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Panel on Welfare Services

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

**Minutes of the 16th meeting
held on Tuesday, 19 December 2006, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

- Members present** : Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
- Members absent** : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
- Member attending** : Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
- Public Officers attending** : Mr D C CHEUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Elderly Services and Social Security) 2
- Miss Nancy LAW, JP
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)

Mr CHENG Chok-man
Chief Social Security Officer (Social Security) 1
Social Welfare Department

Mr NG Wai-kuen
Chief Social Security Officer (Social Security) 2
Social Welfare Department

Mr Kenneth NG Wing-cheung
Senior Statistician (Social Welfare)
Social Welfare Department

**Deputations
by invitation** : Society for Community Organization

Mr NG Wai-tung
Community Organizer

Mr CHAN Bin-wing
Representative of singleton

The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong

Mr WONG Kwai-yau
Supervisor

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Dr WONG Hung

Concerning CSSA Review Alliance Action Group

Mr AU YEUNG Tat-chor
Member

Christian Action

Mr Sam KWONG
Assistant Director

The Chinese Grey Power

Mr NG Kin-wing
Commitment Organizer

Ms FUNG Yung
Member

Concerning Group for Women Poverty

Ms HUI Yi-lai
Member

Ms HO Foei-lin
Member

Hong Kong Christian Institute

Mr FAN Lap-hin
Project Secretary

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

Ms LIU Ngan-fung
Chairman

Ms CHEN Lan
Member

New Women Arrivals League

Ms YEUNG Mei
Member

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

Staff in attendance : Miss Josephine SO
Council Secretary (2) 1

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Action

I. Election of Chairman

Dr Fernando CHEUNG, Chairman of the Subcommittee in office, presided at the meeting. He sought members' views on the need for re-election of the Chairman of the Subcommittee for the 2006-2007 session.

2. Members agreed that re-election of the Chairman was not required and Dr Fernando CHEUNG would continue to be the Chairman of the Subcommittee for the 2006-2007 session. Members also agreed that election of a deputy chairman of the Subcommittee was not required.

II. Review of the standard payment rates under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme and the Social Security Allowance Scheme

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2381/05-06(01), CB(2)643/06-07(01) to (08), CB(2)685/06-07(01) and CB(2)705/06-07(01) to (02))

3. The Chairman advised that the Finance Committee (FC) had, at its meeting on 15 December 2006, approved the Administration's proposal to increase the standard payment rates under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme and the Disability Allowance (DA) under the Social Security Allowance (SSA) Scheme. Although Members had no objection to the funding application, there was grave concern about the adequacy of the standard payment rates to meet the basic needs of the CSSA recipients.

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Elderly Services and Social Security) 2 (PAS/HWF(ES&SS)2) introduced the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)643/06-07(01)) and highlighted the following salient points -

- (a) as part of the CSSA payments, different standard rates for broad categories of recipients were made to meet their normal day-to-day basic needs. Apart from standard rates, a wide range of special grants and supplements, such as single parent supplement and community living supplement, were payable to meet the special needs of different categories of recipients on an individual basis;

Action

- (b) the Social Welfare Department (SWD) would assess the needs of individual recipients to determine the amount of financial assistance payable to them;
- (c) during the period between November 2005 and October 2006, the average monthly CSSA payments for households comprising four or five eligible members were \$9,263 and \$10,995 respectively. The Administration considered the monthly allowance adequate for CSSA recipients to meet their day-to-day basic needs; and
- (d) FC had, at its meeting on 15 December 2006, approved the Administration's proposal to increase, with effect from 1 February 2007, by 1.2% the standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme and DA under the SSA Scheme, in accordance with the established adjustment mechanism and taking into account the movement in the Social Security Assistance Index of Price (SSAIP) for the past 12 months ending in October 2006.

5. The Chairman invited deputations to give their views on the matter. The views of the deputations are summarised below.

Views of deputations

Society for Community Organization
(LC Paper No. CB(2)643/06-07(03))

6. Mr NG Wai-tung said that more than one million people in Hong Kong were living in poverty. He expressed concern on how the Administration would assist those low-income workers who were not on CSSA. The Administration should also provide a safety net to protect the basic livelihood of the low-income workers, for example, in the form of medical or rental subsidies.

