

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2264/05-06
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 8 May 2006 at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Chairman)
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Bernard CHAN, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, SBS, JP
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC

Member absent : Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

Public Officers attending : Items IV and V
Ms Linda LAI, JP
Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Family and Women)

Mr Freely CHENG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Family)

Item IV

Mrs Grace NG
Project Management Officer
Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Dr TING Wai-fong
Associate Professor
Department of Applied Social Sciences
The Hong Kong Polytechnic University

Dr K K LEUNG
Associate Professor, Department of Applied Social Studies,
City University
Director, Quality Evaluation Centre, City University

Item V

Ms Wendy CHEUNG
Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Family) 3

Mr Freeman HUEN
Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Elderly Services and Social Security) 1

Mrs TANG LAI Yuen-yee
Chief Social Work Officer (Strategy Planning)
Social Welfare Department

**Deputations
by invitation** : Item V

The Hong Kong Society for the Aged

Mr TIK Chi-yuen
Executive Director

Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association

Dr Miranda CHAN
Chief Executive

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Ms Christine FANG
Chief Executive

Ms Jane TSUEI
Business Director

SAGE Senior Council

Mr TONG Sin-ching, Edward
External Vice-Chairman

Ms LEE Mo-ching
Internal Vice-Chairman

Hong Kong Social Workers Association Ltd

Mr CHUA Hoi-wai
President

Clerk in attendance : Ms Doris CHAN
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

Staff in attendance : Ms Amy YU
Senior Council Secretary (2) 3

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

I. Confirmation of minutes
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1873/05-06 and CB(2)1902/05-06)

The minutes of the meetings held on 21 March 2006 and 10 April 2006 were confirmed.

II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

2. There was no information paper issued since the last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1874/05-06(01) and (02))

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items at the next regular meeting to be held on 12 June 2006 at 10:45 am –

- (a) Consultancy study for the review of the Design Manual : Barrier Free Access 1997; and
- (b) Workload of social workers.

The Chairman suggested and members agreed to invite members of the Panel on Planning, Lands and Works to attend the meeting for discussion of item (a), instead of holding a joint meeting of the two Panels on the item as originally agreed at the meeting on 9 January 2006.

4. The Chairman said that at the meeting of the Panel on Health Services held prior to this meeting, it was agreed that it would meet jointly with this Panel to discuss the issue relating to “Discharge planning in public hospitals” on 12 June 2006. Members agreed.

5. Arising from the recent incident involving the issuance of child protection orders by the Juvenile Court against a mother with four children, Mr Albert CHAN proposed to hold a special meeting to discuss child protection policies. Members agreed.

IV. Community Investment and Inclusion Fund - Progress Report as of April 2006

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1874/05-06(03) and (04))

6. Project Management Officer (PMO) showed members a video on experience-sharing by participants, project leaders and collaborators involved in over 20 projects and highlighted four themes with selected examples from projects, outlined as follows –

- (a) Capacity building as reflected in the “Simple Home Repair Co-op” project – under this project some 200 previously unemployed middle-aged home repair workers joined together to form a co-operative, providing voluntary services to the needy and exploring the potential of alternative home repair services markets. In the past two years, the co-operative had generated a turnover of over HK\$2 million.
- (b) Community building through a co-operative model reflected in the “Tung Chung Sunny Community Programme” – this project aimed at promoting the spirit of mutual help, cultivating a positive life attitude and creating opportunities in this new and relatively isolated community. 10 co-operatives had already been set up under the project so far, creating over 150 full and part-time jobs.
- (c) Social inclusion as demonstrated in the “Project to Promote Family Cohesion and a More Colourful Family Life” – the objectives of this project were to apply new strategies to strengthen the link between new immigrants and local residents in Tin Shui Wai. Instead of being cast in the traditional role of recipient of special services, the new immigrants were also able to contribute their skills to serve the local community (e.g. serving as tutors in Putonghua). Now the two groups were jointly operating a self-financed and community-owned after-school care programme.
- (d) Mentoring through cross-sectoral collaboration through the “Red Apprenticeship – Employment Enhancement Scheme” – this project involved matching non-engaged youths with individual volunteer mentors who were professionals in different fields, with the aim of enhancing young people’s motivation, self-confidence, job and interpersonal skills and employability.

