

立法會
Legislative Council

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Panel on Welfare Services

Subcommittee on Poverty Alleviation

Minutes of the 9th meeting
held on Thursday, 25 February 2010, at 4:30 pm
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 CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH

Member absent : Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC

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 Robin LEE
Commissioner for Heritage (Acting)
Development Bureau

Mr Peter NG Ka-him
District Social Welfare Officer (Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing)

Mrs Elaine YUE
District Social Welfare Officer (Sham Shui Po)

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 Kwai Tsing and Sham Shui Po
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)2480/08-09(01), CB(2)756/09-10(01) and
CB(2)965/09-10(01)]

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

2. Members expressed the following views –

- (a) the Administration should put collaborated efforts in devising overall policy and measures to tackle poverty and promote the development of social enterprises (SEs) from the policy perspective on the one hand, and encourage District Officers (DOs) concerned to work jointly with relevant bureaux and departments on specific district-based poverty alleviation measures on the other;
- (b) the Administration should set performance targets for district-based poverty alleviation measures and evaluate the effectiveness of these measures in achieving the targets;
- (c) relevant bureaux and departments should take into account the unique situation and characteristics of Kwai Tsing and Sham Shui Po in devising concrete measures to meet the specific needs of local residents. For instance, taking into account the relatively poor performance of community-based poverty indicators for the two districts, the Administration should put in place specific measures to assist the disadvantaged, in particular the poor elders, children of single-parent families, and low-educated and low-skilled earners in Kwai Tsing, and the middle- to old-aged unemployed persons in Sham Shui Po;

Action

- (d) DOs should take a more proactive role in collaborating with district organisations with a view to improving the poverty situation of districts concerned having regard to the unique characteristics of individual districts. DOs should identify the district needs and promote the development of SEs, in particular the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme, with a view to creating job opportunities for local residents;
- (e) the Administration should encourage government service contractors and SE operators to accord priority to employ local residents;
- (f) the Administration should make reference to overseas experience in promoting the development of SEs by, say, stipulating in the government services contracts the requirement of employing a certain percentage of socially disadvantaged; and
- (g) the revitalisation of industrial buildings had resulted in an upsurge of the rental, which had brought about a negative impact on the operation of certain SEs.

3. The Administration made the following responses –

- (a) the Government had been adopting a pragmatic and multi-pronged approach to tackle poverty. In tandem with the centrally-driven poverty alleviation measures to promote economic growth, the provision of training and retraining programmes, education and child development programmes across the territory also helped raise the competitiveness and skills of the workforce and enhance social mobility and reduce inter-generational poverty. On the other hand, relevant Government bureaux and departments had introduced a number of district-based initiatives to meet the specific needs of local residents having regard to the unique situation and characteristics of individual districts;
- (b) taking into account the poverty situation was attributable to various factors, such as the economic environment, it would be very difficult to set any target to reduce poverty. Notwithstanding this, the Administration would continue to make use of the 24 multi-dimensional poverty indicators to monitor the poverty situation in Hong Kong, and formulate and evaluate policies to assist the needy;

Action

- (c) having regard to the profile and specific needs of Kwai Tsing, the Administration had launched various pilot schemes in the district, for instance, the District-based Scheme on Carer Training, the Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for Elderly Patients, and the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project. As regards the unemployment situation in Kwai Tsing, in addition to the provision of training and retraining programmes, the Administration had organised large-scale job fairs in the district. This apart, 42 target buildings were identified under the Operation Building Bright project in Kwai Tsing. Owners of these buildings would receive grants for relevant maintenance works, which would create job opportunities and boost the local economy;
- (d) three historic buildings in Sham Shui Po, namely Lai Chi Kok Hospital, North Kowloon Magistracy and Mei Ho House, had been awarded to three non-profit-making organisations for adaptive re-use through operating SEs under the Revitalising Historic Buildings through Partnership Scheme. It was estimated that around 200 full-time staff and 100 part-time staff would be employed in the coming years. When these buildings were in operation, other related job opportunities would also be created, thereby bringing about a positive impact on the local economy;
- (e) the Employees Retaining Board and Vocational Training Council had provided a wide range of training and retraining programmes to the target groups in the light of the development of the six industries under the policy initiatives and the employment needs of the workforce, including the middle-aged and low-income earners;
- (f) DOs had been actively collaborating with District Councils (DCs), district organisations and departments concerned in carrying out community involvement programmes to meet the district needs, helping the under-privileged and alleviating local poverty;
- (g) a number of government cleansing service contracts and gardening service contracts had been identified for priority bidding by SEs. It would relay the suggestion of specifying in the government service contracts the requirement to employ the socially disadvantaged to relevant departments for consideration;
- (h) the Housing Department had provided for in some of the security and cleansing service contracts for public rental housing estates in Tin Shui Wai under which the service providers were required to employ a certain percentage of local residents;

Action

- (i) the newly established Social Enterprise Advisory Committee, which comprised SE operators, the business sector, academics and persons aspired to promote SE development, would study ways to further promote SE development; and
- (j) the revitalisation of industrial buildings as announced in the Policy Address aimed to encourage redevelopment and wholesale conversion of under-utilised or vacant industrial buildings, and minimise the potential risks in terms of fire and other hazards arising from non-compliant mixed industrial and commercial uses of these buildings. Given that over 1 000 industrial buildings met the basic criteria under the new policy initiative, the measures would help upgrade these buildings and provide readily available premises at an affordable price. Revitalisation of these buildings would bring about new economic activities and employment opportunities in the community.

