUMBER OF NEGATIVE IMPLICATIONS.

"IF THE DECLARATION IS ONLY A MATTER OF ROUTINE WITHOUT CAREFUL VERIFICATION BY THE ADMINISTRATION, IT WOULD INVITE PEOPLE TO DECEIVE AND WOULD CONDONE DISHONEST BEHAVIOUR. BUT IF THE CHECKING IS THOROUGH, THE ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS WILL BE ENORMOUS," HE SAID.

"FURTHERMORE, THE NEEDY ELDERLY WOULD HESITATE TO APPLY FOR THE SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS AND WOULD RATHER DEPRIVE THEMSELVES OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO LEAD A DECENT LIVING. THUS, THE INCOME AND ASSET DECLARATION WILL DEFEAT THE PURPOSE OF THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE SCHEME."

DR HO SAID, THE EXPANDED OLD AGE ALLOWANCE AND THE IMPROVED PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, TOGETHER WITH OTHER LABOUR WELFARE MEASURES, WERE INTRODUCED AS A PACKAGE TO ENHANCE THE INCOME SECURITY OF THE RETIRED AND THE ELDERLY IN THE ABSENCE OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND.

THE STIGMA ATTACHED TO THE INCOME DECLARATION WOULD DISCOURAGE THE NEEDY SENIOR CITIZENS TO COME FORWARD TO APPLY FOR THE BENEFITS, AND HENCE THEIR INCOME SECURITY NEEDS WOULD NOT BE MET AS INTENDED, HE ADDED.

IN ADDITION, DR HO SAID, IT WAS IMPERATIVE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO URGENTLY REASSESS THE PRIORITIES OF THE MUCH-NEEDED PERSONALISED WELFARE SERVICES AND TO UPGRADE THEIR PROVISION.

NEEDY FAMILIES, HE ADDED OFTEN REQUIRED A WIDE SPECTRUM OF PERSONAL AND WELFARE SERVICES TO MEET THEIR NEEDS.

"IMPROVED CASH BENEFITS ARISING FROM THE IMPROVED SOCIAL SECURITY MEASURES ARE MORE LIKELY TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF THOSE PEOPLE WHOSE PERSONAL NEEDS CAN BE READILY SATISFIED BY PURCHASE OF THE REQUIRED SERVICES IN THE OPEN MARKET," HE SAID.

"BUT WHEN THE MORE PERSONALISED OR SPECIALISED SERVICES ARE IN SHORT SUPPLY OR BARELY AVAILABLE, THE INCREASED CASH PAYMENTS MERELY SERVE TO PUSH UP THE PRICE OF THESE SERVICES," HE NOTED.

DR HO ALSO CALLED FOR A REVIEW OF THE CURRENT SUBVENTION POLICY IN THE INTEREST OF A MORE CONGENIAL PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE SUBVENTED SOCIAL WELFARE SECTOR, WHICH MUST BE FOUNDED ON AND NURTURED IN THE SPIRIT OF MUTUAL APPRECIATION, TRUST AND EQUALITY.

HE SAID UNDER THE CURRENT POLICY, FRINGE BENEFITS GIVEN TO THE STAFF OF SUBVENTED ORGANISATIONS WERE LIMITED AND THEY ONLY RECEIVED A PART OF THOSE AWARDED TO THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE CIVIL SERVICE.

/HE SAID .....

HE SAID THAT THE BENEFITS TO WHICH THE CIVIL SERVANTS WERE ENTITLED SHOULD BE EXTENDED IN FULL TO THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE SUBVENTED SECTOR WHO HAD SIMILAR QUALIFICATIONS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

DR HO SAID THE FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS WERE LIKELY TO BE ENORMOUS BUT THE EXTENSION COULD BE CARRIED OUT IN STAGES.

ON THE PUBLIC ASSISTANCE SCHEME, HE SAID THE EXISTING SCHEME WAS FAMILY-BASED AND REGARDED CHILDREN AS DEPENDENT MEMBERS OF A FAMILY UNIT. BUT THE LEVEL OF THE PROVISION WAS JUST SUFFICIENT FOR BARE SUBSISTENCE.

HE SAID HUMAN BEINGS WERE HONG KONG'S PRIMARY ASSETS, AND "WE MUST PRESERVE OUR PRECIOUS HUMAN RESOURCES, IN PARTICULAR OUR YOUNG."

HE THEREFORE PROPOSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONSIDER A CHILDREN'S SUPPLEMENT OF \$280 PER MONTH FOR ALL DEPENDENT CHILDREN UP TO THE AGE OF 17 YEARS OF A SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE.

HE ADDED THAT THE NEWLY PROPOSED \$80 MEAL ALLOWANCE COULD BE DEDUCTED FROM THE SUPPLEMENT, AND THAT CHILDREN RECEIVING A DISABILITY ALLOWANCE OR IN FULL TIME EMPLOYMENT SHOULD NOT BE ELIGIBLE FOR THE SUPPLEMENT.

TURNING TO THE SENTENCING PATTERNS ADOPTED BY THE COURTS, DR HO NOTED ONE FINDING OF SIGNIFICANCE IN THE THIRD REPORT ON THE CRIME VICTIMISATION SURVEY DUE TO BE PUBLISHED SOON.

WITH REGARD TO THE TREATMENT OF OFFENDERS, A LARGE PROPORTION OF THE CRIME VICTIMS SURVEYED HELD THE VIEW THAT THE MOST APPROPRIATE SANCTION FOR CRIMINALS WAS IMPRISONMENT.

WARNING BY THE POLICE AND PROBATION WERE REGARDED AS ACCEPTABLE DETERRENTS BY SOME VICTIMS. VERY FEW VICTIMS SUPPORTED SUCH SENTENCES AS FINES OR PAYMENT FOR COMPENSATION.

HE SAID CRIME VICTIMS POLLED WERE NOT HAPPY WITH THE SENTENCING METED OUT BY THE COURTS. THEY WERE OF THE OPINION THAT THE PENALTIES WERE NOT AS PUNITIVE AS THEY WOULD LIKE THEM TO BE, AND THAT THE COURTS WERE APPARENTLY TOO PRONE TO DISPENSE NON-CUSTODIAL SENTENCES.

"ONCE THE LAW HAS BEEN FAIRLY INTERPRETED AND IMPARTIALLY APPLIED TO THE DETERMINATION OF GUILT OR INNOCENCE, I BELIEVE THAT THE COURT, IN DECIDING ON THE LEVELS AND TYPES OF PENALTY, SHOULD ATTEMPT TO REFLECT PUBLIC CONCERN," HE SAID.

/ "SUCH CONSIDERATION .....

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"SUCH CONSIDERATION BY THE COURTS WILL BE CONDUCTIVE TO BOOSTING PUBLIC CONFIDENCE IN THE JUDICIARY, RESULTING IN A GREATER RESPECT FOR AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE LAW BY THE PUBLIC," HE ADDED.

FINALLY, DR HO SAID THE ATTORNEY GENERAL, BEING THE PRINCIPAL LAW OFFICER AND RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL PROSECUTIONS IN HONG KONG, SHOULD TAKE HEED OF THE PUBLIC VIEW ON THE SENTENCING PATTERNS AND THE LEVELS OF PENALTY AND TO HELP CONVEY THIS PUBLIC CONCERN TO THE JUDICIARY.

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CONTROL ON CHINESE TRADITIONAL MEDICINE URGED  
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THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN URGED TO CONTROL THE PRACTICE OF CHINESE TRADITIONAL MEDICINE FOR THE BENEFIT AND PROTECTION OF PEOPLE SEEKING SUCH FORMS OF TREATMENT.

SPEAKING IN SUPPORT OF THE MOTION BEFORE THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY), DR THE HON HENRIETTA IP CALLED FOR THE SETTING UP OF A COMMITTEE WITH REPRESENTATION AND EXPERTS FROM THE CHINESE TRADITIONAL MEDICAL PROFESSION TO LOOK INTO THE FEASIBILITY, AND TO RECOMMEND WAYS, OF CONTROLLING THE PRACTICE WITHIN THREE TO FIVE YEARS.

AS A START, SHE SUGGESTED THERE SHOULD BE COMPULSORY APPLICATION FOR A LICENCE TO PRACTISE AND MANDATORY PURCHASE OF INSURANCE SUBSEQUENTLY LEADING ON TO THE SETTING UP OF A MINIMUM STANDARD OF QUALIFICATION REQUIRED FOR REGISTRATION TO PRACTISE, BUT ALLOWING A GRANDFATHER CLAUSE.

DR IP EXPLAINED THAT THE NEED TO CONTROL THE PRACTICE HAD BECOME MORE IMMINENT WITH THE CHANGING MEDICAL SCENE IN CHINA, WHERE ACUPUNCTURISTS WERE INJECTING STEROIDS WITH NEEDLES, BONE-SETTERS WERE USING X-RAYS AND HERBALISTS WERE PRESCRIBING CAPSULES AND AMPOULES.

SHE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT MEDICAL IMMIGRANTS FROM CHINA WERE NOW PRACTISING A CONCOCTION OF BOTH WESTERN AND CHINESE TRADITIONAL MEDICINE IN HONG KONG.

"WHERE THE WESTERN MEDICAL TREATMENT BEGINS AND THE CHINESE TRADITIONAL MEDICINE ENDS IS BECOMING BLURRED," SHE SAID.

IN HER OPINION, THE TWO TYPES OF PRACTICE SHOULD BE COMPLEMENTARY TO EACH OTHER AND NOT IN COMPETITION.

/ "AT THE .....

"AT THE END OF THE DAY, THE SAFETY OF PATIENTS MUST COME FIRST," SHE SAID.

DR IP ALSO CRITICISED THE GOVERNMENT FOR APPLYING DOUBLE STANDARDS IN THIS PARTICULAR CASE.

"WHILE WE WILL BE INTRODUCING CONTROL OVER PHYSIOTHERAPISTS, OCCUPATIONAL THERAPISTS AND TECHNICIANS WHO ASSIST WESTERN-TRAINED DOCTORS, WE ALLOW THE CHINESE TRADITIONAL MEDICAL PRACTITIONERS WHO WORK INDEPENDENTLY TO GO BY WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST CONTROL," SHE SAID.

SHE POINTED OUT THAT IT WAS A KNOWN MEDICAL FACT THAT SOME HERBS, BONE SETTING AND ACUPUNCTURE DID GIVE RISE TO SERIOUS COMPLICATIONS, AND NO MATTER HOW LOW THE INCIDENCES MIGHT BE, IT WAS FAIR TO INSIST ON SOME FORM OF CONSUMER PROTECTION.

"IT IS THEREFORE A LAUGH, AND A SAD ONE, THAT WE ALLOW BY LEGISLATION ANY PERSON OF THE CHINESE RACE AND ORIGIN, IRRESPECTIVE OF TRAINING, EVEN AT THE LACK OF IT, TO CARRY OUT THESE THREE FORMS OF MEDICAL PRACTICE," SHE SAID.

EARLIER IN HER SPEECH, DR IP URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO IMPROVE SPORTS FACILITIES IN THE EDUCATION SYSTEM.

