

**For information
on 21 August 2006**

LEGCO PANEL ON WELFARE SERVICES

**Subcommittee on Review of the
Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme**

The Social Security Assistance Index of Prices

PURPOSE

The Administration has completed the latest round of the Household Expenditure Survey (HES) on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Households in 2004/05. Based on the findings, we have updated the weighting system of the Social Security Assistance index of Prices (SSAIP).

BACKGROUND

2. The CSSA standard rates are reviewed annually to take account of price changes with reference to the movement of the SSAIP¹, which is specially compiled by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD), to reflect the impact of price

¹ Please see Annex for the article on the SSAIP published in the Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics (August 2006).

changes experienced by recipients of CSSA. It consists of the same items as other Consumer Price Indices (CPIs) compiled by the C&SD except that items which are covered by special grants under the CSSA Scheme (such as rent) or provided free by the Government (such as medical services) are excluded.

3. On top of the regular monitoring on the changes of the SSAIP, the weighting system of the SSAIP (i.e. the relative expenditure shares of individual items of good and services covered by the index) are updated every five years on the basis of the finding of the HES on CSSA Households.

HES ON CSSA HOUSEHOLDS

Survey objective

4. The objective of the HES on CSSA Households is to collect data for studying the latest expenditure patterns of CSSA households and updating the expenditure weights of the SSAIP.

Survey period, survey coverage and sample size

5. The HES on CSSA Households was conducted between October 2004 and September 2005. All CSSA cases with at least one eligible member receiving the standard rate and living in local domestic households are covered in the survey. A random sample of CSSA households from various geographical areas and categories of households has been drawn by the SWD based on their administrative records. The target sample size for this survey round is 1 610 CSSA households.

Findings

6. The key findings of the 2004/05 HES on CSSA Households are listed below:

- (a) Of the total expenditure on all goods and services consumed by CSSA recipients in 2004/05, 67% were covered by the SSAIP while the remaining 33% were covered by special grants or provided free by the Administration.
- (b) Among all SSAIP consumption items, food (55%) was the largest component, followed by miscellaneous services (11%) and miscellaneous goods (9%).
- (c) When compared with 1999/2000-based SSAIP, the weights of 2004/05 based SSAIP remained fairly stable. Apart from a decrease of 1.2 percentage point for meals bought away from home and an increase of 2.0 percentage points for electricity, gas and water, the differences for other sections of goods and services were within one percentage point.
- (d) According to the preliminary figures compiled from the HES on CSSA Households, the average CSSA monthly payment is higher than the average monthly CSSA household expenditure. The table below shows the details of the comparison:

Comparison of Average Monthly CSSA Payment* and Average Monthly Household Expenditure during April 2005 to March 2006 by Number of Household Members

<i>Number of household members</i>	<i>Average monthly CSSA payment * (Apr 05 – Mar 06) (\$)</i>	<i>Average monthly CSSA household expenditure ^ (at Apr 05 – Mar 06 prices) (\$)</i>	<i>Difference</i>	
	(a)	(b)	<i>Amount (\$)</i> (c)=(a)-(b)	<i>%</i> (d)=(c)/(a)
1	3,477	3,095	382	11.0
2	5,798	5,562	236	4.1
3	7,779	7,635	144	1.9
4	9,172	8,777	395	4.3
5	10,896	10,287	609	5.6
6 or over	13,646	12,734	912	6.7

Notes : (1) * Refer to the situations when CSSA households do not have income other than CSSA payment. The figures are compiled based on CSSA cases and the number of household members refers to those eligible for CSSA.

(2) ^ The data are extracted from the 2004/05 CSSA Household Expenditure Survey adjusted by the 2004/05-based Consumer Price Index (CPI(A)) for the period Apr 2005 – Mar 2006 and the number of household members refers to those receiving CSSA standard rate.

WAY FORWARD

7. Upon the completion of the 2004/05 HES on CSSA Households, a new series of SSAIP has been compiled with October 2004 to September 2005 as the base period. The adoption of the new series in June will reflect more accurately the impact of price changes faced by CSSA recipients. The details of the rebasing of

the SSAIP can be found in article published in the Hong Kong Monthly Digest of Statistics (August 2006) at Annex.

8. We will follow the annual adjustment cycle to revise the rate of standard payments under CSSA and the Social Security Allowance (SSA). The Administration will take into account the SSAIP movement for the past 12 months ending in October, and seek approval by Finance Committee (FC) in December to revise the standard rates in accordance with the movement. The revised rates, if applicable, will be effected in February of the following year.

