

Chapter 16

Public Order

In 2008, Hong Kong continued to be one of the safest cities in the world. The overall crime rate fell by 3.7 per cent while the violent crime rate fell by 4.2 per cent compared to 2007. The overall crime detection rate was 45.6 per cent.

Fight Crime Committee

Established in 1973 under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary for Administration, the Fight Crime Committee (FCC) provides advice and recommendations on measures to prevent and reduce crime, and co-ordinates crime-fighting efforts and monitors their results.

During the year, the committee continued to monitor the overall crime situation and the trend of various types of commercial crime. The committee also kept under review the progress of the 'Police Superintendent's Discretion Scheme', which serves as an alternative to prosecuting young offenders.

In addition, the committee considered progress reports on the work of the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse, a high level inter-departmental task force established in October 2007 under the chairmanship of the Secretary for Justice. The committee offered its views on various proposed strategies and recommendations in tackling the youth drug abuse problem. The committee welcomed the release of the report of the task force in November 2008, which set out detailed recommendations on strategies to combat the problem of youth drug abuse from a holistic perspective.

The Standing Committee on Young Offenders, a sub-committee under the Fight Crime Committee, monitored the trend of crimes involving juveniles and young persons. The sub-committee discussed factors which affect the involvement of juveniles and youths in crime and proposed preventive and remedial measures to tackle the problem.

To enhance public awareness of thefts and deceptions, in particular pickpocketing and street deceptions which showed a considerable increase in 2007, the committee decided to step up publicity on safeguarding one's possessions and

watching out for deception. In collaboration with the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse, the committee included in its publicity campaign an additional theme on combating youth drug abuse.

District Fight Crime Committees (DFCCs) continued to play an important role in the battle against crime by monitoring the situation at district level and reflecting community concerns about law and order issues. They helped foster community awareness of crime prevention and encouraged community participation in combating crime through publicity programmes carried out in the districts.

To foster closer co-operation, the Fight Crime Committee and DFCCs exchanged feedback regularly on various issues discussed at their respective meetings. FCC members also took turns to attend DFCC meetings and functions. In December, the committee organised a Fight Crime Conference for all DFCC members to exchange views on topical crime issues and ways to combat crime.

Police Force

The Hong Kong Police Force's strong commitment to maintaining law and order ensured Hong Kong continued to be one of the safest cities in the world for residents and visitors alike.

During the year, the Police Force played a key role in providing a safe and secure environment for a number of major events in Hong Kong, including the Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay and the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events.

The Police Force also continued to partner with overseas law enforcement agencies to tackle transnational crime threats. In March, the Police Force, as a sub-bureau of the INTERPOL China National Central Bureau, co-hosted the 20th INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference with the INTERPOL China National Central Bureau.

At year-end, the Police Force had an establishment of about 27 800 police officers supported by more than 4 700 civilian staff and reinforced by some 3 800 volunteers serving in the Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force. In 2008, 88 inspectors and 780 constables were appointed.

Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force

The Hong Kong Auxiliary Police Force helps the regular force in crowd management and foot patrols. In 2008, it also provided assistance during the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events and the Legislative Council election.

Crime

Reported crimes in 2008 totalled 78 469, a decrease of 2.9 per cent compared with 80 796 in 2007. The crime rate stood at 1 125 cases per 100 000 population, a drop of 3.6 per cent compared with 1 167 in 2007. The decrease in crimes was mainly due to a decline in thefts, criminal damage as well as wounding and serious assaults.

During the year, the number of violent crimes decreased to 14 429, a drop of 3.4 per cent compared with 14 934 in 2007. Criminal intimidation and wounding and serious assaults accounted for 68 per cent of total violent crimes in 2008. There was a notable increase in the relatively more serious violent crimes such as homicide.

In all, there were 1 100 robberies in 2008, a drop of 9.5 per cent compared with 1 216 in 2007. There were no robberies with genuine firearms in 2008. No such case was recorded in 2007 either. There were 10 bank robberies, two more than in 2007. Most of these crimes were committed by lone robbers.

Regarding non-violent crimes, burglary increased from 4 512 in 2007 to 4 774 in 2008, a rise of 5.8 per cent, while thefts fell from 36 762 in 2007 to 35 230 in 2008, down 4.2 per cent.

Of the reported crimes in 2008, 45.6 per cent (or 35 774 crimes) were detected, resulting in the arrest of 41 220 people for various offences. Of this number, 4 178 were juveniles aged between 10 and 15 and 4 830 were young people aged between 16 and 20. Most of them were arrested for shop thefts, miscellaneous thefts, wounding and serious assaults, and serious narcotics offences.

There were no crimes involving the use of firearms in 2008. During the year, seven firearms were seized, compared with six in 2007.

There was a significant reduction in pickpocketing in 2008. A total of 940 cases were reported in 2008 compared to 1 198 in 2007, a fall of 21.5 per cent. The decrease was largely due to stringent enforcement action against pickpocket syndicates and effective crime prevention strategies. Where appropriate, and subject to advice from the Department of Justice, the Police would apply for enhanced sentences against habitual offenders.

Vehicle thefts remained stable. A total of 1 360 vehicles were reported missing in 2008 compared with 1 398 in 2007. In 2008, the Police Force conducted 27 large-scale anti-car theft operations. A total of 42 people were arrested and 48 vehicles were recovered.

The number of triad-related crimes showed a slight increase. In 2008, there were 2 376 triad-related crimes compared with 2 259 in 2007. Triad-related crimes accounted for 3 per cent of all reported crimes during the year. To tackle triad activities, a large-scale tripartite anti-triad operation involving the police forces of Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao was mounted in June and July 2008 with a total of 1 664 people arrested in Hong Kong for various crimes.

Domestic Violence

In accordance with the Police Force's commitment to responding to all reports of domestic violence promptly and professionally, combating domestic violence continued to be one of the Commissioner of Police's 'Operational Priorities' in 2008.

The Police received 7 278 reports of domestic violence during the year, 2 341 of which were crime-related and 4 937 were miscellaneous cases, representing a drop of 3.1 per cent compared with 2007.

In seeking continuous improvement in tackling domestic violence, the Police implemented a 'Victim Management Workflow' in 2008 to strengthen the support and safety assurance to victims of domestic violence cases, and to enhance communication and collaboration with the Social Welfare Department and non-governmental organisations.

In addition, the Police upgraded the Central Domestic Violence Database with enhanced functionality, accessibility and data searching and storage capability to allow officers to obtain more thorough background information on the parties involved for risk assessment and initial case investigation.

Commercial Crime

To maintain a safe and stable business environment in Hong Kong, the Commercial Crime Bureau continued to implement a structured intelligence-based approach in its investigations into syndicated and serious frauds, counterfeit and forgery cases, and technology crimes.

In 2008, the number of reported cases of serious fraud, counterfeit currency, forgery and technology crimes remained stable.

Offences perpetrated by street deception gangs continued to fall. This was attributable to proactive targeting of syndicated criminals during intelligence-led operations, which resulted in the successful neutralisation of six street deception syndicates. Furthermore, publicity campaigns to raise public awareness of street deceptions continued throughout the year.

Lottery frauds, particularly those targeting overseas Chinese, increased. The Police neutralised 12 fraud syndicates in 2008, with 34 people arrested for lottery scams involving some \$39 million.

The Commercial Crime Bureau seized 3 156 counterfeit Hong Kong banknotes and 645 counterfeit payment cards in Hong Kong in 2008. This represents a decrease of 39 per cent and 3 per cent respectively when compared with 2007.

Technology Crime

The Police received a total of 791 reports of technology crimes in 2008 and the associated total monetary loss was about \$23.99 million.

In collaboration with the Hong Kong Computer Emergency Response Team Co-ordination Centre and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, the Police Force has run an annual 'Clean PC Day' campaign since 2005 to promote information and communication technology security and 'cyber' ethics.

On the enforcement side, the Police Force established a Technology Crime Steering Group for strategic planning as well as the setting of objectives at the policy level. At the implementation level, various specialised teams under the Technology Crime Division are responsible for countering advanced cyber crime threats and providing computer forensic services.

The Technology Crime Division was responsible for ensuring Internet security during the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events. It also quickly identified and arrested all known suspects after rumours regarding the liquidity and potential debts of some Hong Kong banks appeared on websites and 'blogs' in September 2008.

Narcotics

Tackling youth drug abuse was a priority for the Police Force in 2008. The Police Force participated in the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse headed by the Secretary for Justice and took steps to enhance the Police's role in preventive education and publicity as well as in enforcement action.

The overall number of people arrested for drug offences increased by 10.5 per cent compared with 2007. The number of people under 21 years old arrested for drug-related offences increased by 34.2 per cent.

The Narcotics Bureau's local enforcement action and joint efforts with the Mainland and overseas counterparts to interdict cross-boundary and international trafficking activities led to numerous arrests, the dismantling of drug production sites and substantial drug seizures. In an operation conducted jointly with the Mainland authorities, a total of 309 kilogrammes of precursor chemicals and finished methamphetamine along with 40 000 ecstasy tablets were seized. In all, a total of eight illicit drug manufacturing enterprises in the Asian region were dismantled with assistance from the Narcotics Bureau.