SHE SAID THAT SPORTS WERE IMPORTANT FOR ONE'S PHYSICAL AS WELL AS MENTAL HEALTH, BUT UNFORTUNATELY, THEY PLAYED A VERY INFERIOR ROLE IN THE LIFE OF CHILDREN IN HONG KONG. THIS WAS MAINLY DUE TO THE LACK OF SPACE AND THE BISESSIONAL CLASS SYSTEM IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

"DR IP SAID THAT A COMMITTEE CHAIRED BY HERSELF HAD COMPLETED A REPORT CONTAINING THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- \* PROVIDE MANDATORY OPEN SPACE FOR KINDERGARTENS;
- \* DEVELOP EXTRACURRICULAR SPORTS ACTIVITIES IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS AIMED AT MASS PARTICIPATION BUT WITH SPECIAL EMPHASIS ON THOSE WITH LOWER PHYSICAL EDUCATION STANDARDS;
- \* INTRODUCE "SPORTS FOR ALL" IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS SO THAT ALL STUDENTS TAKE PART IN AT LEAST ONE SPORT. THIS IS DONE BY MEANS OF A SYSTEM OF ACCREDITED SCHOOL BASED SPORTS COACHES RATHER THAN TEACHERS;
- \* INTRODUCE PHYSICAL EDUCATION AS AN EXAMINABLE SUBJECT IN THE HKCEE AND LATER, SPORTS STUDIES IN THE HKALE;
- \* INTRODUCE A SPORTS-RELATED DEGREE PROGRAMME AT THE CHINESE UNIVERSITY AND THE HONG KONG POLYTECHNIC;
- \* EMPHASISE CAREER GUIDANCE AND IMPROVE THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES OF THOSE GRADUATES; AND
- \* LAUNCH A PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN TO INCREASE THE AWARENESS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SPORTS IN OUR LIVES AND THE WAYS OF PURSUING IT.

DR IP SAID THE REPORT WILL SOON BE PRESENTED TO THE GOVERNOR, MEMBERS OF THE EDUCATION COMMISSION, THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND OTHER RELEVANT BODIES FOR CONSIDERATION.

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GENETIC COUNSELLING SHOULD BE EXPANDED

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THE GOVERNMENT WAS ASKED TODAY (THURSDAY) TO EXPAND AND PROMOTE GENETIC COUNSELLING AS A PART OF ITS PREVENTIVE MEDICAL CARE PROGRAMME.

THE CALL WAS MADE BY DR THE HON CHIU HIN-KWONG DURING THE DEBATE IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ON THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY SPEECH.

DR CHIU EXPLAINED THAT THE PURPOSE OF PROVIDING GENETIC COUNSELLING WAS TO PREVENT GENETIC DISORDERS AND REDUCE THE INCIDENCE AND RECURRENCE OF GENETIC DISEASES AS FAR AS POSSIBLE.

SOME EXAMPLES OF GENETIC DISEASES HE CITED WERE DOWN'S SYNDROME, DIABETES, HUNTINGTON'S CHOREA, NIGHT BLINDNESS, POLYCYSTIC KIDNEY DISEASE, SICKLEMIÄ, MULTIPLE POLYPOSIS OF THE INTESTINES, AND OSTEOGENESIS IMPERFECTA.

"A GREAT MAJORITY OF THESE DISEASES ARE SERIOUS, RELATIVELY FEW ARE TREATED, BUT NONE ARE CURABLE. THEREFORE, THE APPROPRIATE APPROACH TO THEIR CONTROL IS PREVENTION THROUGH COUNSELLING, WITH PRENATAL DIAGNOSIS AND SELECTIVE ABORTION IF INDICATED," DR CHIU SAID.

HE POINTED OUT THAT, ACCORDING TO SURVEY RESULTS, AT LEAST ONE CHILD IN 10, AND SOMETIMES PERHAPS AS MANY AS ONE IN FOUR, HAD A DISORDER WHICH WAS PARTLY GENETIC IN CAUSATION; AND ONE IN 20 HAD A DISORDER WHICH WAS ENTIRELY GENETIC IN ORIGIN.

HE ADDED THAT STUDIES CONDUCTED IN WESTERN COUNTRIES REVEALED THAT GENETIC DISORDERS CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO MORBIDITY AND MORTALITY IN CHILDHOOD.

"IT IS, THEREFORE, IMPORTANT TO RECOGNISE THE PROBLEM AND IDENTIFY THOSE AT RISK AS A FIRST STEP TOWARDS PREVENTION," HE SAID.

DR CHIU NOTED THAT HONG KONG OPERATED A CLINICAL GENETIC COUNSELLING SERVICE ON A SMALL SCALE, SUPPORTED BY THE CYTOGENETIC LABORATORY AT THE TSAN YUK HOSPITAL.

BUT HE SAID ONLY 1,630 OUT OF HUNDREDS OF THOUSANDS OF FAMILIES HAD MADE USE OF THIS SERVICE, AND HE ATTRIBUTED THE LOW USAGE TO "INADEQUATE PUBLIC EDUCATION".

"SHOULD THE GENERAL PUBLIC BE AWARE OF THE EXISTENCE OF SUCH A SERVICE, THE CASELOAD WILL CERTAINLY INCREASE CONSIDERABLY," HE SAID.

/HE DESCRIBED .....

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HE DESCRIBED MEASURES TO PREVENT GENETIC DISEASE AS ONE OF THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAYS TO CUT DOWN MEDICAL EXPENSES AND LESSEN THE SOCIAL BURDEN IN THE LONG TERM. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE MEDICAL AND HEALTH DEPARTMENT WAS TO BE COMMENDED FOR ITS "EXCELLENT PREVENTIVE HEALTH MEASURES" AGAINST COMMUNICABLE DISEASES, AS A RESULT OF WHICH MANY INFECTIOUS DISEASES HAD BEEN ERADICATED OR SUCCESSFULLY BROUGHT UNDER CONTROL.

IN WELCOMING THE SETTING UP OF A SUB-COMMITTEE OF THE PROVISIONAL HOSPITAL AUTHORITY, DR CHIU ASKED FOR AN ASSURANCE THAT THE NEW CONDITIONS OF SERVICE FOR STAFF WOULD BE REASONABLY ATTRACTIVE; THAT EXISTING STAFF WOULD BE GIVEN THE OPTION TO REMAIN IN THE CIVIL SERVICE OR TO JOIN THE NEW BODY; AND THAT SERIOUS CONSIDERATION WOULD BE GIVEN TO THE PROMOTION PROSPECTS OF EXISTING STAFF.

DR CHIU REQUESTED THAT THE SUB-COMMITTEE SUBMIT A REPORT ONE YEAR AFTER ITS ESTABLISHMENT.

HE ALSO SAID THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD NOW CONDUCT A REVIEW OF THE OVERALL POLICY OF PRIMARY CARE SINCE IT HAD ALREADY DECIDED TO SET UP THE PROVISIONAL HOSPITAL AUTHORITY IN APRIL NEXT YEAR. HE SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO KNOW WHEN THIS REVIEW WOULD TAKE PLACE; WHO WOULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE TASK; HOW WIDE THE SCOPE WOULD BE AND HOW LONG IT WOULD TAKE FOR THE WHOLE EXERCISE TO BE COMPLETED.

HE HOPED THAT THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REVIEW TEAM WOULD SHED LIGHT ON ISSUES RELATING TO THE DOCTOR/PATIENT RELATIONSHIP; THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A PROPER MEDICAL RECORD SYSTEM; THE CASELOAD OF DOCTORS; TRAINING NEEDS AND RECOGNITION OF POSTGRADUATE QUALIFICATION IN GENERAL PRACTICE.

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#### COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY URGED

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MAPPING OUT A COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY FOR THE 1990'S WILL BE A NECESSARY STEP TO TAKE, ALONG WITH OTHER DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR BUILDING THE SOCIAL INFRASTRUCTURE, THE HON HUI YIN-FAT SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE DEBATE ON THE GOVERNOR'S ANNUAL ADDRESS, MR HUI SAID THAT AS HONG KONG FACED UP TO RAPID SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL CHANGES ENVISAGED FOR THE COMING DECADE, AD HOC, PIECEMEAL AND TEMPORARY SOLUTIONS TO SOCIAL PROBLEMS WOULD BE INADEQUATE FOR COPING WITH EMERGING SOCIAL ISSUES.

/"THE BLUEPRINT .....

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"THE BLUEPRINT ON SOCIAL WELFARE DEVELOPMENT-- 'SOCIAL WELFARE INTO THE EIGHTIES' -- HAS SINCE 1979 BECOME OUTDATED, AND THE TIME HAS COME FOR AN OVERALL REVIEW OF OUR SOCIAL WELFARE POLICY," HE SAID.

HE SAID LONG-TERM, COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL PLANNING, INCLUDING SOCIAL WORK MANPOWER PLANNING, AND MORE AMBITIOUS PROGRAMMES IN RESPONSE TO NEW NEEDS SUCH AS THE CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND WERE WELL WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT'S CAPABILITY.

"A PROGRESSIVE, RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT DOES NOT ONLY ADDRESS ITSELF TO LONG FELT NEEDS, BUT ALSO COMMITS ITSELF TO ACTIVELY IMPROVING PEOPLE'S QUALITY OF LIFE WELL BEYOND 1997," HE SAID.

ON SPECIFIC ISSUES, MR HUI SAID HE FELT OBLIGED TO POINT OUT ONE PROBLEM AREA THAT WAS SERIOUSLY AFFECTING THE QUALITY OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES -- SOCIAL WORK MANPOWER AND REGISTRATION.

HE SAID RECENT FAMILY TRAGEDIES INVOLVING SUICIDES, HOMICIDES AND DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, HAD ALERTED THE COMMUNITY TO THE INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED NEEDS OF SOCIETY AND BROUGHT INTO PUBLIC LIMELIGHT THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS.

"AND THE QUESTION MUST BE ASKED -- HOW WELL ARE THEY EQUIPPED TO EFFECTIVELY HANDLE COMPLICATED CASES?" HE SAID.

MR HUI SAID TRAINED PROFESSIONAL SOCIAL WORKERS WERE ESSENTIAL TO THE SUCCESSFUL IMPLEMENTATION OF SOCIAL WELFARE POLICIES. HOWEVER, HAPHAZARD SOCIAL WORK MANPOWER PLANNING DONE ON AN AD HOC BASIS HAD CREATED A DEMAND AND SUPPLY PROBLEM WHICH WOULD BECOME A CRISIS UNLESS EARLY INTERVENTION TOOK PLACE.

IN 1981, HE SAID, IT WAS ESTIMATED THAT THE SHORTFALL FOR GRADUATE SOCIAL WORKERS BETWEEN 1983 AND 1987 WOULD BE 705, AND THAT FOR NON-GRADUATES WOULD BE 1,050.

"HOWEVER, IN THE LAST TWO YEARS, DUE TO A VARIETY OF REASONS THAT INCLUDED SLIPPAGE IN PROJECTS, THE SUPPLY OF TRAINED SOCIAL WORKERS OUTSTRIPPED DEMAND. SO MUCH SO THAT IN 1985 OUR SOCIAL WORK GRADUATES COULD NOT FIND EMPLOYMENT SOME SIX MONTHS AFTER GRADUATION."

HE SAID THE VOLATILE EMPLOYMENT SITUATION HIT HARDEST AT SOCIAL WORK DIPLOMA HOLDERS WHO HAD TO BEAR THE BRUNT OF THE EFFECTS OF INADEQUATE MANPOWER PLANNING.

BY AUGUST THIS YEAR, HE SAID, ONLY 88 OF THE 220 GRADUATING DIPLOMA HOLDERS WERE PLACED IN JOBS.

MR HUI SAID APART FROM THE LACK OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES, UNFAVOURABLE WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT AND VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WERE CAUSING WASTAGE OF SOCIAL WORKERS, THUS AGGRAVATING THE MANPOWER SITUATION.

/HE SAID .....

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HE SAID WITHOUT A SUFFICIENT LEVEL OF FINANCIAL SUPPORT, BOTH THE DEPARTMENT AND THE VOLUNTARY AGENCIES WERE FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO RETAIN THEIR STAFF.

MR HUI SUGGESTED FIVE SOLUTIONS. FIRSTLY, HE SAID, WITH IMPROVED MANPOWER SUPPLY AND A STRONG ECONOMY, EARLY IMPLEMENTATION OF AGREED MANNING RATIOS WAS IMPERATIVE. STAFF IMPROVEMENTS, ENDORSED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE, OUGHT TO BE IMPLEMENTED WITHOUT DELAY, SINCE THIS WAS THE MOST EFFECTIVE WAY TO EASE THE HEAVY WORKLOAD PLACED ON SOCIAL WORKERS.

