

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Helping young people cope with the financial tsunami”
moved by Hon Tanya CHAN
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 18 February 2009**

Motion as amended by Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, Hon WONG Sing-chi and Hon LEE Cheuk-yan

That, as the global economy slows down, and Hong Kong is struck by the financial tsunami, young people will definitely face pressure from various fronts, including the financial burden arising from repaying student loans and the employment difficulties caused by reduction in jobs etc; this Council urges the Government to show concern for the needs of young people amid economic adversities and offer suitable support to help them alleviate their pressure, develop their career and contribute to the society, with specific measures which include:

- (a) standardizing the existing interest rate for the ‘Non-means Tested Loan Scheme’ at a flat rate of 2.5%, making changes to the effect that the interest will be calculated after a student has completed the relevant programme and secured employment, as well as changing the means-tested loans to interest-free loans;
- (b) suspending the collection of repayments from all borrowers of student loan schemes for one year and waiving the interests on all loans for that year;
- (c) providing young people with more employment counselling and support, especially by increasing the resources allocated to the environmental protection and creative industries, with a view to helping them find suitable jobs;
- (d) creating temporary jobs and placements which are suitable for young people, including those in the fields of environmental conservation, survey studies, community relations, publicity and promotion etc, to give them opportunities to accumulate working experience;
- (e) exploring various forms of support, including appropriate training, counselling services, subsidies or loan arrangements, for young people who aspire to start a business or become self-employed; and
- (f) expeditiously implementing the recommendations of the Task Force on Economic Challenges which target at young people’s needs, introducing an attachment allowance scheme for tertiary graduates whereby the Government will offer allowances to Hong Kong and Mainland enterprises which provide attachment places with a view to helping fresh graduates tackle employment

difficulties, and putting forward specific work plans as well as announcing the details;

- (g) reviewing various financial assistance schemes for post-secondary students, relaxing the eligibility criteria, and raising the amount of grants and loans, so as to alleviate the financial burden on tertiary students; and
- (h) considering giving tertiary graduates more flexibility in repayment, including repaying a smaller amount during the first three years after graduation; and
- (i) establishing a training contract system to enable young school leavers to have training opportunities and working experience.