

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2773/06-07
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

**Minutes of special meeting
held on Tuesday, 3 July 2007, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon Bernard CHAN, GBS, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP

Members attending : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC

Public Officers attending : Item I
Ms Carol YIP
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2

Mr D C CHEUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare) 4

Mr Tony YIP
Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 4B

Ms Nancy LAW
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)

Mr Kenneth NG
Senior Statistician
Social Welfare Department

Mr CHAN Tak-kin
Chief Social Security Officer (Social Security) 4
Social Welfare Department

Professor LEUNG Cho-bun
Head of Department of Social Work and Social
Administration
The University of Hong Kong

Dr WONG Yu-cheung
Assistant Professor of Department of Social Work and
Social Administration
The University of Hong Kong

Mr YIP Hak-Kwong
Director of Policy 21

Item II

Ms Candy LAU
Assistant Secretary (Narcotics)
Security Bureau

Ms IP Siu-ming
Chief Social Work Officer (Youth)
Social Welfare Department

Mr CHEUNG Wing-hung
Chief Curriculum Development Officer
(Moral and Civic Education)
Education Bureau

**Deputations
by invitation** : Item I

港島單親互助社

Ms HO Chun-lai
Speaker

Mr NG Tak-chi
Speaker

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Ms Mariana CHAN
Chief Officer

Christian Action

Mr KWONG Fu-sam
Assistant Director

Hong Kong Association for the Survivors of Women Abuse
(Kwan Fook)

Ms LIU Ngan-fung
Chairman

Ms CHOW Ling
Member

The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong

Mr WONG Kwai-yau
Supervisor

Concerning Group for Women Poverty

Ms LEE Yuk-wah
Member

Society for Community Organization

Miss SZE Lai-shan
Community Organizer

Concerning CSSA Review Alliance

Miss LI Wai-yee
Researcher

New Women Arrivals League

Ms YEUNG Siu-kuen
Chairman

Hong Kong Christian Institute

Mr FAN Lap-hin
Project Secretary

Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union

Ms IP Pui-yu
General Secretary

CSSA Action Group

Mr AU YEUNG Tat-chor
Community Organizer

Justice & Peace Commission of the HK Catholic Diocese

Mr CHOY Man-kit
Project Officer

Item II

Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service

Mr Billy TANG Kam-piu
Programme Coordinator

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Ms Angela NG
Chief Officer, Services Department
(Family and Community)

Ms Lynn LAW
Officer, Services Department (Family and Community)

Hong Kong Children & Youth Services

Mr LAM Kwok-keung
Social Work Supervisor

Society of the Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention, Hong
Kong

Mr FUNG Cheung-tim
Planning & Development Manager

Caritas – Hong Kong

Mr CHU Fung
Social Worker

Hong Kong Christian Service Jockey Club Lodge of Rising
Sun

Mr Max SZETO
Superintendent

Christian New Life Association

Rev Sam CHENG
Director

Individual

Dr Ben CHEUNG Kin-leung

**Clerk in
attendance** : Miss Betty MA
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

**Staff in
attendance** : Mr Chris LAI
Senior Council Secretary (2) 7

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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As the Panel Chairman could only join the meeting later due to another urgent commitment, the Deputy Chairman took the chair during the temporary absence of the Chairman.

I. Evaluation Study on the New Dawn Project

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2030/06-07(01), CB(2)2300/06-07(01) to (02), CB(2)2335/06-07(01) to (02) and CB(2)2389/06-07(01) to (05)]

2. Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2 (DSLW(W)2) said that the Department of Social Work and Social Administration of The University of Hong Kong (HKU) had been commissioned to conduct an evaluation study of the New Dawn Project (the ND Project) for single parents and child carers on the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme (the Study). The key findings and the Executive Summary of the Study were set out in the Administration's paper. DSLW(W)2 advised that the Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) had a preliminary discussion on the findings of the Study, and considered that the ND Project should be continued under the existing mode of operation. SWAC also suggested that the consultant should enrich the Study by conducting case studies over a longer period and providing analysis for further discussion. DSLW(W)2 stressed that the Administration had yet to formulate position or decide on the recommendations of the report. Having regard to the favourable response of the ND Project and the positive findings of and recommendations made in the Study, the Administration would continue the ND Project in its existing mode of operation for 30 months. In the meantime, further studies and analyses would be conducted as suggested by SWAC before the Administration could consider the findings of the Study, and review the various measures under the ND Project with a view to providing more appropriate support services for employable single parents and child carers on CSSA.

