The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Administration and Rural Matters</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recreation and Sport</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Culture</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Community Economy</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Building</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rights of the Individual</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Youth Development</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civic Education</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling Policy</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building Management</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Licensing</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauging Public Opinion</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion Policy</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership and Liaison with Charitable Organizations</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charitable Trust Funds</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enquiries</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

This booklet is to provide a brief introduction to the work of the Home Affairs Bureau and its two departments, that is, the Home Affairs Department and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.

We see as one of our important roles the maintenance of a free-flow communication channel between the Government and the public. We also aim to facilitate the governance of Hong Kong through our community building work, and to foster the development of a civil society through our various policy programmes.

Mission and Vision

In partnership with the community, we are committed to –

- facilitating the administration of Hong Kong in line with changing needs and aspirations
- fostering the spirit of community participation in public affairs
- building Hong Kong as a vibrant, caring and harmonious community
- enriching life through supporting and promoting the development of the arts, culture, sports and recreation, preservation of cultural heritage and beautification of the environment
Our mission is to –

- enhance communication between the Government and the people of Hong Kong
- promote community development
- facilitate the development of District Administration
- protect and promote the rights of the individual
- promote youth development
- nurture civic responsibility and a sense of belonging
- advise owners of private buildings on better building management
- provide quality leisure and cultural services
- promote professionalism and excellence in leisure pursuits and cultural services
- promote synergy with sports, cultural and community organizations in enhancing the development of arts and sports
- preserve cultural heritage
- promote greening and public art
- achieve a high level of customer satisfaction
- build a highly motivated, committed and satisfied workforce

Dr. Patrick HO Chi-ping
Secretary for Home Affairs
District Administration and Rural Matters

District Administration

Our district administration work aims to promote community development, and to induce civic responsibility and a sense of belonging in the community. The District Administration Scheme was introduced since 1982. The main elements of the scheme are the District Councils (formerly known as District Boards) and the District Management Committees. Through the scheme, the Home Affairs Department promotes public participation in district affairs and fosters among the people of Hong Kong a sense of belonging and mutual care. The scheme also helps to ensure that the Government is responsive to district needs and problems.

District Councils

The main function of the District Councils is to advise the Government on matters affecting the well-being of the people living and working in the district concerned, as well as on the provision and use of public facilities and services within the district. The Government also consults these bodies on a wide range of issues. For the second term District Council, there are 400 elected members, 27 ex officio members (i.e. Rural Committee chairmen in the New Territories) and 102 appointed members in the 18 District Councils.
Each district has a District Management Committee, chaired by the District Officer, comprising the Chairman, Vice Chairman and committee chairmen of the District Council and representatives of bureaux/departments providing essential services in the district. The District Management Committee serves as a forum for inter-departmental consultation on district matters and co-ordinates the provision of public services and facilities to ensure that district needs are promptly met.

Area Committees

Area committees were first set up in 1972 to support the “Keep Hong Kong Clean Campaign” and “Fight Violent Crime Campaign”. They have since 1982 become local advisory bodies under the District Administration Scheme. Their present functions are to encourage public participation in district affairs, help organize community activities and government campaigns and advise on local issues. There are now 73 Area Committees with 1958 members appointed by the Director of Home Affairs on an ad personam basis.

Heung Yee Kuk

The Heung Yee Kuk (HYK) is a statutory advisory body promoting mutual co-operation and understanding among the people of the New Territories (NT). It also advises the Government on the well-being and traditional customs of the NT people.

A parade of float at Lantern Festival organized by Sha Tin District Council
The HYK has established various committees responsible for areas such as legislation and politics; housing and land; law and order and transport, etc. Government departments attend HYK meetings and consult the Kuk on various issues in the NT such as land use, premium and conservation, rural services and facilities.

**Village Representative Election**

The Village Representative Elections Ordinance was enacted in February 2003. This represented the start of a completely new era in the history of NT affairs. For the first time in history, Village Representatives are to be elected under a statutory framework and the supervision of the Electoral Affairs Commission. The 2003 Village Representative election took place in July and August and this was followed by the Rural Committee elections in September. The entire cycle of the 2003 rural elections ends with the completion of the Heung Yee Kuk election in December.

While there were isolated instances showing that there may be room for improvement, the elections have in general been conducted in a satisfactory manner. A comprehensive review will be conducted to see what improvements should be made for the next cycle of rural elections in 2007.

*Vote counting at the 2003 Village Representative Election*
Public Enquiry Service Centres

Attached to the District Offices are 20 public enquiry service centres, which provide a wide range of free services to members of the public, including answering general enquiries on Government services; distributing Government forms and information; administering oaths and declarations; and referring cases under the District Council members' meet-the-public scheme, the Free Legal Advice Scheme and Rent Officer Scheme. The public enquiry service centres and the Central Telephone Enquiry Centre served 2.6 million clients in 2002.

