

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

SB154

Question Serial No.

0593

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: Under Matters Requiring Special Attention, it is stated that the Administration is seeking solutions to address the problem of overcrowding in some of the correctional facilities. What criteria are used in determining whether a correctional facility is overcrowded? Currently, how many prisons are regarded as overcrowded? Will the Administration consider identifying sites to construct new correctional institutions?

Asked by: Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply: 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 in 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.

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 different 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:

- (a) 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;
- (b) 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;

- (c) 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. We plan 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