3. With the aid of powerpoint presentation, Dr WONG Yu-cheung of HKU briefed members on the findings and recommendations of the Study.

Views of deputations

4. Deputy Chairman welcomed deputations to the meeting. The views of the deputations are summarised below.

港島單親互助社

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2300/06-07(01)]

5. Ms HO Chun-lai expressed strong dissatisfaction at the findings and recommendations of the Study, and considered that it had not taken into full account the difficulties faced by single parents on CSSA in seeking employment.

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Having regard to the need to take care of their young children and the lack of suitable part-time jobs in the labour market, it was difficult, if not impossible, for single parents to find paid jobs.

6. Mr NG Tak-chi considered that single parents and child carers on CSSA should not be deprived of the rights to take care of their children, and they should not be forced to work irrespective of their individual circumstances.

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2389/06-07(01)]

7. While welcoming the continuation of the ND Project to assist single parents and child carers on CSSA to move towards self-reliance, Ms Mariana CHAN considered that the Project should be improved in a number of ways. For instance, case management approach should be adopted to assist single parents and child carers to overcome barriers to employment, and participation in job attachment or training to increase their employability should be regarded as meeting the working hour requirement under the ND Project. Ms CHAN said that discussion on the recommendations of the Study should be held only when the full report of the Study was available.

Christian Action
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2300/06-07(02)]

8. Mr KWONG Fu-sam objected to the suggestion for increasing the working hour requirement for CSSA recipients under the ND Project. He said that job attachment should be provided for single parents to increase their employability. In addition, child care services for single parents/child carers in Hong Kong lagged far behind those of developed overseas countries and should be improved.

Hong Kong Association for the Survivors of Women Abuse (Kwan Fok)

9. Referring to her own experience, Ms CHOW Ling said that it was difficult for single parents on CSSA to strike a proper balance between taking care of their children on the one hand and working for a living on the other. She strongly urged the Administration to enhance support services for single parents and child carers on CSSA, in particular child care services, to facilitate them to find and retain in employment.

The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2389/06-07(02)]

10. Given the lack of suitable employment opportunities and inadequate child care services for single parents on CSSA, Mr WONG Kwai-yau questioned the effectiveness of the ND Project in assisting single parent CSSA recipients to

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move towards self-reliance. He raised objection to the recommendations of the Study to impose more punitive measures on single parents on CSSA who did not join the ND Project, and increase the working hour requirement. Mr WONG suggested that a comprehensive study should be undertaken to evaluate the impact of the ND Project on single parents and their children.

*Concerning Group for Women Poverty
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2335/06-07(01)]*

11. Considering that difficulties faced by single parents on CSSA in finding jobs had not been taken into full account in the Study, Ms LEE Yuk-wah expressed strong reservation about its findings and recommendations. She said that participation in the ND Project should be voluntary. To enhance the employability of single parents on CSSA, the Administration should foster the development of social enterprise to provide more suitable jobs for single parents. Ms LEE said that single parent CSSA recipients should be required to work only when their children had reached the age of 18.

Society for Community Organization

12. Miss SZE Lai-shan said that single parent CSSA recipients were mostly middle-aged and low-skilled women who could hardly compete for better job opportunities in the labour market. She considered that the existing child care services fell far short of the needs of single parents and should be enhanced. Miss SZE said that the Study should look into the difficulties faced by single parents in seeking jobs and the reasons why they chose not to join the ND Project. Having regard to their special circumstances, single parents CSSA recipients should be encouraged, rather than forced, to work.