Financial Investigation

During the year, the Police made greater use of financial investigation in combating local and transnational crimes. A number of people were prosecuted for money laundering, and substantial amounts of criminal assets were restrained and confiscated.

The Police maintained close co-operation with overseas law enforcement agencies in anti-money laundering operations and in countering the financing of terrorism. It also provided training to law enforcement agencies in the region to enhance their financial investigation capability.

Illegal Immigration

During the year, the Police Force and the Immigration Department arrested 2 368 Mainland illegal immigrants, a decrease of 21 per cent compared to 3 007 in 2007; and 1 617 Vietnamese illegal immigrants and other non-ethnic Chinese illegal immigrants, a decrease of 21 per cent compared to 2 041 in 2007. The decrease in the number of illegal immigrants arrested was due to the deterrent effect of successful joint operations carried out by the Police Force, the Immigration Department and their Mainland counterparts in recent years. In 2008, the Police Force, the Immigration Department and the Guangdong Border Defence Bureau continued to maintain close liaison through regular meetings and exchange of intelligence.

Crime Prevention

The Crime Prevention Bureau kept up its publicity efforts in improving citizens' awareness of telephone deception, burglary and theft in order to prevent the public at large from becoming victims of these crimes.

The bureau also continued to strengthen its engagement with the private security industry.

Forensic Support

The Identification Bureau continued to play a significant role in supporting crime investigations and prosecutions by providing a professional fingerprint and photographic service and by collecting DNA evidence from crime scenes. The indispensable and technologically advanced latent fingerprint recovery service provided supporting evidence for the detection of numerous major crimes. In 2008, the bureau established the criminal history of 31 507 individuals, linking 2 912 people to 3 028 criminal cases.

The new Computer Assisted Palmprint and Fingerprint Identification System was implemented in May. Using the latest computerised palmprint and fingerprint search technology, the new system not only significantly enhanced the productivity, efficiency and accuracy of identification, but also enabled the Police to tackle many cases which otherwise would have remained unresolved.

The Forensic Firearms Examination Bureau is responsible for providing quality forensic services in relation to firearms evidence in Hong Kong. Replacement of the bureau's existing Ballistics Identification System and Scanning Electron Microscope was in progress.

Liaison

The Liaison Bureau serves as a conduit for communication between the Hong Kong Police Force on the one hand, and the Mainland Public Security Bureau, overseas law enforcement agencies and their local consulate officials on the other.

Part of the core business of the bureau is to assist the Department of Justice in handling overseas requests for mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and the surrender of fugitive offenders. Up to 2008, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government had signed bilateral agreements with 25 jurisdictions on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and with 17 jurisdictions on surrender of fugitive offenders.

In 2008, the bureau joined forces with the Mainland and Macao to combat cross-boundary crimes, further cementing the ties created at the operational, intelligence and strategic levels at the 14th Hong Kong-Guangdong-Macao Tripartite Criminal Investigation Department Heads Meeting in April.

During the year, the Police continued to send officers on secondment to the INTERPOL General Secretariat in Lyon, France, and its Regional Liaison Office in Bangkok, Thailand. They have also established attachment programmes with various overseas law enforcement agencies.

The Police have continued to enhance co-operation with INTERPOL in different areas. In addition to the 20th INTERPOL Asian Regional Conference, other conferences and working groups at working levels were organised during the year. The Police also identified training opportunities in INTERPOL's member countries in which officers could participate.

Explosive Ordnance Disposal

The Explosive Ordnance Disposal Bureau is responsible for all bomb disposal work including Improvised Explosive Device Disposal, Conventional Munitions Disposal, and the disposal of pyrotechnic devices. It is also responsible for dealing with chemical, biological, radiological and nuclear incidents. It forms an essential part of the Police's counter-terrorism and internal security response capability.

Force Search Unit

In 2008, the Force Search Unit played an important role in the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events. Since early July, a number of defensive venue search operations were conducted by the 500 cadre members of the unit equipped with advanced search equipment, together with explosives sniffer dogs. Security screening operations in respect of the Equestrian Events-related venues were also conducted by the unit. A total of 334 000 people were screened and 5 400 vehicles were checked before entering the venues.

Police Dogs

There were 120 police dogs in the Police Dog Unit in 2008, assisting the Police in detecting and preventing crimes. Police dogs played an important role in a number of Police operations in 2008, including the screening of the Hong Kong Stadium for the 2008 Rugby Sevens; hotel and venue searches for visits of Internationally Protected Persons and leaders of the Central People's Government; the Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay; and the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events.

Public Order

To maintain public order, the Police Force continued to provide all officers with suitable training and equipment, facilitating their performance in a wide range of duties in an efficient, effective and professional manner. In 2008, the public, as well as the local and international media, witnessed the special tactics and equipment deployed by the Police Force in a number of public order events, including the Beijing 2008 Olympic Torch Relay and the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events.

Police Licensing Office

The Police Licensing Office is responsible for issuing various types of licences and permits. In 2008, the Police Licensing Office continued to work closely with the Efficiency Unit and the Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit of the Financial Secretary's Office in bringing improvements to the Police Force's licensing system. During the year, the office processed 3 551 applications for liquor licences and made recommendations to the Liquor Licensing Board accordingly. At year-end,

there were 162 licensed massage establishments, 190 licensed pawnbrokers, 5 494 liquor licensed premises, 280 380 security personnel permit-holders and 779 licensed money-lenders in Hong Kong.

The Police Licensing Office is also responsible for processing notifications of public order events. There was an increase in the number of public order events when compared to 2007 and 2006. During the year, 1 425 notifications of public order events were processed.

Marine Region

The implementation of the Versatile Maritime Policing Response strategy was in full swing in 2008 with the commissioning of two barge platforms, six medium patrol launches and six divisional fast patrol crafts. This has greatly enhanced the efficiency and capability of the Marine Police. There will be further deliveries of 11 medium patrol launches and 17 divisional fast patrol craft in phases over the next two years.

In 2008, Marine Region continued to focus on water sports safety in the territory and put forward various recommendations to the Safety Afloat Committee to promote safety at sea. The number of fatalities arising from recreational activities at sea was maintained at a reasonably low level of seven.

Marine Police continued to adopt a multi-agency approach to combating smuggling activities. There was a noticeable reduction in the sighting of Fast Moving Targets and the seizure of contraband in 2008.

Traffic

In 2008, there were 14 576 traffic accidents involving casualties, a decrease of 4.8 per cent compared with 2007 and 143 fatal traffic accidents, a decrease of 6.5 per cent compared with the previous year's figure. During the year, 453 830 fixed-penalty tickets for driving offences were issued, a decrease of 6.2 per cent compared with 2007 figures. A total of 696 210 tickets were issued for parking offences, representing a decrease of 1.2 per cent when compared with 2007. A total of 66 674 summonses were served on traffic offenders, an increase of 2 per cent when compared to 2007.

Public Relations

The Police Public Relations Branch (PPRB) plays an important role in enlisting public support for maintaining law and order by keeping the public informed of the work of the Police Force and maintaining good relations with all sectors of the community. Information about police activities is disseminated to the local and overseas media round the clock.

Details of Police policies and operational priorities were disseminated to the public by Police Community Relations Officers while the Junior Police Call (JPC) Scheme and the Police School Liaison Programme serve as bridges between the Police and young people.

To keep the public abreast of crime trends and crime prevention measures, the PPRB worked closely with Radio Television Hong Kong and Cable TV to produce a number of TV programmes, including *Police Magazine*, *Police Report* and *Police Bulletin*. Over the course of 35 years, *Police Magazine* had continued to expand its audience network, reaching a wide segment of the society. The Programme won the Award of TV Appreciation Index 2007. The PPRB also worked with other TV broadcasters and film-production companies, both local and overseas, to produce dramas, documentaries and films related to Police work. In this connection, the PPRB offered support to the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority in processing applications for filming-related licences.

The PPRB produces a number of publications, including a bi-weekly newspaper called *Offbeat* and a JPC monthly newsletter. *Hong Kong Police Review 2007*, a yearbook published by the PPRB, won the Silver Award in the Governmental Annual Report category of the Galaxy Awards 2008. The PPRB also assisted the Fight Crime Committee in planning and implementing the Fight Crime Publicity Campaign 2008-09.

Organised by the Police Force and sponsored by the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, the Good Citizen Award Scheme gives recognition to citizens who have assisted the Police in their fight against crime. In 2008, 80 citizens received awards under the scheme.

Police hotlines and crime information forms provide convenient channels for reporting crime. By year-end, the Police had received a total of 23 076 hotline phone calls, excluding those made to the 999 emergency hotline, and 1 950 crime information forms, resulting in 245 arrests.

Planning and Development

Construction works for the new Central District Headquarters and the new Central Division Police Station commenced in April 2007. The Central Division Police Station will move from its temporary accommodation in Arsenal Street to its new building in Chung Kong Road in the first quarter of 2010. Upon the opening of the new Police Station, two existing Divisions in Central District (Central Division and Waterfront Division) will amalgamate to form a Divisional District. The project will also allow Wan Chai District Headquarters and Wan Chai Division to move to the Arsenal House Complex by the fourth quarter of 2010.

