

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Comprehensively improving the effectiveness of
Integrated Family Service Centres”
moved by Hon WONG Sing-chi
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 4 March 2009**

Motion as amended by Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che

That the Integrated Family Service Centres (‘IFSCs’) are the key players of the front-line social service teams which respond to family crises and prevent family tragedies, whether they can smoothly operate in responding promptly and properly to such social crises is indeed critical to alleviating people’s hardship and fostering an overall harmonious atmosphere in the community; recently there have been ample evidence and voices indicating that if IFSCs are to achieve their functions under the current service mode, the Government has to adjust their service concept and operation mode, in addition to allocating additional resources to IFSCs; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to adopt the following measures:

- (a) setting up a central mechanism to regularly and comprehensively assess and co-ordinate the support and services provided by various departments;
- (b) assessing and studying afresh the mission and objectives of IFSCs, and ensuring that the information and data collected through the relevant study must be made public subject to consideration of privacy protection;
- (c) strictly implementing the staff establishment of IFSCs, increasing the staff ratio of both supervisory staff and senior practitioners, setting workload indicators for social workers working in IFSCs, and recruiting temporary staff to cope with the additional workload arising from social crises as necessary, so as to ensure that there is sufficient manpower to adequately meet the needs of potentially high-risk families, and providing preventive and support services;
- (d) increasing the staff establishment of frontline social workers, and monitoring non-governmental organizations (‘NGOs’) so that they recruit social workers according to the salary benchmark formulated by the Government, so as to lessen their workload, boost the currently low morale among social workers and enable them to tackle family problems more effectively;

- (e) striving to standardize the respective roles of the Social Welfare Department ('SWD') and NGOs and their division of responsibilities in respect of IFSCs, and giving more powers to NGOs so that they can provide practical assistance (such as housing assistance or Comprehensive Social Security Assistance) to clients in a timely manner;
- (f) examining in depth the difficulties faced by staff of SWD and NGOs working in IFSCs (such as being required to handle non-professional clerical work, and being authorized to vet and approve requests for social resources, etc), formulating measures for improvement, strengthening clerical support to staff, and referring non-core counselling or professional services to non-IFSC units for follow-up;
- (g) comprehensively reviewing the performance pledge of IFSCs, and setting a service standard that can sensitively and accurately reflect the needs of potentially high-risk families;
- (h) formulating a comprehensive policy on family service, particularly focusing on the needs of multi-stressed and potentially high-risk families, and exploring how to support and facilitate the healthy development of families in Hong Kong; and
- (i) adjusting the population-to-IFSCs ratio to one IFSC serving some 80 000 to 90 000 people, and according priority to setting up IFSCs in 'potentially high-risk communities'.