SECONDLY, APART FROM AN ADEQUATE MANPOWER SUPPLY, PROFESSIONAL TRAINING WAS NEEDED TO PROVIDE SUFFICIENTLY QUALIFIED PERSONNEL TO DEAL WITH INCREASINGLY COMPLEX SOCIAL PROBLEMS AND RISING EXPECTATIONS OF CLIENTS.

HE SAID IT WAS NECESSARY TO REVIEW THE SOCIAL WORK TRAINING FUND AND REPLACEMENT GRANTS FOR VOLUNTARY AGENCIES TO SEE HOW THEY COULD BE BEST DEPLOYED IN PROVIDING FURTHER IN-SERVICE TRAINING FOR DIPLOMA HOLDERS AND MORE SPECIALISED TRAINING FOR DEGREE HOLDERS.

THIRDLY, THE SCHEME TO EMPLOY GENERAL DEGREE HOLDERS TO FILL SOCIAL WORK POSTS OUGHT TO BE TERMINATED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

THE SCHEME ADOPTED IN 1983 BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT TO EASE THE MANPOWER SHORTAGE WAS NOT ONLY A COSTLY MEASURE, BUT ALSO DEALT A BLOW TO THE MORALE OF TRAINED SOCIAL WORKERS.

FOURTHLY, MORE AND MORE DIFFICULT SITUATIONS WOULD REQUIRE EXPERIENCED AND SKILFUL SOCIAL WORKERS WHO WERE AT PRESENT ENGAGED IN ADMINISTRATIVE WORK BECAUSE THERE WERE NO REASONABLE OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE TO RETAIN THEM IN DIRECT PRACTICE.

MR HUI SAID CASES INVOLVING CHILD ABUSE, DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, AND HARD CORE DELINQUENTS, AND ALSO "AT RISK" CASES, REQUIRED EXPERIENCED PRACTITIONERS. SENIOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE, OFFERING MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION, SHOULD MERIT THE GOVERNMENT'S SERIOUS CONSIDERATION.

LASTLY, HE SAID HONG KONG NEEDED A CENTRAL PLANNING BODY TO MAKE AVAILABLE AN ESTIMATION OF SOCIAL WORK MANPOWER DEMAND AND SUPPLY, ON WHICH TRAINING INSTITUTIONS COULD PLAN THEIR IN-TAKE PROGRAMMES. THIS BODY WOULD ENHANCE THE EFFICIENT AND EFFECTIVE DEPLOYMENT OF TRAINED SOCIAL WORK MANPOWER.

ON SOCIAL WORK REGISTRATION, MR HUI SAID REGISTRATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS WOULD ENSURE BETTER CLIENT PROTECTION AND PROVISION OF QUALITY SERVICES AND WAS THE FIRST STEP TOWARDS LEGISLATING FOR LICENSING OF SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE.

HE SAID SOCIAL WORKERS' STRUGGLE TO ESTABLISH THEIR PROFESSIONAL STATUS WAS PERHAPS NOT SO MUCH AN OBTRUSIVE ATTEMPT TO ENHANCE PUBLIC CONFIDENCE THAN AN EFFORT TO ACHIEVE ACCOUNTABILITY.

/"FOR IN .....

"FOR IN HONG KONG, NO LEGISLATIVE QUALIFICATIONS ARE REQUIRED FOR PRACTICING SOCIAL WORK, NOR DOES AN ACCREDITATION BODY EXIST FOR DECIDING WORKERS' LEVEL OF COMPETENCE," HE SAID.

"THUS, STANDARD SETTING AND SELF-REGULATION FOR SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE HAVE EVOLVED AS ONE OF OUR PRIMARY FUNCTIONS TO PROTECT THE PUBLIC FROM UNQUALIFIED PRACTITIONERS."

MR HUI ALSO SPOKE AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION NOT TO ESTABLISH A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND.

HE SAID THE ASSUMPTION THAT THE ACCUMULATED FUND MIGHT CAUSE GREAT INTERFERENCE IN THE MONEY MARKET HAD ALREADY BEEN PROVED TO BE INVALID BY ECONOMISTS AT A MEETING WITH THE FINANCE BRANCH.

"THE EFFECT OF INFLATION ON CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND CONTRIBUTIONS, WHICH CAN BE OFFSET BY PROPER MANAGEMENT OF RETURNS ON INVESTMENTS, HAS ALSO BEEN OVER-EXAGGERATED," HE SAID.

"THUS, BY ADOPTING THE LOPSIDED ARGUMENTS ADVANCED BY EMPLOYERS TO CAUSE ALARM, GOVERNMENT HAS DEMONSTRATED A PAROCHIAL OUTLOOK AND AN OBDURATE ATTITUDE IN ADDRESSING A VITAL SOCIAL ISSUE," HE SAID.

MR HUI SAID THE SOCIAL SERVICES FUNCTIONAL CONSTITUENCY BELIEVED THAT A FUND WAS THE ONLY EFFECTIVE SOLUTION TO HONG KONG'S GROWING PROBLEM CONCERNING THE AGED, IN THE LIGHT OF RAPID SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES AND LIMITED SOCIAL RESOURCES.

HE ALSO SAID THE SOCIAL SECURITY FUNCTION OF A FUND COULD NOT BE REPLACED BY THE PROPOSED MEASURES TO IMPROVE SOCIAL SECURITY SCHEMES, THE LONG SERVICE PAYMENT SCHEME AND PRIVATE PROVIDENT FUNDS.

APART FROM THE ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL BENEFITS, THE CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND, IN EXERTING A STABILISING EFFECT ON SOCIETY DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, ALSO CARRIED SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL MEANING THAT OUTWEIGHED THE CONTRIBUTIONS MADE BY EMPLOYERS.

"THEREFORE, UNLESS GOVERNMENT WANTS TO REFRAIN FROM MAINTAINING HONG KONG'S STABILITY AND PROSPERITY ON A LONG TERM BASIS, IT HAS EVERY RESPONSIBILITY TO COME UP WITH ANOTHER COMPREHENSIVE SOCIAL SECURITY PACKAGE BEFORE IT CAN SWEEP THE CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND UNDER THE CARPET."

MR HUI ALSO SAID THE NEW SCHEME OF EXTENDED OLD AGE ALLOWANCE, WHICH HE SAID WAS DESIGNED AS A TRADE-OFF FOR A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND, HAD AROUSED MIXED FEELINGS AMONG SOCIAL WORK PROFESSIONALS, AS A MEANS TEST IN THE FORM OF AN INCOME DECLARATION WAS INTRODUCED FOR ALL NEW OLD AGE ALLOWANCE APPLICANTS.

HE SAID AN INCOME DECLARATION TOUCHED A SOFT SPOT IN CONSERVATIVE-MINDED CHINESE PEOPLE WHO TENDED TO KEEP PRIVATE THEIR SOURCE OF INCOME.

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"INCOME DECLARATION, WHICH DISQUALIFIES A SINGLE PERSON WITH A MONTHLY INCOME OF \$1,500 AND ASSETS OF \$100,000, AUTOMATICALLY LABELS THE RECIPIENTS AS PEOPLE LEAST ABLE TO HELP THEMSELVES," HE SAID.

"THIS UNWANTED SOCIAL STIGMA EASILY BECOMES A DETERRENT TO POTENTIAL OLD AGE ALLOWANCE CLAIMANTS."

MR HUI SAID VOLUNTARY WELFARE AGENCIES SERVING THE ELDERLY INSISTED THAT THE NON-MEANS TESTED OLD AGE ALLOWANCE, WHICH HAD BEEN OPERATING SUCCESSFULLY FOR THE PAST 14 YEARS, SHOULD BE RETAINED.

AS CONVENOR OF THE OMELCO PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES, MR HUI SAID PANEL MEMBERS WERE ALSO UNANIMOUS IN OPPOSING THE PROPOSED INTRODUCTION OF AN INCOME DECLARATION FOR NEW APPLICANTS FOR THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE.

"WE STRONGLY FELT THAT WITHHOLDING THE ENTITLEMENT FROM OUR SENIOR CITIZENS WOULD NULLIFY THE HARD EARNED RESULTS OF YEARS OF CIVIC EDUCATION EFFORT IN PROMOTING APPRECIATION AND RESPECT FOR THE ELDERLY," HE SAID.

SIMILAR VIEWS HAD BEEN EXPRESSED BY THE SOCIAL WELFARE ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ON THE ELDERLY, MR HUI ADDED.

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REMEDIAL MEASURES NO SUBSTITUTE FOR CPF

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THE HON ROSANNA TAM SAID TODAY (THURSDAY) THAT SHE IS DEEPLY DISAPPOINTED WITH THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION NOT TO SET UP A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND.

SPEAKING IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL DURING THE POLICY DEBATE, MRS TAM SAID IT WAS WRONG TO DROP THE IDEA AND INSTEAD INTRODUCE OTHER REMEDIAL MEASURES SUCH AS STRENGTHENING THE SUPERVISION OF PRIVATE PROVIDENT FUNDS, IMPROVING SOCIAL SECURITY, AND EXTENDING AND CHANGING THE CHARACTER OF THE LONG SERVICE PAYMENT SCHEME.

SHE SAID THE PROPOSED REMEDIAL MEASURES WERE ESSENTIALLY OF A DIFFERENT NATURE FROM THAT OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND. THEY COULD DO LITTLE TO SOLVE THE PROBLEMS THAT A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND SCHEME WAS INTENDED TO RESOLVE.

SHE SAID THAT, IN PRACTICE, THE CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND WAS A COMPULSORY SAVINGS SCHEME BASED ON THE EMPLOYMENT RELATIONSHIP. IT WAS NOT SOCIAL WELFARE AND DID NOT EFFECT RE-DISTRIBUTION OF WEALTH. IN SPIRIT, THE CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND ENCOURAGED "SELF-PROVIDED LUNCHES" AND NOT "FREE LUNCHES".

/SHE ADDED .....

SHE ADDED THAT, MORE IMPORTANTLY, THE OBJECTIVE OF SETTING UP A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND WAS TO PREPARE FOR AN EXPECTED GENERAL SOCIAL PHENOMENON BROUGHT ABOUT BY AN AGEING POPULATION.

IT WAS HOPED THAT THROUGH A COMPULSORY SAVINGS SCHEME, THE GROWING POPULATION OF OLD PEOPLE COULD SUPPORT THEMSELVES AND MAINTAIN A REASONABLE LIVING STANDARD UPON RETIREMENT SO AS TO RELIEVE AN INCREASING FINANCIAL BURDEN.

REFERRING TO THE THREE REMEDIAL MEASURES PROPOSED IN THE GOVERNOR'S POLICY SPEECH, MRS TAM SAID THAT IMPROVING SOCIAL SECURITY WOULD ONLY BENEFIT THOSE WHO HAD NO STEADY JOBS AND WHOSE PAY HAD BEEN VERY LOW; AN EXTENDED LONG SERVICE PAYMENT SCHEME WOULD ONLY TAKE CARE OF THOSE WHO WORKED A LONG PERIOD FOR THE SAME INSTITUTION AND NOT THOSE WHO CHANGED JOBS; STRENGTHENING THE SUPERVISION OF PRIVATE FUNDS WOULD BE BUT AN ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENT.

"OBVIOUSLY, TO PLACE THESE THREE MEASURES TOGETHER WITH THE PROPOSAL FOR A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND IS TO MISLEAD THE PUBLIC.

"NONE OF THEM SERVE THE SAME TARGET GROUP AS DOES THE CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND, NOR DO THEY SOLVE THE PROBLEMS OF AN AGEING POPULATION AS A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND INTENDS TO DO," SHE SAID.

AS THE GOVERNMENT WAS AGAINST THE IDEA OF A CENTRAL PROVIDENT FUND, THE ONLY WAY TO ACHIEVE THE SAME OBJECTIVE WOULD BE TO RELY ON THE INITIATIVES OF EMPLOYERS IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO SET UP PROVIDENT FUNDS FOR THEIR OWN EMPLOYEES.