II. Any other business

4. Members agreed that the next meeting originally scheduled for 15 March 2010 to receive views from deputations on district-based poverty alleviation measures would be re-scheduled for 31 March 2010. An invitation for views would be posted on the Legislative Council website. In line with the usual practice, invitation letters would be sent to 18 DCs. Members also agreed that the Chairman of the Social Enterprise Advisory Committee would be invited to attend the meeting.

5. The Chairman said that the Subcommittee was concluding its work and would provide a report to the Panel on Welfare Services. He sought members' views as to whether the Subcommittee should move a motion on the report at a Council meeting. Members agreed that the Subcommittee should seek the support of the House Committee, under rule 14A(h) of the House Rules, for priority allocation of a debate slot to the Chairman for moving a motion on the Subcommittee's report at a Council meeting in June 2010. In view of this, the Chairman said that the Subcommittee would discuss the draft report of the Subcommittee in April 2010, with a view to submitting the report to the Panel and seeking the support of the House Committee in May 2010.

6. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:17 pm.

**Proceedings of the 9th meeting of the
Subcommittee on Poverty Alleviation
on Thursday, 25 February 2010, at 4:30 pm
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 Kwai Tsing and Sham Shui Po</i>			
000000 - 002523	Chairman Administration	Briefing by the Administration on poverty alleviation work in Kwai Tsing and Sham Shui Po [LC Paper No. CB(2)965/09-10(01)]	
002524 - 002552	Chairman Administration	Enquiries about the progress in updating the performance of 24 multi-dimensional poverty indicators	
002553 - 003125	Mr WONG Sing-chi Chairman Administration	<p>Whether the Administration would set targets for poverty alleviation in the two districts and evaluate the effectiveness of the district-based measures in achieving these targets</p> <p>The Administration's advice that the Government had been adopting a pragmatic and multi-pronged approach to tackle poverty, which included promoting economic growth to create more job opportunities, providing training and retraining programmes to raise the competitiveness and skills of middle-aged and low-income earners, and investing in education and child development to enhance social mobility and reduce inter-generational poverty. In view of the unique situation and characteristics of individual districts, a district-based approach was adopted to complement the centrally-driven poverty alleviation measures. This would help meet the specific needs of local residents. Notably, the performance of community-based poverty indicators for Kwai Tsing and Sham Shui Po had generally been improved over the years. Nonetheless, the Administration would continue its efforts in district-based poverty alleviation work with a view to improving the livelihood of local residents</p>	
003126 - 003741	Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung Chairman Administration	<p>Views of Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung that the Administration should examine what specific measures had been contributed to the improvement in the performance of the community-based poverty indicators for Kwai Tsing over the past years so that more resources should be allocated for such measures. Taking into account the relatively poor performance of community-based poverty indicators for Kwai Tsing as compared to other districts, the Administration should study the roots of the problems and devise concrete measures to assist the disadvantaged, in particular the poor elders, children of single-parent families, and low-educated and low-skilled job seekers in the district</p> <p>The Administration's response that in tandem with the centrally-driven poverty alleviation measures to promote economic growth, the provision of training and retraining programmes, education and child development programmes across the territory also helped raise the competitiveness and skills of the workforce and enhance social mobility. Having regard to the district profile and</p>	

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		<p>specific needs of Kwai Tsing, the Administration had launched various pilot schemes in the district, for instance, the District-based Scheme on Carer Training, the Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for Elderly Patients, and the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project. As far as the unemployment situation was concerned, in addition to the provision of training and retraining programmes, the Administration had organised large-scale job fairs in the district. This apart, 42 target buildings were identified under the Operation Building Bright (OBB) project in Kwai Tsing. Owners of these buildings would receive grants for relevant maintenance works, which would create job opportunities and boost the local economy</p>	
003742 - 004347	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Administration	<p>Whether OBB was effective in improving the local unemployment situation; and whether and how the Administration had collaborated cross-departmental efforts to formulate specific district-based poverty alleviation measures to meet the specific needs of local residents having regard to the unique situation and characteristics of the districts</p> <p>The Administration's response that District Officers (DOs) and the District Councils (DCs) attached great importance to the livelihood of local residents and had been carrying out community involvement programmes to meet the district needs, helping the under-privileged and alleviating local poverty. Moreover, the revitalisation of industrial buildings not only created job opportunities at district level, but also brought about a positive impact on the local economy</p>	
004348 - 005413	Chairman Administration	<p>Views of the Chairman that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Administration should set performance targets for reducing the poverty indicators to a prescribed level; and (b) the revitalisation of industrial buildings had resulted in an upsurge of the rental <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Commission on Poverty adopted 24 poverty indicators to help the Administration monitor the poverty situation in Hong Kong from different perspectives and understanding the needs of different social groups and people in different districts; (b) poverty could be defined in terms of absolute poverty or relative poverty. With regard to absolute poverty in Hong Kong, the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme served as a safety net to meet the basic needs of the needy persons. However, relative poverty would exist even though the overall economic situation had been improved because a portion of the population would by definition always be regarded as "poor people" owing to their relatively low 	

