

立法會
Legislative Council

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seen by the Administration)

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Panel on Welfare Services

Subcommittee on Poverty Alleviation

Minutes of the 8th meeting
held on Thursday, 21 January 2010, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

- Members present** : Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon WONG Sing-chi
- Members absent** : Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
- Member attending** : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
- Public Officers attending** : Item I
Mr Franco KWOK Wai-fan
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Poverty)

Mr Andrew TSANG Yue-tung, JP
Assistant Director for Home Affairs (2)

Mr FU Tsun-hung
District Social Welfare Officer (Yuen Long)

Mrs Alice LEUNG
District Social Welfare Officer (Tai Po/North)

Clerk in attendance : Miss Betty MA
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

Staff in attendance : Miss Florence WONG
Senior Council Secretary (2) 5

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Action

I. Poverty alleviation work in Yuen Long and North District
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)756/09-10(01) and CB(2)2480/08-09(01)]

The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings attached at **Annex**).

2. Members expressed the following views –

- (a) to promote local economic activities in Yuen Long and North District with a view to creating job opportunities for the low-income and low-skilled workers in the area, the Administration should consider –
 - (i) making use of vacant sites for the promotion of local economic activities, such as the establishment of hawker bazaars;
 - (ii) injecting economic activities at district level having regard to the unique situation and characteristics of the area;
 - (iii) expediting the implementation of large-scale development projects in these districts through the collaboration of different bureaux and departments; and
 - (iv) setting up new Government offices in the districts;
- (b) to facilitate the development of social enterprises (SEs) in these districts, the Administration should consider –

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- (i) accepting applications for the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme (the ESR Programme) from organisations and individuals other than tax-exempted charitable bodies recognised under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap.112) taking into account that most of the operators of charitable bodies did not have the business mindset to run SEs;
 - (ii) raising the amount of seed grants under the ESR Programme to facilitate the development of larger-sized SEs, providing more support and advice to SEs, such as conducting marketing research on the business opportunities in these districts; and
 - (iii) making reference to overseas experience, e.g. South Korea, in promoting the development of SEs;
- (c) the Transport Support Scheme (TSS), which aimed to encourage needy job seekers and low-income employees to seek jobs or work across districts, should be extended to all districts;
 - (d) having regard to the increasing number of cross-boundary families, the Administration should provide more assistance to those families which had financial difficulties, in particular those with newly arrived members from the Mainland who were ineligible for the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and public housing due to the residence requirements.

3. The Administration made the following responses –

- (a) District Officers (DOs), in collaboration with District Councils (DCs), had been cooperating with other sectors in providing worthwhile programmes to meet the district needs, and working closely with different bureaux/departments and district organisations in promoting local community economic activities in order to create more job opportunities in the districts. The promotion of SEs would also help provide job opportunities to the underprivileged;
- (b) having regard to the challenges faced by different sectors, the Administration had implemented targeted measures to meet the specific needs of individual districts. For instance, over 40 projects funded under the Community and Investment Inclusion Fund and the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged had been implemented in Yuen Long to build up social capital and encourage mutual support in the neighbourhood, and the development of the Hong Kong Geopark and the cycle track in North District would also attract more tourists to the district;

Action

- (c) different bureaux and departments would develop relevant industries across the territory in the light of their policy objectives, such as the six industries proposed in the Chief Executive's Policy Address 2009-2010;
- (d) apart from the ESR Programme, the Administration had been supporting SEs through providing a platform to link up entrepreneurs and professionals with SEs so that the former could provide professional and business advisory services to the latter. Besides, the Social Enterprise Advisory Committee, which comprised SE operators, members of the business sector, academics and persons aspired to promote SE development, had just been set up to provide advice on ways to further promote SE development;
- (e) the objective of TSS was to provide time-limited transport subsidy to encourage needy job seekers and low-income employees in the four designated remote districts, including Yuen Long and North District, to seek jobs or work across districts. As the review was underway, the Administration would report the findings and the way forward for TSS to the Panel on Manpower in due course; and
- (f) the Director of Social Welfare could consider exercising discretion to waive the residence requirements under the CSSA Scheme to applicants in genuine financial hardship, having regard to the individual circumstances.

Admin

4. The Administration was requested to –

- (a) provide details on local community economic activities which had been promoted by DOs in collaboration with DCs in Yuen Long and North District; and
- (b) revert to the Subcommittee on the proposal of establishing hawker bazaars at designated locations in the less well-off districts.

II. Any other business

5. The Chairman reminded members that the next meeting would be held on 25 February 2010 to discuss the poverty alleviation work in Sham Shui Po and Kwai Tsing. Taking into account that measures to inject economic activities at district level was vital to promote local economy and create employment opportunities, members took the view that representatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau, Home Affairs Bureau, Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and Development Bureau should be invited to attend the next meeting.