The video showed the positive impact of the projects on raising the self-confidence of participants, building social cohesion, strengthening community networks and achieving social and economic outcomes.

7. PMO then briefed members, through a PowerPoint presentation, on the latest position of the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF), an assessment of its impact achieved so far, and the Fund’s strategic focus for the coming year, details of which were set out in the Administration’s paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1874/05-06(03)). PMO further said that the Administration would be happy to arrange site visits on CIIF projects for members.

8. Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Family) (PASHWF(F)) informed members that the Administration had commissioned an evaluation consortium (the Consortium), which comprised seven research teams from five tertiary institutions, to conduct an independent evaluation on the CIIF operation and funded projects in 2004. The Consortium studies were completed with final reports submitted in March 2006. He then invited Dr TING Wai-fong of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University and Dr K K LEUNG of the City University of Hong Kong, members of the Consortium, to share with members the findings of their studies.

(Post-meeting note : The full reports of the CIIF Evaluation Consortium and the press clippings on CIIF provided by the Administration at the meeting were made available to members for their information vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1946/05-06 after the meeting. Soft copies of the reports are available through the CIIF website <<http://www.hwfb.gov.hk/ciif>>)

9. Dr TING Wai-fong told members that the objectives of the study undertaken by her research team were to document the mechanism whereby social capital was built among the disadvantaged groups, and to measure the impact of social capital on the quality of life of people from the disadvantaged groups. The study focused on CIIF projects for two groups of participants, namely, the communities of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong and the socially and economically disadvantaged young people in Hong Kong. Dr Ting further highlighted the following findings of her study –

- (a) both groups of participants had demonstrated positive changes in respect of their general outlook on life after having participated in the CIIF projects. It was also notable that they rated themselves highly in terms of willingness to offer help to others; and
- (b) since 1990's, the provision of social welfare services had shifted towards the remedial mode, with less emphasis being placed on preventive measures and developmental work at the local community level. CIIF, in seeking to promote community participation and mutual assistance, could help redress this imbalance. The study showed that participation in CIIF projects had enabled the participants to strengthen their social networks and broadened the support base available to assist them to resolve their problems.

10. Dr K K LEUNG briefed members on the findings and recommendations of his research study on CIIF projects –

- (a) his research focused on the formation of the three key social capital components, namely, cognitive, relational and structural. It was found that the CIIF projects had helped built up cognitive social capital among project participants/members and volunteers, and relational social capital across groups was also evident;
- (b) the development of social capital in Hong Kong required the joint efforts of the Government, the business community and the third sector. More dialogues among the three parties would be helpful in strengthening this tripartite partnership; and
- (c) in the light of the importance of CIIF projects in promoting social inclusion and mutual assistance, the Administration should allocate more resources for the development of the projects.

Pace of disbursement of fund of the CIIF

11. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that when the \$300 million CIIF was launched in August 2002, it was initially for a period of three years. However, after almost four years of operation, the total funding granted to approved projects under the Fund was only around \$80 million as of April 2006. He asked whether this slow pace of disbursement of the Fund was due to its assessment criteria being too stringent, or the projects submitted for consideration not being sufficiently innovative, or other reasons.

12. PASHWF(F) explained that as the prime objectives of the Fund were to promote mutual help and develop community support networks by mobilizing community resources and volunteer efforts, the projects did not involve huge amount of funding, which accounted for the reason why only \$80 million had been disbursed so far. Indeed, the more successful projects required less amount of funding support and some of them were able to achieve self-financing after a short period of time. He further said that there was no pre-set timetable for expending the entire Fund and there was also no ceiling for each round of application. He also pointed out that some organisations preferred to run a project on a trial basis during the initial year, after which the operation of the project would be reviewed and additional funding sought for in subsequent years as appropriate.

13. The Chairman said that with the affirmation by the Consortium studies on the positive impact of the social capital building initiatives being adopted by the CIIF, the Administration should speed up the pace of disbursement of the Fund.

14. Mr James TIEN pointed out that like CIIF, many other special funds set up by the Government were not yet exhausted after a few years of operation, such as

Action

the fund specifically set up to assist small and medium-sized enterprises. He was of the view that it was important not to over relax the assessment criteria of the Fund, and considered the rate of disbursement of the Fund thus far, with 102 projects approved involving a total funding of some \$80 million, to be reasonable.