7. Mr CHAN Bin-wing pointed out the following problems faced by singleton persons living on CSSA –

- (a) the current CSSA standard rates could merely meet the basic needs of recipients as a significant part of their CSSA payments was spent on food items. This left them very little to spend on other basic items, such as clothing, footwear, eye glasses and dentures; and
- (b) the CSSA payable to an able-bodied adult aged below 60 was only \$1,610 per month. This category of CSSA recipients would have difficulty in seeking employment even if they hoped to get a job in the

Action

market. Since their CSSA payments were very meager, it was difficult for them to save money for clothing required and transport expenses incurred for attending job interviews.

*The Boys' and Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong
(LC Paper No. CB(2)643/06-07(04))*

8. Mr WONG Kwai-yau presented the views of the Association as detailed in its submission. The major views of the Association were as follows -

- (a) the inadequacy of the CSSA payments for children had hampered the development of children as shown by the findings of a study on needy children commissioned by the Association in 2004;
- (b) it was noteworthy that expenses for school-related items, such as textbooks, had risen in the past few years at a far higher level than the inflationary movements in SSAIP. There was a need to review the CSSA standard rates for children, and formulate a separate formula for calculating the levels of CSSA payments for children;
- (c) the Administration should aim at helping those living on CSSA move towards self-reliance and encourage asset-building for the future; and
- (d) objective criteria were necessary for adjusting the standard payment rates under the CSSA and SSA Schemes. The Administration should give due regard to the findings of the basic needs study conducted by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS).

*The Chinese Grey Power
(LC Paper No. CB(2)643/06-07(06))*

9. Ms FUNG Yung, a 93-year-old CSSA recipient, said that she had to cut down on expenses on food items in order to save money for medical consultation and treatment. She urged the Government to establish a retirement protection scheme for all elderly in Hong Kong. Referring to the findings of a study conducted by the Chinese Grey Power on the expenditure pattern of the elderly as set out in its submission, Mr NG Kin-wing held the view that the Administration should review whether the existing CSSA standard rates were adequate to enable all needy elderly in Hong Kong to maintain a basic standard of living.

*Concerning CSSA Review Alliance Action Group
(LC Paper No. CB(2)643/06-07(05))*

10. Mr AU YEUNG Tat-chor presented the views of the Concerning CSSA

Action

Review Alliance Action Group as detailed in its submission. He said that pursuant to the downward adjustment of the standard rates based on the decline in SSAIP in the past eight years, the provision of standard payment rates under the CSSA and SSA Schemes could no longer provide a safety net of last resort for the financially vulnerable, for example, children, the disabled and the chronically ill. Against this background, the Action Group made the following suggestions -

- (a) the Administration should restore the CSSA and SSA standard payment rates to the 2003 level;
- (b) the Administration should resume the provision of long-term supplement for able-bodied CSSA recipients abolished in 1999;
- (c) the Administration should conduct expeditiously a comprehensive review of the CSSA Scheme using the basic needs approach, with a view to formulating an adjustment mechanism that could reflect closely the economic conditions and the actual needs of different categories of recipients; and
- (d) the Administration should make public the adjustment mechanism for each type of special grants under the CSSA Scheme.

Christian Action

11. Mr Sam KWONG said that as a result of the tightening of the residence requirement for applying for CSSA from one year to seven years in 2004, a large number of new arrivals had become ineligible for CSSA. Citing two cases as examples, Mr KWONG criticised the arrangements relating to the seven-year residence requirement under the CSSA Scheme and the exercise of discretion by the Director of Social Welfare to waive the residence requirement, as well as the lack of coordination among different services/operational units of SWD and the inadequate assistance and supporting services available to the new arrivals. The Christian Action urged the Administration to review the seven-year residence rule and SWD to publicise the relevant procedures for applying for waiver of the residence requirement.