Action

6. Members agreed to receive views from deputations on the district-based poverty alleviation measures at the meeting to be held in March 2010.
7. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:54 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
23 February 2010

**Proceedings of the 8th meeting of the
Subcommittee on Poverty Alleviation
on Thursday, 21 January 2010, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
<i>Agenda item I – Poverty alleviation work in Yuen Long and North District</i>			
000000 - 001553	Chairman Admin	Briefing by the Administration on the poverty alleviation work in Yuen Long and North District [LC Paper No. CB(2)756/09-10(01)]	
001554 - 002146	Mr WONG Kwok-hing Administration	Views of Mr WONG Kwok-hing that the Administration should consider the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions' suggestion regarding the establishment of hawker bazaars in Yuen Long with a view to promoting local economy and creating employment opportunities. Apart from drawing experience from the Tan Lung Market in Wong Tai Sin, reference could also be made to the operation of flea markets and hawker bazaars in Singapore and Taiwan The Administration's response that District Officers (DOs) and District Councils (DCs) had been cooperating with other sectors in promoting local community economic activities which could create job opportunities in the districts. Mr WONG's suggestion would be relayed to relevant bureaux and departments for consideration	
002147 - 002706	Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung Administration Chairman	Enquiries about the specific measures implemented in Yuen Long and North District to promote local economy and the plan of setting up new Government offices in the area The Administration's response that – (a) DOs, in collaboration with DCs, had been promoting local community economic activities at the district level. It could provide more details on such activities after the meeting; and (b) The new Amenity and Community Building in Tin Shui Wai (TSW) Area 104, which was expected to be completed in late 2010, would accommodate non-governmental organisations, as well as a pioneer one-stop employment and training centre run by the Labour Department	Admin
002707 - 003544	Mr LEE Cheuk-yan Administration	Views of Mr LEE Cheuk-yan that- (a) although the performance of community-based poverty indicators had shown improvement between 2004 and 2008, it had yet to reflect the impact of financial tsunami on the economy; and (b) the Administration should actively consider the use of the undeveloped site in TSW Area 112 for commercial activities, e.g. hotel and food bazaars, and thereby creating more local employment opportunities	

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		<p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) the improvement in the performance of community-based poverty indicators in the two districts were attributable to both the economic growth and the district-based initiatives over the years. As stated in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(2)2480/80-09(01)], the situation in 2009 was expected to be less optimistic given the challenging state of the local economy and external environment as well as weak labour market conditions; and</p> <p>(b) the Development Bureau (DEVB) had invited proposals on the land use of Area 112, but to its understanding, the proposals were not technically practicable. The Administration would obtain further information from DEVB on the progress</p> <p>Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was of the view that the Administration should either relax the approving criteria for the proposals or expedite implementation of development projects in Area 112</p>	
003545 - 004927	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Administration	<p>Concerns whether the implementation of specific measures to address the poverty situation in Yuen Long and North District were met by new resources or by redeployment of resources from other districts, and whether the Administration had devised plans for the promotion of economic activities in these two districts taking into account the specific local needs and characteristics</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) in addition to the territory-wide poverty alleviation measures, district-based measures were also implemented;</p> <p>(b) the Administration had implemented targeted specific measures to address the district needs through cross-sectoral collaboration. For instance, over 40 projects funded under the Community and Investment Inclusion Fund and the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged had been implemented in Yuen Long to build up social capital and encourage mutual support in the neighbourhood. Moreover, the development of the Hong Kong Geopark and the cycle track in North District would also attract more tourists to the district; and</p> <p>(c) the Construction Industry Council Training Academy opened a training centre in TSW in September 2009 to provide targeted training courses for new entrants to the construction industry</p>	

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004928 - 005654	Chairman Administration	<p>Views of the Chairman that the Administration should consider injecting more economic activities by, say, developing thematic industries and pressing ahead large-scale projects, into the less well-off districts with a view to attracting talents and investment, and improving the employment situation in these districts</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) different bureaux and departments would continue to promote relevant industries in the light of their respective policy objectives, such as the six industries proposed in the Chief Executive's Policy Address 2009-2010, which would help create job opportunities; and</p> <p>(b) DOs would, in collaboration with DCs, identify local needs and work closely with different bureaux/departments and district organisations in providing worthwhile programmes to meet the district needs</p>	
005655 - 010527	Mr WONG Kwok-hing Administration	<p>Concerns about –</p> <p>(a) the concrete plan for the establishment of hawker bazaars at designated locations in the less well-off districts; and</p> <p>(b) the discriminatory arrangements in respect of cross-boundary families with newly arrived members from the Mainland in applying for the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme and public housing units as well as using public obstetric services. The Administration should provide assistance to these families</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) DOs concerned, in consultation with relevant DCs, could collaborate with relevant bureaux and departments and study the feasibility of proposals for establishing hawker bazaars at designated locations; and</p> <p>(b) the Director of Social Welfare could exercise discretion to waive the residence requirements under the CSSA Scheme to applicants in genuine financial hardship, having regard to the individual circumstances</p> <p>The Administration was requested to revert to the Subcommittee on the proposal of establishing hawker bazaars at designated locations in the less well-off districts</p>	Admin
010528 - 011556	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Administration	<p>Views of Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che that –</p> <p>(a) the household income levels in Yuen Long and North District were relatively low but the living costs were comparable to those in affluent districts. DOs concerned should put more efforts in</p>	