15. Mr Albert HO requested the Administration to provide information on the projects funded by CIIF, such as the names and the main features of the projects, and the amount of funding granted to each project, to facilitate members' understanding of the progress of the Fund.

Admin 16. In reply, PMO advised that the Annual Reports of the Fund, as well as information on the approved projects (such as amount of grant and project status), the Annual Sharing Forums and the Project Expositions had been previously distributed and posted on the CIIF website. Nonetheless, she agreed to provide for members' reference the information requested by Mr HO.

Review of the Co-operative Societies Ordinance

17. Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that some organisations had reflected to her that the constraints posed by the Co-operative Societies Ordinance (Cap. 33) (the Ordinance) had made it difficult for them to form co-operatives to continue with the work of the CIIF projects after the seed funding granted by the Fund had been used up. She further said that she and some other Legislative Council (LegCo) Members, including Mrs Sophie LEUNG, had been pursuing the amendment of the Ordinance for many years, and she was dissatisfied that there had not been much progress in the matter so far.

18. PASHWF(F) responded that the Administration was willing to review the Ordinance with a view to facilitating the formation of co-operatives of social enterprise nature. He said that the Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (SHWF) together with the Panel Chairman had paid site visits to some co-operatives to better understand their specific concerns. It was found that a major difficulty encountered by the needy groups in forming co-operatives was the lack of professional knowledge/experience in setting up co-operatives. The requirement under the Ordinance that all co-operatives should have a minimum number of 10 members was only secondary. He also invited members to note that a membership base that was too small was not conducive to the smooth operation of co-operatives, which usually involved a lot of practical tasks requiring a critical mass for division of labour and was based on the principles of democratic control and check-and-balance. Overseas experience showed that the membership size of a co-operative ranged from three to 100. He said that the Administration welcomed views of the relevant organisations on the appropriate threshold in respect of the membership size of co-operatives.

19. Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that apart from the number of members, the lack of an employer and employee relationship in a co-operative was another area of concern. She urged the Administration to expedite the review of the Ordinance and present proposed amendments to the Ordinance for members' discussion as soon as possible, rather than continue to procrastinate on the matter.

20. Mrs Sophie LEUNG said that the Administration should stop making reference to the co-operatives which the Ordinance sought to regulate, as they were distinctly different in nature from the co-operatives formed to enhance the sustainability of social capital projects such as the CIIF projects. She added that the Women's Commission had already raised with the Administration the need to adopt a fresh perspective a few years back.

21. Responding to the enquiry of Mr Albert HO on the number of co-operatives formed arising from the CIIF projects, PMO advised that under the CIIF scheme, mutual help networks were not formed for the sole purpose of forming co-operatives. Nonetheless, of the 200-odd mutual help networks to be formed under CIIF projects, 22 would develop into self-financing co-operatives, two of which had been formally registered to date. She further said that formal registration of co-operatives was not necessarily a prerequisite to achieving the social capital objectives of promoting mutual assistance and creating job opportunities through partnership.

22. In response to the Chairman's comment that the Administration should discuss the amendment of the Ordinance with the relevant parties as soon as possible, PASHWF(F) said that the Commission on Poverty had been discussing how to promote the development of social enterprises including co-operatives in Hong Kong from a strategic perspective, and the review of the Ordinance was only a part of the discussion. He stressed that the review of the Ordinance should be undertaken within the broad context of promoting the development of social enterprises in Hong Kong.

23. Mrs Sophie LEUNG suggested that the Panel should write to the Commission on Poverty to request the Commission to follow up vigorously on promoting the development of social enterprise, in particular the review of the Ordinance. Members agreed.

Clerk

“Simple Home Repair Co-op” project

24. In response to Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, PMO elaborated on the operation of the “Simple Home Repair Co-op” project. She said that the project did not only generate employment opportunities for a group of some 200 middle-aged,

Action

unemployed home repair workers, but also helped these workers regain self-esteem, improved their family relationships and enhanced their community involvement. Apart from the fee-charging home repair services offered by the co-operative, the home repair workers also provided voluntary home repair work to the aged and needy persons/families and trained up student volunteers who joined the voluntary work team for home repair. In return, the volunteer students would help the home repair workers in their promotion and marketing work. She added that the co-operative operation was being managed primarily by some 30 core members of the co-operative.

