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By Fax (2840 1902)
17 July 2008

Mr TSANG Tak-sing, JP
Secretary for Home Affairs
Home Affairs Bureau
8/F, West Wing
Central Government Offices
11 Ice House Street
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Mr TSANG,

Panel on Welfare Services

Community development services

On behalf of the Panel, I write to convey members' request to the Administration for increased resources for community development services.

At its meeting on 15 July 2008, the Panel on Welfare Services has examined the provision of community development services. Members generally consider that the service demand for community services, including community centres, the Neighbourhood Level Community Development Projects (NLCDPs) and other community-based services are great, especially in the remote districts and new development areas. While the Administration has no plans at present to terminate the existing 17 NLCDPs, when NLCDPs in certain districts terminate, the resources released will go into the Home Affairs Department's envelope for the provision of community services. Members are concerned about the facilities and services available to meet the local demand for community development services after the termination of NLCDPs in the project areas.

Members note with concern that the NGO Forum on Community Development (the Forum) has not met since 2006, although it is stated in the Policy Statement on Community Development released in 2004 that meetings of the Forum would be held on a quarterly basis. Members consider that the Administration should honour its policy statement and reconvene the Forum for discussing issues relating to community development, including the overall

planning and management of resources, development and direction of new services, rationalization of existing services, community concerns and service needs. Should there be policy changes, the Administration should keep the public abreast of the latest developments and explain to the concerned parties the reasons and justifications for the changes.

Members also note that the record of the last meeting of the Forum held on 27 March 2006 are still outstanding. Members consider that the outstanding notes of the meeting should be issued as soon as possible.

As the Home Affairs Bureau is responsible for the policy on community development, members of the Panel have requested your Bureau to seriously consider reconvening the Forum as early as practicable and providing resources for new NLCDPs.

I should be grateful for your early response.

Yours sincerely,

(Fernando CHEUNG)
Chairman of Panel