

**Progress Report on the Motion on
"Adding impetus for promoting upward social mobility"
Moved by Hon Sophie LEUNG as amended by
Hon Frederick FUNG, Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che and Hon Ronny TONG
At the Legislative Council Meeting on 17 March 2010**

Background

At the Legislative Council Meeting held on 17 March 2010, Hon Sophie LEUNG moved the motion on "Adding impetus for promoting upward social mobility", on which a number of legislators moved relevant amended motion. The following amended motion (please refer to the Appendix for the motion) moved by Hon Frederick FUNG, Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che and Hon Ronny TONG was carried after voting. The Administration was urged to promote upward social mobility. The amended motion is as follows:

- to promote education which is steered by ‘inspiration’ in place of ‘impartation’ mode of teaching, to develop creativity and independent analytical ability among students, with a view to establishing proper attitudes towards life;
- to expand the types of existing education programmes, promote diversified development, increase the opportunities for young people to study abroad and participate in summer exchange programmes and on-the-job training, etc., and provide further support to young people from poor families, so as to enhance the quality of education for the whole community;
- to break the vicious cycle of inter-generational poverty and provide support for poor families on all fronts;
- to create a fair social environment to encourage the public to fulfil their personal potentials and avoid introducing policies which impede the fulfilment of potentials;

- to promote in the Government and various sectors of the community the development of a ‘from the heart’ attitude of doing things, consolidate Hong Kong’s core values of ‘being proactive and progressive’, and encourage young people to strive harder for improvement and self-reliance, so as to prevent the development of a mentality of dependency;
- to promote upward social mobility through developing the economy and new industries;
- to resume the construction of Home Ownership Scheme (‘HOS’) flats and assist the younger generation in purchasing their homes through measures such as revitalizing the secondary market of HOS flats and re-launching the Home Starter Loan Scheme, etc.;
- to enhance the level of participation of young people in various statutory and advisory bodies, and establish communication channels such as new media to listen sincerely to young people’s views and let them actively participate in social affairs;
- to vigorously develop social enterprises so as to provide alternative development opportunities for those workers who have not been absorbed by the free market;
- to respect the right of young people to achieve self-development;
- to re-establish the Commission on Poverty to actively study and formulate long-term policies to solve the problem of inter-generational poverty; and
- to increase the number of subsidized university places to train local talents

2. This progress report informs Members of the follow-up actions taken by the Administration.

Education Curriculum and Learning

3. The Administration has launched the curriculum reform since 2000, which emphasizes enquiry approach in learning, and nurture of students' generic skills like creativity, independent analysis, critical thinking and communication abilities. Positive values like sense of responsibility, commitment and respect to others are also developed. With the implementation of the New Academic Structure (NAS) of 6-year secondary education articulating to 4-year university education, all students have the opportunity to enjoy 12 years of free education, which is a learning journey for all to succeed. Under the NAS, schools provide students with a broad curriculum. Apart from the four core subjects (Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies), students can choose 2 to 3 elective subjects from an array of 20 New Senior Secondary (NSS) subjects, Applied Learning courses and Other Language courses. In addition, students are provided with a range of Other Learning Experiences opportunities in five areas, including Moral and Civic Education, Community Service, Career-related Experiences, Aesthetic Development and Physical Development. As a component of the NSS curriculum, OLE accounts for 15% or above of the overall learning time and complements with the core and elective subjects. The NAS enables students with different abilities and interests to fully develop their talents. It also promotes their whole-person development, fosters their life-long learning capabilities and prepares them to meet challenges in future.

4. Results of the *Survey on New Senior Secondary Subject Information* conducted by the Education Bureau (EDB) in November 2009 in over 450 secondary schools show that there are more than 1,400 subject combinations offered to students. About 70% of the students are taking elective subjects from more than one Key Learning Areas. This reflects that schools are no longer bound by the traditional streaming of arts and science subjects. Students can select their elective subjects according to their own interests, ability and development needs. This helps students establish a broad knowledge-base, develops their life-long learning capabilities, enhances their

personal competitiveness as well as the overall competitiveness of the society which in turn promotes the upward social mobility.