25. Mr James TIEN said that the organiser of the project should consider further enhancing the professional skills of the home repair workers, and hence their employability, by soliciting the help of technical staff in the business sector in providing training to the workers in respect of the latest technology/products relating to home repair and renovation.

26. In response, PASHWF(F) said that the business sector could contribute to the development of social capital in many ways. Apart from providing financial support to initiatives and projects relating to social enterprises, they could encourage their employees to serve as volunteers and to provide some fundamental training to members of social enterprises in areas such as management, accounting and marketing, which would assist them in their endeavours.

Future development

27. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan asked whether consideration would be given to turning successful CIIF models into mainstream services.

28. PMO responded that while encouraging mutual help and concern, and promoting cross-sectoral partnerships were the common objectives of all CIIF projects, extension of successful CIIF project models to other districts should take account of the different service needs and characteristics of local communities. The Administration would promote the good practices of successful projects to maximise their impact, which would be one of the strategic priorities for the Fund in the next phase of its development. PASHWF(F) supplemented that the Administration was prepared to discuss with the interested non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on how to maximise the impact of successful CIIF models in other communities.

29. Miss CHAN Yuen-han echoed the view of Dr TING Wai-fong that it was important to develop community support networks to complement the current remedial mode of provision of social services. She was of the view that the Administration should enhance the promotion of the Fund to maximise its impact

and advantages.

30. In response, PASHWF(F) said that there were regular discussions between District Social Welfare Officers (DSWOs), the CIIF and the NGOs concerned on ways to enhance the promotion of CIIF. As many CIIF projects, particularly the successful ones, involved cross-sectoral collaboration, it would take more time before the promotion efforts bore fruits.

31. Mrs Sophie LEUNG said that CIIF was a successful initiative on the part of the Administration, and its progress to date had been encouraging. Now that the seeds for social capital had been sown, the Administration should plan for the next step of development to help social enterprises take root in the society, including facilitating the formation of co-operatives. She added that local greening work was a service area which could be taken up by unengaged young people, and reference should be drawn from successful experience in other countries, such as those shared at the recent Conference on Social Enterprise. She hoped that the Administration would submit to members a paper on how to take forward the development of social enterprises in due course, and invite LegCo Members to attend the Annual Sharing Forum of CIIF.

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32. PASHWF(F) reiterated that the promotion of social enterprises should be undertaken from a holistic and strategic perspective. In this regard, he understood that the Commission on Poverty had already commissioned academics to conduct studies to enhance the development of social enterprises in Hong Kong. The Financial Secretary, in his 2006-07 budget speech, had mentioned that the Administration would assist further in the development of social enterprises, such as by setting up seed funds to assist the formation of social enterprises and facilitating participation by social enterprises in tenders of government contracts.

V. Social welfare planning mechanism

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1874/05-06(05) to (07), CB(2)1923/05-06(01) and CB(2)1942/05-06 (01))

33. At the invitation of the Chairman, PASHWF(F) introduced the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1874/05-06(05)) which set out the Government's present social welfare planning mechanism.

Views of deputations

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

34. Ms Christine FANG presented the views of the Hong Kong Council of

Social Service as set out in its submission (LC Paper No. CB(2)1923/05-06(01)) and highlighted the following points –

- (a) while it was noted that the Administration had engaged in various forms of planning in the provision of social welfare services in the last few years, such as annual consultation and district planning, it failed to put in place an integrated and forward-looking planning framework comprising long-term strategic directions, medium-term plans for individual programme areas and service development and delivery of annual plans by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and NGOs, as undertaken by the Administration when it introduced the Lump Sum Grant funding mechanism in 2000;
- (b) although the Administration engaged the welfare sector in discussions on the Strategic Framework for the Social Welfare in 2004, it had not yet come up with such a blueprint, which was essential in guiding the long-term development of social welfare services in Hong Kong;
- (c) the Administration should also formulate medium-term plans for individual programme areas reflecting the priorities in each service area. In this regard, reference could be made to the 2005 Rehabilitation Programme Plan Review during which the Administration had adopted a partnership approach in the numerous discussions and consultations with the relevant service providers and user groups; and
- (d) to facilitate the district planning process, the Administration should provide NGOs with detailed analyses of the needs of different districts in respect of social welfare services.

Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association

35. Dr Miranda CHAN presented the following views –

- (a) while she welcomed the Administration's initiatives in establishing the mechanisms on annual consultation and district planning, she considered that the Administration should also draw up an integrated long-term plan to provide the public with a vision on the development of social welfare services, which should embody the ethos of social harmony, social justice and social progress;

- (b) when planning for social welfare services, the Administration should not only consult the professional organisations concerned, but should also solicit the views of the general public. Co-ordination among different bureaux/government departments in the planning process should be strengthened; and
- (c) the annual half-day consultation sessions provided a valuable platform for exchanges and communications between the Administration and the organisations concerned. Consideration should be given to extending the duration of these sessions.

The Hong Kong Society for the Aged

36. Mr TIK Chi-yuen highlighted the following points in the submission of the Hong Kong Society for the Aged which was tabled at the meeting -

- (a) Over 180 000 elders were now on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA), and another 100 000 non-CSSA elders were living in poverty. Also, around 72% of the elderly suffered from chronic illnesses. These, and other data quoted in the submission, reflected the huge demand for support services among the elderly;
- (b) the rapid increase in the ageing population over the next 30 years meant that the demand for elderly services would continue to be on the rise;
- (c) the existing support services were inadequate to meet the needs of the elderly, as evidenced by the long waiting lists for elderly homes (with 20 000 elders on the waiting list involving an average waiting period of three years) and Integrated Home Care Services (with 3 500 elders on the waiting list); and
- (d) the present planning mechanism could not address the needs of the elderly in the long run. Instead, the Administration should implement a three-tier planning mechanism comprising a 10-year strategic plan; a three-year medium-term plan which included planning on manpower and resources allocation; and delivery of these plans via the annual Policy Address and the Annual Budget.

(Post-meeting note : The submission of the Hong Kong Society for the Aged was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1874/05-06(07) after the meeting.)

SAGE Senior Council

37. Mr TONG Sin-ching, Edward highlighted the shortage of places in elderly homes. He said that his parents, who were both over 90 years old, had applied for admission into an elderly home. However, they were told that it would take at least three years before they would be admitted into one, and it would take even longer if they wished to be admitted into the same elderly home. He asked what the Government had done and would do to take forward the vision of “ageing in place” as announced in last year’s Policy Address.

38. Ms LEE Mo-ching said that due to inadequate retirement protection, many elders were living in poverty. She urged the Administration to provide the needy elders with better support services. As the elderly possessed valuable skills and experience in different fields, she also called upon the Administration to provide them with employment opportunities, which would not only help them earn their living, but also give them opportunities to continue to contribute to the society.

Hong Kong Social Workers Association Ltd

39. Mr CHUA Hoi-wai introduced the submission of the Hong Kong Social Workers Association Ltd which was tabled at the meeting.

(Post-meeting note : The submission of the Hong Kong Social Workers Association Ltd was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1942/05-06(01) after the meeting.)

40. Mr CHUA was disappointed that the only conclusion coming out of the discussions on formulating the Strategic Framework for the Social Welfare in 2004 was the dual focus on social investment and tripartite partnerships in future welfare planning. He stressed that a comprehensive strategic plan was needed to ensure the provision of adequate welfare services in the future, and urged the Administration to establish a platform to work with the NGOs and user groups concerned, in the spirit of partnership, to map out the future strategic directions as soon as possible.

Discussion

41. The Chairman and Mr LEE Cheuk-yan criticised the Administration for failing to work out a blueprint on the long-term development of welfare services. They pointed out that the Administration had in fact reneged on its undertaking made when the Lump Sum Grant Subvention System was introduced, that it would put in place an integrated and forward looking planning framework comprising long-term strategic directions, medium-term plans and annual plans.

42. Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Family and Women) (DSHWF(F&W)) responded that the Administration had adopted a flexible planning approach which allowed the Administration and the NGOs to be responsive to the latest requests and changing circumstances. While discussions during the annual consultation sessions were primarily focused on the immediate priorities for the coming year, there would also be exchanges with the welfare sector on the longer-term development.