*The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
(LC Paper No. CB(2)705/06-07(01))*

12. Dr WONG Hung presented the views of HKCSS as detailed in its submission. The major views of HKCSS are summarised as follows -

- (a) the Administration should conduct a comprehensive review of the CSSA standard payment rates, having regard to the fact that the last

Action

comprehensive review was conducted in 1996 and the expenditure pattern of different categories of CSSA recipients had changed over time. The review should address the issue of whether the payment rates were pitched at levels adequate to meet the basic and essential needs of the recipients;

- (b) the downward adjustment of CSSA standard rates for households comprising three and more than three able-bodied adults/children by 10% and 20% in 1999 was unreasonable. The adjustment mechanism whereby the standard CSSA and SSA payment rates were adjusted according to the movements of SSAIP was at variance with the basic needs approach adopted in the 1996 CSSA review; and
- (c) the special grant to cover school-related expenses under the CSSA Scheme should be incorporated into the respective standard payment rates for children recipients. The Administration should also review the items of goods and services to be covered by different types of special grants.

*Concerning Group for Women Poverty
(LC Paper No. CB(2)643/06-07(07))*

13. Ms HUI Yi-lai introduced the Concerning Group for Women Poverty's submission and took the view that the prevailing CSSA standard rates failed to meet the basic needs of the recipients, particularly after the downward adjustment of the rates by 11.1% in 2003. The Concerning Group for Women Poverty strongly requested that -

- (a) the Administration should resume the provision of long-term supplement;
- (b) the standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme should be restored to the 2003 level; and
- (c) a comprehensive review should be conducted on the basic needs of different categories of CSSA recipients.

*Hong Kong Christian Institute
(LC Paper No. CB(2)643/06-07(08))*

14. Mr FAN Lap-hin presented the views of the Hong Kong Christian Institute as detailed in its submission. The major views are summarised as follows -

Action

- (a) the downward adjustment of the standard rates and special grants under the CSSA Scheme in 1999 and 2003 due to the economic downturn had caused significant financial hardship on CSSA recipients, and had further widened the gap between the rich and the poor;
- (b) the recent increase of 1.2% to the standard rates under the CSSA Scheme and DA under the SSA Scheme was too meagre at a time of strong economic recovery which featured a return of inflation. The pressure on prices of food items imported from the Mainland was particularly high given the recent appreciation of Renminbi exchange rate; and
- (c) given (a) and (b) above, the Administration should conduct a comprehensive review of the CSSA Scheme. It should collect up-to-date information on the expenditure pattern of CSSA households to ascertain whether the CSSA standard rates could meet the basic needs of recipients.

Hong Kong Association for the Survivors of Women Abuse (Kwan Fook)
(LC Paper No. CB(2)685/06-07(01))

15. Ms CHEN Lan said that special grants currently provided for CSSA children recipients were inadequate to cover school-related expenses. Hence, many parents had to cut down on their expenses on other items covered by the standard payment rates to save up for school-related expenses. Ms CHEN considered that there to be a pressing need for increasing the amount of special grants for children, as the inadequate CSSA payments for children had hampered their development.

New Women Arrivals League

16. Ms YEUNG Mei shared the view that the Administration should review the standard rates for CSSA households comprising three and more than three able-bodied adults/children, since the standard rates for these households were inadequate for them to maintain a reasonable living standard. She also requested the provision of supplements for the acquisition of computer equipment and payment of internet and telephone services as these were essential items for most families nowadays.

Other submissions received

17. Members noted that the following organisations had provided written submissions, but had not sent representatives to the meeting -

Action

- (a) The Against Elderly Abuse of Hong Kong (LC Paper No. CB(2)643/06-07(02)); and
- (b) Hong Kong Association for Parents of Persons with Physical Disabilities (LC Paper No. CB(2)705/06-07(02)).

Discussion

18. PAS/HWF(ES&SS)2 gave the following response to the views expressed by the deputations –

- (a) the amount of assistance under the CSSA Scheme was determined by the monthly income and needs of a family. While there was difference in the amount of assistance payable to different needy families, the current average monthly CSSA payments for four-member and five-member households were \$9,263 and \$10,995 respectively;
- (b) the Administration was committed to meeting the needs of children at different development stages and ensuring that they were adequately cared for. An extensive network of Integrated Family Service Centres over the territory was providing children with a range of support services. With regard to education, children in Hong Kong enjoyed nine-year free education. The Education and Manpower Bureau had also earmarked a recurrent provision of \$75 million per annum for schools to provide school-based after-school learning and other support programmes for needy students. To support the participation of needy students in extra-curricular activities, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust had set up a Life-wide Learning Fund with a sum of about \$140 million in 2002 for a period of five years;
- (c) all CSSA recipients could receive free medical service at public clinics and hospitals; and
- (d) the existing CSSA payment rates and grants were subject to regular review and adjustment. Different types of special grants were provided to meet the special needs of CSSA recipients. For example, the housing and related grants covered assistance for electricity/gas deposits, domestic removal and emergency alarm system for elderly recipients, and school grants and meal allowance were provided for students.

19. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan shared the views of deputations that the proposed increase by 1.2% of the standard payment rates under the CSSA and SSA Schemes was too meagre given the economic recovery and the improving Government reserve. In his

Action

view, the Administration should conduct a comprehensive study on the CSSA recipients' basic needs since the last review was carried out in 1996 and the expenditure pattern of CSSA households had changed over time. Referring to the Administration's paper on the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices (LC Paper No. CB(2)2945/05-06(01)), Mr LEE doubted the methodology for the compilation of SSAIP since 33% of the total expenditure on all goods and services consumed by CSSA recipients were not covered by the SSAIP. Although such expenditure were met by the CSSA special grants or provided free by the Government, the adjustment mechanism for each type of special grant had not been spelt out. Mr LEE held the view that the items of goods and services included in SSAIP should be reviewed, and consideration should be given to updating the expenditure pattern of CSSA households on essential items such as medical supplies, reference books and stationery and internet service charges.

20. In response, Senior Statistician (Social Welfare) and Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration) (DDSW(A)) made the following points -

- (a) the CSSA standard rates for different categories of recipients were meant to meet the normal day-to-day basic needs of CSSA recipients. As revealed in the 2004-2005 Household Expenditure Survey (HES) on CSSA Households, the CSSA standard rates covered some 67% of all goods and services consumed by CSSA recipients. For the remaining items not covered by the CSSA standard rates (about 33%), they were covered by special grants or provided free by the Government;
- (b) the CSSA standard rates were reviewed annually, taking into account price changes with reference to the movement of SSAIP compiled specially by the Census and Statistics Department. In addition to the regular monitoring on the changes of SSAIP, the SSAIP weighting system that reflects the actual expenditure pattern of CSSA recipients was updated every five years on the basis of the findings of the HES on CSSA Households;
- (c) in the 2004-2005 HES on CSSA Households conducted between October 2004 and September 2005, a key finding was that when compared with the 1999-2000 based SSAIP, the weights of the 2004-2005 based SSAIP remained fairly stable. Hence, the Administration had followed the established review mechanism and proposed an annual adjustment of the CSSA standard payment rates and DA by 1.2% in accordance with the movement of the SSAIP. The Administration had no plan to conduct a review of the adequacy of the CSSA standard rates at the moment;

Action

- (d) there was an established adjustment mechanism for each type of special grants under the CSSA Scheme. The basis and timing of revision of CSSA special grants were set out in the information paper provided by the Administration to the Subcommittee in August 2006 (LC Paper No. CB(2)2381/05-06(01)); and
- (e) given that the provision of assistance under the CSSA Scheme involved public money and the fact that the Scheme was a safety net of last resort for those who could not support themselves financially, the recipients were expected to spend the money in a prudent manner. When comparing the average monthly CSSA payments with the average monthly expenditure of the non-CSSA households in the lowest 25% expenditure group of the same household size, the average monthly CSSA payments were consistently higher than the latter. Furthermore, as CSSA was a cash assistance, the recipients could choose to spend the money on goods and services based on their personal preference.

21. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed disappointment at the Administration comparing the average monthly CSSA payments with the income of the low-income population, and suggesting that the recipients could live on the meagre CSSA payments by using the allowances "flexibly". In the past, the CSSA recipients might use their standard payments to cover shortfall in special grants. However, this could no longer be done because the CSSA standard payments could barely support the recipients' basic livelihood. Echoing Mr LEE's view, Ms CHEN Lan of Hong Kong Association for the Survivors of Women Abuse (Kwan Fook) added that applications for special grants were subject to a lot of restrictions.

22. Miss CHAN Yuen-han shared the views of deputations that the CSSA payments were inadequate to cover the day-to-day expenses of CSSA families, in particular the expenses on school-related items, medical treatment and internet service. She supported the proposal that the Administration should make reference to the findings of the basic needs study conducted by HKCSS and conduct a comprehensive review of the CSSA Scheme. In her view, the Administration should first understand the needs of CSSA recipients and keep an open mind on the examination of items of goods and services that should be incorporated into the SSAIP basket and the basis for adjusting the standard rates for all categories of CSSA payments.

23. PAS/HWF(ES&SS)2 reiterated that -

- (a) as far as medical services were concerned, the Hospital Authority and some NGOs jointly offered Chinese medicine consultation and medication at a reasonable fee level. Free Chinese medicine services were provided for CSSA recipients at public Chinese Medicine Clinics;

Action

- (b) many schools and public libraries provided computers with internet access for free use by their students and the public respectively. According to the findings of the 2004-2005 HES on CSSA Households, many CSSA households could meet the expenses on internet and telephone charges within the CSSA standard rates; and
- (c) the special grants for needy students to cover school-related expenses were set at \$3,810 for Secondary 1 to 3 students and \$2,505 for Primary 1 to 6 students. The grants were normally paid before the commencement of the school year. Additional payments could be considered in case the actual expenses exceeded the grants upon production of relevant receipts.

24. Referring to the basic needs study conducted by HKCSS, DDSW(A) said that the Administration considered that a number of items proposed by HKCSS in its study, such as ritual expenses, should not be included as basic need items of CSSA recipients.

25. Ms LIU Ngan-fung of Hong Kong Association for the Survivors of Women Abuse (Kwan Fook) said that the Administration should demonstrate its commitments in fostering the development of children by reviewing whether the CSSA standard rates and special grants were adequate in meeting the basic needs of the recipients. Citing the meal allowance of about \$6 per meal as an example, the Administration should review regularly and adjust the level of assistance based on market prices.

26. Mr Frederick FUNG supported fully the view that the Administration should conduct a comprehensive review of the CSSA Scheme. He pointed out that although CSSA recipients were provided with free medical service from public clinics and hospitals (including western and Chinese medical consultations and medicine), there were currently only eight public Chinese Medicine Clinics in Hong Kong. In the light of this, Mr FUNG requested the Administration to consider reimbursing CSSA recipients their actual costs incurred for seeking treatment from private Chinese medicine practitioners. Referring to paragraph 11 of the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)643/06-07(01)), Mr FUNG said that the comparison of the average CSSA monthly payments and the average CSSA monthly household expenditure was meaningless as it was impossible for CSSA households to spend more than the monthly CSSA. Regarding the New Dawn (ND) Project under the CSSA Scheme whereby single parents/family carers with the youngest child aged between 12 to 14 were required to seek employment, Mr FUNG hoped that the Administration could make reference to overseas experience and consider providing financial incentives to these CSSA recipients so that they would be encouraged, rather than forced, to seek employment.

Action

27. PAS/HWF(ES&SS)2 responded that –

Admin

- (a) he would convey Mr Frederick FUNG's views on the provision of Chinese medicine service to the department concerned for consideration and follow-up;
- (b) the ND Project aimed to help single parents/family carers on CSSA with the youngest child aged between 12 to 14 to move towards self-reliance. Since the introduction of the project in April 2006, over 1 000 CSSA recipients had found full-time or part-time jobs and were paid on monthly average up to \$2,000. To provide incentives for work, earnings from such employment would be disregarded up to a prescribed level; and
- (c) the comparison of the average CSSA monthly payments and the household expenditure revealed that the current CSSA payments were sufficient to cover the basic needs of recipients. Recipients were allowed to keep the savings gained through exercising flexibility in spending on goods and services.

28. Mr Frederick FUNG said that the Administration should take the opportunity to review the basis for determining the amount of special grants relating to travelling expenses as they were outdated. He pointed out that special grants for travelling expenses for CSSA students were calculated on the actual expenses by the cheapest means of available transport, usually non-air-conditioned buses. He considered it unreasonable to restrict CSSA students recipients to travel by non-air-conditioned buses given that most of the buses running on the roads were air-conditioned.

29. Chief Social Security Officer (Social Security) 1 responded that to uphold the principle of prudent use of public money, travelling expenses to school for CSSA students should normally be calculated by the cheapest means of available transport. However, in the event that air-conditioned buses vastly outnumbered that of non-air-conditioned buses in certain routes making it impracticable for the students to take non-air-conditioned buses, consideration could be given to grant actual expenses for taking air-conditioned buses in the light of the actual situation.

30. Mr Frederick FUNG said that the Administration should take the initiative to obtain information from the bus companies on the proportion of air-conditioned buses vis-à-vis non-air-conditioned buses for different routes. He strongly requested the Administration to review the basis for reimbursing actual travelling expenses incurred by the cheapest means of transport and provide members with the review results.

Admin

Action

31. As regards the proposal to conduct a comprehensive review of the CSSA Scheme, DDSW(A) reiterated that so far, the annual adjustment mechanism of CSSA standard rates on the basis of the movement in SSAIP and the findings of the HES on CSSA Households worked effectively. As the findings of the 1996 CSSA Review were still applicable to the present-day situation, the Administration did not consider it necessary to conduct a fresh review of the CSSA Scheme.

32. Mr Ronny TONG expressed disappointment that, despite the repeated requests from members and deputations, the Administration refused to conduct a comprehensive review of the basic needs of CSSA recipients and the items of goods and services covered by SSAIP. Mr TONG expressed reservations about the Administration's commitments to honour the pledge made by the Chief Executive in his Policy Address that his governance was "people-oriented" and "for the people", as the Administration was not responsive in addressing the long-standing problem that the CSSA payments were inadequate for recipients to maintain a reasonable living standard. Mr TONG suggested that a working group be formed under the Subcommittee to further study the issue.

33. PAS/HWF(ES&SS)2 reiterated that CSSA special grants were reviewed annually and the CSSA and SSA standard rates were also subject to an annual adjustment cycle that took into account the SSAIP movement for the past 12 months ending in October. Given that the adjustment mechanism had been working effectively for the past 10 years, the Administration did not see the need for reviewing the system.

34. In expressing support for Mr Ronny TONG's proposal for a review of the items of goods and services covered by SSAIP, Dr WONG Hung of HKCSS said that as HKCSS had already conducted a basic needs study, the review should focus on what basic need items were presently not covered under the SSAIP basket of goods and services. Apart from this, the Administration should update the levels of assistance in the light of the actual prices of all items of goods and services covered by SSAIP. In addition, the review should look into the adjustment mechanism for the CSSA special grants.

35. To facilitate a better understanding of the adequacy of the CSSA standard rates in meeting the basic needs of the recipients, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was of the view that the Administration should provide members with information as to whether there were any changes to the goods and services covered by the basic needs approach adopted in the 1996 CSSA Review and those of SSAIP, and items that were expected to be covered by CSSA households by using their monthly allowances "flexibly". Given that about 33% of the total expenditure on all goods and services consumed by CSSA recipients in 2004-2005 were covered by special grants or provided free by the Government, Mr LEE added that the Subcommittee should study the items of goods

Action

and services consumed by CSSA households currently not covered by the standard payment rates which should be added to the basic need items and whether certain items covered by special grants should instead be provided under CSSA standard rates.

Admin

36. The Chairman shared the view of Mr LEE Cheuk-yan and said that further meetings would be held to follow up the discussion. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide the following information –

- (a) a comparison of items of goods and services covered by the CSSA standard payment rates in 1996 and 2006; and
- (b) a list of items of goods and services not covered under SSAIP and which were either provided free by the Government or met by CSSA recipients within their standard payment rates.

37. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung requested to put on the record his strong dissatisfaction with the Administration's response to the repeated requests from members and deputations for a comprehensive review of the CSSA Scheme.

38. The Chairman said that other policy issues raised at the meeting, including difficulties faced by different categories of people in applying for CSSA, would be followed up by the Subcommittee at future meetings. The Chairman further said that members would be informed of the date of the next meeting in due course.

39. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:05 pm.