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		<p>collaboration with different bureaux and departments in identifying vacant sites for the operation of traditional market stalls and groceries to meet the specific needs of the low-income groups. This could promote local economy, create job opportunities and provide less expensive daily commodities for local residents; and</p> <p>(b) the Administration could consider developing more tourist attractions, e.g. cycle track, and encouraging social enterprises (SEs) to run the related-business such as bicycle rental</p> <p>The Administration's response that DOs concerned had been cooperating with other sectors in promoting local community economic activities having regard to the specific characteristics of individual districts. As for SEs, the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals was granted with seed money under the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme (ESR Programme) to operate the BiciLine Cycling Eco-Tour Social Enterprise which provided various kinds of guided bicycle eco-tours in TSW</p>	
011557 - 012154	Chairman Administration	<p>The Chairman urged the Administration to consider providing a legal definition of SEs and accepting applications for the ESR Programme from organisations/individuals other than charitable institutions recognised under section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap.112) to facilitate the development of SEs taking into account that operators of charitable organisations did not have the business mindset to run SEs</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) apart from the ESR Programme, the Administration had been supporting SEs through providing a platform for entrepreneurs/professionals and SEs so that the former could provide professional and business advisory services to the latter, having regard to the fact that SEs should operate like a business; and</p> <p>(b) the Social Enterprise Advisory Committee, which comprised SE operators, the business sector, academics and persons aspired to promote SE development, had just been set up with a view to providing advice on ways to further promote SE development</p>	
012155 - 013243	Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung Administration	<p>Concerns about the effectiveness and the way forward for the Transport Support Scheme (TSS), and the Administration's efforts in providing incentive to attract the commercial sector to set up business in Yuen Long and North District with a view to creating local job opportunities</p> <p>The Administration's advice that –</p>	

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		<p>(a) the objective of TSS was to provide time-limited transport subsidy so as to encourage needy job seekers and low-income employees in the four designated remote districts, including Yuen Long and North District, to seek jobs or work across districts. By the end of 2009, a total of around 36 000 applications had been received and some 33 000 were approved. As the review was underway, the Administration would report the findings and the way forward for TSS to the Panel on Manpower in due course; and</p> <p>(b) to address the relatively high unemployment rates in the two districts, the Administration had undertaken various initiatives and measures to provide more job opportunities and support for job seekers, such as the provision of training and retraining services and the promotion of SEs</p>	
013244 - 013738	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Administration	<p>Concerns about the long-term plan in promoting economic activities in the less well-off districts and whether the Administration would gauge views from members of the public through organising forums on the development of economic activities in these districts</p> <p>Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che was of the view that the Administration should formulate long-term specific development plans for boosting local economy in the less well-off districts</p>	
013739 - 015533	Chairman Administration	<p>The Chairman urged the Administration to –</p> <p>(a) consider the impacts of redevelopment projects on the operation of traditional small retailing businesses, given that such mode of operation could support local economy and provide employment opportunities for low-skilled workers;</p> <p>(b) consider using vacant premises for developing labour-intensive business in the less well-off districts; and</p> <p>(c) expand the ESR Programme by raising the amount of seed grants to facilitate the development of larger-sized SEs, conduct marketing research on the business opportunities and make reference to the overseas experience (e.g. South Korea) in promoting the development of SEs</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) it would relay the Chairman's concern to DEVB pertaining to the impact of the redevelopment projects on the traditional small business;</p> <p>(b) the use of vacant sites or premises would be considered by relevant bureaux and departments in accordance with their policy objectives. DOs, in collaboration with DCs, would assist in gauging views from different sectors; and</p>	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		(c) the ESR Programme aimed to provide seed grants to eligible organisations to run SEs during the initial operation. SEs should operate like a business eventually	
015534 - 020355	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Administration Chairman	View of Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che that in the light of the difficulties faced by SEs to sustain their business, the Administration should provide more support to SEs and the ESR Advisory Committee should offer advice, instead of merely monitoring those projects funded under the ESR Programme The Administration's response that – (a) the ESR Advisory Committee, which comprised some members from the business sector, would offer advice to the SE operators from time to time. Since the SEs funded under the ESR Programme needed to achieve certain social objectives, there was a need to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of projects; and (b) it had provided a platform to enhance and facilitate partnership among different sectors of the community through a matching forum and a mentorship scheme, under which entrepreneurs/ professionals were linked up with SEs so that the former could offer voluntary professional and business advisory services to the latter	
<i>Agenda item II – Any other business</i>			
020356 - 020912	Chairman Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung	Discussion items for the meetings in February and March 2010	