

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**SB498**

**(Question Serial No. 4693)**

Head: (30) Correctional Services Department

Subhead (No. & title): ( )

Programme: (1) Prison Management

Controlling Officer: Commissioner of Correctional Services (YAU Chi-chiu)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Security

Question:

Under this Programme, short-term and long-term solutions will be sought to improve and upgrade ageing facilities. Please advise this Committee of the following:

- 1) Have any studies been conducted in the past 3 years on how correctional facilities with low usage rates could be distributed, closed or merged in a reasonable way? If yes, what are the details? What are the facilities and expenditure involved?
- 2) There were proposals to build a large-scale prison in Hong Kong so that persons in custody could be centrally managed. Has the Department conducted any follow-up work on similar proposals? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon WU Chi-wai (Member Question No. 109)

Reply:

The Correctional Services Department (CSD) is required to classify and assign persons in custody (PICs) to different institutions according to such factors as gender, age, status (i.e. convicted inmates or remands, first-time offenders or repeated offenders), length of sentence, types of sentence, criminal background, risk of escape and security level in order to achieve effective management.

CSD has been keeping a close watch on changes in the size and composition of the penal population and deploying resources flexibly to cater for the custodial and rehabilitation needs of PICs. On this basis, CSD has all along been implementing various improvement measures, including the swapping of functions of individual institutions where practicable, the conversion and upgrading of correctional institutions, etc. The major projects and resources redeployment schemes carried out in the past 3 years include:

- (a) some of the facilities in Lai Chi Rehabilitation Centre (LCRC) and Sha Tsui Correctional Institution (STCI) were swapped in March 2014 to better utilise the correctional facilities and relieve the overcrowding situation of Pik Uk Prison. The existing LCRC is renamed as Tai Tam Gap Correctional Institution (TGCI), whereas part of the facilities in STCL is renamed as LCRC;
- (b) improvement works of some of the facilities in Tai Lam Correctional Institution (TLCI) were completed at the end of 2014 and elderly PICs serving sentence in Ma Hang Prison (MHP) were transferred to TLCI in January 2015. MHP has been vacated and used for staff training and community education purposes;
- (c) Nei Kwu Correctional Institution has provided 56 additional penal places for adult female drug addicts since March 2015;
- (d) in early January 2016, some of the adult PICs with potential higher security risk were transferred from Hei Ling Chau Correctional Institution to Lai Sun Correctional Institution to be detained separately in a special location. Security measures are strengthened and the existing resources are better utilised with flexibility; and
- (e) Tai Lam Centre for Women is undergoing partial redevelopment and the project is expected to be completed at the end of 2016. By then, an additional 108 penal places will be provided.

CSD will continue to closely monitor the changes in the size and composition of the penal population, and consider relevant deployment having regard to actual needs where practicable. At present, the Department will deploy existing manpower and resources to undertake the work concerned.

On the whole, the 29 correctional facilities currently in operation accommodate PICs of different gender, age, security level and custodial programmes such as drug addiction treatment centres, rehabilitation centres for young PICs and half-way houses etc. in accordance with relevant laws and operational needs of the Department. Therefore, despite the decrease in overall penal population in recent years, it would not be sufficient to cope with such changes by mere consolidation of the correctional institutions. On the other hand, relocation of correctional institutions would involve detailed planning and complicated process. At present, the Department has not carried out any studies on consolidated prison management.