The Public Enquiry Service Centre at Yau Tsim Mong District
Recreation and Sport

To formulate a strategic blueprint for the development of sport in Hong Kong, the Home Affairs Bureau has conducted a review on sports policy. Encouraged by the positive response to the Sports Policy Review Report, we will initiate a new partnership with the sports sector, as well as the community at large, to promote wider participation in sports. We will work towards the following goals—

- our outstanding athletes compete competitively and in good sportsmanship in major international sports events, and become role models for our young people;
- people of all age groups participate in sports in quest of better health and community spirit; and
- more major international sports events being hosted to promote community interest in sports, and to bring in more tourists and other economic benefits.

Upon completion of the restructuring of the administration of sports, a Sports Commission will be set up to provide a high level steer for sports development in Hong Kong. The Commission will have three Committees to provide a focus for
the development of elite sport, community sports and promotion of major sports events in Hong Kong.

**Hong Kong Sports Institute**

Elite sports training is carried out in the Hong Kong Sports Institute, a centre for training elite athletes. The Institute is a subvented organization with focus on 13 sports, namely badminton, cycling, fencing, rowing, squash, swimming, table tennis, tennis, ten-pin bowling, track and field, triathlon, windsurfing and wushu.

**Leisure and Cultural Services Department**

The promotion of community sports in Hong Kong is vested in the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, which is committed to providing quality services to enhance the quality of life of the community. The Department manages over 3,000 sports and recreational facilities, including 83 sports centres, 41 gazetted beaches, 36 swimming pools, 24 sports grounds, four water sports centres, four holiday camps, two outdoor stadia, 621 children's playgrounds, 325 squash courts, 270 tennis courts, 222 hard-surface soccer pitches, 68 natural and artificial turf pitches, four golf driving ranges, two riding schools and over 1,330 parks and gardens. The Department supports and organizes sports and recreational programmes, in conjunction with the National Sports Associations.
Arts and Culture

The Bureau sees its role as a catalyst, promoting and encouraging the development of different art forms. Our mission is to promote the community’s appreciation of and participation in the arts and to fill their lives with cultural enrichment. We work to provide an environment in which the pursuit of artistic creation and cultural enrichment is a part of the everyday life of the people of Hong Kong. We also wish to nurture artistic creativity and excellence.

Culture and Heritage Commission

The Culture and Heritage Commission, a high level advisory body, was set up in April 2000 to advise the Government on overall policies and funding priorities for the cultural development in Hong Kong. The Commission conducted two public consultations and submitted its Policy Recommendation Report to the Government on 25 April 2003. The Bureau will study its recommendations carefully in formulating a preliminary implementation plan.

Cantonese opera showcases the gems of Chinese heritage and culture
Hong Kong Arts Development Council, The Hong Kong Academy of Performing Arts and Hong Kong Arts Centre

Established by ordinance in 1995, the Hong Kong Arts Development Council plans, promotes and supports the broad development of the arts, including literary, performing, visual and film arts, as well as arts education in Hong Kong, through initiating arts projects and the provision of financial support to artists/arts groups. Major grantees (Three-Year Grant recipients) include Hong Kong Ballet, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, City Contemporary Dance Company, Chung Ying Theatre Company, Zuni Icosahedron and Theatre Ensemble.

The Hong Kong Academy for Performing Arts, established by ordinance in 1984, offers professional training up to degree level in performing arts, theatre technical arts, film and television and Chinese traditional opera.

The Hong Kong Arts Centre, established by ordinance in 1986, nurtures creativity, arts and cultural engagement, through promoting contemporary performing arts as well as visuals arts and film and video arts, and providing multiform education for lifelong learning.
Leisure and Cultural Services Department

As an executive arm of the Bureau, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department provides leisure and cultural services throughout the territory. The Department organizes and supports a good variety of cultural presentations, festivals, entertainment, literary arts, film and exhibition programmes, and at the same time operates a wide range of facilities serving the needs of the community. These facilities include 15 performing venues (including two indoor stadia), 62 libraries, eight mobile library vans, 12 museums, a film archive and a visual arts centre. The Department provides subvention to major professional performing arts groups including Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra, Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra, Hong Kong Dance Company, Hong Kong Repertory Theatre and Hong Kong Arts Festival Society. In the year 2003-04, the Department has co-operated with the overseas Economic and Trade Offices to promote Hong Kong by arranging the City Contemporary Dance Company, Hong Kong Chinese Orchestra and Hong Kong Ballet to perform in major European and North American cities.
Heritage Conservation

Our objective is to support and promote the conservation of our heritage, infuse a cultural identity and a sense of belonging in the people of Hong Kong. Through suitable adaptation, we aim to blend the conserved heritage into contemporary life, to bring about social and economic benefits, and to facilitate sustainable development. We are reviewing the policy, with a view to further enhancing the effectiveness of our conservation work. In particular, we aim to develop a holistic approach in selecting heritage items for conservation, having regard to their historical value and cultural significance.

