Psychotropic Substance Abuse in Hong Kong

Abstract of Speech by Ms. Mimi Lee, Principal Assistant Secretary (Narcotics)

According to the Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA) which is a system serving to monitor changes in trends and characteristics of the drug abuser population in Hong Kong, there was a downtrend in the number of reported drug abusers since 1995 in Hong Kong. However, these downtrends reversed in the first three quarters of 2000. The recent rising trend reflected that Hong Kong was not immune from the global trend of rising psychotropic substance abuse involving mostly ecstasy and ketamine.

A multi-disciplined task force was therefore set up within the Government to recommend a comprehensive strategy to tackle the problem of rising psychotropic substance abuse. The task force has proposed and put in place a number of measures, including tightening control over ketamine, enhancing anti-drug publicity targeting especially at Hong Kong people crossing the boundary to Shenzhen and Guangdong, and youth who frequent recreational venues such as bars and discos. Apart from this, the Police and Customs are having regular sessions with their Mainland counterparts on exchange of information and will take parallel enforcement actions to counter drugs and related crimes when necessary. In August 2000, the Government met with dance party organizers to discuss cooperation to minimize drugs and other crimes in rave parties. In October 2000 a Code of Practice for Dance Party Organizers was issued and a review on the statutory regime for regulating raves has since been underway.

The Three-year Plan on Drug Treatment and Rehabilitation Service in Hong Kong promulgated in October 2000 points to the direction of strengthening various drug treatment service provisions. On anti-narcotics research, special emphasis has been laid on psychotropic substance abuse. A number of studies are underway and are expected to complete within this year.