Information and Communication Technology

In 2008, the Communications Branch under the Information Systems Wing received the Outstanding Contribution to Terrestrial Trunked Radio (TETRA) Award during the TETRA World Congress held in Hong Kong. The TETRA-based Third Generation Command and Control Communication System uses advanced digital radio technology to support frontline police officers and enhance their operational efficiency. The Police Force is among the most advanced users in the field of communications technology in the Asia-Pacific Region.

Training

To professionalise Police training, the Police College successfully rolled out its web-based Training Management System in January 2008 to provide an on-line one-stop service for all police officers. The system advertises available training courses and provides a paperless process to administer applications, nominations, selections and results. In addition, throughout the year, the college trained 2 500 crime officers in using the newly acquired SIG P250 pistol, which replaced the Colt DS revolver used previously.

In furtherance of lifelong learning, the Police College launched the Force Research Award Scheme to encourage, recognise and collate professional and academic research conducted by Police Force members. Also, the psychological and social studies modules in policing, provided as part of foundation training for recruit constables by the Open University of Hong Kong since 2006, were extended to probationary Inspectors in 2008.

Occupational Safety and Health

During the year, the Police Force made further improvements to its safety management system so as to better ensure the safety of police officers while maintaining a high standard of service to the public.

The Police Force continued to promote a 'risk aware but not risk averse' culture among police officers. Improvement measures implemented during the year focused on creating a safer workplace and managing risks that arose during dynamic situations.

Transport

In pursuit of environmental awareness and continued promotion of green practices, the Police took delivery of 92 environmentally-friendly hybrid vehicles and 79 low emission, fuel-efficient, EURO IV diesel vehicles in 2008. Six zero-emission electric scooters were on trials in three Police Districts in mid-2008, with a further four to be delivered in 2009.

Service Quality

In 2008, the Service Quality Wing continued to serve as a facilitator for the Police Force's strategic planning, assisting the Commissioner and the Senior Directorate Group in the formulation and promulgation of the Strategic Action Plan 2008-2010. The updated Strategic Action Plan contains 17 key projects in support of four strategic directions – engaging the community, enhancing the personal and professional qualities of Police Force members, strengthening criminal intelligence gathering Force-wide, and supporting frontline units.

The Police Force commissioned the Hong Kong University Public Opinion Programme to conduct the staff opinion survey 2007 on 5 000 members of the force. The survey was completed in January 2008. The survey results showed that an overwhelming majority of the respondents shared the force's vision and were willing to put in extra effort to achieve it. A large majority of the respondents also considered that the Police Force had performed very well in key policing areas.

During the year, the Police Force conducted a customer service satisfaction survey and a public opinion survey. The results reflected a very high level of satisfaction among the respondents of their interaction with the Police Force as well as a very high level of confidence in the Police service.

Complaints and Internal Investigations

The Complaints and Internal Investigations Branch comprises the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) and the Internal Investigations Office.

Complaints lodged by the public against members of the Police Force are handled by CAPO, which is committed to ensuring that every complaint is impartially and thoroughly investigated prior to subsequent examination and review by the Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC). In 2008, this two-tier Police complaint system was codified and reinforced by the enactment of the Independent Police Complaints Council Ordinance. Together with the IPCC, CAPO took steps to facilitate the commencement of the Ordinance at an early date. It will continue its efforts in maintaining the integrity of, and public confidence in, the Police complaint system.

In 2008, CAPO received 2 714 reportable complaints, an increase of 7.4 per cent compared to 2007. In the same period, IPCC endorsed the investigation results of 2 572 cases. Of those cases, 46 were substantiated and disciplinary action was taken against the officers involved. CAPO and the Complaints Prevention Committee will continue to explore ways to prevent complaints in the coming year.

The Internal Investigations Office is primarily responsible for devising and implementing the Police Force's integrity management programme. Among its many initiatives, the office has introduced in the Police intranet a new webpage called 'Ethics Corner', which provides one-stop information on all matters related to integrity and ethics within the Police Force.

Independent Police Complaints Council (IPCC)

The IPCC is an independent body established to observe, monitor and review the Police Force's handling and investigation of reportable complaints. Its 18 members, all appointed by the Chief Executive, are drawn from a wide spectrum of society with diverse expertise. The council had 84 lay observers at year-end. These observers, as well as the council members, may attend interviews and observe the collection of evidence conducted by Police formations in respect of reportable complaints on a pre-arranged or surprise basis, to ensure that investigations are conducted in a fair and impartial manner.

The IPCC Ordinance enacted in July 2008 puts the IPCC on a statutory basis while maintaining the existing two-tier police complaints system. The ordinance sets out clearly the powers, functions and duties of the IPCC under the Police complaints system. It also stipulates the obligation of the Police to provide assistance to the IPCC in various aspects and to comply with other requirements made by the IPCC under the Ordinance. The enactment of the IPCC Ordinance is conducive to

enhancing the independent status as well as the monitoring function of the IPCC. The IPCC will start operating as a statutory body from June 1, 2009.

Customs and Excise

The Customs and Excise Department is responsible primarily for the collection of revenue on dutiable goods, prevention of duty evasion, suppression of drug trafficking and abuse, prevention and detection of smuggling of contraband, and protection of intellectual property rights. The department also enforces legislation to protect consumer interests, safeguard and facilitate legitimate trade and industry, uphold Hong Kong's trading integrity and fulfil relevant international obligations. At year-end, it had an establishment of about 5 600 staff. (See also Chapter 5).

Revenue Collection

The department is responsible for the collection of excise duties derived from dutiable commodities stipulated in the Dutiable Commodities Ordinance: liquor, tobacco, hydrocarbon oil and methyl alcohol. During the financial year 2007-08, the excise duties collected amounted to \$7.06 billion, of which 47.6 per cent was from hydrocarbon oil, 42.6 per cent from tobacco, 9.7 per cent from liquor and 0.1 per cent from methyl alcohol, representing a total increase of 0.5 per cent over 2006-07.

The department also assesses the taxable values of motor vehicles under the Motor Vehicles (First Registration Tax) Ordinance for the purpose of levying first registration tax. In 2008, the department registered 79 motor traders, assessed the provisional taxable value on 54 101 vehicles and re-assessed 18 843 of them, resulting in the collection of \$5.63 billion first registration tax by the Transport Department.

Revenue Control

The department administers a licensing and permit system to control the manufacture, import, export, storage and movement of dutiable commodities. It ensures that no dutiable commodities, whether imported or locally manufactured, are released for local consumption unless full duty has been paid.

Revenue Protection

In 2008, the department detected 3 705 cases of abuse of duty-free cigarette concessions, involving 1.9 million sticks of cigarettes, representing a decrease of 37 per cent and 16 per cent respectively compared with 2007.

In 2008, a total of 4 660 offenders involved in illicit cigarette activities were arrested and 81 million sticks of illicit cigarettes seized, a decrease of 34 per cent and 32 per cent respectively when compared with 2007.

The department continued co-operating with overseas customs administrations to stamp out transnational cigarette smuggling. In 2008, by monitoring suspicious shipments and through intelligence exchange, the department's effort led to the successful seizure of 69.6 million sticks of illicit cigarettes and 1 300 kilogrammes of manufactured tobacco by overseas enforcement authorities.

Illicit fuel activities involving motor spirit remained a prime concern. The department took sustained action to stamp out illicit filling stations, illegal fuel offloading and storage spots. It also conducted joint operations with the Fire Services Department to stop illicit fuel activities at commercial premises such as garages and car beauty saloons. Action was also taken at sea and at land boundaries to prevent smuggling of illicit fuel.

In 2008, a total of 604 people were arrested for illicit fuel activities and 283 000 litres of illicit fuel were seized. The amount of illicit oil seized in 2008 was about 70 per cent less than that of 2007.

Anti-narcotics Operations

The department continues to take vigorous enforcement action to prevent and suppress the unlawful manufacture, distribution and trafficking of dangerous drugs; to trace, confiscate and recover drug proceeds from illegal drug activities; and to prevent the diversion of chemicals used for the illicit manufacture of dangerous drugs. It also maintains close co-operation and exchange of intelligence with local, Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies to combat drug trafficking.

In 2008, the department dealt with 148 drug trafficking cases and neutralised six drug storage and distribution centres. A total of 624 kilogrammes of assorted dangerous drugs were seized and 647 arrests were made. Significant cases included the historic seizure of 307 kilogrammes of ketamine from a cargo shipment at the Hong Kong International Airport. Co-operation with other customs administrations resulted in the seizure of 500 kilogrammes of precursor chemicals and 28 kilogrammes of assorted dangerous drugs in the Mainland and overseas.

As part of the Government's vigorous efforts to combat the youth drug abuse problem, the department stepped up enforcement at boundary control points by deploying more detector dogs and conducting more operations carried out by plainclothes officers, exchanging intelligence and mounting parallel operations with Customs counterparts in Guangdong and Shenzhen. It also collaborates with non-government organisations to help young people to stay away from drugs and to lead a healthy life.

Boundary Control

During the staging of the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events in Hong Kong, the department stepped up customs controls at the Hong Kong International Airport and other boundary control points to safeguard public safety and security. It also worked closely with the Mainland customs and local law enforcement agencies to exchange intelligence and mount joint enforcement actions to detect and prevent the smuggling of items that posed security risks and other contrabands. During the events, the department provided a smooth and speedy clearance service for competitors and their horses and equipment, guests and spectators arriving in Hong Kong.

