

For information

Legislative Council House Committee

Subcommittee to Study the Subject on Combating Poverty

Work Progress of the Commission on Poverty

PURPOSE

This paper provides an overview of the progress made during the past eleven months by the Commission on Poverty (CoP) and the Administration in strengthening efforts in poverty alleviation and prevention.

WORK OF THE COMMISSION

2. During the first eleven months of its establishment, the CoP has held six meetings and conducted four formal visits. The work of the Commission has focused on five key areas viz. (i) understanding poverty, (ii) adopting the district-based approach in alleviating and preventing poverty, (iii) reducing risk of intergenerational poverty, (iv) promoting “from welfare to self-reliance”, and (v) encouraging social enterprise development. The overall objectives, aims and actions of each area are detailed at *Annex A*. Paragraphs 3 to 7 below highlighted examples of the key actions in each of the areas -

(I) Understanding poverty

3. In order to reflect the poverty situation in Hong Kong and to facilitate broad strategy planning, a set of multi-dimensional poverty indicators has been compiled. Relevant studies (e.g. on earnings mobility) are being conducted.

(II) Adopting district-based approach

4. A district-based approach to alleviate and prevent poverty has been

adopted in addressing the key local priorities and challenges through energising district networks and focusing resources. The key actions include –

- (a) district task forces chaired by District Officers in the pilot districts. District action plans are being implemented to tackle local challenges;
- (b) additional funding has been allocated to fund sustainable district initiatives with a clear employment focus which help enhance self reliance and promote community building; and
- (c) a study on the guiding principles in implementing the district-based approach which the newly established Task Force on District-based Approach would take into account when making recommendations on the long-term strategy.

(III) Reducing risk of intergenerational poverty

5. The Task Force on Children and Youth established since May 2005 has been focusing on the following major areas of action -

- (a) enhance understanding of risk factors -- e.g. an evaluation of the schemes to help hardcore unemployed youths on CSSA including “My STEP” with a view to analyzing the reasons for protracted stay on CSSA and the effectiveness of the proposed schemes;
- (b) identify gaps in existing policies and measures – e.g. to tackle the hardcore cases which were not helped by the present employment and motivation programmes, including launching a pilot project “My STEP”; to enhance the interface between programmes so that youths do not fall through the cracks and remain non-engaged, un-noticed; and to strengthen parenting support to parents from disadvantaged families;
- (c) build social capital among the younger generation – e.g. pilot projects including the Mentorship Fun Project and the “Adopt-a-school” Project have been launched; and
- (d) mobilize community resources e.g. to facilitate the opening up of some schools for community use in areas deficient in community facilities. An additional \$10 million has been allocated to EMB for the purpose. The aforementioned “Adopt-a-school” project also aims at building long term partnership between the private sector and schools.

(IV) Promoting “from welfare to self-reliance”

6. In order to further encourage the able-bodied unemployed to move from welfare to self-reliance, the CoP would -

- (a) enhance employment assistance – a district study on existing training and employment assistance and services is being conducted to ensure that services and support are delivered in an integrated and effective manner;
- (b) enhance coordination among departments - the Labour Department and the Social Welfare Department would enhance their interface and coordination; and
- (c) enhance incentives to encourage work – initiatives are being considered to encourage CSSA recipients and the unemployed to find and retain job.

(V) Encouraging social enterprise development

7. To further encourage social enterprise (SE) development in Hong Kong, a number of follow-up actions have been undertaken, for example -

- (a) *public education*: seminars, conferences on SE have been held/planned. Researches and publicity efforts are underway;
- (b) *training*: discussions have been held with the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Committee to extend existing SME support to SEs; possible models to enhance training for social entrepreneurs are also being explored; and
- (c) *policy environment*: discussions are being held with relevant bureaux/departments and their advisory bodies on how to facilitate SE development at the policy level, e.g. extension to SE of existing support to small and medium enterprises interface. The additional funding for district-based initiatives (re. para 4(b) above) will also stimulate SE development at the community level.

WORK OF OTHER BUREAUX

8. It has been the Government's long established policy to assist the disadvantaged through, e.g. welfare and social protection and support, housing, education, training, vocational and employment assistance. Work of the CoP and other bureaux should thus be seen holistically, as efforts by the HKSARG to empower and promote the interest and self-reliance of the disadvantaged through various means.

9. *Annex B* highlights new policies and initiatives of relevant bureaux/departments announced in the last eleven months, as well as those being planned, which contribute to Government's efforts in poverty alleviation and prevention.

CONCLUSION

10. Members are invited to -

- (a) note the progress of the Commission made in five key work areas (paragraphs 3 – 7 and Annex A); and

- (b) note the work of other relevant bureaux and departments at Annex B.

Secretariat to the Commission on Poverty
Financial Secretary's Office
January 2006

Commission on Poverty
Highlights of Major Areas of Work (as at January 2006)

Key Work Area (I) - Understanding Poverty

Overall objective: To enhance understanding of the poverty situation in Hong Kong through developing indicators and conducting relevant studies. Such efforts would be complemented by work at the district level (Key Work Area II – District-based Approach).

Aim	Action
For an affluent society like Hong Kong, poverty should not be defined rigidly as one fixed figure or line based on income. As in the case of other developed economies, Hong Kong should adopt a multi-dimensional approach in sizing poverty and pragmatically focus on the needs of the disadvantageous groups.	➤ A set of 24 <i>poverty indicators</i> has been developed by the Government Economist to reflect the poverty situation in Hong Kong, and to facilitate broad strategy planning.
It is important to ensure equality of opportunity, not equality of outcome. Our society should provide opportunities for the low-income employees and their families to move up the income ladder.	➤ The Government Economist is conducting a <i>study on earnings mobility</i> in recent years. Results would be available in mid-2006.
To better understand the true extent of poverty faced by the low-income group, the impact of Government benefits/transfers on disposable income (instead of gross income) and the redistribution effect of salary tax should be taken into account.	➤ Subject to CoP's discussion on 23.1.2006, an assessment on the <i>impact of Government benefits/transfers</i> and salary tax on the disposable income of the different income groups would be conducted.

CoP Key Work Area (II) – Adopting District-based Approach

Overall objective: To adopt a district-based approach to alleviate and prevent poverty through energising district networks and focusing resources in addressing key local priorities and challenges. A Task Force on District-Based Approach has been established to follow-up on further work (first meeting on 21.1.2006).

Aim	Action
Different districts have their own characteristics and problems; poverty alleviation work should be district-based as local personalities should be in the best position to identify the priorities of the district, and to design corresponding solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Following CoP's visits to Tin Shui Wai, Kwun Tong and Sham Shui Po, <i>district task forces</i> chaired by District Officers have been set up with the involvement of relevant parties. District <i>action plans</i> are being implemented to tackle local challenges.
District-based approach is not a one-way approach whereby all the responsibilities are placed on the districts. It <i>complements the central efforts</i> of various policy bureaux and the CoP.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The CoP Secretariat has been maintaining close liaison with the districts with a view to providing them with assistance where necessary e.g. meeting with NGO representatives on difficulties faced by NGOs in conducting poverty alleviation work at district level. ➤ Government bureaux have also strengthened their services at the districts (see Annex B).
The Administration is committed to reinforcing the district-based approach by providing districts with additional resources.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Part of the net proceeds from the Personalised Vehicle Registration Marks (PVRM) Scheme (\$30 million in 2006/07) would be used to <i>fund sustainable district initiatives</i> with a clear employment focus and help enhance self-reliance and promote community building. ➤ A multi-disciplinary vetting committee would be established under HAB/HAD for the purpose.
CoP would make recommendations on the long-term strategy in implementing the district-based approach, taking into account the experience of the three pilot districts, use of PVRM funding, and other relevant studies and programmes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Task Force on District-Based Approach will oversee a <i>study on the guiding principles</i> in implementing the district-based approach, including the facilitative and support structure needed to address common and district-unique issues of concern.

CoP Key Work Area (III) – Reducing Risk of Intergenerational Poverty

Overall objective: To reduce the risk of intergenerational poverty, viz. deprivation of assets of the older generation from becoming deprivation of the younger generation's access to opportunities. A Task Force on Children and Youth has been established since May 2005 to take forward the work.

Aim	Action
<p>To improve understanding of the younger generation at risk of poverty.</p> <p>Such risk factors are not limited to income/ socio-economic status (SES), but also other environmental factors and subjective variables (such as special needs and motivation deficit of the children themselves).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Work in Key Work Area I (poverty indicators, earnings mobility study) would enhance the understanding. ➤ The Task Force has examined the existing screening mechanisms in place and has been assured that services and programmes will be closely monitored and reviewed to ensure that those who are at higher risks can be identified. ➤ The Task Force has drawn reference to the correlation between SES and academic performance in Hong Kong, which is not strong by international comparison. Hong Kong students generally perform well regardless of their SES. ➤ An <i>evaluation</i> of the schemes to help hardcore unemployed youths on CSSA including “My STEP” will be conducted with a view to analyzing the reasons for protracted stay on CSSA and the effectiveness of the proposed schemes.
<p>To examine policies and measures to ensure that there are effective interventions to the younger generation at risk, to identify possible gaps and formulate policy recommendations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ The Task Force has identified the need for enhanced assistance to tackle the <i>hardcore cases</i> which were not helped by the present employment and motivation programmes, including those from SWD, LD and EMB. ➤ A pilot project “<i>My STEP</i>”, including tailor-made motivation programmes, post-programme support and active job placement will be implemented in 2006 targeted at youths who could not be motivated back to employment after participating in existing employment programmes. ➤ The Task Force is exploring how to enhance the <i>sharing of data</i> so that more targeted intervention could be effected. ➤ The Task Force has organized a sharing session to examine how to <i>strengthen parenting support</i> to parents from disadvantaged families. Policy bureaux and relevant advisory committees would take into account the discussion in planning their future work. The Task Force will also consider further initiatives in this area. ➤ The Task Force will continue to study other possible service gaps, e.g. need for greater targeting in services to youths aged 25-29 for whom currently, only generally accessible services are available.

<p>To mobilize community resources in building social capital among the younger generation and consider launching pilot projects</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Two projects have been implemented – a <i>Mentorship Fun</i> Project to encourage building up social capital in the education sector, and a “<i>Adopt-a-school</i>” Project using schools as a platform for cross-sector partnership in poverty alleviation and prevention. ➤ An additional \$10 million has been allocated to EMB to facilitate the <i>opening up of some schools for community use</i> in areas deficient in community facilities.
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CoP Key Work Area (IV) – Promoting “From Welfare to Self-Reliance”

Overall objective: Noting the past trend and projection of the caseload of able-bodied and other social security recipients, to help the able-bodied unemployed to move from welfare to self-reliance.

Aim	Action
<p>To examine the effectiveness of existing policies and measures in helping the unemployed, including training, delivery of employment assistance at the district level.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A <i>district study on the existing employment assistance</i> and services for the able-bodied is being conducted to ensure that services and support are delivered in an integrated and effective manner. ➤ There will be <i>closer interface and coordination in services between LD and SWD</i> at the district level. ➤ Training/re-training initiatives would be examined at the CoP meeting in March 2006.
<p>To encourage more targeted and work-focused approach in existing employment assistance programmes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Assistance will be enhanced to tackle the <i>hardcore cases</i> which were not helped by the present employment assistance programmes e.g. pilot project “My STEP” for youths. We shall continue to explore other pilot projects to tackle hardcore cases.
<p>To enhance incentives to encourage work.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ To keep in view SWD’s review on disregarded earnings in 2006. ➤ Additional measures to encourage CSSA recipients and the unemployed to find and retain job being considered. ➤ CoP would consider how best to provide additional incentives for the low-income employees and their families to stay in

	employment at its meeting on 23.1.2006, bearing in mind financial sustainability of the public finance system
To encourage creation of community employment opportunities.	➤ Work in Key Work Area V – promoting social enterprise development – is relevant.

CoP Key Work Area (V) – Encouraging Social Enterprise (SE) Development

Overall objective: To further encourage the development of social enterprises (SEs) to provide community employment opportunities for the unemployed to integrate into the job market.