BUT THE POLICY SPEECH DID NOT PUT FORWARD ANY PROPOSALS TO ENCOURAGE EMPLOYERS TO SET UP SUCH FUNDS.

"INSTEAD, GOVERNMENT'S UNILATERAL MOVE TO STEP UP SUPERVISION OF PRIVATE PROVIDENT FUNDS AND EXTEND THE LONG SERVICE PAYMENT SCHEME WILL ONLY DISCOURAGE EMPLOYERS FROM SETTING UP THEIR OWN PROVIDENT FUNDS," SHE SAID.

SIMILARLY, THE INCREASE IN EXPENDITURE RESULTING FROM THE EXTENSION OF THE LONG SERVICE PAYMENT SCHEME WOULD ALSO DETER THE EMPLOYERS FROM SETTING UP PROVIDENT FUNDS WHICH WAS A MORE COMPREHENSIVE PROTECTION. AS A RESULT, THE NUMBER OF PRIVATE PROVIDENT FUND SCHEMES IN HONG KONG WOULD BECOME STATIC AND THE LARGE NUMBERS OF WORKERS NOT YET COVERED BY THE PROVIDENT FUND SCHEMES WOULD STILL BE WITHOUT ANY PROTECTION.

TURNING TO THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE, MRS TAM POINTED OUT THAT THE EXISTING SCHEME WAS NON-MEANS TESTED. OLD PEOPLE OVER 70 YEARS OLD WERE ENTITLED TO OLD AGE ALLOWANCE IRRESPECTIVE OF THEIR WEALTH AND INCOME.

/SHE NOTED .....

SHE NOTED THAT THE PROPOSED NEW MEASURE EXTENDED THE ALLOWANCE TO THOSE AGED 65 BUT NEW APPLICANTS WOULD BE REQUIRED TO DECLARE THAT THEIR INCOME AND ASSETS DID NOT EXCEED A CERTAIN LIMIT.

"FROM THE WELFARE POINT OF VIEW, SUCH A REQUIREMENT IS CERTAINLY A RETROGRESSIVE MEASURE," SHE SAID.

SHE SAID THAT ANOTHER, MORE CRUCIAL PROBLEM WAS THAT EVEN IF AN "INCOME-BASED" APPROACH WAS ADOPTED IN PROCESSING THE APPLICATIONS, THE EXPENDITURE ON SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMMES WOULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY INCREASED IN FUTURE WHEN THE OLD AGE ALLOWANCE WAS EXTENDED IN STAGES AND THE PROPORTION OF OLD PEOPLE IN OUR POPULATION INCREASED.

ACCORDING TO ESTIMATES PROVIDED BY THE GOVERNMENT, THIS PHASED-BASIS EXTENSION WOULD INCUR AN ADDITIONAL EXPENDITURE OF OVER \$500 MILLION IN THE FIRST YEAR OF ITS FULL IMPLEMENTATION. CONSEQUENTLY, THE ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES FOR SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES AS A WHOLE WOULD BE AFFECTED.

"WITH A SIGNIFICANT GROWTH IN THE EXPENDITURE ON SOCIAL SECURITY PROGRAMMES, THE PROVISION OF OTHER IMPORTANT WELFARE SERVICES SUCH AS FAMILY AND YOUTH SERVICES AND SERVICES FOR THE HANDICAPPED WILL BE GREATLY HAMPERED IF THE GOVERNMENT'S TOTAL EXPENDITURE ON WELFARE SERVICES IS NOT CORRESPONDINGLY RAISED," SHE SAID.

MRS TAM ALSO URGED THE GOVERNMENT TO GIVE CAREFUL CONSIDERATION TO THE ALLOCATION OF FUNDS FOR WELFARE SERVICES BY TAKING INTO ACCOUNT THE NEEDS IN ALL OTHER SERVICES AND THE ADEQUACY OF RESOURCES AVAILABLE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF VARIOUS KINDS OF SERVICES.

SHE PROPOSED THAT THE EXPENDITURE ON "SOCIAL SECURITY", AT PRESENT UNDER THE HEAD OF SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES, SHOULD BE SEPARATED FROM THE LATTER TO BECOME AN INDEPENDENT HEAD OF EXPENDITURE.

"THE AUTHORITIES CONCERNED AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC THEN WILL HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE OF THE ANNUAL EXPENSES ON SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES," SHE SAID.

TURNING TO POLICY ON YOUTH, MRS TAM SAID THAT YOUNG PEOPLE WERE IN FACT CONFRONTED BY A LOT OF PROBLEM AND THEY NEEDED COMMUNITY SUPPORT.

"THE INCREASING SERIOUSNESS OF JUVENILE DELINQUENCY, THE AGGRAVATING STATE OF DRUG ABUSE, PARTICULARLY THAT OF SOFT DRUGS, AND THE CONTINUOUS INVOLVEMENT OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN TRIAD ACTIVITIES ARE SIGNIFICANT INDICATORS," SHE SAID.

SHE SAID THAT HONG KONG WAS AT A CRITICAL HISTORICAL PERIOD LEADING TO ITS POLITICAL HANDOVER. THE COMMUNITY HAD HIGH HOPES FOR THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WOULD BE THE MASTERS OF FUTURE SOCIETY.

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"TO PREPARE THEM FOR THESE ASPIRATIONS, WE SHOULD PAY MORE ATTENTION TO THE CIVIC EDUCATION OF OUR YOUTHS AND DEMONSTRATE OUR COMMITMENT TO OUR YOUNG," SHE SAID.

SHE ADDED THAT THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD CONTINUE ITS EFFORTS TO DETER JUVENILE CRIMES BY STRENGTHENING PERSONAL SOCIAL WORK AMONG YOUNG PEOPLE, WHICH WOULD HELP THEM COPE WITH THE MANY PROBLEMS IN GROWING UP AND PREVENT THEM FROM GOING ASTRAY.

SHE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT THE GOVERNMENT APPOINT MORE YOUNG PEOPLE TO SERVE ON THE DISTRICT BOARDS, AREA COMMITTEES AND OTHER ADVISORY BODIES SO THAT THEY COULD HAVE MORE PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE AND A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AS WELL AS THEIR COMMITMENTS.

FINALLY, SHE PRAISED THE SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT FOR THE EFFORTS IT HAD MADE THROUGHOUT THE YEAR TOWARDS PROMOTING RELATIONSHIPS AND UNDERSTANDING WITH VOLUNTARY AGENCIES.

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#### SPECIAL TEAM ON BN(O) PASSPORT SUGGESTED

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THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD ESTABLISH A SPECIAL TEAM TO ASSIST IN ENQUIRIES BY INDIVIDUALS AND THE TRAVEL TRADE IN CASES WHERE UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE BN(O) PASSPORT ARISES, THE HON SELINA CHOW SAID IN THE LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL TODAY (THURSDAY).

SPEAKING IN THE POLICY DEBATE, MRS CHOW SAID A KEY ISSUE IN THE SINO-BRITISH JOINT DECLARATION WHICH HAD INSPIRED CONFIDENCE IN OUR FUTURE WAS THE GUARANTEE THAT THE DOORS OF HONG KONG WOULD REMAIN OPEN, NOT ONLY FOR OUTSIDERS TO COME IN, BUT MORE IMPORTANT, FOR HONG KONG PEOPLE TO TRAVEL, AS THEY WERE ABLE TO TODAY.

SHE SAID CHINA HAD BEEN PRAGMATIC ENOUGH TO ACCEPT THE ARRANGEMENT ON THE BN(O) PASSPORT BEYOND 1997.

HOWEVER, SHE SAID WHAT HAD HAPPENED SINCE THE ISSUANCE OF THE PASSPORT IN JULY THIS YEAR HAD BEEN UNFORTUNATE, AND HAD NOT BEEN HELPFUL IN BUILDING UP PEOPLE'S CONFIDENCE IN THIS NEW TRAVEL DOCUMENT.

"ALTHOUGH WE HAVE BEEN ASSURED BY GOVERNMENT THAT UNFAILING EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO GAIN ACCEPTANCE FOR THIS DOCUMENT, AND IN SPITE OF THE FACT THAT OTHER COUNTRIES ARE UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO ENDORSE IT, NOR IS SUCH ENDORSEMENT NECESSARY IN THE EYES OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT, TO THE PEOPLE OF HONG KONG, POSITIVE AND PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF ACCEPTANCE BY FRIENDLY NATIONS SUCH AS THOSE GIVEN BY THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, CANADA, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, SWITZERLAND AND OTHER STATES, HAVE GONE A LONG WAY IN ESTABLISHING CONFIDENCE IN THE BN(O) PASSPORT," SHE SAID.

/MRS CHOW .....

MRS CHOW STRESSED THAT SHOULD PROBLEMS ARISE CONCERNING ANY PARTICULAR FOREIGN GOVERNMENT OR ITS REPRESENTATIVE HERE, THESE COULD MORE EASILY BE SOLVED BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS, WITHOUT CREATING FURTHER MISUNDERSTANDING OR DELAY.

"LET THERE BE CO-OPERATION BETWEEN THE PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT TO TRY AND SHORTEN THE TEETHING PERIOD AS FAR AS POSSIBLE THROUGH POSITIVE ACTION," SHE SAID.

"THIS IS, BY FAR, PREFERABLE TO THE PRESENT SITUATION IN WHICH A SUSPICIOUS PUBLIC AND A DEFENSIVE GOVERNMENT PASS THE BUCK FOR A LOW APPLICATION RATE TO EACH OTHER WHILE THE REAL PROBLEMS REMAIN UNRESOLVED."

SHE SAID IT DID NOT HELP THE BN(O) PASSPORT NOR ITS HOLDER WHO WOULD SOONER OR LATER BE RELYING ON IT FOR OUTBOUND TRAVEL TO PUT OFF THE APPLICATION OR THE USE OF IT.

"ON THE CONTRARY, THE SOONER WE GET OVER THE TEETHING PROBLEMS THE BETTER IT WILL BE FOR PUBLIC CONFIDENCE. THIS PRINCIPLE IS FULLY RECOGNISED.

"HOWEVER, UNLESS GOVERNMENT IS SEEN TO ASSIST IN EVERY WAY IT CAN, WHO CAN BLAME ANYONE FOR THE 'LET SOMEBODY ELSE BE THE GUINEA PIG FIRST' ATTITUDE?"

MRS CHOW SAID IN SPITE OF THE UNCERTAINTIES CAUSED BY THE PASSPORT ISSUE, AND UNCOMFORTABLE RUMBLING IN THE OUTBOUND TRAVEL TRADE, HONG KONG PEOPLE TRAVELLED TO LANDS NEAR AND FAR FOR BUSINESS AND PLEASURE LAST YEAR.

THE VOLUME OF BUSINESS IN THE TRAVEL TRADE WAS CONSERVATIVELY ESTIMATED TO BE \$9 BILLION, OF WHICH ALMOST 30 PER CENT WAS TAKEN UP BY TOURS.

"WITH AN INDUSTRY THAT CATERS TO SO MANY CONSUMERS, IT WOULD BE QUITE UNACCEPTABLE AND RETROGRESSIVE FOR GOVERNMENT TO PREACH OR PRACTISE LAISSEZ-FAIRE, PARTICULARLY IN THE LIGHT OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE LAST FEW YEARS," SHE SAID.

"NO ONE WOULD DENY THAT THE TRADE IS IN A HARDLY HEALTHY STATE. BUT LET US NEVER FORGET THAT IT IS IN THE STATE IT IS IN BECAUSE OF THE LAISSEZ-FAIRE POLICY IN THE FIRST PLACE AND THE CASH-IN-ADVANCE NATURE OF THE BUSINESS."

SHE SAID FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO WASH ITS HANDS OF THE MESS NOW IN THE HOLY NAME OF SELF-REGULATION WITH NEITHER LEGISLATIVE CONTROL NOR COMMUNITY MONITORING WAS A DANGEROUS STEP TO TAKE.