Anti-smuggling Operations

Smuggling carried out across the Hong Kong-Mainland boundary remains an enforcement concern. In 2008, a total of 198 Hong Kong-Mainland smuggling attempts were detected, resulting in the arrest of 313 people and the seizure of about \$552 million worth of smuggled goods.

Computer parts, electrical and electronic appliances and precious metals continued to be the common items smuggled from Hong Kong to the Mainland. Luxury items such as high-end computer products, Chinese tonics, leather and fur, and items which are cheaper in the Mainland such as cigarettes, counterfeit goods, meat and poultry were smuggled from the Mainland to Hong Kong.

The department continues to liaise closely with the Mainland and oversees law enforcement agencies to combat smuggling activities. Enforcement action taken included exchange of intelligence and mounting of parallel operations at the land boundary control points and at sea.

To protect public safety, the department works closely with the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department and the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department to detect and prevent food smuggling of all kinds. An inter-departmental task force was set up in November 2007 to co-ordinate surveillance and enforcement action, enhance publicity campaigns and strengthen intelligence exchange among government departments and with the trade.

Narcotics Division

The Security Bureau's Narcotics Division (ND) is tasked with co-ordinating policies and ways to fight drug abuse. It is also responsible for tackling anti-money laundering and countering terrorist financing in the non-financial sectors.

Overall Strategy and Co-ordination

The Government adopts a five-pronged approach to fighting drug abuse. The strategy involves legislation and law enforcement, education and publicity, treatment and rehabilitation, research, and external co-operation.

The Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) advises the Government on the formulation of anti-drug strategies. It is a non-statutory body composed of professionals in the medical, youth service, education, community service, legal and anti-drug fields. Headed by a chairman, in 2008 it had 17 official and non-official members. The officials are the Commissioner for Narcotics and a representative from the Department of Health. Under an arrangement between Singapore and Hong Kong, the Director of Singapore's Central Narcotics Bureau also sits on the committee.

As a result of the rise in drug abuse by young people in recent years, the Chief Executive announced in his 2007-08 Policy Address the appointment of the Secretary for Justice, who is Deputy Chairman of the Fight Crime Committee (FCC), to head a high level inter-departmental task force to combat drug abuse among young people. The task force made use of the existing fight crime and anti-drug networks,

including ACAN and FCC, to consolidate strategies from a holistic perspective, spearhead cross-bureaux and inter-departmental efforts, and enhance collaboration among non-governmental organisations (NGOs), stakeholders and the community in promoting the anti-drug cause.

The task force concluded its work and published a report on November 11, 2008, with a host of recommendations – from short to long term – spanning over the five prongs of the anti-drug policy and for promoting a community culture of care for young people.

Legislation

Regular reviews are conducted to see whether amendments or revisions to the existing ordinances are needed to deal with changes in the drugs world.

Treatment and Rehabilitation

The Narcotics Division works with its anti-drug partners to provide a variety of treatment and rehabilitation services for drug abusers from different backgrounds. The major services include the running of a compulsory drug treatment programme by the Correctional Services Department, a voluntary methadone outpatient treatment programme provided by the Department of Health, and voluntary residential programmes run by NGOs. Psychiatric treatment for substance abusers is provided by seven substance abuse clinics under the Hospital Authority. In addition, the Counselling Centres for Psychotropic Substance Abusers, operated by NGOs and subvented by the Social Welfare Department (SWD), provide community-based services to psychotropic substance abusers. Two new centres were opened in December, bringing the total to seven.

Under the Drug Dependent Persons Treatment and Rehabilitation Centres (Licensing) Ordinance, centres offering voluntary in-house treatment to four or more people need to be licensed by the SWD to make sure the centres meet present-day safety and management requirements. By year-end, 13 centres were operating with valid licences, while Certificates of Exemption were issued to 26 centres that had been operating before the ordinance went into effect.

As a result of the rising trend of psychotropic substance abuse in recent years, a two-year pilot project to provide body checks and motivational interviews for young substance abusers was launched in early 2008. It is aimed at widening the network for early identification and intervention at the community level, particularly for young and occasional drug abusers.

The ND continued to work closely with other stakeholders on implementing the recommendations of the fourth three-year plan (2006-08) for drug treatment and rehabilitation in Hong Kong. Its key recommendations include strengthening co-operation between medical practitioners and NGOs to address the medical needs of drug abusers and to extend the scope for early intervention.

Preventive Education and Publicity

Schools are an important platform for preventing drug abuse. The ND works with the Education Bureau (EDB) and other relevant departments to promote a

healthy school policy that contains anti-drug elements. The ND and the EDB organised a seminar in July for some 500 school heads to facilitate exchange of experiences in implementing anti-drug initiatives in schools. Two seminars were held in December to bring teachers and social workers of primary and secondary schools up to date the know-how and educational programmes for combating drugs abuse.

Structured professional training for school personnel started in the 2008-09 school year. This included on-site training programmes for class and subject teachers and two-day advanced training for school management staff, including guidance and discipline teachers.

The ND also worked with the EDB during the year to extend the coverage of the drug education programme for primary four to six students as well as international schools and schools with non-Chinese speaking students.

The Hong Kong Jockey Club Drug InfoCentre continued to serve as a platform for promoting anti-drug messages among different sectors of the community. During the year, 26 030 visitors comprising 11 937 students; 3 110 members of youth groups, community organisations, drug treatment and rehabilitation centres and parent-teacher associations; 435 groups and 7 009 walk-in visitors, visited the centre. The ND's website was also updated.

A two-year territory-wide campaign against youth drug abuse, carrying the theme 'No Drugs, No Regrets. Not Now, Not Ever' was launched on June 28. Intensive publicity initiatives followed, including an anti-drug theme song, new Announcements in the Public Interest targeting different audiences, posters, large outdoor banners, advertisements at public transport stations, SMS messages on mobile phones and promotion on the internet. A new anti-drug leaflet targeting parents was sent to over two million households in July.

District and community organisations, including the District Fight Crime Committees and various NGOs organised about 100 district-based activities, including talks and carnivals to drive home the anti-drug message.

The ACAN and the ND also launched two major anti-drug projects during the year: an anti-drug short-film competition held with the Government's Youth Portal (www.youth.gov.hk) and a drama training and production programme co-organised with a radio station.

Changing the Chinese nomenclature of psychotropic substance abuse was a main feature of the publicity campaign. After extensive consultation, the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse recommended gradually replacing the Chinese term '濫藥' with '吸食危害精神毒品' to correct a common misconception, especially among young people, that psychotropic substances are not harmful or addictive.

Drug Abuse, Statistics and Trends

Statistics on drug abuse are compiled by the Central Registry of Drug Abuse. It collates information about drug abusers obtained from a wide network of reporting agencies, including law enforcement departments, treatment and welfare agencies, hospitals and clinics.

In 2008, 14 175 drug abusers were recorded in the registry, 33 per cent were new cases, 24 per cent were aged under 21, and 80 per cent were males. Heroin continued to be the most commonly abused drug in Hong Kong, with 51 per cent of drug abusers recorded in the registry being heroin abusers. The proportion of psychotropic substance abusers among all reported drug abusers has grown noticeably over the years, reaching 59 per cent in 2008. Psychotropic substances commonly abused include ketamine (36 per cent), ice (9.6 per cent), triazolam/midazolam/zopiclone (9.5 per cent). About 23 per cent of drug abusers in 2008 were reported to have abused more than one drug. Some 9 per cent of drug abusers were reported to have taken drugs in the Mainland, mostly in Shenzhen. Forty-three per cent of drug abusers were reported to have taken drugs only in their own homes or in friends' homes, another 34 per cent at both homes and other localities such as recreation areas, public gardens, public toilets and discos or karaoke halls. The remaining 23 per cent took drugs wherever convenient.

Research

Findings from drug-related research studies provide useful reference materials to facilitate the Government's formulation of anti-drug strategies and programmes. During the year, two studies carried forward from previous years were completed.

The first study assessed the extent to which parents are involved in existing drug prevention activities and examined the reasons that motivate or discourage them from getting involved. It says parents should be treated as key partners in the fight against drug abuse by young people as should family members. The second study examined the demographic and psychological characteristics of cocaine users, and reviewed the sociological and harmful effects as well as treatment for cocaine addicts. It helped to develop preventive education programmes and treatment and rehabilitation models, which took overseas experience into account.

Four new research projects were launched in 2008 in addition to the two ongoing ones, entitled: 'Study of patterns of drugs of abuse in New Territories East cluster Substance Abuse Clinic using conventional and new technologies' and 'Short-term and long-term effects of Chinese herbal medicine in drug detoxification – A series of meta-analysis'. The four new projects are entitled: '2008 survey of drug use among students', 'Socioeconomic and health impacts of psychoactive drug abuse in Hong Kong – a longitudinal study', 'Long-term ketamine abuse and apoptosis in cynomolgus monkeys and mice' and 'Effective ways to dispel misunderstanding about psychotropic substances in youth at risk for drug abuse problems'.

