

For Information
23 October 2008

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Policy Initiatives of Home Affairs Bureau

Introduction

This note highlights the work of Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) concerning the Family Council and promoting the development of social enterprises (SE).

Family Council

2. The Chief Executive (CE) announced in his 2007-08 Policy Address the establishment of the Family Council to be chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration. The Family Council was set up in December last year to advise the Government on the formulation of policies and strategies for supporting and strengthening the family and on the development of related programmes/activities, and to monitor their implementation.

3. One of the first major issues considered by the Family Council was the identification of family core values. The Council identified “Love and Care”, “Responsibility and Respect” as well as “Communication and Harmony” as the three family core values. It is mapping out a promotion campaign to encourage different sectors of the community to actively participate in the promotion of family core values and a harmonious relationship amongst family members.

4. Moreover, to create a “pro-family” environment, the Family Council is examining ways to further encourage the business sector to provide a “family-friendly” working environment and to promote “family-friendly” employment practices more effectively to enable employees to balance their work and family priorities. On the advice of the Family Council, the Government is looking into ways to include the family as a factor to consider in its policy-making process.

Social Enterprises

5. In his 2007-08 Policy Address, the CE has stated the Government's ongoing initiatives in encouraging the further development of SE together with stakeholders, to help enhance the employability of the able-bodied unemployed and create more job opportunities for them.

6. The summit on social enterprise was held on 20 December 2007. Taking into account the views of various sectors, the Administration promotes the development of SE through a four-pronged approach -

- (a) Enhance public understanding;
- (b) Promote cross-sector collaboration;
- (c) Nurture more social entrepreneurs; and
- (d) Strengthen support for SE.

7. On enhancing public understanding, we will continue to broadcast the television and radio announcements in the public interest (API) to enhance public understanding of the social objectives achieved by SE. Moreover, we will continue to update the SE website and the SE directory, and to organize promotional activities in the 18 districts to promote the services/products of SE. We will also continue to introduce stories of successful SE to members of the public.

8. We spare no effort in promoting cross-sector collaboration. In this regard, the Home Affairs Department implements the Social Enterprise Partnership Programme which enhances and facilitates partnership through a matching forum and a mentorship scheme.

9. Social entrepreneurship is the key to the success and development of SE. In this regard, we have commissioned the Centre for Entrepreneurship of the Chinese University of Hong Kong to organize the "Social Enterprise Challenge 2008" in partnership with eight other tertiary institutions. The event, to be organized in this academic year, is a business plan writing competition targeted at students of tertiary institutions.

10. On provision of support for SE, the Administration will continue to provide seed grants for eligible SE to subsidize their initial operations. The "Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme" under the Home Affairs Department has approved under the first three phases of applications a total grant of about \$67 million to

some 70 new SE projects creating some 1 300 jobs for the socially disadvantaged. The Home Affairs Department has just completed processing applications received under phase 4.

11. The CE has announced in the summit on social enterprise held in December last year the introduction of a pilot scheme to give eligible SE priority in bidding 38 government cleansing contracts. Under the pilot scheme, 16 contracts have been awarded to SE. We are reviewing the effectiveness of the pilot scheme and will continue to look for suitable service contracts having regard to the need to maintain transparency and fairness.

Home Affairs Bureau
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