Overseas Studies and Exchanges

5. Since November 2008, the Career and Guidance Section of the EDB has organised over 10 seminars on overseas studies, providing useful information for students who may wish to study overseas. The content of the seminars have been uploaded to the webpage of Career Guidance Services for public access.

6. With the implementation of the NAS, the first Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) Examination will be held in 2012. The new HKDSE qualification has already gained recognition from various sectors in Hong Kong. NSS graduates will enjoy multiple pathways in further studies and employment. For overseas studies, the HKDSE has already secured recognition from renowned academic agencies abroad, university admission services and governments. The Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) commissioned the Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS) of the United Kingdom (UK) to conduct a benchmarking study. Findings show that Level 3 of HKDSE is broadly comparable to Grade E of the General Certificate of Education (GCE) A Level Examinations of the UK. Besides, the Australian Government has recognised the HKDSE as equivalent to the Australian Senior Secondary Certificate of Education. The NAS hence articulates to worldwide education systems more smoothly and facilitates students' studies abroad.

7. Starting from 2010, the EDB and the HKEAA have been jointly visiting overseas education ministries, universities, academic institutions and relevant organizations to introduce the NAS and the HKDSE. Canada, US, UK, Australia, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan and Korea have been visited. Responses are all positive. Tertiary institutions visited all indicated their readiness to accept the HKDSE as a credential for Hong Kong students' application for admission. The

EDB and HKEAA also conducted a briefing in April 2010 for all Consulates in Hong Kong. Responses to the NAS are positive. The emphasis on broad-based learning, development of students' abilities for life-long learning, and development of their global outlook are generally supported. The EDB issued letters to all Consulates in June 2010, providing them with detailed information on the NAS, as well as seeking their assistance in disseminating the information to their universities and inviting them to indicate their admission requirements for holders of the HKDSE. We will continue the overseas promotion of the NAS and HKDSE. Overseas countries' understanding of the NAS will facilitate students' pursue of further studies abroad as well as exchange activities between Hong Kong students and students all over the world.

8. Hong Kong students have all along been provided with ample opportunities to participate in educational exchange activities across the globe. An annual exchange programme has been jointly organised by the Ministry of Education of Singapore and the EDB of Hong Kong since 2000. It promotes cultural and educational exchange between Singapore and Hong Kong, and provides opportunities for students to broaden their horizons, to improve language and social skills, and to cultivate respect for differences in culture. For the 2010 exchange programme, 60 secondary students in Hong Kong are going to visit Singapore in mid July 2010. The Singapore participants will pay the reciprocal visit to Hong Kong in early November 2010.

9. Besides, starting from 2007, senior secondary students from public sector schools and schools under the Direct Subsidy Scheme may apply for joining the Japan-East Asia Network of Exchange for Students and Youths (JENESYS) Programme fully sponsored by the Japanese Government. The JENESYS Programme aims at promoting mutual understanding of the East Asia Region through participation in lesson and activities in their local schools and home-stay with the host families in Japan.

10. As for exchange activities in the Mainland, 221 secondary and primary schools from each of Hong Kong and Mainland have

formed “sister schools”. Exchange activities are organized according to their wish and needs. In addition, the EDB have been working closely with the Mainland authorities in series of programmes like “Passing the Torch: Exploring and Embracing Chinese Culture” National Education Exchange Programme: Tracing Our Origin in Ancient Cities (「薪火相傳：中華文化探索與承傳」之文化古城尋根之旅), “Award Scheme for Student Leaders of Hong Kong: National Education Course” (香港領袖生獎勵計劃：國情教育課程), “Passing On the Torch - National Education Programme Series: National Education Exchange Programme on the Mainland for Junior Secondary and Upper Primary Students” (「薪火相傳」國民教育活動系列「同根同心」－香港初中及高小學生內地交流等計劃). These programmes not only provide students with exchange opportunities in various provinces / municipalities, but also strengthen their understanding of our country and awareness of their national identity.

11. The implementation of the NAS, with its smooth articulation with worldwide education systems, provides better conditions and more opportunities for student exchange activities.