International Action and Regional Co-operation

The Government continued to participate actively in international forums held to curb drug abuse, drug trafficking and money laundering. Besides fulfilling its obligations under the three major United Nations (UN) conventions on narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances, the Government also maintains close links with the UN, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the International Criminal Police Organisation (INTERPOL) and the World Customs Organisation, to ensure that Hong

Kong's anti-drug and anti-money laundering work is in step with current international standards and requirements.

The Government keeps in touch with various jurisdictions to share Hong Kong's experience with them and to foster closer working ties. The Police Force and the Customs and Excise Department also have co-operative arrangements with their Mainland and overseas counterparts for intelligence exchange, experience-sharing and for carrying out joint anti-drugs operations.

In March, a representative from the ND joined the Chinese delegation to the 51st session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs held in Vienna.

Co-operation with the Shenzhen authorities was stepped up to tackle the growing problem of cross-boundary drug abuse, particularly by young people from Hong Kong taking drugs in the Mainland.

The 'Path Builders' Initiative

The ACAN and the ND launched a programme called 'Path Builders' in September to encourage greater community participation in projects that help young people at different levels and through innovative ways.

Many corporations, businessmen, doctors, lawyers and other professionals and individuals from different walks of life had already taken part in the programme.

The Beat Drugs Fund

The Government set up the Beat Drugs Fund in 1996 with a capital of \$350 million. In 2008, a record \$35.88 million was approved by the fund for carrying out 61 anti-drug projects which included anti-drug kits for parents and teachers to use at home and schools, online games, anti-drugs talks and various activities for young people.

Volunteer Scheme

During the year, an 'Anti-drug Volunteer Group' comprising 93 companies and institutions and 238 individuals took part in, or helped organise 16 anti-drug community and publicity activities. These included district carnivals, exhibitions, seminars and visits to drug treatment and rehabilitation centres.

Action Against Money Laundering and the Financing of Terrorism

Maintaining an effective anti-money laundering and counter-terrorist financing (AML/CFT) regime is of great importance to Hong Kong as an international financial centre. The Government adopts a five-pronged approach to combating money laundering and terrorist financing. It includes an effective legal framework, supervision by financial regulators, vigorous law enforcement, international co-operation, and public education and capacity building.

To fulfil its international obligations under the 1988 United Nations Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Hong Kong enacted the Drug Trafficking (Recovery of Proceeds) Ordinance in 1989 and the

Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance in 1994 enabling it to trace, freeze, confiscate and recover proceeds from drug trafficking and other serious crimes.

To give effect to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1373 and some of the measures stipulated in the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF) Special Recommendations, the United Nations (Anti-Terrorism Measures) (Amendment) Ordinance was enacted in 2004. It provides, among other things, the power to freeze the non-fund property of terrorists and terrorist organisations.

To fulfil another FATF Special Recommendation, section 24C(1) and schedule 6 of the Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance was amended in January 2007 to require remittance agents and money changers to verify customers' identity and to keep records of transactions of \$8,000 or more, instead of the previous threshold of \$20,000 or above.

Since the enactment of the Drug Trafficking (Recovery of Proceeds) Ordinance and the relevant sections of the Organised and Serious Crimes Ordinance, assets valued at \$480 million have been confiscated and handed to the Government. As at December 31, 2008, assets worth \$89 million were ordered to be confiscated. A further sum of \$2,890 million was put on hold pending confiscation proceedings under the two ordinances.

Preparations are being made for holding in 2009 the next series of seminars for designated non-financial businesses and professions (DNFBPs). In collaboration with the ND and the Joint Financial Intelligence Unit (JFIU), professional bodies of DNFBPs issued guidelines on AML/CFT for their members to follow.

Estate agents, precious metals and precious stones dealers, remittance agents and money changers and money lenders are provided with an interactive training kit, or guidelines, to assist them in making reports on suspicious transactions and to raise their awareness of the consequences of money laundering and terrorist financing. A series of Announcement In the Public Interest entitled 'Be a Gatekeeper for Hong Kong', and related messages are broadcast routinely to raise awareness of dangers of anti-money laundering and terrorist financing.

Hong Kong participated in the activities of FATF and the Asia Pacific Group on Money Laundering (APG), an FATF-style regional inter-governmental organisation during the year. It took part in the working group meetings and plenary meetings of the FATF and the APG's annual meeting. It also sent experts to participate in the Mutual Evaluations of other jurisdictions as assessors.

The joint FATF/APG Mutual Evaluation on Hong Kong, which started in 2007, continued into 2008. As part of the Mutual Evaluation process, a delegation led by the Commissioner for Narcotics, attended a meeting in Paris in April where it held talks with international assessors. The Hong Kong delegation comprised representatives from the Security Bureau, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the Department of Justice, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Customs and Excise Department and the Companies Registry as well as those from the Hong

Kong Monetary Authority, the Securities and Futures Commission, and the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance.

The FATF and APG have praised Hong Kong for the way it tackles money laundering and terrorist financing. In their latest joint assessment report published in July, they recognised the strengths of Hong Kong's AML/CFT regime, in particular its good legal structure, strong law enforcement efforts, robust and effective supervision of the banking securities and insurance sectors.

The report also cites Hong Kong's efficient co-operation with countries around the world in tackling these two odious problems and its proactive and effective outreaching efforts to raise the private sectors' awareness of these problems.

The report also made suggestions on specific areas Hong Kong should focus on to enhance its AML/CFT regime.

A Central Co-ordinating Committee on Anti-Money Laundering and Counter Financing of Terrorism (CCC) was set up in April. Chaired by the Financial Secretary, the CCC steers and co-ordinates the strategic development of Hong Kong's AML/CFT regime in line with internationally recognised standards.

In October, the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau took over the overall co-ordinating role of AML/CFT policies from the ND to respond more strategically to the ever changing trend of money laundering and terrorist financing. The ND will continue to co-ordinate AML/CFT matters for the non-financial sector.

International co-operation is vital in combating transnational crimes such as money laundering. Different government departments continue to provide legal assistance to other jurisdictions in dealing with criminal matters in accordance with bilateral agreements and international agreements. By year-end, Hong Kong had concluded 25 bilateral agreements on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters and 17 bilateral agreements on surrender-of-fugitive-offenders.

Independent Commission Against Corruption

Hong Kong continues to be one of the most corruption-free cities in the world. It has a clean civil service and an open and fair business environment.

Its anti-corruption agency, the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) is independent of the civil service and its independence is guaranteed under the Basic Law. Its commissioner is directly accountable to the Chief Executive.

The ICAC's strategy for combating corruption through law enforcement, prevention and education is hailed as a model for weeding out corruption.

The ICAC continues to enjoy strong public support. Its annual survey¹ showed 99 per cent of respondents expressing support for the anti-graft agency, 81 per cent trusted the agency's impartiality in conducting investigations and indicated their

¹ The ICAC has commissioned professional research agencies to conduct annual surveys to gauge public opinion on corruption-related issues in Hong Kong.

willingness to report corruption, while 74 per cent of complainants provided their names when lodging reports about graft in 2008.

The ICAC has been helping enterprises to strengthen their corporate governance and corruption prevention measures in light of the global financial crisis. A conference on corporate governance was held jointly with the Mainland's Ministry of Supervision and the Commission Against Corruption of Macao in December for listed companies. It was well attended.

Corruption Situation

In 2008, corruption reports received by the ICAC recorded a drop of six per cent. Among the 3 377 corruption complaints (excluding election-related complaints) received, 65 per cent concerned the private sector. Complaints against government departments totalled 28 per cent while the remaining seven per cent was against public bodies.

Complaints related to public elections, including the Legislative Council Election, District Council and Village Representative By-elections, totalled 753 in 2008. These were mostly minor complaints and allegations of technical breaches of the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance.

Enforcement

The Operations Department investigates all pursuable reports of corruption. Its investigative strategy is reinforced by a strong intelligence gathering machinery.

Cases involving the public sector were mainly about individual public servant's misconduct and allegations of irregularities in Government procurement of goods and services.

Allegations of private sector corruption ranged from improprieties in company listings, fraudulent insurance claims, bank loan frauds to kickback scams in the catering industry.

At year's end, the ICAC was investigating 2 230 cases of alleged corruption and malpractices, including 711 about public elections. During the year, graft-fighters faced tough challenges in tackling increasingly complex cases, resulting in protracted inquiries and lengthy trials. However, the challenges did not hamper the commission's effectiveness in combating corruption. A total of 357 people were prosecuted for corruption and related offences in 2008, while 54 who committed minor offences were cautioned. Eighty-five per cent of cases brought before the courts by the ICAC resulted in convictions.

Prevention

The Corruption Prevention Department helps government departments and public bodies minimise their corruption risks by examining meticulously their systems and procedures, identifying corruption loopholes and recommending ways to prevent corruption.

The department gives priority to problems revealed in investigations and issues of public concern. During the year, the department carried out 88 corruption

prevention studies for public organisations in 2008. These studies covered procurement, outsourcing of public services, public works projects, law enforcement, and licensing systems.

The department also gave expeditious advice on new policies, legislation and procedures to public organisations on 429 occasions during the year.

The department also offered free, confidential and tailor-made corruption prevention advisory services on 371 occasions to private organisations which requested assistance.