*Concerning CSSA Review Alliance
[LC Paper No. CB(2)2335/06-07(02)]*

13. Miss LI Wai-ye referred to her submission and highlighted the deficiencies of the methodology of the Study. Noting that most of the respondents did not favour lowering the age limit of the youngest child for the targeted ND participants, Miss LI queried the justifications for suggesting that those with their youngest child studying in primary school and aged between six and 11 should start joining the ND Project. She said that support services for single parents on CSSA should be enhanced in order to encourage them to move towards self-reliance. Miss LI added that she had conducted a study jointly with Dr FUNG Ho-lup on the employability of single parents on CSSA, and hoped that the Administration could make reference to their findings.

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New Women Arrivals League

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2389/06-07(03)]

14. Ms YEUNG Siu-kuen said that new arrival single parents faced more problems in finding jobs due to lack of social network. Jobs available to them were largely part-time and low-paid menial work. Ms YEUNG objected to the recommendation that single parent CSSA recipients whose children had reached the age of six should start joining the ND Project, given that child care services were inadequate. She requested that the CSSA payments to single parent recipients should not be deducted by \$200 if they could not join the ND Project.

Hong Kong Christian Institute

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2389/06-07(04)]

15. Mr FAN Lap-hin expressed regret that the Study had failed to address the issues of concern raised repeatedly by depositions. He considered that in view of the limited supply of suitable jobs for single parents on CSSA, they should not be forced to work. Instead, the amount of monthly disregarded earnings for single parent CSSA recipients should be raised to provide more incentives for them to seek employment. Mr FAN objected to the suggestion for single parent CSSA recipients with children aged between six and 11 to start joining the ND Project and questioned the grounds for the suggestion.

Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union

16. Ms IP Pui-yu raised strong opposition to the recommendations of the Study. She said that the lack of suitable jobs for single parents on CSSA had deterred them from moving towards self-reliance. Citing domestic helpers as an example, Ms IP said that the graduates of domestic helper retraining courses had outnumbered the vacancies in the market, and this had driven down the wage level. Moreover, some of the vacancies were not suitable for single parents as the employers required the domestic helpers to work in the evening and weekends during which single parents usually needed to take care of their children.

CSSA Action Group, Concerning CSSA Review Alliance and Justice & Peace Commission of the HK Catholic Diocese

[LC Paper No. CB(2)2389/06-07(05)]

17. Mr CHOY Man-kit presented the joint submission of the CSSA Action Group, the Concerning CSSA Review Alliance and the Justice and Peace Commission of the HK Catholic Diocese. Mr CHOY questioned the need for commissioning an evaluation study of the ND Project. As all the relevant information relating to the Project were kept by the Social Welfare Department

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(SWD), the Study should be conducted by SWD on its own accord. He expressed reservation about the suggestions to increase the level of sanction and the working hour requirement. Mr CHOY suggested that further studies should be conducted to analyse the barriers to employment encountered by single parents.

Discussion

18. Ms Audrey EU expressed disappointment at the Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW) not attending the meeting. In view of the implications of the Study on single parents/child carers on CSSA, Ms EU suggested that SLW should be invited to attend another meeting of the Panel to further discuss the findings and recommendations of the Study. To facilitate members' discussion, she requested the Administration to provide a full report on the evaluation study to the Panel.

19. Expressing support for Ms EU's suggestion, Dr YEUNG Sum said that SLW should take the opportunity to brief members on the welfare initiatives of the new Administration.

20. Responding to Ms EU's request for a full report of the Study, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration) (DDSW(A)) said that the Study Team of HKU was finalising the findings of the Study. As the team would need to enrich the Study and conduct further analyses, the full report would only be available after the further studies had been completed. DDSW(A) stressed that the Administration had not reached a decision in respect of the recommendations made in the Study, and the ND Project would continue in its existing mode of operation for the time being.