Support to Needy Students

12. To counter the impact of the financial tsunami, the Financial Secretary announced in his Budget Speech of 24 February 2010 to implement a number of one-off relief measures. The Finance Committee of the Legislative Council approved the implementation of these measures on 14 May 2010, including providing a one-off cash grant of \$1,000 for needy students outside the existing financial assistance schemes and on a non-accountable basis in the 2010/11 school year. Eligible students will each receive a one-off cash grant of \$1,000 to meet various education-related expenses. The grant will be disbursed starting August 2010. The measure is estimated to entail an additional expenditure of around \$520 million and benefit more than 500 000 students.

13. In addition, to facilitate the low-income families to provide their school-age children with access to the Internet at home for learning and to reduce their financial burden, we will implement a

household-based cash subsidy scheme for Internet access charges for the following two categories of low-income families starting from the 2010/11 school year:

- at full subsidy rate of \$1,300 for families with children who are full-time students receiving education at primary and secondary levels and who are eligible for the flat-rate grant for School-related Expenses under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme; and
- at full subsidy rate of \$1,300 or half subsidy rate of \$650 for families with children who are full-time students receiving education at primary and secondary levels, and who pass the existing means test for receiving financial assistance from the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA). The granting of the full rate or half rate will depend on the result of the means test.

We estimate that around 300 000 low-income families can benefit from the subsidy scheme in the 2010/11 school year, including 80 000 CSSA families and 220 000 families passing the existing means test of SFAA. The number of students who can benefit from the subsidy scheme in the 2010/11 school year will be around 410 000, including around 120 000 CSSA students and around 290 000 students eligible for financial assistance from SFAA. The estimated expenditure on the subsidy for Internet access charges for 2010/11 school year is about \$280 million.

14. In addition, the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council has approved to create a new commitment of \$220 million for the implementation of a five-year Programme to help needy students and parents from low-income families to gain access to the Internet for learning by providing economical Internet access services, suitable computers and necessary complementary services such as training and technical support.

15. To alleviate intergenerational poverty, the EDB has implemented the "School-based After-school Learning and Support

Programmes"(Programme) since the 2005/06 school year to provide grants for schools and non-governmental organisations to organise after-school activities for Primary 1 to Secondary 7 students from families in receipt of the CSSA or recipients of full grant under the Student Financial Assistance Scheme. The Programme aims to increase needy students' learning effectiveness, broaden their learning experiences outside the classroom as well as raise their understanding of the community and sense of belonging with a view to facilitating the whole-person and all-round development of the needy students. The Government has announced in the 2010-11 Budget a significant increase of the annual provision for the Programme from the current \$75 million to \$175 million. That said, under the Programme, the school-based grant is to be increase from \$200 to \$400 per needy student whereas the community-based project grant will be increase by more than 150% so as to increase needy students' opportunity in participating in after-school activities. The school-based grant to be disbursed is around \$65 million whilst the community-based project grant about \$110 million. The grants is going to be disbursed starting from July 2010, benefitting around 163 000 needy students.

Development of the Economy and New Industries

Education Industry

16. In many developed economies, the self-financing sector plays an indispensable role in the provision of higher education. Further developing self-financing institutions can provide senior secondary graduates with even more diversified opportunities for further studies. The Government has introduced a series of initiatives to facilitate the healthy and continuing development of the self-financing sector, including reserving six sites for the construction of self-financing higher education institutions. Applications for three sites are being invited. In promoting the development of the self-financing higher education sector, we will continue to adopt a prudent approach and accord priority to quality assurance.

Medical Industry

17. The Government promotes and facilitates the development of private healthcare, with a view to addressing the imbalance between the public and private sectors in hospital services and to cope with the increasing service demand. The Government also aims to develop medical services as one of the six industries crucial to the development of Hong Kong's economy through development of private healthcare service. In this regard, the Government has reserved sites for private hospital development. Besides, the Government will continue to strengthen the training and development of local medical professionals, and attract overseas medical talents to Hong Kong for exchange of expertise, with a view to enhancing training of medical professionals.