The department joined forces with professional bodies and trade associations to encourage private organisations to adopt 'best practices' in their business dealings. During the year, two corruption prevention guidebooks were produced for listed companies and insurance companies respectively.

Community Education

The Community Relations Department has a statutory responsibility to educate the public against the evils of corruption and to enlist their support for anti-corruption efforts. The department is pressing on with its work of instilling a sense of probity in the community through community-based and sector-oriented programmes as well as the mass media.

To sustain the impact of an ethical leadership programme launched in conjunction with the Civil Service Bureau, the department organised workshops on integrity management for 150 'ethics officers' from 81 bureaux and departments. A dedicated website was also set up to facilitate information sharing on integrity issues within the Government.

During the year, the ICAC collaborated with the Guangdong Provincial People's Procuratorate and 19 business organisations to hold an ethics conference for small and medium enterprises to help them prevent corruption risks. The ICAC also produced a corruption prevention guidebook for companies conducting cross-boundary businesses.

Building maintenance and renovation works continued to generate complaints of corruption. To correct the situation, the department in concert with the industry's stakeholders carried out a strong territory-wide campaign to hammer home anti-corruption message to people in the building management business. Under the programme, a booklet on corruption prevention was produced for building owners' corporations and special programmes on the subject were broadcast on radio and television. A public enquiry hotline and a website were also set up to raise greater awareness of corruption.

Special programmes were also drawn up to drive across the anti-corruption message to school children. These included school plays performed by students which were well received.

The ICAC also ran campaigns ahead of the Legislative Council Election in September to ensure that the election was conducted in a fair and clean manner.

Briefings were arranged and booklets produced for candidates and election agents to better acquaint them with the election laws. A hotline was also set up to advise them on the electioneering 'dos' and 'don'ts'. Advertisements were broadcast on television, radio and infotainment channels on public transport to convey the 'clean election' message.

A mobile exhibition vehicle, drawing people's attention to some of the major corruption cases that occurred in Hong Kong, was launched for the first time. The vehicle carrying the displays drove through the city. Up to 85 000 people saw the displays over a period of five months. The department also organised more than 240 'integrity' events jointly with community organisations, reaching 400 000 people from all walks of life.

International Co-operation

The ICAC has ties with law enforcement agencies and regulatory bodies around the world. During the year, the ICAC received 508 visitors from other jurisdictions, including the European Union, the United States, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, South Korea and Bhutan.

Under the authority of the Central People's Government, Hong Kong continues to assist signatories to the United Nations Convention Against Corruption in implementing corruption prevention measures. In October, the ICAC Commissioner led a high-level delegation to an international conference in Ukraine to share Hong Kong's experiences in combating corruption with other delegations to the conference.

Cross-boundary Liaison

Under the Mutual Case Assistance Scheme established in 1988, the ICAC and the Mainland procuratorate authorities continued to assist each other in corruption investigations. In conducting cross-boundary inquiries, ICAC officers and Mainland procurators paid visits to each other's jurisdiction on 36 occasions during the year.

On the prevention and education fronts, the ICAC continued to step up liaison with the Mainland's anti-corruption authorities. The commissioner visited the Ministry of Supervision in Beijing in May to foster mutual exchanges and co-operation. During the year, the ICAC briefed more than 6 100 visiting Mainland officials on Hong Kong's anti-corruption strategy.

Checks and Balances

The ICAC is subject to a stringent system of checks and balances. Apart from judicial supervision, the commission's work is scrutinised by four independent committees: The Advisory Committee on Corruption, the Operations Review Committee, the Corruption Prevention Advisory Committee and the Citizens Advisory Committee on Community Relations. The committee chairmen held a press conference in late 2008 to update the public on their work in monitoring the ICAC.

An independent ICAC Complaints Committee, chaired by a former member of the Executive Council and comprising legislators and prominent citizens, monitors the handling of non-criminal complaints lodged against the ICAC and its officers.

Government Laboratory

The Forensic Science Division of the Government Laboratory provides a comprehensive forensic service to the criminal justice system in Hong Kong. It is divided into two operational groups. In 2008, the professional staff of the division attended a total of 481 crime scenes.

The Drugs, Toxicology and Documents Group examines cases involving drugs. The number of cases examined remained high in 2008, with ketamine and heroin continuing to be the most widely abused drugs in Hong Kong. The urinalysis service, which provides continuous analytical support in monitoring known drug abusers, saw a phenomenal growth in its demand in 2008. The toxicological examination service seeks to ascertain the presence or otherwise of drugs and poisons in suspicious deaths and in criminal offences where they are implicated.

In addition to routine handwriting and document examinations, the group also offered advice to the Immigration Department in developing and testing the new generation of HKSAR e-passports. In 2008, the Hong Kong Identity Card continued to be the most commonly forged document, followed by the People's Republic of China (PRC) Passport and the PRC Exit-Entry Permit.

The Criminalistics and Quality Management Group provides a wide range of support services to the law enforcement departments. It handles forensic biological samples and performs DNA analysis of exhibits seized from crime scenes. In addition, DNA profiles of convicted offenders, suspects and volunteers in its DNA Database are compared with outstanding DNA profiles of crime scene exhibits in unsolved cases. Comparisons are also performed among outstanding DNA profiles of exhibits from different unsolved cases for possible connection. In 2008, there were 187 and 35 pairs of matches in the two types of comparisons, providing important investigative leads to the Police. In addition, the group deals with cases from the Immigration Department pertaining to right of abode applications that require genetic tests. The matched percentage rate was about 96 percent of all submitted cases. Other services provided include chemical analysis of trace evidence, physical examination of toolmarks and shoeprints, investigation of suspicious fire cases and traffic accident reconstruction. In 2008, the Group handled a number of serious traffic accident and fire investigations, including the coach traffic accident at Sai Kung and the Cornwall Court fire at Mong Kok.

Immigration Department

Immigration Control

The Immigration Department plays an important role in maintaining law and order by controlling entry into Hong Kong. Through checks at control points and the vetting of entry applications, immigration officers detected undesirable people, including international criminals and doubtful visitors, and take appropriate action

such as denying them entry. In 2008, a total of 42 219 such people were refused permission to enter Hong Kong.

Detection of Forged Travel Documents

Strict measures are taken to guard against the use of forged travel documents. The department detected 1 423 forged travel documents during the year, compared with 1 598 in 2007. Frequent contact with local, Mainland and overseas law enforcement agencies and consulates was maintained to exchange information and intelligence on such documents. Special operations were carried out by the department against forgery syndicates.

Interception of Target or Wanted Persons

In 2008, a total of 333 929 target or wanted persons were intercepted at immigration control points and other offices. They were suspected of being connected with offences or court orders ranging from failure to settle outstanding fines on time to serious crimes.

Illegal Immigration and Unlawful Employment

During 2008, some 2 460 Mainland illegal immigrants were apprehended and sent back, compared with 3 175 in 2007.

The Immigration Department set up an Anti-Illegal Workers Combat Squad in January 2005 as a nimble and robust force to combat illegal employment. Its main duties involve conducting undercover patrols at illegal worker black spots.

In 2008, some 6 141 illegal workers were arrested in 10 227 raids, compared with 6 399 arrested in 9 606 raids in 2007. The vast majority of illegal workers were visitors who had breached their conditions of stay.

Illegal workers were either fined or jailed before being sent back to their places of origin. Their employers were also prosecuted. In 2008, a total of 374 charges were laid against employers of illegal workers.

Deportation and Removal

The Immigration Department processes deportation and removal orders. During the year, some 7 363 people convicted of offences punishable with imprisonment for not less than two years were considered for deportation and 392 such persons were deported. Another 253 were removed from the HKSAR. They comprised 18 illegal immigrants and 235 people who had breached their conditions of stay.

Investigation and Prosecution of Immigration Offenders

During 2008, a total of 11 225 charges were laid against people who had committed various immigration offences. These included illegally remaining in Hong Kong, breach of conditions of stay, making false statements or representations, and using or possessing forged travel documents.

Fire Services

The Fire Services Department fights fires, protects life and property in the event of fires and other calamities. It also provides emergency ambulance services, and gives fire protection advice to the public.

The department has 8 792 uniformed and 630 civilian members and is one of the world's finest fire brigades with well-trained personnel, advanced communications systems, and modern equipment and appliances.

The department responded to 35 513 fire calls, 24 398 special service calls and 643 611 ambulance calls in 2008.

Fire-fighting and Rescue

Of the 35 513 fire calls received in 2008, 18 were classified as major fires of No. 3 alarm and above. Careless handling or disposal of lighted materials was the major cause of fires in 2008, causing a total of 2 326 fires, accidents occurring during the preparation of foodstuffs caused 1 863 fires, while electrical faults caused 795 fires. False alarms, triggered mainly by faulty automatic alarm systems, contributed to about 68 per cent of the total number of fire calls.

The department also provides a wide range of rescue services for incidents such as traffic accidents, shipwrecks, people trapped in lifts or locked in rooms, gas leaks, house collapse, flooding, landslides, industrial accidents and attempts by people to jump from heights. The department handled 24 398 such special service calls in 2008.

Ambulance Services

The Ambulance Command handled 643 611 calls during the year, or an average 1 763 calls per day.

The department's ambulance fleet is fully equipped and manned at paramedic level with services meeting international standards. Automated defibrillators and selected drugs for illnesses are available on all emergency ambulances and emergency medical assistant motorcycles.