"TO ADOPT IT AS AN IMMEDIATE PANACEA WHEN EVEN THE TRADE ITSELF FEELS IT MAY NOT BE READY RUNS THE RISK OF CREATING INEQUITY WITHIN THE TRADE ITSELF, OR WORSE STILL, COSTING THE TRAVELLING PUBLIC A LOT MORE THAN IT SHOULD FAIRLY BE."

MRS CHOW SAID ALTHOUGH THE GOVERNMENT HAD NOT DECIDED, EVERY INDICATION WAS THAT CONSUMER PROTECTION BY WAY OF COMPENSATION ON FAILURE OR COLLAPSE OF AGENTS WOULD REMAIN.

SHE SAID IT HAD BEEN WIDELY REPORTED IN THE PRESS LAST MONTH THAT THE INTENTION WAS TO IMPOSE A LEVY ON TOUR RECEIPTS.

"EXISTING PROVISIONS FOR THE RESERVE FUND ARE HEAVILY CRITICISED FOR ITS ELEMENT OF MUTUALITY, WHICH IS SEEN AS AN INCENTIVE FOR THE BLACK SHEEP IN THE TRADE TO ABSCOND, LEAVING THE COMPENSATION BILL FOR THE HONEST AGENTS.

"IT THIS ELEMENT REMAINS IN THE FUTURE SYSTEM, THE SAME DANGER WILL APPLY. THE ONLY REASON THE TRADE DOES NOT OBJECT IS THAT WHEREAS THEY HAVE TO FOOT THE BILL NOW, THE BURDEN WILL IN FUTURE LAY SQUARELY ON THE CONSUMER, ALBEIT INDIRECTLY."

SHE SAID THE ELEMENT OF MUTUALITY SHOULD BE REDUCED AS FAR AS POSSIBLE AND ANY FUND SHOULD BE USED ONLY AS A LAST RESORT AFTER THE DEFAULTING AGENT'S OWN GUARANTEE HAD BEEN EXHAUSTED.

"EACH AGENT SHOULD FURNISH THE BONDING SCHEME WITH A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF SURETY IN THE FORM OF BANKER'S GUARANTEE OR INSURANCE COMMENSURATE WITH THE BUSINESS TURNOVER OF THE AGENT."

MRS CHOW SAID THIS WAS A SYSTEM ADOPTED BY AUSTRALIA AND SINGAPORE AND HAD PROVEN TO BE EFFECTIVE.

"ITS MERITS ARE MANY: IT DISCOURAGES FLY-BY-NIGHT TOUR OPERATORS FROM TAKING ADVANTAGE OF OUR FREE MARKET; REMOVES THE ELEMENT OF MUTUALITY, AND IT REDUCES THE AMOUNT OF LEVIES TO BE IMPOSED ON TOURS.

"AS THE HIGH SEASON FOR TOURS IS ONCE AGAIN DRAWING NEAR, I URGE THE GOVERNMENT TO ACT SOON, AND EVEN IF WE CANNOT HAVE THE PERMANENT SOLUTION IN PLACE, THERE MUST BE SOME INTERIM MEASURE TO PREVENT REPETITION OF UGLY SCENES IN HISTORY," SHE SAID.

SHE ALSO SAID THAT WHILE 16 MILLION PEOPLE TRAVELLED OUTSIDE HONG KONG LAST YEAR, 3.7 MILLION VISITORS CAME TO HONG KONG, SPENDING OVER \$17.8 BILLION.

THIS TOURING POPULATION WAS EXPECTED TO RISE BY A FURTHER 17.5 PER CENT THIS YEAR, MAKING A TOTAL OF 4.38 MILLION, AND LIKELY TO PROVIDE HONG KONG WITH A REVENUE OF OVER \$20 BILLION, AND THE FORECAST FOR NEXT YEAR WAS 4.85 MILLION, WITH A CONSERVATIVE ESTIMATED GROWTH OF 10.5 PER CENT.

MRS CHOW SAID THE UNCHALLENGED ATTRACTION OF HONG KONG FOR MOST VISITORS WAS ITS IMAGE AS THE EPITOME OF THE UNIQUE MIX OF EAST AND WEST, AS MANIFESTED THROUGH ITS PEOPLE, ITS LANGUAGES, ITS LIFESTYLE AND ITS HERITAGE.

/HOWEVER, SHE .....

HOWEVER, SHE POINTED OUT THAT FOR A CITY THAT SPENT BILLIONS ON ITS BUILDING PROGRAMME, SETTING ASIDE LAND FOR PARKS AND SOCCER FIELDS, IT WAS SAD TO SEE HOW LITTLE WAS DONE TO PRESERVE SYMBOLS OF ITS HERITAGE.

"IN SPITE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ANTIQUITIES AND MONUMENTS BOARD MORE THAN 15 YEARS AGO, WE HAVE WITNESSED THE DEMOLITION OF MUCH VALUABLE HISTORICAL ARCHITECTURE SUCH AS THE TSIM SHA TSUI RAILWAY STATION, THE HONG KONG CLUB AND THE MURRAY BUILDING TO MAKE WAY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MODERN CITY.

"DOES THE BOARD HAVE ENOUGH POWER TO DO ITS JOB PROPERLY? AND DOES IT HAVE THE NECESSARY FUNDS TO CARRY OUT REPAIRS? DOES GOVERNMENT RECOGNISE THE NECESSITY OF PRESERVATION AS A BACKBONE TO OUR TOURISM INDUSTRY, AND IF SO IS IT PREPARED TO GIVE THE BOARD POWER AND THE FUNDS TO DO ITS JOB PROPERLY?

"WHY CAN WE NOT HAVE LAWS WHICH MAKE IT MANDATORY FOR OWNERS OF OLD HISTORICAL BUILDINGS DEEMED TO BE WORTH SAVING BY THE BOARD TO RESTORE THEM, OR TO MAINTAIN THE BUILDINGS' ORIGINAL EXTERIOR OR FACADE WHILE REDEVELOPMENT IS ALLOWED AT THE BACK, AS IT IS DONE IN ENGLAND, FRANCE AND SINGAPORE?"

MRS CHOW SAID THE SUCCESS OF OUR TOURISM INDUSTRY HAD BEEN THE ENVY OF MANY NEIGHBOURING TERRITORIES AND WE MUST PROTECT SURE REVENUE EARNERS AND RETAIN WHATEVER COMPETITIVE EDGE WE HAD.

SHE SAID ALTHOUGH THE HONG KONG TOURIST ASSOCIATION HAD BEEN DOING A GREAT JOB IN PROMOTING HONG KONG AND DESERVED RECOGNITION OF ITS OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENTS, CERTAIN IMPROVEMENTS REMAINED OUTSIDE ITS AMBIT.

THESE INCLUDED THE CONDITION OF THE AIRPORT AND ITS ANCILLIARY PASSENGER FACILITIES AND THE GOVERNMENT POLICY OF TIGHT RESTRICTION ON APPLICATION OF VISAS BY EASTERN EUROPEAN VISITORS.

SHE SAID, IN THE PAST, HONG KONG HAD BEEN LOSING OUT IN THE MARKET FOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES BECAUSE OF THIS POLICY.

"OF THE NUMEROUS MEETINGS HELD BY INTERNATIONAL BODIES, IT MAKES GOOD BUSINESS SENSE TO INDUCE THOSE WITH HONG KONG MEMBERSHIP TO CONDUCT THEM IN HONG KONG. THIS IS PARTICULARLY DESIRABLE IN THE RUN-UP TO 1997 WHEN HONG KONG IS KEEN TO KEEP UP INTERNATIONAL RELATIONSHIPS."

SHE SAID ACCORDING TO THE UNION OF INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION DIRECTORY, 669 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATIONS HAD HONG KONG MEMBERS. OF THESE 409 HAD EASTERN EUROPEAN MEMBERSHIP.

"HONG KONG IS EXCLUDED FROM TWO-THIRD OF THE POTENTIAL BUSINESS BECAUSE OF THIS POLICY ON ENTRY VISAS. IN ADDITION WE ARE LOSING OUT ON CONFERENCE DELEGATES WHO SPEND AN AVERAGE OF OVER \$4,000 EACH.

"WITH THE COMPLETION OF THE HONG KONG CONVENTION AND EXHIBITION CENTRE AS WELL AS AN ADDITIONAL 3,682 HOTEL ROOMS IN 1988, GOVERNMENT MUST REVIEW THIS OUTDATED POLICY," SHE SAID.

ANTI-II EFFORTS UNDER CONTINUOUS REVIEW

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THE EFFORTS TO KEEP ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION UNDER CONTROL ARE VERY IMPORTANT TO THE PROSPERITY OF HONG KONG AND IT IS A SUBJECT WHICH THE GOVERNMENT KEEPS UNDER CONTINUOUS REVIEW, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR SECURITY, MR ROBERT UPTON, SAID THIS (THURSDAY) EVENING.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS DURING HIS VISIT TO THE ANNUAL BORDER CAMP OF THE ROYAL HONG KONG REGIMENT (THE VOLUNTEERS), MR UPTON SAID THE LEVEL OF MANPOWER APPLIED TO THE ANTI-ILLEGAL IMMIGRATION TASK AND THE EQUIPMENT USED -- INCLUDING MAJOR INSTALLATIONS SUCH AS THE FENCE ITSELF -- FORM A CONTINUOUS REVIEW.

"PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS BRINGING FORWARD SUGGESTIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS. I WOULDN'T RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY OF SOME IMPROVEMENTS IN THE NEAR FUTURE," HE SAID.

WHEN ASKED WHETHER THE VOLUNTEERS WOULD BE DISBANDED BEFORE 1997, MR UPTON SAID: "I THINK YOU'VE HEARD COL. HUTCHINS (COMMANDING OFFICER OF THE REGIMENT) -- NO DECISIONS HAVE BEEN TAKEN YET ON THE FUTURE OF THE VOLUNTEERS.

"FOR THE TIME BEING THEY'RE AN INVALUABLE ASSET TO THE HONG KONG GOVERNMENT IN THE MAINTENANCE OF PUBLIC ORDER AND WE REGARD THEIR SERVICES VERY HIGHLY INDEED.

"WE HOPE THAT THEY'LL CONTINUE FOR A LONG TIME TO COME, PERFORMING THEIR VALUABLE SERVICE TO THE PUBLIC."

TURNING TO THE DEFENCE COST AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE HONG KONG AND BRITISH GOVERNMENTS, MR UPTON SAID THE THIRD ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS WOULD TAKE PLACE IN ABOUT TWO WEEKS' TIME, BUT HE CLARIFIED THAT THE AGREEMENT HAD NOTHING TO DO WITH FORCE LEVELS OR WITHDRAWAL PLANS.

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JVC'S REPORT ON MISSING BARS CONSIDERED BY GOVT

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THE GOVERNMENT HAS CONSIDERED A REPORT FROM THE GUANGDONG NUCLEAR POWER JOINT VENTURE COMPANY ON THE MISSING STARTER BARS AT THE DAYA BAY NUCLEAR POWER STATION.

IN THE LIGHT OF THIS REPORT AND SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION THAT WAS GIVEN TO THE BOARD OF THE HONG KONG NUCLEAR INVESTMENT COMPANY, THE GOVERNMENT IS SATISFIED THAT ALL REASONABLE STEPS HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO INVESTIGATE THE CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING THE RECENT NON-CONFORMANCE PROBLEM AND THAT APPROPRIATE REMEDIAL MEASURES ARE BEING TAKEN.

/THE GOVERNMENT .....

