

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

SB149

Question Serial No.

0847

Head: 30 Correctional Services Department Subhead (No. & title):

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question: During 2012-13, the Correctional Services Department will seek short-term and long-term solutions to address the problems of ageing facilities and overcrowding in some of the correctional facilities. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee:

- (a) the details of the existing problems of ageing facilities and overcrowding in some of the correctional facilities;
- (b) the details of the short-term and long-term solutions as well as the expenditure and estimates involved?

Asked by: Hon. LAM Tai-fai

Reply: (a) Among the existing 29 correctional facilities, 10 of them have been in operation for 40 years or above by 2012. In 2010-11, the total maintenance cost of the 29 facilities was \$187 million. The cost incurred by those 10 institutions that have been operated for 40 years or above was \$117 million (around 63%). As compared with 2008-09, there is an increase of \$40 million (around 52%) in the maintenance cost of the above 10 institutions concerned.

In 2011, the respective average annual occupancy rate of Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre, Tai Lam Centre for Women and Siu Lam Psychiatric Centre was over 100%. The Correctional Services Department (CSD) needs to classify and assign persons under custody to different institutions according to factors such as their gender, age, status (i.e. convicted inmates or remands, whether they are first-time offenders), length of sentence, criminal background, risk of escape and security level in order to achieve effective management. As such, although the overall occupancy rate of some institutions does not exceed 100%, the situation of excessive admission of inmates still exists in some facilities. Generally speaking, given the large number of remands, the overcrowding situation in reception centers is more serious than that of other institutions.

- (b) CSD has been keeping a close watch on changes in the size and composition of the penal population and maintaining flexible deployment of resources to cater for the custodial and rehabilitative needs of persons in custody. Besides, CSD has all along been implementing various measures, including the swapping of functions of individual institutions whenever feasible, the conversion and upgrading of correctional institutions, etc., to address the problems of ageing facilities and overcrowding in some of the correctional institutions. The major projects conducted in recent years include:

- (i) The redeveloped Lo Wu Correctional Institution came into operation in 2010. With its 1 400 penal places, the overcrowding problem in most female correctional institutions has been relieved. The project cost was \$1,524 million;
- (ii) The completion of the amalgamation of the former Lai Chi Kok Correctional Institution and the nearby Lai Chi Kok Reception Centre early this year has provided about 400 additional penal places. The project cost was about \$9.4 million;
- (iii) We are planning for the in-situ partial redevelopment of Tai Lam Centre for Women to increase the penal places to some 360 and enhance its facilities. The preliminary estimated project cost is \$776 million. The Department plans to seek funding approval from the Public Works Subcommittee and the Finance Committee in mid-2012. Subject to funding approval, the project is expected to commence in phases from the second half of 2012 and be completed by the end of 2016.

CSD will continue to study other redevelopment and upgrading projects to resolve the problems of ageing facilities and overcrowding in some of the correctional institutions, and cater for the custodial and rehabilitative needs of persons in custody.

Signature: _____

Name in block letters: SIN YAT KIN

Post Title: Commissioner of Correctional Services

Date: 28 February 2012