Aim	Action
(a) Establish the value and gain public acceptance	
To conduct research on SE development.	➤ Central Policy Unit has commissioned a <i>research on SE development</i> in Hong Kong and one on overseas experience. Interim report is expected by mid-2006.
To collaborate with the Advisory Committee on Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities in promoting SE in Hong Kong.	➤ Brainstorming session held with members of the Advisory Committee on Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities and CoP members on 20 October 2005.
To organize forums to further the understanding on SE, and to involve the business sector and the wider community in considering the potential of using SE to assist the able-bodied unemployed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Introductory lunchtime seminar held on 1 November 2005. ➤ <i>SE Conference</i> to be held on 6.4.2006. ➤ Publicity programme on SE being planned.
(b) Create an enabling environment	
To promote the concept of SE among those responsible for public procurement at both the central and district level.	➤ Exploratory discussions being held on how to <i>make government procurement regime more SE friendly</i> .
To consider administrative/policy barriers which hinder the development of SE at the district level and in specific sectors.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ HWFB would continue to consider the need to amend the Co-operative Societies Ordinance. ➤ HWFB would keep in view SE development and how it may integrate with existing employment assistance programmes.
To consider the potentials for SE to help the able-bodied unemployed.	➤ To gauge views from NGOs with experience, to promote acceptance and consider policy implications.
(c) Business facilitation and support	
To consider funding source in support of start-ups of SE for disadvantaged groups other than the disabled.	➤ PVRM funding at district level should help start-up funding of sustainable SE initiatives.

<p>To empower and motivate social entrepreneurs, including training, facilitating business-mentoring network and sharing of international best practices, etc.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Brainstorming session with members of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Committee and CoP members held on 24 November 2005. An <i>SE/SME seminar</i> will be held on 11.2.2006. The SME Committee will discuss how to <i>extend its existing support to SEs</i> at its February 2006 meeting.➤ An overseas fact-finding visit on training <i>initiatives for social entrepreneurs</i> is proposed in order to facilitate formulation of suitable initiatives for Hong Kong.
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**Poverty alleviation and prevention measures
implemented or being planned by relevant bureaux**

The following sets out new policies and initiatives of relevant bureaux/departments announced in the last eleven months, and those being planned, which strengthen the work of poverty alleviation and prevention to the disadvantaged and complements the work of the Commission.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

(i) Comprehensive Child Development Service

2. The Comprehensive Child Development Service (0-5 years) (CCDS), an initiative set out in the Policy Address in January 2005, is a universal programme aiming at augmenting the existing service in the Maternal and Child Health Centres (MCHCs), through better alignment of the delivery of health, education and social services, to ensure early identification of the varied needs of children and their families so that appropriate services can be made available to them in a timely manner. While CCDS is not by nature a poverty alleviation initiative, it helps identify needy children and families, including poor families, and provide them with assistance at an early stage. The first pilot CCDS has been launched in Sham Shui Po in July 2005. It has also been extended to the remaining three selected communities (i.e., Tin Shui Wai, Tuen Mun and Tsueng Kwan O) in early 2006. Subject to the experience gained in the pilot run, we will extend CCDS to the other parts of Hong Kong by phases in due course.

(ii) Additional resources to District Social Welfare Officers (DSWOs) to support district-based work

3. To address the developmental needs of those children and youth who are in disadvantaged circumstances in the districts, an annual recurrent new provision of \$15 million has been earmarked effective from 2005-06. The \$15 million has been allocated to the twelve¹ administrative districts of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) having regard to various social indicators on disadvantaged children and youth by district for implementing the District Support Scheme for Children and Youth Development (the Scheme).

¹ Thirteen administrative districts merged into twelve w.e.f. 14.10.2005

4. The Scheme is intended to meet i) learning and education needs; ii) job skills training and employment needs; and iii) social needs of children and youth aged 0 to 24 in deprived circumstances. The DSWOs may use the allocated resources to meet the needs of the target groups through implementation of developmental projects or through direct cash assistance. DSWOs would identify or partner with welfare organizations including SWD departmental units, subvented non-governmental organizations and other welfare organizations to implement the new initiatives.

(iii) Implementation of 'Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social programmes (P.A.T.H.S.) to Adulthood : A Jockey Club Youth Enhancement Scheme

5. The captioned is a new programme financed by the Hong Kong Jockey Club with SWD and Education and Manpower Bureau as partner organizations. It was launched in early April 2005 for junior secondary students to enhance their psycho-social development, such as competency, character and so on. There will be two tiers of programme, one for all junior secondary students and the other for those identified to be in greater need. For the 2005/06 school year, it will be an experimental phase and 52 schools have joined. The project will be fully implemented in the 2006/07 school year.