Testing and Certification

18. The Hong Kong Council for Testing and Certification (HKCTC) submitted its three-year market-oriented development plan for the testing and certification industry in March and the Government has accepted all its recommendations. HKCTC recommends the adoption of a dual approach in promoting further development of the industry – making general improvements to the accreditation service and factors of production of the industry (including manpower, technology, capital and land), whilst at the same time focusing particular attention on four selected trades with good potential in using testing and certification services, i.e. Chinese medicine, construction materials, food and jewellery. Meanwhile, further business opportunities for testing and certification services in two emerging trades, i.e. environmental protection and information and communications technologies, will also be explored.

Environmental Industry

19. The Government would continue to take forward various measures, including (as regards environmental industry) Clean Development Mechanism, circular economy and green procurement etc.,

to promote the development of six industries that would bring about new business and job opportunities.

Innovation and Technology Industry

20. The Government launched a \$200 million Research and Development (R&D) Cash Rebate Scheme in April this year, under which companies conducting applied R&D projects with the support of the Innovation and Technology Fund or in partnership with local designated research institutions will enjoy a cash rebate equivalent to 10% of their investments. We have also decided to allocate \$4.9 billion to develop Science Park Phase 3.

Creative Industry

21. In respect of nurturing talents, Create Hong Kong has initiated projects to nurture and develop creative talent with funding support from the \$300 million Create Smart Initiative set up by the Government. The Government also supports the local comics and animations industries in promoting film and animation education in the new secondary school curriculum of visual arts with a view to foster appreciation to film and animation, and nurturing talents for the two sectors. The Government also works with the local advertising and design sectors in introducing training programmes to offer opportunities for tertiary students and fresh graduates to gain on-the-job experience in the two respective sectors.

22. In addition, we support the organisation of the “Make a Difference” (MAD), a large-scale regional forum which aims at stimulating the spirit of creativity and entrepreneurship amongst our youth population and encouraging them to think creative and innovative. The second MAD forum will be held in January next year.

Revitalisation of the Home Ownership Scheme

23. The Government has recognised that the subject of using public resources to subsidise home ownership is being debated in the

community. On this important subject, the Government will listen to the views of interested parties and members of the public to try to identify a consensus on a way forward. An extensive consultation exercise is being undertaken by the Transport and Housing Bureau to engage stakeholders and members of the public through various channels to look at issues relevant to this subject. On 17 May 2010, as part of the consultation exercise, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA) was consulted on proposals to revitalise the Home Ownership Scheme Secondary Market. The Housing Department will continue the discussions with the HA on the proposed measures. The consultation exercise will last until 17 September 2010. Views and suggestions arising from this consultation exercise will be forwarded to the Chief Executive for his consideration.

Promote Youth Development

Whole Person Development

24. The Home Affairs Bureau continues to work closely with the Commission on Youth to promote youth development, including promoting positive values among young people, enhancing their understanding of the Chinese culture and heritage, encouraging their participation in volunteer and community work, broadening their international perspective and strengthening leadership training for them.

Enhance Communication

25. The Government attaches great importance to communication with young people. In the process of policy formulation, the Government always listens to and receives views from people of all social strata through different channels, including popular social media websites, blogs and online discussion forums of young people. Currently, six political appointees have opened their own Facebook accounts to engage the public, including the youth. The Chief Executive and four other political appointees also have blogs. To enable the public to easily access these sites and to combat

impersonation, the Government published in March this year a directory of official e-engagement sites on GovHK, listing the government officials who have blogs or Facebook accounts with hyperlinks to the relevant sites. The directory will be constantly updated and expanded as necessary. The Administration is studying overseas practices on e-engagement on public affairs using social media tools, and will draw reference from these practices as applicable.

26. Apart from receiving public opinion from the Internet more actively, the Administration will continue to collect the views of young people through existing channels including discussion forums and seminars. For important issues like the Policy Address or the Budget, the Government will make every endeavour to engage young people in consultations held to solicit views, such as arranging consultation sessions tailored made for them.

Social Enterprises (SEs)

27. Since the launch of the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme in June 2006, the Home Affairs Department has approved under the seven phases of applications a total grant of around \$100 million to about 100 new SE projects, creating some 1 600 jobs for the underprivileged.