The department continues to train front-line firemen to become first responders to provide basic life-saving support to casualties and patients while ambulance crews make their way to the scene. During the year, first responders dealt with 40 719 cases in which people needed urgent help.

Communications

The Fire Services Communications Centre, manned round the clock, is responsible for mobilising all fire-fighting and ambulance resources to provide timely fire and ambulance services to the community. The centre is also responsible for receiving complaints about fire hazards and dangerous goods. It acts as an emergency co-ordinator for other Government departments and public utilities during large-scale emergencies or major calamities.

The centre is equipped with a sophisticated telecommunications and computer integrated mobilising system – the Third Generation Mobilising System – to enhance the efficiency of mobilising fire and ambulance resources.

Fire Safety

The Fire Safety Command draws up fire safety policies and formulates fire safety measures for buildings and mass transit systems. It also devotes much of its effort to upgrading arrangements and procedures to protect old buildings from fires and to raise people's awareness of fire safety.

The Commercial Buildings and Premises Division enforces the Fire Safety (Commercial Premises) Ordinance to upgrade fire safety measures in prescribed commercial premises and specified commercial buildings. A total of 13 137 building inspections were conducted in 2008, and 620 Fire Safety Directions and 2 687 Fire Safety Improvement Directions were issued to 3 307 owners or occupiers of these premises and buildings.

The Building Improvement and Support Division is responsible for the enforcement of the Fire Safety (Buildings) Ordinance, which went into effect on July 1, 2007 to step up fire safety measures for pre-1987 domestic buildings and composite buildings. In 2008, the division made a total of 796 joint inspections of buildings with Buildings Department officers under this ordinance. A total of 9 769 Fire Safety Directions were issued, of which 522 were complied with and discharged. The division also carried out 1 137 complaint inspections concerning building fire safety (other than licensed premises and dangerous goods) and issued 700 Fire Hazard Abatement Notices.

A Building Safety Loan Scheme, administered by the Director of Buildings, has been established to provide financial assistance to owners to carry out building safety and fire safety improvement works. A total of 4 374 applications for such aid have been approved.

The New Projects Division, in co-operation with the Buildings Department and other departments, is responsible for vetting new building plans including those for mass transit systems, tunnels, bridges and at the airport. It also defines the fire protection needs of a particular premises. The division vetted a total of 11 721 building plans during the year.

The Railway Development Strategy Division scrutinises the fire safety requirements of new railway infrastructure projects. It processed submissions in respect of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, the West Island Line, the Shatin-to-Central Link, the South Island Line (East) and the Kowloon Southern Link in 2008.

The Community Relations Section is responsible for improving public knowledge of fire safety and for co-ordinating publicity about fire prevention in collaboration with other government departments and the District Fire Safety Committees.

Up to the end of 2008, a total of 96 324 people were trained as Fire Safety Ambassadors and 278 community leaders were appointed as Fire Safety Ambassador Honorary Presidents.

The 2008 Fire Prevention Campaign featuring a television variety show was broadcast and seen by more than one million people.

The Licensing and Certification Command determines the fire safety needs of various types of licensed premises, as well as dangerous goods stores and vehicles, to ensure proper protection for the public. It continued to work with the Efficiency Unit and the Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit to further streamline the licensing process.

The Fire Service Installation Task Force has stepped up the monitoring of fire safety in buildings and heightened public awareness of the need to maintain fire service installations (FSIs) and equipment in buildings. A total of 71 035 building inspections were made in 2008. During the year, six owners of defective FSIs and four contractors were prosecuted for contravention of relevant regulations.

A No. 5 Alarm fire at Cornwall Court in Mong Kok on August 10 killed four people and injured 54, including two firemen who lost their lives fighting the blaze. An inter-departmental task group was set up after the tragedy to check the fire safety standards of all karaoke establishments located in composite buildings in Hong Kong. A total of 179 karaoke establishments were inspected and 188 Fire Hazard Abatement Notices and 48 warning letters were issued.

Appliances and Equipment

In 2008, the department had 854 fire appliances, ambulances and supporting vehicles. A fleet of 22 fireboats provided fire protection and rescue services within Hong Kong waters.

New Stations and Depots

The department continued to plan and build fire stations and ambulance depots to cope with the city's development and growing service needs, and to adhere to the Government's policy of providing the fastest response possible to emergencies. During the year, a new fireboat station on Cheung Chau island was commissioned.

Public Liaison Group

The Public Liaison Group was set up to encourage public participation in monitoring and improving the delivery of emergency fire and ambulance services. The group had 30 members from all walks of life in 2008.

Correctional Services

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) runs a comprehensive range of services for adult and young offenders, drug addicts and offenders with psychiatric problems. Its services fall broadly under two headings: prison management and rehabilitation of offenders.

In 2008, the CSD managed 23 correctional institutions, three halfway houses, four rehabilitation centres, two custodial wards in public hospitals and one immigration centre for the Immigration Department. In all, 6 509 staff were looking after a daily average of 10 556 inmates, 325 detainees and 2 816 people under supervision after discharge.

Offenders sentenced to imprisonment are assigned to institutions according to their gender, age and security ratings. Separate institutions are provided for males and females, and for adults and young offenders. Male and female young offenders aged between 14 and 20 may be admitted to a training centre or a rehabilitation centre. A detention centre programme is available for male offenders aged between 14 and 24. Drug addicts found guilty of an offence punishable by imprisonment may be placed in a drug addiction treatment centre.

All inmates receive proper care. Their diet follows approved scales of nutritional values with regard to their health and religious requirements. All adult inmates, unless certified physically unfit, are required to work six days a week. They are assigned to different work posts according to their fitness and security ratings, personal background and balance of sentence. They receive payments for their work, which may be used for buying approved personal items. They can watch television and have access to newspapers and library books. They may send and receive letters, receive visits and participate in religious services.

Penal Institutions

CSD manages 12 prisons for adult males, consisting of three maximum, four medium and five minimum security institutions. Adult female prisoners are accommodated in four prisons. For young male offenders, the department operates one maximum security institution, one training centre and one detention centre. A training centre section is provided in Lai King Correctional Institution, a multi-function institution for young females. Hei Ling Chau Addiction Treatment Centre and its Annexe accommodate male and female drug addicts respectively. Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre is a maximum security prison which houses separately male and female prisoners of all categories and detainees who require psychiatric observation, treatment or assessment. Five of the institutions cater for remanded males and females of different age groups. Facilities in a penal institution normally include dormitories, kitchens, dining rooms, laundries, workshops, areas for exercise and recreation, a library and a hospital.

CSD operates three halfway houses to help inmates, released under supervision, to reintegrate into society. The residents may go out to work or attend school during daytime.

Penal Population

The penal population was large in 2008. Overcrowding occurred mostly in prisons accommodating female adults. The average number of women in prison in 2008 was 2 103 and they occupied 104 per cent of total prison living space. Despite the overcrowding situation, the department continued to implement its correctional programmes effectively.

During the year, 15 133 adult offenders, comprising 9 880 men and 5 253 women, were sentenced to prison and 8 231 adults (6 278 men and 1 953 women) on remand were taken into custody. The number of young offenders sentenced to imprisonment totalled 684, comprising 370 males and 314 females, and 780 young people on remand (642 males and 138 females) were taken into custody. In addition, 841 young offenders (761 males and 80 females) were sentenced to detention in training centres, rehabilitation centres or the detention centre, and 1 316 offenders (1 080 males and 236 females) were placed in drug addiction treatment centres; while 3 672 offenders (3 155 males and 517 females) were remanded pending reports on their suitability for sentencing to one of these centres.

CSD has been actively looking for opportunities to improve penal facilities and relieve the overcrowding problem in some institutions. For example, the Lo Wu Correctional Institution redevelopment project commenced in 2007, and is expected to be completed in early 2010. The new institution can accommodate 1 400 inmates.

Assessment Services

Young people aged between 14 and 20, who are convicted of an offence punishable by imprisonment, may be remanded in custody for a period not exceeding three weeks for assessment of their suitability for admission to a training centre, rehabilitation centre, detention centre or drug addiction treatment centre. Young men aged between 21 and 24 may be similarly remanded for admission to the detention centre.

In 2008, the Rehabilitation Unit prepared a total of 5 195 suitability reports to the courts, and recommended 1 556 males and 194 females suitable for admission to a rehabilitation centre, a training centre or detention centre, and 1 261 males and 333 females suitable for a drug addiction treatment centre.

Young Offender Assessment Panel

The Young Offender Assessment Panel, comprising representatives from the CSD and the Social Welfare Department, makes recommendations to magistrates and judges on the most appropriate rehabilitation programmes for young male offenders aged between 14 and 24 and females aged 14 to 20.

Training Centres, Detention Centre and Rehabilitation Centres

Training centres provide correctional training for young offenders for periods ranging from six months to three years, which includes half-day educational classes and half-day vocational training. They also receive character development training in the form of scouting, guiding or outward-bound training. Upon release, inmates must have suitable employment, education or vocational training and are subject to statutory supervision lasting three years.

