

**Subcommittee to Study the Transport Needs
and Provision of Concessionary Public Transport Fares for
Persons with Disabilities**

Information Paper for Meeting on 27 February 2007

PURPOSE

At the Subcommittee meeting on 15 February 2007, the Administration undertook to follow-up with public transport operators in exploring possible options of concessionary fares for persons with disabilities (PWDs) in the light of findings of the Survey on the Public Transport Needs of Persons with Disabilities conducted by the Social Sciences Research Centre of the University of Hong Kong. The Subcommittee requested the Administration to provide a concrete timetable for introducing amendments to the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 487) (DDO) to put it beyond doubt that selective provision of concessionary fares for PWDs in phases would not constitute a contravention of DDO.

FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS WITH PUBLIC TRANSPORT OPERATORS

2. Following the Subcommittee meeting, the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (SHWF) and the Secretary for the Environment, Transport and Works (SETW) have jointly written to eight major public transport operators (including MTR Corporation Limited, Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation, Citybus Limited, New World First Bus Services Limited, New Lantao Bus Co., (1973) Ltd., Kowloon Motor Bus Company (1933) Limited, Long Win Bus Co. Ltd. and Hongkong Tramways Limited) to appeal to them to consider providing fare concessions to PWDs with reference to the survey findings to facilitate their further integration into the society. The Administration also met with the public transport operators subsequently to follow up on the survey.

3. The public transport operators expressed that in order for them to have a better understanding of the summary findings of the survey, they would need the full survey report and the questionnaire in order to examine the survey methodology and findings. The requested materials have since been provided to them. The public transport operators also expressed that they would require time to study the report as well as the implications in detail before responses could be provided. The Administration will continue to follow up with the public transport operators on their responses as to whether fare concessions for PWDs could be provided subject to the legislative amendments to DDO being in place.

LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS TO DDO

4. The Health, Welfare and Food Bureau will effect legislative amendments to Annex 5 of the DDO to put it beyond doubt that provision of concessionary fares for selected groups of PWDs by the public transport operators would not constitute a contravention of the DDO. SHWF will introduce the amendment proposal to the Council for approval by resolution.

5. The Administration is working with the Department of Justice to ascertain whether the amendments to be made would impact on other legislation, including the Bill of Rights and the Basic Law. Meanwhile, we shall also consult and seek views from concerned parties, including the Equal Opportunities Commission. According to our plan, we shall issue to the Law Draftsman a draft Drafting Instruction in the second quarter of 2007, and we estimate that drafting work will take about two months to complete. We shall proceed with the legislative process once the draft is ready.

6. According to our timetable, we shall present our proposal for amendments to the Council in the latter half of 2007.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau
Environment, Transport and Works Bureau
February 2007