Health, Welfare and Food Bureau

Social Welfare Department

August 2006

社會保障援助物價指數 THE SOCIAL SECURITY ASSISTANCE INDEX OF PRICES

社會保障援助物價指數（社援指數）是用來反映綜合社會保障援助（綜援）標準金額所包括的商品和服務的價格變動對綜援受助人的影響。這個指數由政府統計處編製，供社會福利署按價格變動調整綜援標準金額時作為參考。

本文闡述社援指數的編製方法、指數基期的重訂（新基期為二零零四／零五年）及其應用於綜援計劃的情況。

The Social Security Assistance Index of Prices (SSAIP) is compiled to reflect the impact of price changes on recipients of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) insofar as the items of goods and services covered under the CSSA standard rates are concerned. The index is compiled by the Census and Statistics Department for use by the Social Welfare Department as a reference in making adjustments to CSSA standard rates to take account of price changes.

This article describes the method of compilation of the SSAIP, the re-basing of the index to 2004/05 and its application in the CSSA Scheme.

如對本文有任何查詢，請致電社會福利署研究及統計組（電話：2892 5225）。
If you have any enquiries on this article, please call Research and Statistics Section,
Social Welfare Department (Tel. : 2892 5225).

社會保障援助物價指數

The Social Security Assistance Index of Prices

1. 引言

1.1 香港常用的消費物價指數是甲類消費物價指數、乙類消費物價指數及丙類消費物價指數。這三類消費物價指數由政府統計處編製，是用作反映不同開支範圍的住戶所使用的商品和服務的價格變動。甲類消費物價指數的對象是約 50% 屬較低開支範圍的住戶；乙類消費物價指數的對象則是約 30% 屬中等開支範圍的住戶；而丙類消費物價指數的對象則是約 10% 屬較高開支範圍的住戶。綜合消費物價指數則是根據以上所有住戶的總體開支模式而編製，反映消費物價轉變對整體住戶的影響。至於其餘 10% 屬於最低及最高開支範圍的住戶及領取綜合社會保障援助（綜援）的住戶則不包括在內。消費物價指數的變動，普遍用作顯示影響消費者的通貨膨脹或通貨緊縮的指標。

1.2 社會保障援助物價指數（社援指數）是一個具有以上消費物價指數的功能，而對象是綜接受助人的消費物價指數。這個指數是由政府統計處編製，用以反映綜援標準金額所包括的商品和服務的價格變動對綜接受助人的影響，供社會福利署（社署）按價格變動調整綜援標準金額時作為參考。

1.3 本文闡述社援指數的編製方法、指數基期的重訂（新基期為二零零四／零五年）及其應用於綜援計劃的情況。

2. 綜援計劃

2.1 綜援計劃（一九九三年七月一日前為公共援助（公援）計劃）是向有需要的個人或家庭提供經濟援助，使他們的入息達到一定的水平，以應付生活上的基本需要。申請人須接受經濟狀況調查。

1. Introduction

1.1 The commonly used Consumer Price Indices (CPIs) in Hong Kong are the CPI(A), CPI(B) and CPI(C). These three indices are compiled by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) to reflect changes in the prices of goods and services consumed by households in different expenditure ranges. CPI(A) relates to about 50% of households in the relatively low expenditure range; CPI(B) relates to the next 30% of households in the medium expenditure range; and CPI(C) relates to the next 10% of households in the relatively high expenditure range. A Composite CPI is also compiled based on the aggregated expenditure pattern of all the above households taken together to reflect the impact of overall consumer price changes on all the affected households as a whole. The remaining 10% households in the lowest and the highest expenditure ranges and those living on the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) are not covered. Changes in the CPI are widely used as indicators of the inflation or deflation affecting consumers.

1.2 The Social Security Assistance Index of Prices (SSAIP) is a CPI which has functions like the others mentioned above but directed towards CSSA recipients. The index is compiled to reflect the impact of price changes on CSSA recipients insofar as the items of goods and services covered under the CSSA standard rates are concerned. It is compiled by the C&SD for use by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) as a reference in making adjustments to CSSA standard rates to take account of price changes.

1.3 This article describes the method of compilation of the SSAIP, the re-basing of the index to 2004/05 and its application in the CSSA Scheme.

2. The CSSA Scheme

2.1 The CSSA Scheme (known as Public Assistance (PA) Scheme before 1 July 1993), which is means-tested, is designed to provide financial assistance to bring the income of needy individuals or families up to a prescribed level to meet their basic needs.

2.2 綜援金分爲三類：

- (甲) 供受助人應付基本及一般需要，如食品、電力與燃氣、衣履及交通的標準金額；
- (乙) 就單親和長期受助人的特別需要而發放的補助金；及
- (丙) 由於年老、傷殘、就學、住屋及其他家庭特別情況而引致的特別需要所發放的特別津貼，例如租金、水費及排污費、就學費用、特別膳食、康復及外科用具。

2.3 標準金額及補助金會按社援指數的變動而定期調整，以跟上價格的變動。特別津貼大多按實際支出支付，部分則定有最高限額，社署會因應價格的變動，不時檢討和調整所定的限額。

3. 社援指數的發展及編訂

3.1 社援指數（前稱公共援助物價指數）於一九七二年首次編製。指數的權數，即各商品和服務的相對重要性，乃參照當時反映低開支住戶開支模式的修訂消費物價指數的權數而編算。及至社署聯同統計處進行一九七四／七五年住戶開支統計調查，將公援住戶首次納入調查範圍內，他們的開支模式亦因而得以確立，並用作編算指數的權數系統。此後，權數便按每五年進行一次的住戶開支統計調查的結果而重訂。

2.2 There are three types of payments under the CSSA Scheme :

- (a) standard rates to meet the basic and general needs of different types of recipients such as food, electricity and gas, clothing and footwear and transport;
- (b) supplements to meet the specific needs of single parents and long-term recipients; and
- (c) special grants to meet the particular needs arising from old age, disability, education, accommodation and other family circumstances, such as rent, water and sewage charges, schooling expenses, special diets, rehabilitation and surgical appliances.

2.3 The standard rates and supplements are reviewed periodically to keep pace with price changes, with due regard to the rate of change in the SSAIP. Most of the special grants are provided to meet the actual costs and others are payable up to prescribed ceilings which are reviewed and adjusted from time to time to take account of price changes.

3. Development and Compilation of the SSAIP

3.1 The SSAIP (then known as the Public Assistance Index of Prices) was first constructed in 1972. The weights, i.e. relative importance of the goods and services covered by the index, were derived from those of the then Modified CPI which related to low expenditure households that time. In the 1974/75 round of the Household Expenditure Survey (HES) jointly conducted by the C&SD and SWD, a sample of PA households was first included. The expenditure pattern of CSSA recipients was accordingly established and used to derive the weighting system for the index. Thereafter, the weighting system was updated according to the results of each round of the HES, which is conducted once every five years.

3.2 按月編訂的社援指數是由下列三個基本部分組成：

- (甲) 指數所涵蓋的一籃子商品及服務；
- (乙) 權數系統，即個別商品及服務項目所佔的相對重要性；及
- (丙) 個別商品及服務的每月平均零售價。

商品及服務籃子

3.3 上述（甲）部分包括綜援受助人所使用的各項商品及服務，但下述 3.4 段所列的項目則**不包括**在內，原因是這些項目：(i) 是根據實際開支支付；(ii) 已包括在特別津貼之內，而特別津貼會按價格轉變定期作出相應調整；或 (iii) 由政府免費提供。

3.4 以下列出不包括在社援指數之內的商品及服務項目：

3.2 The SSAIP, computed on a monthly basis, comprises the following three basic components :

- (a) a basket of goods and services covered by the index;
- (b) a weighting system, i.e. relative importance of individual items of goods and services; and
- (c) monthly average retail prices of individual items of goods and services.

Basket of Goods and Services

3.3 For component (a), all items of goods and services consumed by CSSA recipients are included **except** those listed under para. 3.4. These items are not included because they are : (i) paid on an actual expenditure basis; (ii) covered by additional allowances for which any changes in the prices will be catered for by regular adjustments made to the special grants; or (iii) provided free by the Government.

3.4 The items of goods and service not included in the SSAIP are listed below :

不包括在社援指數之內的商品及服務 Goods and Services Not Included in the SSAIP

商品及服務的類別／項目

- 住屋
 - ◆ 房屋及所有有關費用（包括租金、差餉、地租、管理費、保養及維修費用。）
- 電力、燃氣及水
 - ◆ 水費及排污費
- 衣履
 - ◆ 夏季及冬季校服
 - ◆ 其他校服配件
 - ◆ 童裝毛衫、冷衫 *
 - ◆ 童裝鞋襪 *

Sections/items of goods and services

- Housing
 - ◆ All housing and related expenses (including rent, rates, government rent, management fees, maintenance and repair charges.)
- Electricity, gas and water
 - ◆ Water and sewage charges
- Clothing and footwear
 - ◆ Summer and winter school uniforms
 - ◆ Other school uniform accessories
 - ◆ Children's cardigans *
 - ◆ Children's stockings and footwear *

不包括在社援指數之內的商品及服務 (續)
Goods and Services Not Included in the SSAIP (Cont'd)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>➤ 耐用物品</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 剪刀 * ◆ 書包 ◆ 個人電腦及有關物品 ◆ 計算機 <p>➤ 雜項物品</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 醫療用品及設備 ◆ 參考書及字典 ◆ 教科書 (包括幼稚園至中學、毅進計劃、工藝程度及技術員程度)及網上教科書 ◆ 與就學用途有關的文具 <p>➤ 交通</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 校巴／褓母車車費 <p>➤ 雜項服務</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ 學費 (包括幼稚園至中學、毅進計劃、工藝程度及技術員程度) ◆ 考試費 (有學術性) 及其他教育服務費 ◆ 醫管局及衛生署的醫療服務費 ◆ 託兒服務費 ◆ 護老院收費 ◆ 家務助理收費 ◆ 上網收費 ◆ 殮葬服務費 ◆ 證件相費用 (例如學生相) * ◆ 影印／圖文傳真收費 ◆ 傳呼機收費 (例如一線通平安鐘的服務費) * | <p>➤ Durable goods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Scissors * ◆ Carrying cases for pupils ◆ Personal computers and related items ◆ Calculators <p>➤ Miscellaneous goods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Medical supplies and equipment ◆ Reference books and dictionaries ◆ Textbooks for kindergarten to secondary, project Yi Ji, craft and technician level and e-textbook ◆ Stationery for schooling purposes <p>➤ Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ School bus and nanny bus fares <p>➤ Miscellaneous services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ School fees for kindergarten to secondary, project Yi Ji, craft and technician level ◆ Examination fees (academics) and other educational charges ◆ Medical services provided by Hospital Authority and Department of Health ◆ Nursery charges ◆ Charges of residential care home services for elderly ◆ Charges of home help services ◆ Internet service charges ◆ Burial expenses ◆ Passport photo fee (e.g. photo fee for student card) * ◆ Photocopying / fax charges ◆ Paging service charges (e.g. emergency alarm system for elderly) * |
|--|--|

註釋：對於有“*”號的項目，特別津貼只佔去該項目部分的開支，這些項目的開支比重有部分（粗略地以一半計算）不會計算在社援指數的籃子內。例如，“童裝鞋襪”是與就學有關的劃一津貼之下所涵蓋的商品。由於實際上很難分辨“童裝鞋襪”的使用是否與就學有關，“童裝鞋襪”的一半開支比重會保留在社援指數的籃子之內，而另一半比重則不會計算在籃子內。

Note: For items marked with “*”, special grants are expected to account for a fair share of the expenses. They are excluded partially (with a broad-brush apportioning by half) in the SSAIP basket. For example, there is a flat rate grant for school related expenses in which “children’s stockings and footwear” is covered. Since it is difficult in practice to distinguish whether the use of “children’s stockings and footwear” is for schooling purposes or not, half of the expenditure weight of “children’s stockings and footwear” remains in the SSAIP basket while the other half is excluded from the basket.

權數系統

3.5 上述（乙）部分的權數是根據住戶開支統計調查所獲得有關綜援受助人用於個別商品及服務的實際開支與總開支的比率而編製。因此，權數系統是顯示綜援受助人在綜援標準金額所包括的消費項目的綜合開支模式。

3.6 隨着最近一次的二零零四／零五年住戶開支統計調查的完成，以二零零四／零五年為基期的社援指數新數列亦得以編製。採用新數列，將更能準確反映綜援受助人面對價格變動的影響。

3.7 下頁是以一九九九／二零零零年及以二零零四／零五為基期的社援指數的權數系統一覽表：

Weighting System

3.5 The weights of component (b) are based on the proportion of actual expenditure of CSSA recipients on individual items of goods and services as obtained from the HES. The weighting system thus represents the collective expenditure pattern of CSSA recipients in respect of all consumption items covered by the CSSA standard rates.

3.6 With the completion of the latest round of the HES in 2004/05, a new series of the SSAIP with 2004/05 as the base period has been compiled. The adoption of the new series will reflect more accurately the impact of price changes faced by CSSA recipients.

3.7 The table on the next page shows the weighting systems of the 1999/2000-based and 2004/05-based SSAIP :

以一九九九／二零零零年及以二零零四／零五年為基期的社援指數開支權數
Expenditure Weights of the 1999/2000-based and 2004/05-based SSAIP

商品或服務類別 Commodity/Service Section	1999/2000 %		2004/05 %	
食品 Food	56.12	(39.15)	55.26	(36.78)
外出用膳 <i>Meals bought away from home</i>	20.31	(14.17)	19.11	(12.72)
食品 (不包括外出用膳) <i>Food (excluding meals bought away from home)</i>	35.81	(24.98)	36.15	(24.06)
住屋 Housing	*	(*)	*	(*)
電力、燃氣及水 Electricity, gas and water	6.05	(4.22)	8.07	(5.37)
煙酒 Alcoholic drinks and tobacco	3.09	(2.16)	2.59	(1.72)
衣履 Clothing and footwear	4.83	(3.37)	4.50	(3.00)
耐用物品 Durable goods	3.54	(2.46)	3.03	(2.02)
雜項物品 Miscellaneous goods	9.05	(6.32)	9.12	(6.07)
交通 Transport	5.69	(3.97)	6.55	(4.36)
雜項服務 Miscellaneous services	11.63	(8.11)	10.88	(7.24)
所有社援指數內的商品或服務項目 All SSAIP commodity/service items	100.00	(69.76)	100.00	(66.57)
所有不包括在社援指數內的商品或服務項目 All commodity/service items not included in SSAIP		(30.24)		(33.43)
所有商品或服務類別 All commodity/service sections		(100.00)		(100.00)

註釋：* 所有住屋及有關開支都不包括在社援指數之內。

由於四捨五入關係，統計表內個別數字加起來可能與總數略有出入。

括號內數字為各項商品或服務在總開支中的比重。

Notes : * All housing and related expenditures are not included in the SSAIP.

Individual figures in the table may not add up to total due to rounding.

Figures in brackets represent the corresponding proportions to the total expenditure on all commodities/services.

3.8 綜接受助人在二零零四／零五年的商品及服務總開支中，有 67% 用於社援指數所包括的商品及服務（當中以食品佔最大比重，佔 37%）；而其餘 33% 則用於特別津貼所包括或政府免費提供的商品及服務。在組成社援指數的消費項目中，比重最高的是食品（55%），其次是雜項服務（11%），以及雜項物品（9%）。

3.9 與一九九九／二零零零年為基期的社援指數比較，以二零零四／零五年為基期的社援指數的權數大致維持穩定。除外出用膳的權數下跌 1.2 百分點，以及電力、燃氣及水的權數上升 2.0 百分點外，其他類別的商品及服務權數的變動均在一個百分點之內。

消費項目的每月平均零售價

3.10 至於（丙）部分，即各項商品及服務的每月平均零售價，是採用統計處為編製一般消費物價指數而搜集的價格資料。在該按月零售物價統計調查中，統計處從不同類別的零售商店及服務行業商號搜集個別項目的價格資料。搜集的方法主要以訪問形式進行，亦有部分以電話查詢及郵遞問卷方式取得。過去，所有用以編製甲類消費物價指數的相關消費項目的價格資料會用來編製社援指數。由二零零四／零五年開始，則會選取從綜接受助人所光顧的零售商店及服務行業商號類別搜集得來的價格資料，用以編製社援指數，這樣可更準確地反映綜接受助人所經歷的價格變動。

變動率

3.11 社援指數的變動率，是按照個別消費項目相對於基期的價格變動及其有關的支出權數來計算。這方法相當於找出，在當時購買與在基期時購買的同一籃子消費品，所需的總開支的變動。

3.8 Of the total expenditure on all goods and services consumed by CSSA recipients in 2004/05, 67% were covered by the SSAIP (with food constituting the largest share of 37%) while the remaining 33% were covered by special grants or provided free by Government. Expressed as a proportion to all SSAIP consumption items, the largest component was food (55%), followed by miscellaneous services (11%) and miscellaneous goods (9%).

3.9 When compared with the 1999/2000-based SSAIP, the weights of 2004/05-based SSAIP remained fairly stable. Apart from a decrease of 1.2 percentage point for meals bought away from home and an increase of 2.0 percentage points for electricity, gas and water, the differences for other sections of goods and services were within one percentage point.