A detention centre programme is carried out at Sha Tsui Detention Centre for young male offenders aged between 14 and 20 for a period between one to and six months, and young male adults aged between 21 and 24 for a period between three and 12 months. It emphasises strict discipline, strenuous training, hard work

and a vigorous routine. After release, detainees are placed under a one-year statutory supervision.

In operation since July 2002, the rehabilitation centres provide an additional sentencing option for the courts to deal with young offenders aged between 14 and 20 who are in need of a short-term residential rehabilitation programme.

Education

Inmates under 21 are required to attend educational classes conducted by qualified teachers. They are encouraged to take part in both local and overseas public examinations.

A Prisoners Education Trust Fund, set up with charitable donations in 1995, provides financial assistance to prisoners seeking an education.

Vocational Training

To help young offenders reintegrate smoothly into society as law-abiding citizens, the CSD provides half-day vocational training programmes for inmates under 21 years of age to enable them to acquire job skills, obtain accreditation and develop work habits.

For local adult prisoners, the CSD provides pre-release vocational courses for those wishing to participate. These are full-time courses provided at the Lai Sun Correctional Institution Vocational Training Centre and the Lai Chi Kok Correctional Institution. There are also part-time courses held in other institutions.

Correctional Services Industries

The Correctional Services Industries (CSI) Section provides work for adult prisoners as required by law to keep them gainfully employed and to help them develop good working habits, sense of responsibility and self-confidence. Through the training received at work, prisoners can also cultivate employability skills to facilitate their reintegration into society.

In 2008, a daily average of about 5 256 prisoners were engaged in CSI providing government departments and subvented bodies with a wide range of goods and services. These include office furniture, uniforms, leather goods, hospital linen, protective filter masks, fiberglass litter containers, traffic signs, precast concrete products, laundry services for hospitals and clinics, book binding for public libraries, printing work, file jackets and envelopes. The market value of these goods and services, together with other domestic work and services provided for CSD, was \$441 million in 2008.

Welfare and Counselling Services

Programme Officers look after the welfare of detainees and prisoners, and help them deal with personal problems and difficulties arising from their detention or imprisonment. They conduct individual and group counselling sessions, and assist in running various rehabilitation programmes and services such as pre-release reintegration orientation courses, making arrangements for the prisoners to meet their family members and supplying them with information on community resources.

Drug Addiction Treatment

The CSD runs a compulsory treatment programme for convicted drug addicts, which provides the courts with an alternative to imprisonment. Male and female inmates are accommodated at Hei Ling Chau Addiction Treatment Centre and its Annexe respectively. Young addicts aged between 14 and 20 are accommodated separately from the adults. The programme includes two to 12 months of in-centre treatment, followed by one-year statutory supervision.

Medical Services

Every institution has a hospital to provide inmates with basic medical treatment, health care and dental services. Inmates who need specialist treatment are referred to visiting specialists or specialist outpatient clinics in public hospitals. Pregnant prisoners are referred to public hospitals for delivery and related services.

Psychological Services

Psychological services are provided to inmates and prisoners to improve their psychological well-being and to change their offending behaviour. Clinical psychologists and trained officers provide special treatment programmes for inmates such as sex offenders, violent offenders, inmates with addiction problems and young offenders.

They also provide assessment reports to the courts, review boards and institutional management on request. CSD took steps during the year to further improve the running of rehabilitative services provided for offenders after discharge. It has adopted an empirically-based protocol and clinical measures for assessing the risk of re-offending after discharge.

Supervision Services

Statutory supervision is provided to discharged young prisoners, people discharged from training, rehabilitation, detention and drug addiction treatment centres, and prisoners discharged under the Release Under Supervision, Pre-release Employment and Post-release Supervision Schemes, as well as prisoners discharged under a conditional release order or post-release supervision order. The aim of supervision services is to help ex-offenders reintegrate into society. Any breach of the supervision conditions may result in these ex-inmates being recalled for a further period of training, treatment or imprisonment.

During the year, 2 646 offenders were discharged under supervision. They, together with those discharged in previous years and who had yet to complete their supervision period numbered 2 787 people under CSD's supervision at the end of 2008. During the year, 1 038 people were recalled for breach of supervision conditions.

Community Support

Community acceptance and support are of paramount importance to an offender's rehabilitation and reintegration into society. The Committee on Community Support for Rehabilitated Offenders is a non-statutory advisory body appointed by the Commissioner of Correctional Services to advise on rehabilitation

programmes and publicity strategies. It comprises representatives of non-government organisations, government departments and professionals from various sectors of society.

The CSD continues to organise a variety of publicity activities to appeal for public support for rehabilitated offenders.

Information Technology and Management Services

CSD makes continuous efforts to enhance the quality and efficiency of prison management and offender rehabilitation services through the use of new technologies.

Visiting Justices

Each penal institution is visited by Justices of the Peace fortnightly or monthly, depending on the type of institution. The Justices of the Peace receive and investigate complaints from prisoners, inspect their diets and examine the living and working conditions in the institutions.

Complaints

The Complaints Investigation Unit is responsible for handling and investigating complaints in relation to the department's work. All investigation reports are subject to the scrutiny of the Correctional Services Department Complaints Committee. Inmates may also lodge complaints with any senior officers or duty officers of the CSD, or through other channels such as the visiting Justices of the Peace, The Ombudsman and the Legislative Council.

Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance

The Interception of Communications and Surveillance Ordinance, which came into effect on August 9, 2006, provides a new statutory regime for the authorisation and regulation of interception of communications and covert surveillance conducted by law enforcement agencies (LEAs) for the purposes of preventing or detecting crime and protecting public security. The ordinance provides for the appointment of a Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance as an independent oversight authority. On the recommendation of the Chief Justice, the Chief Executive appointed Justice Woo Kwok-hing, Justice of Appeal of the Court of Appeal, as the commissioner for a period of three years. The commissioner is assisted by a secretariat in performing his functions under the ordinance.

The main duties of the commissioner are to oversee and conduct reviews on the compliance by LEAs and their officers with the relevant requirements under the ordinance; carry out examinations upon applications from people who suspect they are subjects of interception or covert surveillance conducted by LEAs; give notifications to those affected in cases of interception or covert surveillance without the authority of a prescribed authorisation; and make recommendations to the Secretary for Security on the code of practice issued under the ordinance and to the heads of LEAs to better carry out the aims of the ordinance and the code of practice.

The commissioner is required to submit annual reports to the Chief Executive with statistical information and his assessment on the overall compliance with the relevant requirements under the ordinance during the report period. The annual report for 2007, covering the period from January 1 to December 31, 2007, was submitted to the Chief Executive in June 2008. The report will be tabled in the Legislative Council.

Civil Aid Services

The Civil Aid Service (CAS) is a government auxiliary emergency service established under the Civil Aid Service Ordinance. It has an establishment of 3 634 adult members, 3 232 cadets and 111 civil servants.

Its primary duty is to provide auxiliary support services during emergencies. Members are trained to perform emergency duties during typhoons, flooding and landslips; to search for and rescue people in distress in mountains; to help evacuate or rescue victims trapped under collapsed buildings or buried in landslips; and to combat vegetation fires and oil pollution at sea. In 2008, CAS members were mobilised for six rescue operations after tropical cyclones or landslips, 69 mountain search and rescue duties, and nine vegetation fire-fighting operations. On June 8, 2008, CAS members were deployed to assist residents of Tai O to clear sand and mud obstructing an access road and residential blocks following a heavy rainstorm.

The CAS was heavily involved in security control and crowd management during the 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Equestrian Events in Hong Kong. The CAS provided crowd management services for 210 public events during the year.

The CAS continued to patrol hiking trails and country parks on Sundays and public holidays to assist the public in case of needs. During the dry season, CAS members were on standby duty for vegetation fire-fighting.

The CAS endeavours to develop leadership potential and cultivate civic and national awareness among youngsters by recruiting those aged 12 to 17 into the CAS Cadet Corps. Apart from participating in recreational activities, CAS cadets are taught various disciplines and skills, including foot drill, basic emergency rescue, first aid, rock climbing and expeditions. Cadets aged over 13 are also encouraged to perform crowd management duties at festive or community events, and to patrol country parks.

Government Flying Service

The Government Flying Service (GFS) is a disciplined service department. It provides a wide range of flying services, including round-the-clock search and rescue coverage, casualty and medical evacuation, fire fighting and support for law enforcement agencies and other government departments.

The GFS has an establishment of 166 disciplined and 57 civilian staff, and operates an aircraft fleet of two fixed-wing aeroplanes and seven helicopters. In 2008, it flew a total of 4 910 hours, assisted in 326 search and rescue operations and transported 1 350 patients to hospitals by helicopter. Auxiliary flying doctors

and nurses flew a total of 383 hours in 493 operations. The GFS also flew 5 480 government officers and official visitors in the course of their duties or programmes.

After the devastating earthquake in Sichuan on May 12, 2008, the GFS sent a rescue team and a helicopter to Sichuan to carry out search and rescue operations. The GFS took part in 26 operations in which 96 casualties were brought to safety and 84 ground support personnel were dispatched to the disaster area.

Websites

Security Bureau: www.sb.gov.hk (links to Disciplined Services)

Independent Commission Against Corruption: www.icac.org.hk

Commissioner on Interception of Communications and Surveillance:
www.sciocs.gov.hk