THE GOVERNMENT IS GENERALLY REASSURED THAT:

- (A) WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE 316 MISSING STARTER BARS, ALL OTHER REINFORCEMENT BARS SPECIFIED FOR THE FIRST LAYER OF THE FOUNDATION (THESE EXCEED 14,500) HAVE BEEN INCORPORATED. THE DESIGNER ELECTRICITE DE FRANCE HAS CONFIRMED THE INTEGRITY OF THE FIRST LAYER OF THE FOUNDATION;
- (B) THE EDF PROPOSED REMEDIAL SOLUTION WILL RESTORE THE INTEGRITY OF THE REACTOR CONTAINMENT BUILDING TO AN EQUIVALENT OF THE ORIGINAL DESIGN. AN ASSURANCE TO THIS EFFECT HAS BEEN GIVEN, IN WRITING, BY EDF TO THE JOINT VENTURE COMPANY;
- (C) IMPROVEMENTS ARE BEING MADE TO THE QUALITY CONTROL ARRANGEMENTS AT DAYA BAY TO AVOID SIMILAR RECURRENCES IN THE FUTURE. IN ADDITION TO DEPLOYING MORE STAFF, QUALITY CONTROL PROCEDURES HAVE BEEN TIGHTENED AND BOTH THE CONTRACTOR AND THE JOINT VENTURE COMPANY WILL ENSURE THAT 100 PER CENT CHECKS ARE MADE ON ALL WORK BEING UNDERTAKEN TO ENSURE THAT IT IS IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE APPROVED PLANS.

THE GOVERNMENT THEREFORE CAN SEE NO COMPELLING REASONS WHY NORMAL WORK AT THE DAYA BAY SITE SHOULD NOT RESUME. THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT GNPJVC IS PLANNING TO RESUME WORK ON SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7.

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#### JAIL SENTENCE FOR IMPORTING MEAT WITHOUT PERMISSION

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A SPOKESMAN FOR THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH EMPHASISED TODAY (THURSDAY) THAT ANY PERSON WHO IMPORTS FRESH OR FROZEN MEAT AND POULTRY TO THE TERRITORY WITHOUT AN OFFICIAL CERTIFICATE AND WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF A HEALTH OFFICER IS LIABLE TO PROSECUTION.

HE ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE MAXIMUM PENALTY FOR SUCH AN OFFENCE IS A FINE OF \$25,000 AND SIX MONTHS' IMPRISONMENT.

CITING A RECENT CASE, AS A DETERRENT, THE SPOKESMAN SAID A 33-YEAR-OLD MAN, TAM HOK-LING, WAS CONVICTED BY A MAGISTRATE AT KWUN TONG MAGISTRACY AND JAILED FOR THREE MONTHS FOR ILLEGALLY IMPORTING ABOUT 12 TONNES OF FROZEN SUCKLING PIGS INTO HONG KONG FROM CHINA WITHOUT AN OFFICIAL CERTIFICATE AND WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF A HEALTH OFFICER.

TAM COMMITTED THE OFFENCE ON OCTOBER 30 THIS YEAR BY IMPORTING THE FROZEN PIGS FROM SHEKOU ON BOARD A CHINESE VESSEL WHICH WAS INTERCEPTED BY MARINE POLICE AT THE KOWLOON BAY CARGO HANDLING BASIN.

HE WAS HANDED OVER TO OFFICERS OF THE FOOD SECTION OF THE MUNICIPAL SERVICES BRANCH FOR INVESTIGATION AND WAS SUBSEQUENTLY CHARGED.

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## SECOND QUARTER SHIPPING, PORT AND CARGO STATISTICS RELEASED

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IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1987, 3,787 SHIPS WITH A TOTAL CAPACITY OF 22.6 MILLION NET REGISTERED TONS (NRT) ARRIVED IN HONG KONG, REPRESENTING AN INCREASE OF 376 (OR 11 PER CENT) IN NUMBER AND OF 2.6 MILLION NRT (OR 13 PER CENT) IN CAPACITY OVER THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1986, ACCORDING TO THE "HONG KONG SHIPPING STATISTICS REPORT" PUBLISHED TODAY (THURSDAY) BY THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT.

DURING THE SAME PERIOD, THE TOTAL TONNAGE OF CARGO DISCHARGED IN HONG KONG FROM INCOMING SHIPS (ESTIMATED FROM A SAMPLE OF MANIFEST CONSIGNMENTS) INCREASED BY 11 PER CENT.

WHEN ANALYSED BY SHIP TYPE, INCREASES WERE RECORDED IN THE NUMBER OF CONTAINER VESSELS (+197), DRY BULK CARRIERS (+32) AND SEMI-CONTAINER VESSELS (+28). INCREASES IN NUMBER WERE RECORDED FOR SHIPS REGISTERED IN CHINA (+158) AND PANAMA (+109), BUT A DECREASE WAS RECORDED FOR THOSE REGISTERED IN THE U.S.A. (-36). THE NUMBER OF SHIPS WITH A CAPACITY OF LESS THAN 10,000 DEADWEIGHT TONS INCREASED (+190).

IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1987, THERE WERE 3,771 OUTGOING SHIPS WITH A TOTAL CAPACITY OF 22.6 MILLION NRT, REPRESENTING AN INCREASE OF 384 (OR 11 PER CENT) IN NUMBER AND OF 2.6 MILLION NRT (OR 13 PER CENT) IN CAPACITY OVER THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1986. THE TOTAL TONNAGE OF CARGO LOADED ONTO OUTGOING SHIPS (ESTIMATED FROM A SAMPLE OF MANIFEST CONSIGNMENTS) ROSE BY 17 PER CENT. ABOUT 64 PER CENT OF THE DEPARTING SHIPS STAYED IN HONG KONG FOR LESS THAN TWO DAYS.

OF THE CARGO DISCHARGED FROM INCOMING SHIPS, 84 PER CENT IN TERMS OF TONNAGE WAS IMPORTS AND 16 PER CENT WAS TRANSHIPMENT CARGO. OF THE CARGO LOADED ONTO OUTGOING SHIPS, 55 PER CENT WAS EXPORTS (INCLUDING DOMESTIC EXPORTS AND RE-EXPORTS) AND 45 PER CENT WAS TRANSHIPMENT CARGO.

THE MAJOR COUNTRIES OF LOADING FOR SEABORNE IMPORTS IN TONNAGE TERMS WERE CHINA (15 PER CENT), SINGAPORE (14 PER CENT), JAPAN (13 PER CENT), SOUTH AFRICA (10 PER CENT) AND AUSTRALIA (9 PER CENT), WHILE THE MAJOR COUNTRIES OF DISCHARGE FOR SEABORNE EXPORTS WERE THE U.S.A. (22 PER CENT), TAIWAN (11 PER CENT), CHINA (9 PER CENT) AND JAPAN (7 PER CENT). TRANSHIPMENT CARGO WAS MAINLY LOADED IN CHINA (29 PER CENT) AND THE U.S.A. (23 PER CENT); AND WAS MAINLY DISCHARGED IN CHINA (21 PER CENT) AND THE U.S.A. (12 PER CENT).

COMPARING THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1987 WITH THE SAME QUARTER IN 1986, INCREASES IN TONNAGE WERE NOTED FOR SEABORNE IMPORTS FROM SOUTH KOREA (+61 PER CENT), CHINA (+54 PER CENT), WEST GERMANY (+48 PER CENT), AUSTRALIA (+33 PER CENT) AND TAIWAN (+12 PER CENT); BUT DECREASES IN TONNAGE WERE NOTED FOR SEABORNE IMPORTS FROM THE U.S.A. (-22 PER CENT), SOUTH AFRICA (-12 PER CENT) AND SINGAPORE (-11 PER CENT).

AS A WHOLE, THE TOTAL TONNAGE OF SEABORNE IMPORTS ROSE BY EIGHT PER CENT. AMONG THE PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES, INCREASES IN CARGO TONNAGE WERE RECORDED FOR SEABORNE IMPORTS OF CORK AND WOOD MANUFACTURES (+103 PER CENT), ARTIFICIAL RESINS AND PLASTIC MATERIALS (+79 PER CENT) AND CRUDE ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE MATERIALS, NOT ELSEWHERE SPECIFIED (+54 PER CENT); BUT DECREASES WERE RECORDED FOR SEABORNE IMPORTS OF INORGANIC CHEMICALS (-25 PER CENT) AND PETROLEUM, PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND RELATED MATERIALS (-21 PER CENT).

DURING THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1987, THE TOTAL TONNAGE OF SEABORNE EXPORTS (DOMESTIC EXPORTS PLUS RE-EXPORTS) INCREASED BY 10 PER CENT. INCREASES IN TONNAGE WERE RECORDED FOR SEABORNE EXPORTS TO THAILAND (+153 PER CENT), SOUTH KOREA (+150 PER CENT), JAPAN (+86 PER CENT), THE UNITED KINGDOM (+28 PER CENT) AND THE U.S.A. (+23 PER CENT). AMONG THE PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES, INCREASES IN TONNAGE WERE NOTED FOR SEABORNE EXPORTS OF MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES, NOT ELSEWHERE SPECIFIED (+126 PER CENT), COTTON TEXTILES (+71 PER CENT), CLAY AND KAOLIN (+58 PER CENT) AND METALLIFEROUS ORES AND METAL SCRAP (+36 PER CENT), BUT DECREASES IN TONNAGE WERE NOTED FOR SEABORNE EXPORTS OF VEGETABLES AND FRUIT (-57 PER CENT) AND PETROLEUM, PETROLEUM PRODUCTS AND RELATED MATERIALS (-43 PER CENT).

OF THE CARGO DISCHARGED FROM INCOMING SHIPS, INCLUDING SEABORNE IMPORTS AND INWARD TRANSHIPMENT, 31 PER CENT IN TERMS OF TONNAGE WAS CONTAINERISED CARGO. OF THOSE LOADED ONTO OUTGOING SHIPS, INCLUDING SEABORNE EXPORTS AND OUTWARD TRANSHIPMENT, 74 PER CENT WAS CONTAINERISED CARGO.

IN TERMS OF TONNAGE, CONTAINERISED CARGO ACCOUNTED FOR 26 PER CENT OF SEABORNE IMPORTS. IN PARTICULAR, CONTAINERISED CARGO ACCOUNTED FOR A LARGE PROPORTION OF SEABORNE IMPORTS FROM THE NETHERLANDS (86 PER CENT), THE U.S.A. (77 PER CENT), THE UNITED KINGDOM (59 PER CENT) AND WEST GERMANY (58 PER CENT). THE TOTAL TONNAGE OF CONTAINERISED SEABORNE IMPORTS IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1987 ROSE BY 29 PER CENT OVER THE SAME QUARTER IN 1986.

AMONG THE PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES, CONTAINERISED CARGO ACCOUNTED FOR, IN TONNAGE TERMS, 95 PER CENT OF SEABORNE IMPORTS OF ARTIFICIAL RESINS AND PLASTIC MATERIALS, 85 PER CENT OF TEXTILES OF MAN-MADE FIBRES, 84 PER CENT OF PAPER, PAPERBOARD AND ARTICLES OF PAPER PULP, OF PAPER OR OF PAPERBOARD AND 83 PER CENT OF CHEMICAL MATERIALS AND PRODUCTS, NOT ELSEWHERE SPECIFIED.

FOR SEABORNE EXPORTS, CONTAINERISED CARGO ACCOUNTED FOR 72 PER CENT IN TERMS OF TONNAGE. IN PARTICULAR, CONTAINERISED CARGO ACCOUNTED FOR ALMOST ALL OF THE SEABORNE EXPORTS TO THE U.S.A., THE UNITED KINGDOM, WEST GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS. THE TOTAL TONNAGE OF CONTAINERISED SEABORNE EXPORTS IN THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1987 ROSE BY 33 PER CENT OVER THE SAME QUARTER IN 1986.

AMONG THE PRINCIPAL COMMODITIES, ALL OR ALMOST ALL SEABORNE EXPORTS OF COTTON GARMENTS; TOYS; GARMENTS OF MIXED MATERIALS OR OTHER MATERIALS, NOT ELSEWHERE SPECIFIED; PLASTIC MANUFACTURES, NOT ELSEWHERE SPECIFIED; COTTON TEXTILES AND MISCELLANEOUS MANUFACTURED ARTICLES, NOT ELSEWHERE SPECIFIED; WERE CONTAINERISED.