Antiquities Advisory Board and Antiquities and Monuments Office

The Antiquities Advisory Board (AAB) is a statutory board formed under the Antiquities and Monuments Ordinance to advise the Antiquities Authority (who is the Secretary for Home Affairs) on matters relating to antiquities and monuments. The Antiquities and Monuments Office, under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, is Government's executive arm on heritage conservation work. The Office also provides secretariat support to the AAB.
West Kowloon Cultural District

The Government has decided to develop the 40 hectares of land at the southern tip of the West Kowloon Reclamation into a world-class integrated arts, cultural, entertainment and commercial district. Invitation for Proposals for the development of the district was launched in September 2003. The core arts and cultural facilities to be provided in the district will include a theatre complex, a performance venue, a museum cluster, an art exhibition centre, a water amphitheatre and four piazza areas. Proponents have great flexibility in the design, construction and operation of the arts and cultural facilities in the district, and are encouraged to form partnership with local and international cultural institutions, experts and professionals in creating this new cultural icon for Hong Kong. The deadline for submission of proposals is 19 June 2004.
Greater Pearl River Delta Cultural Collaboration

The Pearl River Delta (PRD) is one of the most rapidly developing economic region in Mainland China. Collaboration with the PRD would enhance cultural development, promote cultural literacy and enrich civilization in the area. Officials of Guangdong Province, Hong Kong and Macao signed an Agreed Minute in November 2002 and an Agreement in August 2003, setting the cornerstone for cultural collaboration. Three Summit meetings were held and five Working Groups were set up to discuss and take forward co-operation proposals.
Local Community Economy

The Home Affairs Department co-ordinates efforts to promote the development of the local community economy (LCE) with a view to –

- stimulating domestic consumption;
- creating employment opportunities;
- promoting district characteristics; and
- lifting community mood.

In his 2002-03 Budget speech, the Financial Secretary pledged to promote the development of LCE in Hong Kong. Government is to provide facilitation measures such as suitably relaxing Government rules and regulations, enhancing co-ordination among departments, reasonably modifying land uses or allowing pilot projects on a temporary basis, providing basic infrastructure facilities, and lending promotional and publicity support. However, Government will not be directly involved in business decisions and operation. It looks to the market to put forth LCE initiatives, make the necessary investment and operate them on a commercial basis. An inter-bureau working group has been set up to oversee the promotion of development of LCE. At the operational level, the Home Affairs Department and its 18 District Offices play the role of a co-ordinator, acting as the point of contact with the community and co-ordinating Government efforts in the provision of facilitation measures.
Through the concerted efforts of the community, we have already implemented a number of LCE initiatives. We will launch further LCE initiatives. To enhance publicity, we will promote LCE through different media channels and provide local residents and tourists, in particular those from the Mainland, with information on interesting places to go. We believe that a thriving LCE will also strengthen our sense of belonging through a better understanding of the place we live in.

Creative Industries

The Bureau will focus its efforts on creative sectors including performing arts, publishing, antiques, arts and craft, music and architecture. Our policy is to promote and facilitate the development of creative industries by improving the business environment, encouraging investment and stimulating the free flow of talents and creativity. (Creative industries refer to industries with value added through creativity and interest protected under intellectual property rights.)

We will facilitate the nurturing of creativity, provide platforms for talents/artists to express their creativity and enhance market opportunities for the local creative services and products.
Community Building

Our objective is to foster a harmonious community with broad public participation in local affairs and a strong sense of belonging to Hong Kong. To this end, we have devoted strenuous efforts in promoting community and youth development, and developing community awareness. The Home Affairs Department has established close networking with community and non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as well as the private sector to promote civil participation and to establish effective communication channels between the public and the Government.

Over the years, our complementary partnership with various sectors has seen us working together on a number of worthy causes, including promotion of the use of information technology in the community, the Clean Hong Kong Campaign, Prevention of Dengue Fever Campaign, community-building activities under the Summer Youth Programme, as well as support for various charity events. In support of the Chief Executive’s pledge for a greener Hong Kong, we have co-ordinated a great number of greening activities and included more greening...
ideas in Home Affairs Department’s minor works programmes as far as possible. These activities include promotion of horticulture through distributions of potted-plants, partnership schemes with residents’ associations/schools to plant trees in their premises, etc. In this regard, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department has also organized greening and horticulture activities to strengthen community building, educate the public and enhance their awareness of the environment.