(iv) Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged

6. The \$200 million Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged, which promotes the development of a tripartite social partnership comprising the Government, the business community and the welfare sector in helping the disadvantaged, was launched in March 2005. Funds would be disbursed in the form of a matching grant for application by welfare Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) who are able to secure corporate sponsorship in organizing projects for the direct benefit of the underprivileged groups. In the first round of applications, 43 applications have been received and 29 approved. The second round of applications closed at the end of 2005 and they are now under progressing. Results will be announced from February 2006 onwards.

(v) Community Investment and Inclusion Fund

7. The Government has set up the \$300 million Community Investment and Inclusion Fund to encourage innovative solutions through

cross-sectoral partnerships to build community capacity for mutual help. As of December 2005, 90 projects have been selected, with early results of enhanced social and economic outcomes being achieved and contributed to breaking the cycles of inter-generational deprivation. Outcomes achieved include: (i) Increased resilience – with over 17,000 (vulnerable) ex-service recipients transformed into contributive helpers, self-managing 210 mutual help networks and 20 potential work co-operatives; (ii) Increased vitality - over 2 000 job and other development opportunities created for the new arrivals, disengaged youth, middle-aged unemployed, ethnic minorities, elders and the homeless to be re-engaged with the mainstream society. ; and (iii) new cross-sectoral partnerships that involved 1 000 collaborators from schools, businesses, professional bodies, NGOs, resident and women’s groups and government departments.

(vi) Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme

8. Regarding the CSSA Scheme, HWFB has -
- evaluated the intensive employment assistance projects for able-bodied recipients;
 - implemented a \$100 monthly supplement for severely disabled CSSA recipients living in the community;
 - extended the Portable CSSA Scheme for elderly to Fujian Province and relaxed the eligibility requirement for participation.

Education and Manpower Bureau

(i) School-based After School Learning and Support Programmes

9. To tie in with the Government’s policy on poverty alleviation, EMB has provided additional funding to schools for organising school-based after-school learning and support programmes for needy students with effect from the 2005/06 school year. The programmes are school-based in nature and the focus is placed on providing more assistance and opportunities to the younger generation of needy families to improve their learning effectiveness, broaden their learning experiences outside classroom, and raise their understanding of the community and sense of belonging. The target group is P1 to S7 students from CSSA families or in receipt of full-grant assistance under student financial assistance schemes. Funding in the amount of \$75 million has been allocated to about 300 schools in the 2005/06 school year

for organizing support programmes for some 55 700 target students.

(ii) Small class teaching

10. Starting from the 2005/06 school year, EMB implements small class teaching (SCT) in schools with a high concentration of disadvantaged students, as a means to help those children, and, in so doing, to support the Government's pledge to alleviate inter-generational poverty. This Scheme takes into account overseas research studies which indicate that SCT has more significant effects on students with weak family support and in their early years of schooling. Schools having 40% of their P.1-P.3 students receiving CSSA or full grant assistance under student financial assistance scheme are eligible to participate. The selected schools are provided with a cash grant of \$290,000 per annum for each additional class to enable them to split their P.1 – P.3 students into small classes of 20 – 25 for the Chinese, English and Mathematics lessons. Apart from cash grant, the schools will be provided with professional support to help the teachers develop effective pedagogical strategies to maximize the benefits of SCT. A total of 75 primary schools meet the 40% threshold and 29 of them have joined the scheme.

(iii) Enhancement of uniformed/youth groups activities

11. As an enhancement measure for Uniformed Groups (UGs) Activities, EMB is separately considering the provision of additional subsidies to UGs that will set up new leagues with free uniforms for needy participants. Sponsorship will also be provided for those with financial difficulties to receive leadership training. The details are being worked out for implementation expected of later in the 2005/06 school year.

(iv) Strengthening training and retraining services

12. The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) offers annually over 110 000 retraining places (about half being offered in placement-tied courses) in some 130 centres throughout the territory. Training places will be adjusted among districts by respective training bodies taking into account the number of retrainees as well as market needs.

13. From January to June 2005, the ERB has set up two new retraining centres in Yuen Long district (covering Tin Shui Wai), on top of the existing seven centres, to cater for the increasing demand for retraining in that area. In terms of training capacity, the number of training places has increased significantly to 5 502 for the period from 2004/2005, up from 4 721 for the corresponding period in 2003/2004.

