

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)445/01-02

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

**Paper for the House Committee meeting
on 23 November 2001**

**Report of the Panel on Welfare Services on
"Proposed inter-departmental committee to combat poverty"**

Purpose

This paper reports on the deliberations of the Panel on Welfare Services (the Panel) on measures to address poverty, and seeks the House Committee's support to request the Administration to set up an inter-departmental committee to combat poverty.

Background

2. In view of the growing gravity of the problem of poverty in Hong Kong as evidenced by the widening disparity between the poor and the rich revealed in the results of the 2001 Population Census, the Panel met with the Administration and a total of 12 individuals/deputations to discuss the issue on 12 November 2001. The names of the individuals/deputations attending the meeting are in the **Appendix**.

Deliberations of the Panel

3. The Panel considers the following approaches adopted by the Administration to tackle poverty, although well-intentioned, are ineffective in providing immediate relief to the disadvantaged groups and the unemployed, and ultimately eradicating poverty -

- (a) foster economic growth, facilitate human investment and increase social investment;
- (b) strengthen education, training and retraining to enhance the competitiveness of our people under the new economy; and
- (c) assist the vulnerable, with the purpose of enhancing, not impeding their will to be self-reliant.

4. The Panel considers it necessary for the Administration to set up an inter-departmental committee to ensure a focused and co-ordinated approach to address the problem, given that -

- (a) poverty is a complex and multi-dimensional issue and the causes are complicated and inter-related; and
- (b) there is no sign that the economy would improve in the foreseeable future.

This view is shared by all of the 12 individuals/deputations attending the meeting on 12 November 2001.

5. The Administration has pointed out to the Panel that there is no need to set up an inter-departmental committee to address poverty, as there is already in place within the Administration a mechanism to deal with issues which straddle various policy areas. In this particular case, the Health and Welfare Bureau is responsible for co-ordinating and examining all information regarding the issue of poverty, and it will also convene meetings with the relevant Policy Bureaux/government departments where necessary. Moreover, progress reports on the approaches made to address poverty are regularly submitted to the Chief Executive who is also very concerned about this issue. Members of the Panel disagree with the Administration's view. The majority of members of the Panel voted in favour of the following motion moved by Dr Hon YEUNG Sum at the meeting -

"That the Panel on Welfare Services requests the Administration to set up an inter-departmental "Combat Poverty Committee" to conduct studies on the issue of poverty and propose alleviating measures."

Recommendation

6. Members of the Panel consider that the proposal of setting up an inter-departmental "Combat Poverty Committee" within the Administration should be brought to the attention of the House Committee. The Panel seeks Members' support for the Chairman of the House Committee to put forward the proposal to the Chief Secretary for Administration for his consideration.

Advice Sought

7. Members are invited to support the recommendation of the Panel in paragraph 6 above.

**Individuals/deputations attending the
LegCo Panel on Welfare Services
meeting on 12 November 2001**

Individuals

Dr WONG Hung, City University of Hong Kong

Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Department of Applied Social Science
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Deputations

Livelihood Agenda 21

Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions

The Federation of Hong Kong & Kowloon Labour Unions

Society for Community Organization

Elderly Rights League (HK)

Fight for Social Welfare Alliance

St. James' Settlement

Association for the Rights of the Elderly

Hong Kong Council of Social Service

The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions