

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Elderly housing policy”
moved by Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 9 April 2008**

Motion as amended by Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, Hon James TO Kun-sun, Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, Hon SIN Chung-kai, Hon CHAN Yuen-han, Hon Albert HO Chun-yan and Hon LEE Wing-tat

“That, although the Chief Executive’s Policy Address emphasizes ‘quality city and quality life’, it has not put forward any long-term policy objective, and in the face of the two challenges of the appalling living conditions of many elderly persons and the known problem of the ageing population, this Council urges the Government to allocate additional resources to promote comfortable living for all the elderly so as to achieve quality life for the whole community, and make reference to local and overseas experience, as well as comprehensively consult the elderly, to expeditiously formulate, through comprehensive planning, a clear policy on elderly housing, including:

- (a) immediately examining the different housing needs of various categories of elderly persons in various districts in the territory, and formulating guidelines for constructing elderly housing;
- (b) encouraging people to live with their elderly parents through measures such as perfecting the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance system and offering additional tax concessions, etc, as well as enhancing the support for elderly persons living alone or with another elderly person;
- (c) formulating land policies that complement elderly housing, including giving consideration to land supply, land grant and land premium, etc, and setting out explicitly in the Outline Zoning Plan the types of land to be used for building elderly housing;
- (d) expediting the pace of urban renewal and rehabilitation to improve the living environment for the elderly residing in old districts (including Sham Shui Po and Kwun Tong);
- (e) providing land at a low price or for free to non-profit-making bodies or organizations that have the interest, ability and experience to build elderly housing, and considering converting vacant schools and old industrial buildings into elderly housing;
- (f) comprehensively reviewing the legislation on lands, planning and buildings, as well as the system for long-term care services and the relevant support

measures, with a view to reinforcing the policy objective of ‘ageing in the community’, so as to integrate elderly housing, medical care and community care services into various communities, and providing in the vicinity of elderly housing sufficient community and passive recreational facilities which are needed by the elderly; and

- (g) improving the regulation of care and attention homes and serviced housing for the elderly by increasing the subsidized places and nursing manpower as well as enhancing the transparency of residential care homes for the elderly, so as to provide diversified choices for elderly persons with different means,

thereby truly creating a quality living environment and a culture of mutual help and care for the people in the territory, including the elderly who will account for over a quarter of the population, and developing a harmonious and integrated quality city for the future of Hong Kong; in addition, in view of the cramped living environment in Hong Kong and the appalling living conditions of many elderly persons, quite a number of elderly persons hope to take up residence on the Mainland upon retirement to enjoy a better housing and living environment; the Government, in formulating the elderly housing policy, should take into consideration this factor and provide more support and flexibility in such areas as medical care, welfare, etc, for the Hong Kong elderly persons who take up residence on the Mainland, so as to enable the elderly to choose the places where they reside and live upon retirement according to their actual situations and wishes; at the same time, the Government should also raise the dependent parent/grandparent allowance, and relax the requirement of living together for the purpose of claiming tax deduction, so that children living in the same housing estates as their elderly parents or grandparents or living in the vicinity within a specified distance can enjoy the tax allowance, so as to encourage children to take care of their elderly parents and grandparents; in addition, the Government should:

- (a) construct public housing units and other types of housing for the elderly according to the different housing needs of various categories of elderly persons in various districts in the territory;
- (b) when considering converting vacant schools and old industrial buildings into elderly housing, also consider converting them into relevant support facilities, such as elderly centres, to be managed and operated by non-profit-making bodies or organizations;
- (c) lower the income and asset limit requirements for public housing applicants living with their elderly parents, as well as extend and enhance the various measures under the ‘schemes to foster harmonious families’ in public housing, thereby enabling more elderly persons to live with their children and be taken care of by their family members; and
- (d) conduct a comprehensive survey on the housing conditions of elderly persons in Hong Kong, actively help elderly persons living in appalling conditions to improve their living environment, and assist elderly persons with housing

needs, such as those living in cubicle apartments and cage homes, to apply for public housing;

- (e) construct more small public housing flats for the elderly and provide supporting social services; and
- (f) study the provision of 'residential care vouchers' to eligible elderly persons so that holders of such vouchers can freely purchase residential care services of their choice, as well as introduce a grading system for residential care homes for the elderly to strengthen their regulation, while at the same time expeditiously increase the residential care places for the elderly, so as to resolve the current hardship caused by the excessively long waiting time to those on the central waiting list; and
- (g) review the policy on public housing for the elderly, including providing housing units of elderly-friendly designs and relevant support facilities on a comprehensive basis, as well as assigning more young families to housing estates where many elderly persons live, so as to inject new vitality into the elderly community."