Monthly Average Retail Prices of Consumption Items

3.10 As regards component (c), i.e. monthly average retail prices of individual items of goods and services, the price data which are collected by the C&SD for compiling the general CPIs are used. In that monthly retail price survey, price data on individual items are collected from various types of retail outlets and service providers, mainly by personal visits and supplemented by telephone and postal enquiries. In the past, price data of all relevant consumption items collected for the compilation of the CPI(A) were used in compiling the SSAIP. Starting from 2004/05, price data from the types of retail outlets and service providers patronized by CSSA recipients are selected for inclusion in the compilation to better reflect the price movements they experienced.

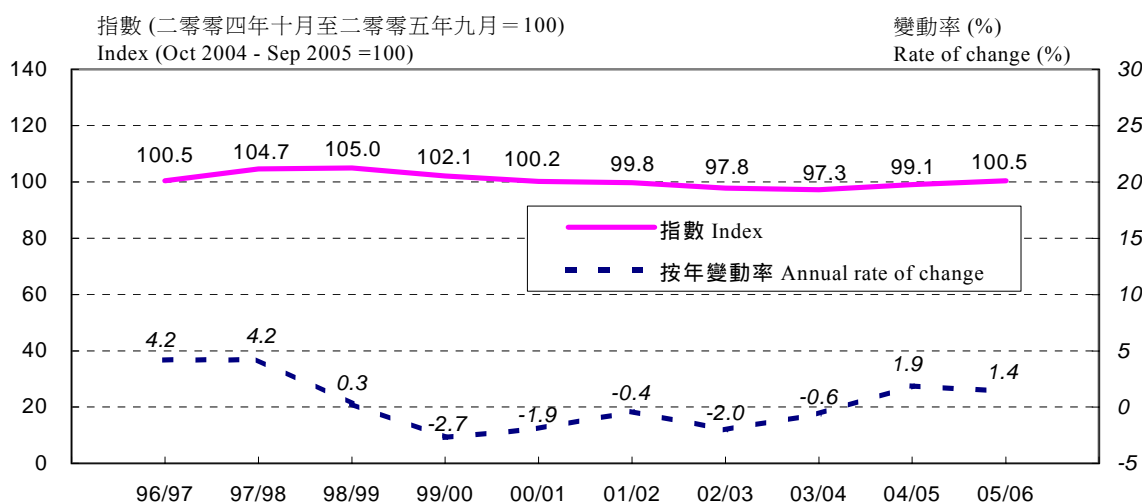
Rate of Change

3.11 The rate of change in the SSAIP is computed by applying the expenditure weights of individual consumption items to their corresponding price changes over the base period. The procedure is equivalent to comparing the total expenditure required to purchase the same consumption basket in the current period with that in the base period.

3.12 下圖顯示一九九六／九七年至二零零五／零六年度期間，社援指數的走勢及其按年變動率。在這期間，指數由一九九六／九七的 100.5 上升至一九九八／九九年的 105.0，之後逐漸下降至二零零三／零四年的 97.3，再回升至二零零五／零六年的 100.5。

3.12 The following chart presents the movements of the SSAIP and its annual rates of change during 1996/97 – 2005/06. The index increased from 100.5 in 1996/97 to 105.0 in 1998/99, decreased gradually to 97.3 in 2003/04 and then increased back to 100.5 in 2005/06.

一九九六／九七年度至二零零五／零六年度社援物價指數走勢及其按年變動率*
Movements of the SSAIP and Its Annual Rate of Change, 1996/97-2005/06*



註釋：* 按年變動率是按二零零四年十月至二零零五年九月為基期的社援物價指數計算。

Note: * Annual rate of change is computed based on the SSAIP with October 2004 to September 2005 as base period.

4. 指數的應用

4.1 為維持綜援計劃下標準金額及補助金的購買力，政府已設立機制，定期每年檢討有關金額的水平。在這個機制下，會參考社援指數截至每年十月的十二個月平均數與上一年同期的平均數比較得出的變動率，以衡量綜援受助人所面對綜援標準金額所涵蓋的商品及服務的價格變動。政府會參考指數所反映的價格變動，考慮是否需要調整標準金額及補助金。

4. Application of the Index

4.1 To maintain the purchasing power of the standard rates and supplements under the CSSA Scheme, the Government has put in force a mechanism to review their levels on an annual basis. Under this mechanism, the rate of change of SSAIP averaged for the 12 months ended October of a current year comparing with that of the preceding year will serve as a reference of the price changes that the CSSA recipients are experiencing insofar as the goods and services covered by the standard rate are concerned. The Government makes reference to the price changes reflected by the index and will consider making adjustment to the standard rates and supplements if necessary.