

(Translation)

Motion on
“Supporting the market for traders running small businesses”
moved by Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan
at the Legislative Council meeting commencing on
Wednesday, 17 March 2010

Motion as amended by Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, Hon WONG Yung-kan, Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun and Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun

That, although the impact of the financial tsunami is gradually subsiding, the Hong Kong economic outlook remains uncertain, and the rents and operating costs in the private sector have remained high in recent years, together with ever increasing prices, the market for small businesses has suffered a severe blow, and this has not only increased the life stress of the grassroots, but has also reduced their chances of achieving self-reliance, making it difficult to improve the unemployment situation; as such, this Council urges the Government to support the market for traders running small businesses, so as to preserve their characteristic of providing quality goods at low prices and serve the grassroots, thereby increasing job opportunities; the relevant measures should include:

- (a) to revitalize hawker stalls by expeditiously allocating no less than 70% of the vacant on-street fixed hawker pitches to the existing registered assistants at fixed hawker pitches for running businesses through priority balloting, so as to enable the registered assistants who are familiar with the hawking trade and the stall environment to start businesses on the same streets or in the same districts, so as to bring vitality to the hawker market;
- (b) to increase the room for survival for licensed itinerant hawkers, reasonably reduce the number of illegal hawking blackspots, and study the designation of proposed hawking locations with time limits or conditions, and publish the list of locations concerned through various means, including facsimiles or telephone-recorded messages, for access by itinerant hawkers;
- (c) to implement the voluntary surrender scheme for itinerant hawker licences on a long-term basis, including arrangements such as allowing itinerant hawkers who have voluntarily surrendered their licences to select a vacant fixed pitch;
- (d) to strive to preserve the culture of ‘dai pai dong’ open-air bazaars, to tie in with the promotion focus of the tourism industry and, apart from improving the sanitary facilities of the existing ‘dai pai dong’ and planning and developing them afresh, to expeditiously study subsidizing the development of ‘dai pai dong’ or open-air markets in remote areas, so as to stimulate the economic activities of the neighbouring communities and create job opportunities for residents in remote areas;

- (e) to affirm the position and function of public markets as facilities serving the grassroots and determine future rent adjustments by using the affordability of the grassroots as one of the principles, so as to ensure that small traders can continue to capitalize on their selling point of providing quality goods at low prices to counter rent increase by The Link and monopolization by supermarkets; and
- (f) to immediately implement a public market enhancement policy and proactively allocate resources to improve the design and business environment of the public markets, including bearing the costs of the installation works and maintenance for air-conditioning facilities in public markets provided that 65% of the tenants in the markets concerned give consent, so as to enhance the competitiveness of small traders;
- (g) to improve the business environment for the hawker stalls and waive the hawker licence fee for one year; and
- (h) to extend the rent freeze period for public markets for one year; and
- (i) to appropriately relax the restrictions on on-street busking and hawking in various districts (particularly in places with tourism value or features);
- (j) to improve the sanitary conditions of the markets, step up advertising and promotion, and enhance the ancillary facilities for business operation in the markets;
- (k) if rent reduction or waiver are proposed in the Budget of a certain financial year, to consider also including commercial tenants of public markets as the target beneficiaries; and
- (l) to use the economic condition of the current year and employment market situation as reference indicators when adjusting the levels of rent of public markets.