28. The Social Enterprise Advisory Committee (SEAC), chaired by the Secretary for Home Affairs, has met twice since its establishment in January 2010. It is hoped that the establishment of SEAC would further combine the efforts of the government and the community, formulate and refine policies that will be beneficial to the development of SEs with a view to responding to the needs of the society. The Administration will also continue to adopt a four-pronged approach to promote the development of SEs, namely to enhance public understanding of SEs; to promote cross-sector collaboration; to nurture more social entrepreneurs; and to strengthen support for SEs.

Policy on Poverty

29. To promote the personal development of children from a disadvantaged background and reduce inter-generational poverty, the Government launched the first batch of three-year Child Development Fund (CDF) pioneer projects in December 2008, benefiting a total of 750 children. The second batch of 15 projects was rolled out in June this year, benefiting another 1 500 needy children. We expect that CDF will eventually benefit not less than 13 600 children.

Increasing Publicly-funded University Places

30. In determining the approved student number target for publicly-funded first-year first-degree (FYFD) places in the UGC-funded sector, the Administration will take into account various educational, social and economic factors. These include, among others, the projected student population of the 17–20 age cohort, the quality of teaching and student intakes, the development of the publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary sectors, the Government's fiscal position, as well as the manpower requirements and economic development trends of Hong Kong.

31. As regards the number of publicly-funded senior year undergraduate places in the UGC-funded sector, it has been increasing in phases from the 2005/06 school year onwards. In the 2009/10 to 2011/12 triennium, the annual number of senior year intake places will further increase to around 2 000.

32. Currently, the annual expenditure on education accounts for about a quarter of the government recurrent expenditure. Any further increase in the number of publicly-funded undergraduate places will involve huge amount of public resources. Therefore, we must act prudently with due regard to the needs of the self-financing sector, in order to ensure the sustainable development of the whole higher education sector.

Training and Re-training Programmes

33. In 2010-11, the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) offers more than 500 courses through some 70 training bodies all over the territory, including part-time courses which are suitable for in-service workers. Low-income participants can enjoy fee exemption or subsidies. In addition, ERB is taking over gradually the Skills Upgrading Scheme (SUS) and launching courses in phases under a new SUS designed according to Level One to Level Four of the Qualifications Framework. ERB courses offer progressive training and help the participants obtain professional and vocational qualifications, which enable them to climb up the career ladder and enhance their upward social mobility. ERB plans to provide some 20 000 training places under the new SUS in 2010-11.

34. By the end of June 2010, the Labour Department (LD) received over 15 500 applications for the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme. In addition, to step up its efforts to help young people with acute employment difficulties, LD will launch by the end of this year a targeted employment programme under which non-governmental organisations will provide training and internship for 12 months to young people aged 15 to 24 with low educational qualifications, who need special assistance because of emotional / behavioural problems or learning difficulties. The programme will provide 500 places, involving an estimated expenditure of \$33 million.

35. On the other hand, LegCo Finance Committee approved in May 2010 funding of \$100 million to the Construction Industry Council to implement a series of one-off measures, including providing incentives to attract more youngsters to receive training and re-training in the industry in order to address the ageing problem and skills mismatch in the construction workforce, and to help enhance the skills and competitiveness of in-service construction workers.

Concluding remarks

36. To conclude, the Administration will continue to develop education, support needy families, develop the economy and new industries to promote upward social mobility. Talents are nurtured through education, which will bring competitive edge for economic development and employment, which in turn promotes upwards social mobility. Education develops whole-person development of the young generation, nurture in them positive values, develop their creativity and generic skills like abilities in communication, independent thinking, etc. to equip them with life-long learning capabilities, which also meet the need of socio-economic development in Hong Kong. In this regard, our younger generation will be able to seek opportunities, realize their dreams and lead to social mobility.

Commerce and Economic Development Bureau

Education Bureau

Environment Bureau

Food and Health Bureau

Home Affairs Bureau

Innovation and Technology Commission

Labour and Welfare Bureau

Transport and Housing Bureau

29 July 2010