In combating the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in early 2003, the Home Affairs Department played an active role in rallying community support. These included mobilizing different sectors to organize large-scale activities, like distributing health kits to those in need and organizing talks on public hygiene.

**New Arrivals**

It is Government’s policy to facilitate early and smooth integration of new arrivals into the local community through services provided by various Government departments and NGOs.

To ensure that services provided by Government departments and NGOs are co-ordinated and could meet the needs of new arrivals, we have in place a Steering Committee on New
Arrival Services, District Co-ordinating Committees, as well as a roundtable meeting for discussion and co-operation between Government and NGOs. A community education programme has been launched since 2001 to promote community acceptance of new arrivals and mutual understanding between new arrivals and local residents. The Home Affairs Department has also published a service handbook for new arrivals which provides updated information about Hong Kong and the services provided to new arrivals. Since 1996, seven editions have been published with a total distribution of over 1 000 000 copies.

Regular surveys have also been conducted since February 1996 to establish a profile of the new arrivals.
Rights of the Individual

(A) Human Rights

Human rights cover many areas of Government activity. There is therefore a need for a co-ordinating function to enable the Government to make a coherent assessment of the way in which human rights are implemented in practice. That role has been the responsibility of the Home Affairs Bureau since 1993, when we conducted a government-wide review of all legislation in the light of the Bill of Rights Ordinance (BORO). The review led to the amendment of some forty legal provisions. Now, all legislation that predates the BORO conforms to its provisions. So too must all new legislation.

Human Rights Reporting

A total of 14 United Nations human rights treaties apply to Hong Kong. Six entail a reporting requirement; they are –
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR);
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR);
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD);
- Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT);
- Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC); and
* Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

The Home Affairs Bureau drafts Hong Kong’s reports under all these treaties except CEDAW, responsibility for which rests with the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau.

**Hearing of Reports**

Hong Kong teams attend the hearings of our reports. At the hearings, delegates answer questions put to them by the UN Committees. Thereafter, the Home Affairs Bureau will publicize the Committees’ concluding observations, except those relating to CEDAW.

**Visits by the Treaty Monitoring Bodies**

It is our practice to invite the Treaty Monitoring Bodies to nominate members to visit Hong Kong prior to their hearing of our reports under the respective Covenants. The aim is to give them the opportunity to see Hong Kong for themselves and to meet local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), politicians, officials and other members of the public.

**Rights of the Child**

Children’s rights are protected under the CRC and the Bureau’s work includes the promotion of those rights through such vehicles as the electronic media (Announcements in the Public Interest), posters, and competitions. But our “flagship” initiative – undertaken in collaboration with the three NGOs
that specialize in child rights – has been the creation of the Child Ambassadors scheme. Launched in September 2000 to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Convention, the scheme comprised the recruitment of two teams of child ambassadors whose mission was to promote the message of child rights to their parents, teachers, and peers. In carrying out that mission, the ambassadors have travelled to Geneva, where they presented greetings to the Committee on the Rights of the Child on behalf of all Hong Kong children, and to Bangkok, where they exchanged ideas with local and international activists for the rights of children. In March 2003, we sponsored the three NGOs to convene Hong Kong’s first Children’s Council. The objectives were to promote public awareness of the CRC and to give practical effect to the children’s right to respect for their views. Among the 60 Child Councillors who participated, ten were Child Ambassadors. The Councillors debated five motions that they themselves had initiated and that they discussed with seriousness, maturity, and intelligence. Legislators and senior representatives of the Government appeared before them, to answer questions and to participate in the discussion. The event aroused public awareness of children’s rights in general and of the Convention in particular.
(B) Equal Opportunities

The Government is firmly committed to promoting equal opportunities for all and eliminating all forms of discrimination. The Home Affairs Bureau has, as appropriate, adopted various legislative, administrative, and/or educational measures to promote equal opportunities for people of different gender, family status, sexual orientation, race and religion.

Sex and Family Status

The Sex Discrimination Ordinance and the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance came into force in 1996 and 1997 respectively to prohibit discrimination on grounds of sex and family status. The Equal Opportunities Commission, which is an independent statutory body established in 1996 under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, is responsible for overseeing the implementation of these ordinances.

Sexual Orientation

We have adopted various publicity and educational measures to promote equal opportunities for people of different sexual orientations. An Equal Opportunities (Sexual Orientation) Funding Scheme supports worthwhile community projects to promote equal opportunities on the grounds of sexual
orientation. We also use educational and publicity measures to address common misunderstandings about the homosexual community and to gain greater acceptance of that community’s right to equal opportunities.