SHIPPING STATISTICS ARE COMPILED PRIMARILY FROM GENERAL DECLARATIONS SUBMITTED TO THE MARINE DEPARTMENT BY SHIPOWNERS OR AUTHORISED SHIPPING AGENTS AND COVER ALL OCEAN-GOING VESSELS ENTERING AND LEAVING HONG KONG, EXCLUDING YACHTS AND PLEASURE CRAFT. PORT AND CARGO STATISTICS ARE COMPILED FROM OCEAN MANIFESTS SUPPLIED BY SHIPPING COMPANIES OR AGENTS TO THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT. BECAUSE OF RESOURCE CONSTRAINTS, A SAMPLE OF ALL CONSIGNMENTS LISTED IN THE MANIFESTS IS USED FOR COMPILING THE STATISTICS. THE SAMPLING METHOD IS DESCRIBED IN THE EXPLANATORY NOTES OF THE REPORT.

MORE DETAILS ON SHIPPING, PORT AND CARGO STATISTICS FOR THE SECOND QUARTER OF 1987 ARE CONTAINED IN THE "HONG KONG SHIPPING STATISTICS REPORT" FOR APRIL TO JUNE 1987, WHICH IS NOW ON SALE AT THE GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS CENTRE, GENERAL POST OFFICE BUILDING, CONNAUGHT CENTRE, AT \$19.50 PER COPY.

ENQUIRIES ON STATISTICS PROVIDED IN THE REPORT MAY BE DIRECTED TO THE SHIPPING STATISTICS SECTION OF THE CENSUS AND STATISTICS DEPARTMENT ON 5-8234887.

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#### OFFENDERS GIVEN CONSTRUCTIVE CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMMES

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THE CORRECTIONAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT HAS SUCCEEDED OVER THE YEARS IN MAINTAINING AN ORDERLY ENVIRONMENT IN PENAL INSTITUTIONS, AND IN PROVIDING OFFENDERS UNDER ITS CARE WITH CONSTRUCTIVE CORRECTIONAL PROGRAMMES, INCLUDING ANTI-CORRUPTION MESSAGES.

THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONAL SERVICES, MR CHAN WA-SHEK, SAID THIS AT TODAY'S (THURSDAY) SESSION OF THE THIRD INTERNATIONAL ANTI-CORRUPTION CONFERENCE.

SPEAKING ON THE SUBJECT OF CORRECTIONAL MEASURES AND REHABILITATION SCHEMES, MR CHAN SAID HIS DEPARTMENT HAD LIAISED CLOSELY WITH ANTI-CORRUPTION AUTHORITIES TO PREVENT CORRUPTION IN PENAL INSTITUTIONS.

/STAFF MEMBERS .....

STAFF MEMBERS OF THE DEPARTMENT WERE GIVEN LECTURES BY THE INDEPENDENT COMMISSION AGAINST CORRUPTION IN THEIR BASIC TRAINING COURSE, AND EVERY PRISONER, UPON ADMISSION TO INSTITUTIONS, WAS BRIEFED AND THEIR FAMILIES ADVISED TO REPORT TO THE DEPARTMENT OR THE ICAC SHOULD THEY BE APPROACHED FOR MONEY OR REMUNERATIONS FOR "FAVOURS".

MOREOVER, MR CHAN SAID, ANTI-CORRUPTION POSTERS WERE PROMINENTLY DISPLAYED AT VARIOUS LOCATIONS IN PENAL INSTITUTIONS, AND A JOINT LIAISON GROUP WITH DIRECTORATE OFFICERS FROM BOTH THE DEPARTMENT AND THE ICAC MET REGULARLY TO DISCUSS PROBLEMS AND OTHER PREVENTIVE MEASURES.

MR CHAN ALSO GAVE AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEPARTMENT'S DIFFERENT PROGRAMMES FOR DIFFERENT OFFENDERS. THESE PROGRAMMES, THOUGH RUN DIFFERENTLY, CARRIED A COMMON AIM OF REHABILITATING THE OFFENDERS, IN THEIR HEALTH, EDUCATION, OCCUPATION, VALUES AND GOAL IN LIFE AS WELL AS TEACHING THEM A RESPECT FOR LAW AND ORDER, HE SAID.

"THE DEPARTMENT IS MAKING EVERY ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE ITS PROGRAMMES BY THE USE OF MORE SOCIAL SCIENCE KNOWLEDGE AND BETTER TECHNIQUES. AT THE SAME TIME, WE ARE MAKING AN ACTIVE EFFORT TO INTRODUCE MORE REHABILITATIVE MEASURES INTO THE LAW IN THE HOPE THAT MORE OF HONG KONG'S OFFENDERS CAN BE MOTIVATED TO FORESAKE A LIFE OF CRIME," MR CHAN SAID.

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MARINE CHIEF GIVES ADVICE TO SEA SCHOOL GRADUATES  
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GRADUATES OF THE HONG KONG SEA SCHOOL WERE TOLD TODAY (THURSDAY) TO REMEMBER THAT WHATEVER THEIR POSITION ON THEIR SHIP MIGHT BE, IT WOULD BE AN IMPORTANT ONE.

"YOU WILL BE EXPECTED OBEDIENTLY TO CARRY OUT YOUR DUTIES PROMPTLY, WILLINGLY AND TO THE BEST OF YOUR ABILITY," THE DIRECTOR OF MARINE, MR GERRY HIGGINSON, SAID AT THE SEA SCHOOL'S PASSING OUT PARADE THIS MORNING.

"BY SO DOING, YOU WILL ENHANCE THE IMAGE OF HONG KONG SEAMEN AND GAIN BOTH PERSONAL SATISFACTION AND A SENSE OF SECURITY."

MR HIGGINSON, WHO ALSO PRESENTED SCHOOL LEAVING CERTIFICATES TO THE GRADUATES, SAID THEY HAD BEEN PROVIDED WITH THE FINEST PRE-SEA TRAINING OF ITS TYPE AVAILABLE IN HONG KONG.

/HE SAID .....

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HE SAID THEY WOULD IN FUTURE YEARS HAVE CAUSE TO REMEMBER THE SEA SCHOOL WHICH HAD GIVEN THEM SUCH A GOOD BASIC KNOWLEDGE OF SEAMANSHIP AND STAMINA AND HAD TAUGHT THEM ALL THE NEED FOR DISCIPLINE, AND, IN PARTICULAR, FOR SELF-DISCIPLINE.

"ALL OF THIS HAS EQUIPPED YOU TO BE WHERE YOU ARE TODAY, ON THE THRESHOLD OF CAREERS IN THE MERCHANT NAVY," HE ADDED.

MR HIGGINSON SAID THEY HAD DONE WELL IN THEIR CHOICE OF A FINE CAREER.

"YOUR MINDS WILL BE BROADENED AND YOUR INTERESTS WIDENED AS YOU VISIT DISTANT LANDS, SEE STRANGE SIGHTS AND MEET PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT COUNTRIES AND DIFFERENT CULTURES," HE SAID.

MR HIGGINSON ALSO TOLD THE STUDENTS THAT IF THEY WERE AMBITIOUS, THEY WOULD HAVE EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO ADVANCE THEMSELVES.

HE NOTED THAT SOME OF THEIR PREDECESSORS HAD GONE ON TO BECOME SHIPS' OFFICERS, SHIPMASTERS AND HARBOUR PILOTS AND THREE EX-SEA SCHOOL STUDENTS NOW SERVED AS PROFESSIONAL MARINE OFFICERS IN THE MARINE DEPARTMENT.

MR HIGGINSON SAID THEY SHOULD VIEW THEIR FUTURE WITH COMPLETE OPTIMISM.

"YOU CAN LOOK FORWARD TO SAILING IN BIGGER, SAFER AND TECHNICALLY MORE SOPHISTICATED SHIPS THAN YOUR PREDECESSORS.

"YOU WILL BE WITNESSING THE CHANGES THAT TAKE PLACE IN EVERY GROWTH INDUSTRY, AND SEE THE ALTERATIONS THAT WILL TAKE PLACE IN THE LARGE PORTS OF THE WORLD IN ORDER TO SERVE THE GIANT AND SPECIALISED SHIPS OF THE FUTURE."

THE INDUSTRY, MR HIGGINSON SAID, WOULD OFFER UNEQUALLED OPPORTUNITY FOR CAREER ADVANCEMENT.

"THE REWARDS WILL GO TO THOSE WHO ARE BEST TRAINED, MOST COMPETENT, WELL DISCIPLINED AND WHO CAN SUCCESSFULLY ADAPT TO THE DEMANDS OF A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT," HE ADDED.

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/36 .....

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COMMUNITY YOUTH CLUB TO BREAK WORLD RECORD

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THE 210,000-STRONG COMMUNITY YOUTH CLUB OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT WILL CELEBRATE ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY WITH A WORLD RECORD BREAKING EVENT FOR CHARITY, AN ANNUAL PARADE, A TELEVISION SERICE, AND A CAMPAIGN FOR THE ELDERLY.

AN ATTEMPT WILL BE MADE TO BREAK THE WORLD'S BIGGEST POSTER RECORD IN THE GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS WHEN 400 CYC MEMBERS ASSEMBLE AT FOOTBALL PITCHES NO. 4 AND 5 OF VICTORIA PARK ON NOVEMBER 12 TO CONSTRUCT A 50 M X 50 M POSTER ON THE 10TH ANNIVERSARY THEME OF "HONG KONG - MY HOME".

THE HUGE COLOUR POSTER, EQUIVALENT IN SIZE TO 12 BASKETBALL COURTS, WILL BE MADE UP OF 15,000 CARDBOARD PIECES, EACH MEASURING 50 CM X 50 CM AND HAND-PAINTED BY CYC MEMBERS.

THE CYC POSTER WILL BE 25 PER CENT BIGGER THAN THE ONE LISTED IN THE GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS. THIS WAS MADE BY STUDENTS OF OSAKA GAKUIN UNIVERSITY IN JAPAN IN OCTOBER 1984. THE POSTER WILL BE PHOTOGRAPHED FROM A HELICOPTER AND THE PHOTOGRAPHS WILL BE SENT TO THE EDITORIAL BOARD OF THE GUINNESS BOOK OF RECORDS FOR RECOGNITION AS THE LARGEST POSTER IN THE WORLD.

THE POSTER WILL BE DISPLAYED BEFORE MORE THAN 10,000 CYC MEMBERS AND GUESTS AT THE CYC 10TH ANNIVERSARY ANNUAL PARADE AT THE HONG KONG COLISEUM ON FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 20. THE DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, MR Y.T. LI, WHO IS ALSO CYC PRESIDENT, WILL TAKE THE SALUTE AND PRESENT AWARDS TO CYC MEMBERS WHO HAVE GIVEN DISTINGUISHED SERVICE.

THE PARADE WILL ALSO FEATURE BAND MARCHES AND A TELESCREEN SHOW ON THE HISTORY OF THE CYC.

RATHER THAN GOING INTO THE WASTE PAPER BASKET, EACH COMPONENT CARDBOARD PIECE OF THE POSTER WILL BE DIVIDED INTO SIX SMALLER PIECES. EACH OF THESE CARDS, CARRYING A MINIATURE OF THE BIG POSTER AND A PERSONAL MESSAGE OR DRAWING BY A CYC MEMBER, WILL BE SOLD AS A CHRISTMAS CARD AT \$5 TO FRIENDS AND RELATIVES OF CYC MEMBERS TO RAISE FUNDS FOR THE ELDERLY. IT IS EXPECTED THAT ABOUT \$450,000 WILL BE RAISED FOR DONATION TO VARIOUS HOMES FOR THE AGED.

REPRESENTATIVES FROM THE 19 CYC DISTRICTS THROUGHOUT HONG KONG WILL GATHER AT VICTORIA PARK AGAIN ON SATURDAY, DECEMBER 12, TO PLEDGE THEIR ALLEGIANCE TO THE SPIRIT OF CYC - IN SERVICE TO THE COMMUNITY - AT A CEREMONY TO COINCIDE WITH THE LAUNCHING OF A 13-EPIISODE TV SERIES ON CYC ACTIVITIES PRODUCED WITH THE ASSISTANCE OF RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG AND THE SING TAO GROUP OF NEWSPAPERS.