43. In response to Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's question on whether the Administration had made any projection on service needs in, say, five years, DSHWF(F&W) said that the Administration would adopt different planning mechanisms for different service areas, having regard to the individual needs and situation of each service area. For instance, in respect of rehabilitation service, the Administration had worked out a Rehabilitation Programme Plan to provide for the long-term needs of people with disabilities. She further said that under the existing budgetary arrangements, planning was usually confined only to the expenditure for the coming year. This was different from the past practice whereby bureaux/government departments could make budgetary plans and provisions for the next five years. She stressed that this, however, did not mean that new money for new initiatives would only be granted for one year. Where justified, such funding would continue to be granted on a long-term basis in the subsequent years.

44. Ms LI Fung-ying said that the Administration should carve out a forward-looking plan to guide the long-term development of welfare services, instead of merely responding to changing circumstances in a piecemeal manner. In response to Ms LI, DSHWF(F&W) said that apart from frequent exchanges with the relevant NGOs, the Administration would also engage in regular dialogues with the relevant advisory bodies, such as the Elderly Commission for services to the elderly and the Commission on Youth in respect of youth services, to map out the long-term plan for each service area.

45. Mr Frederick FUNG expressed disappointment with the Administration's paper, which only listed out social investment and tripartite partnership as the focus of attention in future planning. He said that the Administration should not rely on the advisory bodies to hammer out strategic directions for welfare services. Instead, the Administration should formulate a welfare planning framework for consultation with the relevant advisory bodies.

46. Mr Frederick FUNG further said that the pilot project in Kwun Tong on a cross-service district welfare co-ordination mechanism was organised by the Home Affairs Department rather than SWD. He also said that there should be a

plan to extend the mechanism to other districts.

47. PASHWF(F) clarified that the pilot project in Kwun Tong was spearheaded by SWD. He added that SWD planned to extend the implementation of the cross-service district welfare co-ordination mechanism to other districts within the next two years.

48. Mr Albert CHAN was disappointed that the Administration had abandoned the previous planning mechanism in the form of a five-year plan. Such a long-term plan was important in providing a guiding philosophy for the development of social welfare policies, and adjustments to the plan could still be made where necessary in response to changing circumstances. He asked whether the Administration would reinstate the five-year plan for welfare services. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan also said that the Administration should restore the practice of preparing a 10-year White Paper on social welfare policies. DSHWF(F&W) responded that such mechanisms had been abandoned for quite some time, and regard should be given to their effectiveness when considering whether to reinstate them.

49. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that SHWF had to oversee three main policy areas and had been busy tackling a lot of issues and incidents relating to people's daily living, leaving him with little time to pursue long-term planning. The existing budgetary arrangements also made it difficult for policy secretaries to engage in long-term planning. He further said that the Administration might be reluctant to introduce changes to areas which would arouse controversy, such as the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme. He considered that these structural factors rendered it difficult for SHWF to engage in long-term planning.

50. Mr James TIEN said that under our existing political system, it was possible that long-term plans made in respect of different policy areas would be revamped once every five years, given that the term of office of a Chief Executive was for a period of five years. He further said that to facilitate discussions, SHWF should attend Panel meetings which involved discussions on forward-looking policy planning.

51. Mrs Sophie LEUNG suggested that the Director of Social Welfare should take the lead in coordinating the preparation of a blueprint on the Administration's visions on social welfare services, which would be a good starting point for triggering off further discussions on the subject.

52. The Chairman informed members that Mr LEE Cheuk-yan would like to propose a motion on requesting the Administration to reinstate the mechanism of preparing a 10-year white paper on the planning of social welfare policies.

Action

However, as it was already beyond the extended ending time of the meeting, in accordance with rule 24A(f) of the House Rules, the motion could not be proposed. The Chairman said that the motion might be raised when the subject was next discussed.

Admin 53. In summing up, the Chairman reiterated the need for the Administration to work out a long-term plan to guide the development of social welfare services. Noting that the first annual consultation session for 2006 would be held in June 2006, the Chairman requested and members agreed that the Administration should report to the Panel on the discussions in the June consultation session, and further discuss with the Panel on future long-term planning for welfare services, in July 2006. DSHWF(F&W) agreed.

54. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:03 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
9 June 2006