Race

We have been addressing the issue of racial discrimination through public education and administrative means. Since 1997, we have spent some $20 million on public education initiatives, including among others funding for community based projects, publications for adults and children, and advertising campaigns. In 1998, we published the Code of Practice against Racial Discrimination in Employment, which provided guidelines for workers and employers on the avoidance of discrimination in the workplace. In June 2003, following extensive consultations, we announced our decision to introduce legislation against all forms of racial discrimination. We are considering the provisions to be included in the legislation.

In June 2002, we established the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony and the Race Relations Unit to improve our services to the ethnic minorities. The Committee advises the Bureau on activities for the promotion of racial harmony. The Unit is the Committee’s secretariat and puts the latter’s proposals into effect. It also conducts promotional activities in schools and maintains a hotline for complaints and enquiries about racial discrimination.
(C) Personal Data Privacy

The Bureau also assumes policy responsibilities for the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance which was enacted in August 1995 and came into force on 20 December 1996. The Ordinance aims to protect the individual's right to privacy with respect to personal data.

The Ordinance gives statutory effect to a set of internationally-recognized data protection principles and provides for the establishment of an independent statutory authority – the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data – to enforce and promote compliance with them.

Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance

The Ordinance applies to any data relating directly or indirectly to a living individual, from which it is practicable to ascertain the identity of the individual and which are in a form in which access or processing is practicable. Users that control the collection, holding, processing or use of personal data in both the public and private sectors are subject to the provisions of the Ordinance.
Youth Development

The Bureau's policy objectives on youth development are –

• to promote positive values among young people;
• to enhance their understanding of Chinese culture and heritage;
• to encourage their participation in voluntary and community work;
• to broaden their international perspective; and
• to promote leadership training among them.

We work closely with the Commission on Youth in implementing programmes to achieve the above objectives. The Commission currently operates the Youth Leadership Training Funding Scheme, the Community Participation Scheme for Organizing Study Tours to the Mainland and the Youth Community Service Funding Scheme, under which non-governmental organizations (NGOs) can apply for funding in organizing relevant activities and projects. It also undertakes researches and studies on matters pertaining to youth, as well as sponsors international youth exchange programmes between local and overseas youth in Australia, Japan, Singapore, Ireland and the United Kingdom. We encourage NGOs, schools, parents, the private sector and, above all, young people themselves to
join our efforts in enabling our young people to develop their full potentials and to contribute to the development of Hong Kong.

The First Joint Parade of all uniformed youth groups in Hong Kong.

The Bureau provides recurrent subvention to the following ten uniformed groups and two NGOs for providing non-formal education and training programmes for young people –

- Scout Association of Hong Kong
- Hong Kong Girl Guides Association
- Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps
- Hong Kong Sea Cadet Corps
- Hong Kong Adventure Corps
- Hong Kong Red Cross
- Hong Kong St. John Ambulance
- The Boys’ Brigade, Hong Kong
- The Girls’ Brigade, Hong Kong
- The Hong Kong Road Safety Association
- Hong Kong Award for Young People
- Agency for Volunteer Service
Centre for Youth Development

We are planning to build a Centre for Youth Development in Chai Wan. The new Centre is intended to be a focal point for youth development activities in Hong Kong. This is part and parcel of the Government's commitment to developing our young people into creative, knowledgeable, responsible and civic-minded citizens. The Centre, with a total gross floor area of about 35,000 m², would provide the following facilities for young people—

- a convention centre;
- an information technology centre;
- a performing and visual arts centre;
- an international youth hostel;
- a shopping arcade; and
- offices and other multi-functional facilities.

We sponsor international youth exchange programmes
Civic Education

The Home Affairs Bureau is responsible for the promotion of civic education outside schools. Our principal policy objectives are –

• to foster good citizenship;
• to promote civic awareness and civic responsibilities;
• to promote national education and enhance the sense of belonging among the community;
• to promote understanding of and respect for human rights and the rule of law; and
• to promote the Basic Law in the local community.

Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education

We work closely with the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education in achieving the above objectives. The Committee was set up in 1986 for the purpose of advising on matters relating to the promotion of civic education, as well as implementing activities in conjunction with the Government and concerned parties in promoting civic education outside schools with a view to enhancing civic awareness and civic responsibility in all sectors of the community. Apart from producing educational materials and organizing publicity programmes, the Committee operates the Community Participation Scheme whereby organizations and individuals could apply for funding to organize civic education projects.
The Committee also operates the Civic Education Resources Centre which is open to the public. Its facilities include reference library, reading area, audio-visual equipment, computer, etc. The Centre is located at 2/F, Tung Sun Commercial Centre, 194-200 Lockhart Road, Wanchai, Hong Kong.