THE 15-MINUTE PROGRAMME, WITH A CAST OF CYC MEMBERS AND FILM AND TV STARS, WILL BE BROADCAST ON TVB-JADE ON SUNDAYS, AT 4.15 PM, COMMENCING ON DECEMBER 13.

/ALSO ATTENDING .....

ALSO ATTENDING THE MASS RALLY WILL BE MR LI; THE DIRECTOR OF BROADCASTING, MISS CHEUNG MAN-YEE; AND MISS AW SIAN OF THE SING TAO LIMITED. KUNG-FU STAR JACKIE CHAN WILL JOIN CYC MEMBERS IN ENTERTAINING GUESTS AT THE CEREMONY.

FOR CYC GIRLS WHO WISH TO DO SOMETHING FOR THE ELDERLY, A WOOLLEN SHAWL KNITTING OPERATION HAS BEEN ORGANISED. THEY MAY CONTRIBUTE TO THIS OPERATION BY KNITTING AS MANY 18 CM X 18 CM PIECES OF NEEDLEWORK AS THEY LIKE. SOME 21 PIECES OF NEEDLEWORK WILL BE SEWN TOGETHER TO FORM A SHAWL. ABOUT 950 SHAWLS WILL BE REQUIRED FOR DISTRIBUTION TO THE ELDERLY AT A FUN DAY FOR THE AGED THAT CYC MEMBERS WILL ORGANISE TOWARDS THE LUNAR NEW YEAR PERIOD. THE EVENT WILL BE SPONSORED BY THE LAWS TRUST FUND WHICH WAS SET UP LAST YEAR TO HELP PROMOTE CYC ACTIVITIES.

THE HISTORY AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE CYC WILL BE RECORDED IN A CYC 10TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATIVE PUBLICATION TO BE PRODUCED UNDER THE SPONSORSHIP OF 303 DISTRICT OF THE LIONS CLUB.

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YMT COMMUNITY CENTRE TO HOLD OPEN DAY

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YAU MA TEI RESIDENTS WILL BE ABLE TO TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT VARIOUS FACILITIES AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE DISTRICT'S COMMUNITY CENTRE AT AN OPEN DAY ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 7).

LOCATED AT 60 PUBLIC SQUARE STREET, THE HENRY G. LEONG YAU MA TEI COMMUNITY CENTRE WAS BUILT IN 1982 AND HAS BEEN UNDER THE MANAGEMENT OF THE DISTRICT OFFICE SINCE JUNE 1985.

ITS FACILITIES COMPRISE AN AIR-CONDITIONED MULTI-PURPOSE HALL WITH A SEATING CAPACITY OF 800, COVERED PLAYGROUND, BASKETBALL COURT AND A SEVEN-FLOOR WELFARE BLOCK OFFERING VARIOUS SERVICES PROVIDED BY VOLUNTARY AGENCIES, LOCAL ORGANISATIONS AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS.

THE SERVICES INCLUDE A CLUB FOR FORMER MENTAL PATIENTS, YOUTH AND ADULT GROUP ACTIVITIES, OUTREACHING SERVICE, A DAY CENTRE FOR THE ELDERLY AND A NURSERY.

THE OPEN DAY HAS BEEN ORGANISED BY THE CENTRE'S MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF THE CURRENT DISTRICT FESTIVAL. GAME STALLS AND A BOOTH PROVIDING FREE EYE-CARE WILL BE SET UP. THERE WILL ALSO BE A VARIETY SHOW TO FOSTER A FESTIVE ATMOSPHERE.

/THOSE OFFICIATING .....

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THOSE OFFICIATING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY WILL BE YAU MA TEI DISTRICT OFFICER, MR AUGUSTINE CHENG; DISTRICT BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR YIP WAH; URBAN COUNCILLOR MR KWAN LIM-HO, AND DISTRICT BOARD MEMBER MR SO CHUNG-PING.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE OPEN DAY OF THE HENRY G. LEONG YAU MA TEI COMMUNITY CENTRE TO START AT 2.30 PM ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 7).

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REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY AT CENOTAPH

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THE REMEMBRANCE DAY CEREMONY WILL BE HELD AT THE CENOTAPH IN STATUE SQUARE THIS SUNDAY (NOVEMBER 8) IN HONOUR OF THOSE WHO HAD GIVEN THEIR LIVES IN ACTIVE SERVICE.

WREATHS WILL BE LAID BY THE GOVERNOR, SIR DAVID WILSON; THE COMMANDER BRITISH FORCES, MAJOR-GENERAL GARRY JOHNSON; THE CHIEF JUSTICE, SIR DENYS ROBERTS; REPRESENTATIVES OF THE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILS; COMMONWEALTH COMMISSIONERS; THE COMMISSIONER OF POLICE, MR RAYMON ANNING; THE CHAIRMAN OF THE URBAN COUNCIL, MR GERRY FORSGATE; THE CHAIRMAN OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, MR CHEUNG YAN-LUNG, AND CHAIRMEN OF THE DISTRICT BOARDS.

WREATHS WILL ALSO BE LAID BY SERVICE COMMANDERS, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION, SERVICE UNITS, TRADITIONAL COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, EX-SERVICEMEN'S ASSOCIATIONS, SOCIETIES AND OTHER BODIES.

THE CEREMONY WILL START AT 11 AM AND WILL END ABOUT 11.30 AM.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

A PRESS POSITION FOR COVERING THE CEREMONY HAS BEEN RESERVED TO THE WEST OF THE CENOTAPH. MEDIA REPRESENTATIVES COVERING THE CEREMONY SHOULD ASSEMBLE AT THE ENTRANCE OF BEACONSFIELD HOUSE, CENTRAL, BY 10.20 AM TO COLLECT BADGES FOR ADMISSION TO THE CEREMONY. GIS OFFICERS WILL BE ON HAND TO ESCORT THEM TO THE PRESS POSITION.

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YUEN LONG DB CULTURE COMMITTEE TO MEET

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THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD'S CULTURE COMMITTEE WILL MEET TOMORROW (FRIDAY) TO DISCUSS VARIOUS CULTURAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE DISTRICT IN THE COMING MONTHS.

THE ACTIVITIES INCLUDE THE REGIONAL COUNCIL'S CULTURAL PRESENTATIONS AND ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAMMES, THE YUEN LONG PUBLIC LIBRARY'S EXTENSION PROJECT, THE MUSIC OFFICE'S INSTRUMENTAL TRAINING CLASSES AND DISTRICT BOARD SPONSORED EVENTS.

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NOTE TO EDITORS:

YOU ARE INVITED TO COVER THE CULTURE COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD TO BEGIN TOMORROW (FRIDAY) AT 3 PM IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE YUEN LONG DISTRICT BOARD, 13TH FLOOR, TAI KIU GOVERNMENT OFFICES BUILDING, 2 KIU LOK SQUARE, YUEN LONG.

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VARIETY SHOW WILL START SHAM SHUI PO FESTIVAL

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THE 1987 SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT FESTIVAL WILL OPEN ON MONDAY, NOVEMBER 16, WITH A VARIETY SHOW TO BE HELD AT THE HONG KONG COLISEUM, BEGINNING AT 8 PM.

OFFICIATING AT THE OPENING CEREMONY WILL BE EXECUTIVE AND LEGISLATIVE COUNCILLOR, MISS LYDIA DUNN, AND THE REGIONAL SECRETARY FOR HONG KONG AND KOWLOON, MR T.H. CHAU.

THE SHOW'S PROGRAMME INCLUDES PARADE BY A CIVIL AID SERVICES TEAM, SINGING, AND A DRAMA SHOW BY TELEVISION ARTISTS.

A POP CONCERT, FEATURING SINGERS SUCH AS FRANCES YIP, CALLY KWONG, SANDY LAM, TERENCE TSOI AND TAT'S PAIR, WILL BE HELD AS PART OF THE SHOW.

FREE ADMISSION TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE FROM MONDAY (NOVEMBER 9) AT THE SHAM SHUI PO DISTRICT OFFICE, 39 TONKIN STREET, KOWLOON, AND ITS SUB-OFFICES.

DETAILS OF THE FIVE-WEEK FESTIVAL, WHICH PROVIDES 61 ACTIVITIES FOR SHAM SHUI PO RESIDENTS, WILL ALSO BE AVAILABLE.

LAST YEAR, MORE THAN 70,000 RESIDENTS PARTICIPATED IN FESTIVAL ACTIVITIES.

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SPEEDPOST WEIGHT INCREASE  
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THE MAXIMUM WEIGHT FOR A SPEEDPOST ITEM TO NEW ZEALAND WILL BE INCREASED FROM 10 KG TO 20 KG, WITH EFFECT FROM NOVEMBER 9, 1987, THE POSTMASTER GENERAL ANNOUNCED TODAY (THURSDAY).

THE SPEEDPOST SERVICE IS A FAST AND RELIABLE MEANS FOR FORWARDING BUSINESS DOCUMENTS, SAMPLES AND MERCHANDISE OVERSEAS. A FREE PICK-UP SERVICE IS AVAILABLE.

CUSTOMERS REQUIRING MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE SERVICE ARE REQUESTED TO CONTACT THE POSTAL SERVICES REPRESENTATIVES ON 5-8471108.

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FREE JAZZ AND POPULAR MUSIC CONCERT  
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A FREE CONCERT FEATURING A SELECTION OF JAZZ, POPULAR, AND FILM MUSIC WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY (NOVEMBER 7) AT KO SHAN THEATRE.

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC CAN OBTAIN ADMISSION TICKETS AT ANY OF THE FOUR BRANCH OFFICES OF THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT OFFICE AT SAN PO KONG, LOK FU SHOPPING CENTRE, TZE WAN SHAN ESTATE AND CHOI WAN ESTATE.

THE CONCERT WILL BE GIVEN BY THE PAN-ASIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA, CONDUCTED BY MR YIP WAI-HONG.

IT IS ORGANISED BY THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT ARTS COUNCIL, SPONSORED BY THE WONG TAI SIN DISTRICT BOARD AND SUBSIDISED BY THE URBAN COUNCIL.

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500 TO TAKE PART IN TUEN MUN ATHLETIC MEET  
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ABOUT 500 YOUTHS WILL TAKE PART IN VARIOUS FIELD AND TRACK EVENTS OF THE 12TH TUEN MUN ATHLETIC MEET ON SUNDAY (NOVEMBER 8) AT THE TUEN MUN TANG SHIU KIN SPORTS GROUND.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE MEET WILL BE THE FOUR BY 100-METRE GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS RELAY INVITATION COMPETITION AND THE WOMEN'S RELAY COMPETITION.

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THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 1987

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THE FUNCTION IS ORGANISED BY THE TUEN MUN SPORTS ASSOCIATION AND REGIONAL COUNCIL AND SPONSORED BY THE TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICE.

THERE WILL BE AN OPENING CEREMONY AT 11 AM ON THAT DAY. OFFICIATING GUESTS WILL INCLUDE THE VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE TUEN MUN SPORTS ASSOCIATION, MR LAW TZE-YUEN; ACTING TUEN MUN DISTRICT OFFICER, MR EDWARD YAU; AND CHAIRMAN OF THE TUEN MUN AREA COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONAL COUNCIL, MR HO SUN-KUEN.

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TEMPORARY CLOSURE OF TSING YI BRIDGE

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TSING YI BRIDGE WILL BE CLOSED TO TRAFFIC FROM 12.30 AM TO 2.30 AM ON SUNDAY (NOVEMBER 8) SO THAT THE STRUCTURE OF THE BRIDGE CAN BE MONITORED.

THE BRIDGE WILL ALSO BE CLOSED FROM 6.30 AM TO 7.30 AM AND FROM 3 PM TO 4 PM ON THE SAME DAY.

DURING THE CLOSURE, THE BRIDGE WILL BE RE-OPENED TO GENERAL TRAFFIC AT A FIVE-MINUTE INTERVAL, AND IMMEDIATELY FOR EMERGENCY SERVICES.

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