14. The ERB has stepped up its promotional efforts by launching district-based road shows on retraining services in various regions. The first road show was held in June 2005 in Tin Shui Wai. The ERB also sponsors its training bodies in launching district-based promotion in areas of great demand. The training bodies at Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai have been selected as the pioneering centres to stage a series of promotional activities during the period from June to September 2005.

15. Separately, the Task Force on Continuing Development and Employment-related Training for Youth has provided sponsorship of more than \$20 million to support 13 pilot projects for the non-engaged youth, benefiting some 4 600 young people. The Task Force is considering sponsorship of more projects to help the non-engaged youth.

Economic Development and Labour Bureau

(i) Enhanced employment assistance to districts in 2005

16. To strengthen employment assistance to districts, the Labour Department (LD) has equipped the 10 job centres in various districts with additional fax machines and newspapers with vacancy information to encourage job seekers to make applications to employers direct.

17. In addition to the 39 vacancy search terminals (VST) installed at all Social Security Field Units of the Social Welfare Department, LD has since January 2005 further installed 17 VSTs at the Public Enquiry Service Centres / Community Centre of various districts to facilitate job seekers to gain access to a wide range of job vacancies.

18. To promote self-reliance among job seekers, LD has since January 2005 set up resource corners in all the 10 job centres, which are equipped with reference books covering skills on job searching, resume writing and selection interview, as well as updated employment or training materials. All job seekers, in particular ethnic minorities and new arrivals, are encouraged to use the resource corners to obtain comprehensive employment information and attend employment briefings conducted regularly in job centres.

19. At the same time, LD has enhanced its employment briefings with updated labour market information, job search skills, retraining materials and self-reliant messages to encourage the unemployed to be more positive and self-reliant, so as to help them better prepared for re-entering into the labour market.

20. To address the employment needs of the ethnic minorities, the Kowloon West Job Centre regularly provides information on LD's recruitment activities such as employment briefings, job fairs, bulk interviews, recruitment forums etc to the concerned non-governmental organisations for dissemination to ethnic minorities of various districts.

21. Meanwhile, Tuen Mun and Tai Po Job Centres are expanded to organise district-based job fairs. This will capture more local employment opportunities and facilitate job seekers living in the northern part of the New Territories to attend job interviews without the need to travel to urban areas.

22. To reach out to job seekers in the more remote parts of the New Territories, LD has in 2005 organised 12 large-scale job fairs, some of which were held in districts like Tsing Yi, Sheung Shui, Kwai Chung, Tuen Mun

and Tin Shui Wai.

23. To cater for the employment needs of youths living in remote areas, LD staged a series of four job fairs in March and April 2005 in Kwai Chung, Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai in cooperation with nine NGOs with local service centres in the North-western New Territories.

24. To sustain this momentum, NGOs joining the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme have continued to organise job fairs for youths in various districts in the past few months. LD has participated and provided assistance in eight of these job fairs.

(ii) Work Trial Scheme

25. LD has launched the Work Trial Scheme on 28 June 2005. The objective of the Scheme is to enhance, through work trial opportunities, the employability of job seekers who have special difficulties in finding jobs, such as job seekers who have registered at LD for a prolonged period but remain unemployed and those who have failed repeatedly in job interviews.

26. During the one-month work trial period, participants will be arranged to work in real jobs offered by participating organizations, which will also provide on-the-job training and appoint a mentor to the participants. There will be no employment relationship between the participant and the participating organisation. To safeguard the interests of the participants, LD will take out insurance for them. LD will also encourage participating organisations to offer employment to participants after completion of the work trial.

27. On satisfactory completion of the one-month work trial, the participant will be paid an allowance of \$4,500 from LD. As a token of commitment, participating organisations will also be required to contribute \$500 for each participant engaged, making the amount of allowance to \$5,000 for each participant.

Home Affairs Bureau

District-based approach in alleviating and preventing poverty

28. District Officers have stepped up their activities on poverty alleviation work. For the three more deprived districts, District Officers

have set up new district forums to coordinate efforts in poverty prevention and alleviation. Additional resources will be squeezed within the department wherever necessary to support the poverty prevention and alleviation work in these districts.

Secretariat to the Commission on Poverty
Financial Secretary's Office
(with input from relevant bureaux)

January 2006