Promotion of the Basic Law in the local community

In support of the Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee at the central Government level, the Working Group on Local Community was set up in February 2000 under the auspices of Home Affairs Bureau. The Working Group focuses on developing specific strategy, direction and themes, and monitors closely the programmes for the promotion of the Basic Law in the community. The Working Group also works closely with the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education. Funding applications from non-governmental organizations to promote the Basic Law at district level will be considered under the Committee’s Community Participation Scheme as mentioned above.

Supporting the promotion of the Basic Law is one of our tasks
Gambling Policy

The Home Affairs Bureau is responsible for formulating gambling policy and monitoring its implementation. Our policy is to restrict gambling opportunities to a limited number of authorized and regulated outlets. The underlying rationale is not to encourage gambling. At present, such authorized gambling outlets include horse racing organized by the Hong Kong Jockey Club (HKJC), the Mark Six Lottery, authorized football betting and gaming activities authorized by the Commissioner for Television and Entertainment Licensing (CTEL).

The rationale behind this policy is two-fold. First, while it would not be practicable to prohibit gambling altogether, allowing gambling to be conducted in an uncontrolled and unregulated manner would give rise to a host of social problems and provide a lucrative source of income for triad and criminal activities. It is thus a balanced approach to allow only authorized and regulated gambling to take place. Second, since it is impossible to reconcile the differences in the community regarding the extent to which authorized gambling outlets should be allowed to exist, a compromise approach is to allow only a limited number of authorized gambling outlets in Hong Kong. The main purpose of these
outlets is to satisfy the substantial and persistent public demand for gambling which would otherwise turn to unauthorized or illegal operators, hence giving rise to serious social and law and order problems.

**Gambling Legislation**

Under the Gambling Ordinance, all gambling activities are illegal except those expressly authorized by the Government under the Betting Duty Ordinance (i.e. authorized horse racing, authorized football betting and the Mark Six Lottery), those licensed by the CTEL (e.g. mahjong parlours) and those exempted under Section 3 of the Gambling Ordinance (mainly social gambling).

To combat the growing problem of illegal football gambling, the Betting Duty Ordinance was amended in July 2003 to empower the Government to authorize football betting in Hong Kong. Authorization of football betting serves to supplement the existing measures against illegal gambling which mainly include effective anti-gambling legislation and the vigorous law enforcement efforts by the Police. A licence was issued in July 2003 to the HKJC Football Betting Limited, a wholly-owned subsidiary of the HKJC, to conduct football betting.
Football Betting and Lotteries Commission

The Football Betting and Lotteries Commission was set up in July 2003 following the enactment of the Betting Duty (Amendment) Ordinance 2003. The Commission is responsible for advising the Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) on the following matters –

(i) regulation of the conduct of football betting and lotteries in accordance with the provisions of the Betting Duty Ordinance and the licensing conditions;
(ii) compliance with the licensing conditions by the licensees;
(iii) handling of public complaints relating to the compliance of the licensing conditions by the licensees;
(iv) imposition of financial penalties on the licensees; and
(v) issuance and revocation of football betting and lottery licences and variation of the licensing conditions.

Preventive and Remedial Measures to address gambling-related problems

The Ping Wo Fund

The Home Affairs Bureau established The Ping Wo Fund in September 2003 to finance preventive and remedial measures to address the gambling-related problems. The HKJC has undertaken...
to contribute a total of $24 million in the first two years and $12 million to $15 million each year in the following three years. The Fund also welcomes donations from the public.

The major ambits of The Ping Wo Fund are to finance the following measures –

- research and studies into problems and issues relating to gambling;
- public education and other measures to prevent or alleviate problems relating to gambling; and
- counselling, treatment and other remedial or support services for problem and pathological gamblers and those affected by them.

The use and application of the Fund is to be determined by SHA. The Ping Wo Fund Advisory Committee was set up in September 2003 to advise SHA on the management and use of the Fund. Various preventive and remedial measures financed by The Ping Wo Fund are being implemented to address gambling-related problems.
Building Management

The responsibilities for private building management, maintenance and safety rest firmly with the property owners. We aim to provide a wide range of practical advice and support to owners and occupiers of buildings so that they are better equipped to take up their responsibilities for the management of their buildings.

Building Management Ordinance

We provide, and constantly review, a legal framework for the formation and operation of owners' corporations (OCs) to facilitate the management of buildings.

In 1970, the Government enacted the Multi-storey Buildings (Owners Incorporation) Ordinance to provide a legal framework for the incorporation of owners to facilitate the management of their own buildings. The Ordinance was extensively amended and renamed as the Building Management Ordinance (BMO) in May 1993 to keep pace with changing circumstances. The BMO was further amended in 1998 and 2000 to meet the needs of property owners.