21. DSLW(W)2 supplemented that the Administration had undertaken to report to the Panel the preliminary findings of the Study when available; hence the early reporting despite that further studies and analyses would be conducted. She reiterated that the final report had yet to be finalised and the Administration had not come up with decisions on the future mode of operation of the ND Project. DSLW(W)2 added that SLW had already agreed to attend the next regular Panel meeting scheduled for 10 July 2007.

(The Panel Chairman joined the meeting at this juncture and indicated that she would resume the chair at the beginning of agenda item II.)

22. Miss CHAN Yuen-han recapitulated that at the last regular meeting, members requested a special meeting in early July to discuss the findings of the Study. She said that SLW had informed her, in her capacity as Panel Chairman, of his unavailability to attend the special meeting. Miss CHAN expressed support for the suggestion to invite SLW and the Director of Social Welfare (DSW) to attend another meeting to further discuss the Study. To facilitate

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follow-up by the Panel, Miss CHAN said that the Administration should provide information on the concrete timeframe for the completion of the full report.

23. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung considered it meaningless to continue discussion on the findings of the Study, if the Administration failed to provide members with the full report. In his view, the Study should be conducted by the Administration instead of by academics.

24. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that due to time constraint, another meeting should be held shortly to allow sufficient time for members and deputations to give their views. He cast doubt on the findings of the Study, as the number of respondents was small and the Study did not assess the impact of the ND Project on children. Mr LEUNG requested the Administration to provide the full report to the Panel. Echoing similar views, Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that SLW should be invited to discuss with members and deputations the findings of the Study and the Administration's stance at another meeting.

25. Expressing dissatisfaction at the findings and recommendations of the Study, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan suggested that the Panel should move a motion urging the Administration to abort the Study and review the punitive measures under the ND Project. While expressing support for Mr LEE's proposal, Dr YEUNG Sum said that members of the Panel should have sufficient time to discuss the subject before the motion was moved.

26. Deputy Chairman said that in view of time constraint and grave concern expressed by members and deputations, the Panel should hold another meeting to further discuss with the Administration the findings and recommendations made in the Study, and SLW and DSW should be invited to the meeting. As the recommendations would have far-reaching implications on the participants of the ND Project, he took the view that the special meeting should be held in late July 2007. To facilitate members' discussion, Deputy Chairman requested the Administration to provide information on the number and types of jobs available for single parents/child carers, and the number of places of subsidised child care services and after-school services in each district.

27. Dr YEUNG Sum, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung and Ms Audrey EU expressed support for the Deputy Chairman's suggestion. Ms Audrey EU reiterated her request for the Administration to provide the full report of the Study to members. Miss CHAN Yuen-han and Dr YEUNG Sum expressed support for the request.

28. Responding to members' views and concern, DSLW(W)2 explained that the Administration had commissioned HKU to conduct the Study to evaluate the characteristics of the targeted participants of the ND Project, their job-seeking behaviour, barriers to and factors in promoting employment, outcome of employment and the impact on themselves and their children. The Study Team

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was finalizing the findings of the Study and would conduct further researches to enrich the Study. DSLW(W)2 assured members that the Administration had no established position on the findings and recommendations made in the evaluation study. The Administration would revert to the Panel once it had come up with any proposals on the mode of operation of the ND Project.

29. Deputy Chairman said that notwithstanding that the full report would not be available shortly, the Panel meeting could provide a forum for the relevant stakeholders to express their views on the Study. Echoing the suggestion, Dr KWOK Ka-ki strongly requested the Administration to provide the full report of the Study and its plans for the future implementation of the ND Project at the next meeting.

30. DSLW(W)2 said that the Administration would be happy to attend further meetings to discuss the findings of the Study, but for the reasons explained earlier and given the need for further studies and analyses, it would not be appropriate or possible for the Administration to provide the full report or make decisions on concrete proposals on the future implementation of the ND Project to the Panel at the next meeting.

31. DDSW(A) added that in view of the implications on single parent CSSA recipients, the Administration would make very careful deliberations before proposing any changes to the ND Project. As mentioned earlier, the Administration would continue the Project in its existing mode of operation for 30 months pending the further studies to be undertaken by the Study Team of HKU and the Administration.

32. Ms Mariana CHAN of HKCSS considered that as SWAC had expressed support for the Administration's decision to continue the ND Project for 30 more months, the Panel should also discuss the improvements to be made to the Project and support services for single parents at the next meeting.

33. Noting that the full report of the Study had yet to be finalised, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan cast doubt on the grounds for SWAC to support the decision to extend the ND Project for 30 more months. To facilitate members' future discussion, Mr LEE requested the Administration to provide information on the terms of reference and scope of the Study, as well as the number of the Project participants who had succeeded in securing employment, together with a breakdown of the types of their jobs and range of wages.

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34. DDSW(A) responded that the Administration would endeavour to provide the information requested by members, but the full report could only be provided after the further studies had been completed.

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35. Members agreed that a special meeting should be scheduled for late July 2007 to continue discussion on the evaluation study on the ND Project. Deputy Chairman said that members would be informed of the date of the meeting in due course.

(Post-meeting note : The special meeting of the Panel was held on 27 July 2007. The Administration has provided the information requested by members as stated in paragraphs 26 and 33 vide the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)2030/06-07(01).)

II. Support services for young drug abusers

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2300/06-07(03), CB(2)2335/06-07(03) to (04) and CB(2)2389/06-07(06) to (08)]

36. Assistant Secretary (Narcotics) (AS(Narcotics)) briefed members on the Government's anti-drug strategies and support services for young drug abusers, as detailed in the Administration's paper.

Views of deputations

37. With the aid of powerpoint presentation, Mr Max SZETO of the Hong Kong Christian Service Jockey Club and Mr Billy TANG of the Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service presented a joint submission from the following seven organisations –

- (a) Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service;
- (b) The Hong Kong Council of Social Service;
- (c) Hong Kong Children & Youth Services;
- (d) Society of the Rehabilitation and Crime Prevention, Hong Kong;
- (e) Caritas – Hong Kong;
- (f) Hong Kong Christian Service Jockey Club Lodge of Rising Sun; and
- (g) Christian New Life Association.

(Post-meeting note : The power-point presentation materials were issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2389/06-07(08) on 4 July 2007.)

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38. Mr Max SZETO and Mr Billy TANG highlighted the latest drug abuse problem and the difficulties faced by the welfare organisations in providing support services for young drug abusers due to inadequate resources. Mr TANG said that additional resources should be allocated for tackling the problem of young abusers. Consideration should also be given to setting up a high-level body comprising representatives of bureaux and departments to better coordinate the formulation and implementation of the anti-drug policies and strategies.

39. Dr Ben CHEUNG, an individual, expressed concern about the inadequacy of secondary prevention services to address the problem of drug abuse among young people, i.e. early identification of young drug abusers. He said that study findings showed that some young drug abusers were identified only after having taken drugs for as long as four years. To this end, reference should be drawn from the experience of international schools in Hong Kong in which additional resources were allocated to facilitate early identification of drug abuse among students. Dr CHEUNG also suggested that consideration should be given to providing more resources to train family doctors to assist in early treatment and rehabilitation services for young drug abusers.

Discussion

40. Expressing disappointment at the absence of senior Government officials at the meeting, Dr KWOK Ka-ki questioned the Administration's sincerity in tackling the problem of drug abuse among young people. Noting from the Central Registry of Drug Abuse (CRDA) that the total number of young drug abusers in 2006 was 2 549, which was less than the findings of the 2004 Survey on Drug Abuse among Students (2004 Survey) commissioned by the Narcotics Division of Security Bureau and that cited by deputations, i.e. some 20 000 young drug abusers, Dr KWOK cast doubt as to whether the existing reporting mechanism of CRDA could reflect accurately the problem of drug abuse. He strongly urged the Administration to review and improve its anti-drug policy and the reporting mechanism.

41. AS(Narcotics) explained that CRDA collated statistical information regarding drug abuse and tracked the changing trend. The information was submitted by an extensive network of reporting agencies voluntarily, covering law enforcement agencies, treatment and rehabilitation organisations, welfare agencies, tertiary institutions, hospitals and clinics. Although CRDA figures did not represent the total number of drug abusers, they did reflect the general trend of drug abuse which were useful in guiding policy-making. AS(Narcotics) further explained that the "some 20 000 abusers" under the 2004 Survey as quoted referred to the number of students who had ever abused drugs in their lifetime, which was different from the number of drug users at the time of survey. AS(Narcotics) added that in addition to CRDA, the Administration would take

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into account other useful sources of information, such as the 2004 Survey as well as other surveys or studies conducted by other organisations, when drawing up anti-drug policies and strategies.

42. Dr Fernando CHEUNG questioned the reason for the significant discrepancy between the number of young drug abusers provided by the Administration and deputations. He said that the reporting mechanism of CRDA should be reviewed expeditiously. Considering that the existing support services for young drug abusers were far from adequate to address the increasing severity of the problem, Dr CHEUNG urged the Government to enhance the cross-departmental efforts to improve the rehabilitation and support services for young drug abusers.

43. AS(Narcotics) responded that the discrepancy between the number of young drug abusers under CRDA or 2004 Survey and that cited by the deputations was understandable because different methodologies were adopted in different surveys or studies. She said that the 2004 Survey was a large-scale survey, based on a sample of about 100 000 students. The Administration had indeed stepped up its efforts to combat the youth drug abuse problem having regard to the findings of the survey. The next round of the survey would be conducted in 2008. On early intervention efforts, AS(Narcotics) further said that a pilot co-operation scheme would be launched in 2007-2008 to enhance co-operation between social workers and private medical practitioners providing body check and early treatment services for young and occasional abusers at an early stage.

44. Responding to Dr KWOK Ka-ki, AS(Narcotics) said that more than \$2 million was proposed to be allocated for the implementation of the pilot co-operation scheme. As the launch of the scheme was in the pipeline, the Administration was unable to provide details such as the number of target beneficiaries at the moment. She stressed that the Administration attached great importance to anti-drug work and apart from the Beat Drugs Fund, allocated a total of around \$590 million on anti-drug efforts this year. The Administration also invested significant amounts of resources in helping high-risk youth.

45. Dr KWOK ka-ki was of the view that an additional resource of \$2 million would be far from adequate to provide sufficient support services for young drug abusers. He urged the Administration to allocate more resources to ensure sufficient provision of support services for young drug abusers.

46. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan considered that the Administration had not attached sufficient importance to tackling the problem of drug abuse among young people, as demonstrated by the absence of senior Government officials at the meeting. Noting the significant difference in the number of young drug abusers quoted by the Administration and deputations, Mr LEE queried whether the Government's

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reporting mechanism could reflect accurately the magnitude of the drug abuse problem. Mr LEE suggested that the Administration should improve the existing reporting mechanism and enhance collaboration among relevant bureaux and departments in combating the youth drug abuse problem. Additional resources should be allocated to facilitate early identification of young drug abusers in schools.

47. AS(Narcotics) reiterated that the data gathered by CRDA aimed to reflect the general trend of drug abuse rather than the actual number of drug abusers. Another large-scale survey would be conducted in 2008 to gather more comprehensive information on the latest drug use situation among students in Hong Kong.

48. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that according to the surveys conducted by deputations, the magnitude of the problem of drug abuse among young people was far more serious than the statistics gathered by the reporting agencies. Mr LEUNG considered that more resources and support should be provided for schools in order to facilitate early identification of drug abuse among students. The reporting mechanism should be improved with a view to providing an accurate number of young drug abusers for formulating anti-drug measures and support services.

49. The Chairman considered that the Administration failed to address members' grave concern about the increasing severity of drug abuse among young people. She urged the Administration to enhance cross-sectoral efforts and support services for young drug abusers after taking into full account the drug abuse situation in Hong Kong. She also asked how the 2008 Survey of Drug Use among Students would be conducted.

50. AS(Narcotics) responded that the current anti-drug policy was drawn up on the advice of the Action Committee Against Narcotics (ACAN) and its sub-committees, which comprised members from various fields. In partnership with ACAN, the Administration had launched different anti-drug initiatives through cross-sectoral efforts, including the pilot co-operation scheme as explained earlier, which was a good example of collaboration between the medical and social welfare sector spearheaded by ACAN. As regards the 2008 Survey on Drug Use among Students, it would, similar to the 2004 Survey cover a large sample of students.

51. Responding to Dr Fernando CHEUNG's enquiry, AS(Narcotics) said that according to the 2004 Survey, 1.6% and 2.7% of students had ever abused heroin and psychotropic substances respectively in their lifetime, whereas 0.3% and 0.7% of students had abused heroin and psychotropic substances respectively in the 30 days prior to the survey.

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52. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that according to the 2004 Survey, about 1% of the 500 000 secondary students had taken heroin and psychotropic substances in the 30 days prior to the survey. In other words, the number of young drug abusers was estimated to be 5 000, which doubled the number of 2 186 as shown in CRDA. Having regard to the considerable discrepancy between the findings of the 2004 Survey and CRDA figures, Dr CHEUNG strongly requested the Administration to review the reporting mechanism. He suggested that the Administration should commission the Census and Statistics Department to conduct a territory-wide survey of drug abuse among young people. AS(Narcotics) said that the Administration could consider the suggestion and added that the Administration had already been making policies having regard to both the findings of the 2004 Survey and CRDA figures.

53. The Chairman expressed concern about the increasing trend of cross-boundary drug abuse involving young people. She said that the problem should be addressed without further delay, given that more boundary control points were expected to be opened in the coming years.

54. Mr Billy TANG of Hong Kong Lutheran Social Service expressed concern about the inadequacy of resources allocated to the provision of support services for young drug abusers. He considered that the crux of the problem was that the Administration had failed to understand the magnitude of the youth drug abuse problem. He strongly requested the Administration to allocate additional resources to enhance preventive education and publicity, upgrade the skills of parents and implement longer-term schemes to address the youth drug abuse problem.

55. In view of the severity of the problem, Dr KWOK Ka-ki considered that the support services for young drug abusers were far from adequate to meet the needs of the community. More resources should be allocated to enhance early identification of and support services for young drug abusers. Expressing dissatisfaction at the Administration's response, Dr KWOK Ka-ki moved the following motion –

"本事務委員會促請政府立即全面檢討現已過時及不足的禁毒政策、重訂及早識別濫藥者和協助濫藥者復康的政策及方向，並增撥資源，以改善現時的呈報機制及嚴重不足的服務。"

(Translation)

"That this Panel urges the Government to immediately conduct a comprehensive review on the outdated and inadequate anti-drug policy, reaffirm the policy and direction of identifying drug abusers

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at an early stage and helping them to rehabilitate, and allocate more resources to improve the existing reporting mechanism and the extremely insufficient services."

56. The Chairman put the motion to vote. All five members present at the meeting voted for and no members voted against the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

57. Dr KWOK Ka-ki said that discussion on support services for young drug abusers should be followed up by the Panel at a future meeting, and the relevant Principal Officials should be invited to the meeting. The Chairman said that it would be for the Panel to decide the timing for following up the matter in the next session.

58. In closing, the Chairman said that the increasing severity of drug abuse among young people was a complex problem which straddled different bureaux and departments. To tackle the problem effectively, the Administration should step up cross-departmental efforts to enhance early identification, treatment and rehabilitation services for young drug abusers.

III. Any other business

59. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:25 pm.