
立法會秘書處

Legislative Council Secretariat

新聞稿 Press Release

LegCo to debate alleviating the disparity between the rich and the poor and assisting the grassroots in facing up to economic adversities

The Legislative Council will hold a meeting this Wednesday (December 3) at 11 am in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building. During the meeting, Members will debate a motion on alleviating the disparity between the rich and the poor and assisting the grassroots in facing up to economic adversities.

The motion, to be proposed by Hon Frederick FUNG, says: "That, as the growth in Gross Domestic Product for the third quarter has slackened to 1.7%, the effects of the financial tsunami have gradually surfaced, the risk of the economy entering into recession has substantially increased, layoffs and pay cuts take place one after another, the unemployment rate has rebounded but there is no notable downward adjustment in the prices of goods, causing people's livelihood to become more difficult; moreover, a latest report of the United Nations points out that Hong Kong ranks first among all Asian cities in the disparity between the rich and the poor, with the Gini Coefficient which reflects the inequality of income distribution rising to a record high of 0.533, indicating that the disparity between the rich and the poor is increasingly serious, this Council therefore urges the Government to re-establish the Commission on Poverty to explore and recommend focused measures to assist the grassroots in facing up to economic adversities and to formulate comprehensive and

long-term policies to effectively allocate community resources and narrow the gap between the rich and the poor, thereby protecting the basic livelihood of the grassroots and promoting harmonious social development."

Hon TAM Yiu-chung, Hon WONG Sing-chi, Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG and Hon LI Fung-ying will move separate amendments to Hon Frederick FUNG's motion.

Members will debate another motion on formulating new policies on public and public housing estate markets. The motion, to be moved by Hon Tommy CHEUNG, says: "That, as the Administration's approach in planning and managing public and public housing estate markets is very outdated, hence all along it is unable to boost customer flows effectively, and has even resulted in serious vacancy situation in some public and public housing estate markets, this Council urges the Administration to immediately formulate policies on public and public housing estate markets which meet the needs of a modern society, and particularly in view of the recent economic downturn and the worsening trend of the unemployment rate, it is necessary for the Administration to expeditiously enhance the competitiveness of public and public housing estate markets, and assist small traders in these markets in countering monopolization by supermarkets, so as to benefit the grassroots; the measures include:

(a) actively allocating resources to improve the business environment of markets, such as installing additional air-conditioning systems and escalators, thereby boosting customer flows to bring about long-term return;

(b) analyzing in depth, from a market perspective, the needs of the districts to which the markets belong, and planning afresh the sizes, types of commodities sold, layout of stalls and ancillary measures of individual markets;

(c) adopting proactive letting policies, such as offering

short-term rent concessions to improve the situation of low occupancy and striving to assist traders in the markets in introducing new types of commodities or services, so as to inject new elements into the markets and bring into play their characteristics of trade mix; and

(d) appropriately relaxing the tenancy conditions of market stalls so as to facilitate business operations as far as possible and enable traders to provide unique value-added services, thereby enhancing the attractiveness of the markets."

Hon Fred LI, Hon WONG Yung-kan, Hon Alan LEONG and Hon WONG Kwok-hing will move separate amendments to Hon Tommy CHEUNG's motion.

On Government motions, the Chief Secretary for Administration will move a resolution under the Criminal Procedure Ordinance to approve the Criminal Procedure (Witnesses' Allowances) (Amendment) Rules 2008, which was made by the Criminal Procedure Rules Committee on 27 October 2008

The Chief Secretary for Administration will move another resolution under the Coroners Ordinance to approve the Coroners (Witnesses' Allowances) (Amendment) Rules 2008, which was made by the Chief Justice on 22 October 2008.

During the meeting, Members will also ask the Administration 20 questions on various policy areas, six of which require oral replies.

The agenda of the above meeting can be obtained via the Legislative Council InfoFax Service (Tel: 2869 9568) or the Legislative Council web site (<http://www.legco.gov.hk>).

Members of the public are welcome to observe the proceedings of the meeting from the public galleries of the

Legislative Council Chamber. They may reserve seats by calling 2869 9399 during office hours. Seats will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis. Members of the public can also listen to the meeting via the audio webcast system on the Legislative Council homepage.

Ends/Monday, December 1, 2008

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