We plan to introduce further amendments to the BMO into the Legislative Council in the 2004-05 legislative year to improve some of its provisions to facilitate better building management. The proposals being considered aim at facilitating the performance of duties and exercise of powers by OCs,
rationalizing the appointment procedures of a management committee and its members, and offering better protection for property owners. In order to ensure that the amendment bill meets the needs of the community, we have conducted an extensive consultation exercise on the amendment proposals from May to July 2003. We have sought views from all interested parties, including District Councillors, OCs and other owners’ associations, property owners and occupiers, and professional organizations involved in building management.

Advice to OCs, Building Owners and Occupiers

To better equip the property owners to put good building management into practice, we provide supporting services, offer advice and organize training for them. In addition, we organize from time to time educational and promotional activities to raise public awareness of the importance of proper and effective building management.

District Building Management Liaison Teams were set up in the 18 District Offices to provide outreach services and support for building owners. In addition, we have four regional Building Management Resource Centres (BMRCs) across the territory to provide general information, services and advice for our clients. We also work with various professional organizations to provide free professional services and training for property owners at the four BMRCs.

We will continue to work in partnership with other bureaux and departments, professional bodies and community leaders in pursuing our objectives on building management.
(A) Licensing of Hotels, Guesthouses, Clubs and Bedspace Apartments

Our objective is to regulate fire and building safety of hotels, guesthouses, clubs, bedspace apartments and karaoke establishments (except those in restaurants or premises which have been granted licences under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance) through implementation of statutory licensing schemes.

Background

The Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance, Clubs (Safety of Premises) Ordinance, Bedspace Apartments Ordinance and Karaoke Establishments Ordinance provide for statutory licensing schemes to regulate fire and building safety of hotels, guesthouses, clubs, bedspace apartments and karaoke establishments respectively. Licences, certificates of compliance or permits will be issued to or renewed for those meeting the statutory safety standards in respect of fire safety, structural safety, health and hygiene.

The Office of the Licensing Authority of Home Affairs Department is responsible for the enforcement of the above four ordinances. (Note: For those karaoke establishments which have been granted restaurant licences under the Public
Health and Municipal Services Ordinance, the Director of Food and Environmental Hygiene is the licensing authority.

**Appeal Boards**

Under the Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation Ordinance, Clubs (Safety of Premises) Ordinance, Bedspace Apartments Ordinance and Karaoke Establishments Ordinance, operators of hotels, guesthouses, clubs, bedspace apartments and karaoke establishments may appeal to the Appeal Board (Hotel and Guesthouse Accommodation), Appeal Board (Clubs (Safety of Premises)), Appeal Board (Bedspace Apartments) and Administrative Appeal Board respectively against the decision of the licensing authority.

**Singleton Hostel Programme**

To ensure that no displaced bedsapce apartment lodgers will be rendered homeless because of the implementation of the statutory licensing scheme, Home Affairs Department administers a singleton hostel programme to provide, through non-governmental organizations, alternate accommodation to displaced lodgers under 60 years of age. There are now 28 singleton hostels under the programme, 26 are small/medium size hostels converted from private tenement in urban areas managed by the Agency for Volunteer Service, and two are large-size purpose-built hostels managed by the Salvation Army and the Neighbourhood Advice-Action.
Council respectively. At present, the programme has an intake capacity of 878 places.

(B) Public Entertainment Licensing

To ensure that places of public entertainment are operated properly in order to safeguard the well-being of customers, licensing schemes are in place to regulate establishments such as cinemas, billiard rooms, amusement game centres, public bowling alleys, public ice skating rinks, circuses, bazaars and amusement rides. We have also issued a Code of Practice for internet computer services centres.

Public order, fire safety and building safety are of utmost importance when considering applications for these licences. Some of the licensing regimes also provide additional safeguards for the young people. Licensing conditions are reviewed regularly in the light of the changing business environment and the needs of the community.

While the Home Affairs Bureau takes care of the policy for public entertainment licensing, the day-to-day operations of the licensing schemes are carried out by various departments such as the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority, Leisure and Cultural Services Department, and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department.
Gauging Public Opinion

We have put in place a new mechanism for gauging public opinion in Hong Kong in October 2002. The primary objective is to ensure that we have in place different means whereby the Government could effectively gauge and monitor community views and sentiments in the process of formulating public policies. The mechanism comprises the following parts –

- Conducting telephone opinion surveys on general public sentiment;
- Commissioning independent organizations to conduct surveys to gauge in-depth public views on specific policy issues;
- Conducting focus group discussions to tap and understand the diverse range of views on specific policy issues from selected sectors of the population; and
- Meeting the community to hear and understand the concerns of the general public through paying regular visits to the various districts in Hong Kong.

The Secretary for Home Affairs inspecting a hygiene blackspot on his visit to Sai Kung District
Religion Policy

Religious freedom is one of the fundamental rights enjoyed by Hong Kong residents. Religious organizations have the freedom to conduct any religious activities provided that they are consistent with the laws of Hong Kong. Both Article 32 and Article 141 of the Basic Law, as well as Article 15 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance, have expressly provided for this right. The Government is fully committed to upholding religious freedom in Hong Kong in accordance with the Basic Law and the relevant legislation. The Home Affairs Bureau maintains regular liaison with the major religious bodies.

The various religious bodies in Hong Kong embrace, among others, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism. All of these religions have a considerable number of adherents. Apart from offering religious instructions, many major religious bodies run schools and provide health, welfare and other social services and facilities.

Chinese Temples and Chinese Permanent Cemeteries

The Home Affairs Bureau has policy responsibility for the registration of Chinese temples and the management of four cemeteries under the Board of Management of the Chinese Permanent Cemeteries.
All Chinese temples where fees, payments or rewards of any kind are charged to or are accepted from any member of the public for the purpose of worship or communication with spirits or fortune-telling or any similar purposes, are required to register with the Chinese Temples Committee under the Chinese Temples Ordinance. As at 1 November 2003, there were 347 temples on the list of registered Chinese temples. The Chinese Temples Committee also manages 45 temples, including some prominent ones such as Shatin Che Kung Temple, Hunghom Kwun Yam Temple and Tai Hang Lin Fa Kung, which are heavily patronized by local residents.

The Board of Management of the Chinese Permanent Cemeteries, a financially independent statutory body established under the Chinese Permanent Cemeteries Ordinance, manages four cemeteries in Aberdeen, Chai Wan, Tsuen Wan and Tseng Kwan O, which cover a total area of 703 000 m² with over 80 000 burial lots and 207 000 niches. It is the second largest provider for burial lots and niches other than the Government.
Partnership and Liaison with Charitable Organizations

Charitable organizations have a long history of partnership with the Government in the provision of a vast array of social services in Hong Kong. This partnership has clear and proven benefits. On the one hand, it allows for an alternative mode of service delivery to the public, in complement to that of Government services. On the other hand, it encourages wider community ownership and participation. Major charitable organizations in Hong Kong include Tung Wah Group of Hospitals (TWGHs), Po Leung Kuk (PLK), Lok Sin Tong Benevolent Society, Kowloon (LST), Pok Oi Hospital (POH), Yan Chai Hospital (YCH), and Yan Oi Tong (YOT).
Scope of Services

Charitable organizations enjoy a long history of service in Hong Kong. Since their establishment, they have played a key role in the provision of a wide range of services, ranging from schools, child-care services, to service for the disabled and elderly. Emergency relief funds have also been set up to supplement Government’s efforts to provide prompt assistance to people suffering from natural disasters and other misfortune.

Effective Partnership

We maintain close liaison with various charitable organizations. The general operations of these charitable organizations are either governed by their respective Ordinances namely, TWGHs Ordinance and PLK Ordinance, or by their respective Articles of Association. Under the TWGHs Ordinance and PLK Ordinance, the Secretary for Home Affairs is the...
Chairman of the TWGHs' and PLK's Advisory Boards which advise the directors on major issues affecting the development of the two organizations. As these organizations are substantially involved in the direct provision of social, medical and educational services to the community, they also work closely with other bureaux and departments, such as Health, Welfare and Food Bureau, Social Welfare Department and Education and Manpower Bureau.

The close partnership between the charitable organizations and the Government is a testimony of the effective, cross-sectoral synergy. We will continue to cultivate this dynamic and responsible non profit-making sector with an aim to provide more effective and efficient services to the public.
Charitable Trust Funds

The Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA) is entrusted with the management of the following charitable trust funds –

- Brewin Trust Fund
- Ex-Chinese Public Dispensaries Fund
- Grantham Scholarships Fund
- Li Po Chun Charitable Trust Fund
- Lord Wilson United World Colleges Scholarship Fund
- Sir Edward Youde Memorial Fund
- Sir Jack Cater Scholarship Fund
- Sir Murray MacLehose Trust Fund
- Sir Robert Black Trust Fund

The funds are established either by statute or deed for the purpose of promotion and encouragement of education and training for individuals and provision of financial assistance to under-privileged members of the community. Each fund is managed by a committee with members appointed either by the Chief Executive or SHA. The majority of the Funds are serviced by a joint secretariat with staff funded by the committees concerned on a pro-rata basis.

The Bureau also services two other trusts –

- Lord Wilson Heritage Trust, which is set up by statute to promote heritage preservation and conservation in Hong Kong; and
- Hong Kong Jockey Club Music and Dance Fund, a non-statutory charitable trust fund to promote training and education in music and dance in Hong Kong through the award of scholarships and grants.

Cheque Presentation Ceremony for the Sir Murray MacLehose Trust Fund
Enquiries

If you would like to obtain further information, please contact us –

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