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		<p>income. As the poverty situation was attributable to various factors, such as the economic environment, it would be very difficult to set any target to reduce poverty. Notwithstanding this, the Administration would continue to make use of the 24 poverty indicators to monitor the poverty situation in Hong Kong, and formulate and evaluate policies to assist the needy; and</p> <p>(c) the revitalisation of industrial buildings as announced in the Policy Address aimed to encourage redevelopment and wholesale conversion of under-utilised or vacant industrial buildings, and minimise the potential risks in terms of fire and other hazards arising from non-compliant mixed industrial and commercial uses of these buildings. Given that over 1 000 industrial buildings met the basic criteria under the new policy initiative, the measures would help upgrade these buildings and provide readily available premises at an affordable price. Revitalisation of these buildings would bring about new economic activities and employment opportunities in the community</p>	
005414 - 005900	Mr IP Wai-ming Chairman Administration	<p>Enquiry about the performance of community-based poverty indicator in respect of the proportion of workless households in Sham Shui Po</p> <p>The Administration's advice that all the six community-based poverty indicators for Kwai Tsing and five for Sham Shui Po had shown improvement over the years. The performance of the indicator in respect of the proportion of workless households in Sham Shui Po fluctuated slightly between 2004 and 2008. The performance of the 24 multi-dimensional poverty indicators over the years was available at the website of the Labour and Welfare Bureau</p>	
005901 - 011016	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Administration	<p>View that the Administration should consider introducing specific measures for the needy in different districts having regard to their specific needs, instead of adopting a district-based approach to complement the centrally-driven poverty alleviation measures. To this end, the DOs concerned should strengthen their role in collaborating cross-sectoral efforts to carry out specific initiatives, and monitor the progress and performance of these initiatives. Consideration should also be given to encouraging local employment</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) while the key to tackling poverty lay in promoting economic growth, the centrally-driven poverty alleviation measures were complemented by the district-based initiatives to meet the specific needs of the local residents. DOs had been collaborating with DCs and district organisations to carry out programmes to promote local economic activities at the district level having regard to the specific district needs;</p>	

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		<p>(b) to address the specific needs of Kwai Tsing and Sham Shui Po, particularly the relatively high unemployment rate, departments concerned had undertaken various targeted district-based measures in the two districts. These included providing training and retraining programmes, and strengthening employment assistance services to enhance the employability of the unemployed persons. Besides, large-scale job fairs had been organised in the two districts and a pilot Training cum Employment Resource Centre had been set up in Cheung Sha Wan to provide more training and employment support; and</p> <p>(c) the suggestion of requiring service providers to employ local residents would be subject to various considerations, such as free competition in the labour market and mobility of local residents. Nonetheless, the Housing Department had provided for in some of the security and cleansing service contracts for public rental housing estates in Tin Shui Wai under which the service providers were required to employ a certain percentage of local residents</p>	
011017 - 011633	Chairman Administration	<p>View that DOs should take a more proactive role in collaborating with district organisations with a view to improving the poverty situation in the districts having regard to the unique characteristics of individual districts. DOs should identify the district needs and foster the development of social enterprises (SEs) in order to create more job opportunities for local residents</p> <p>The Administration's response that DOs had been actively collaborating with DCs, district organisations and departments concerned in carrying out various community involvement programmes at the district level, including helping the disadvantaged and promoting SEs. Referrals to the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme had been made by DOs</p>	
011634 - 012318	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Administration	Further discussion on the suggestion of setting targets on district-based poverty work at district level and encouraging SEs to accord priority to employ local residents in SE projects	
012319 - 013308	Chairman Administration	<p>View that SEs would be outcompeted for government service contracts due to the stringent threshold of these contracts, and the Administration should make reference to overseas experience in promoting the development of SEs by, say, stipulating in the government service contracts the requirement to employ a certain percentage of socially disadvantaged</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) a number of government cleansing service contracts and gardening service contracts had been identified for priority bidding by SEs. It would relay the suggestion of specifying in the service contracts the requirement to employ a certain</p>	

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		<p>percentage of the socially disadvantaged to relevant departments for consideration; and</p> <p>(b) three historic buildings in Sham Shui Po, namely Lai Chi Kok Hospital, North Kowloon Magistracy and Mei Ho House, had been awarded to three non-profit-making organisations for adaptive re-use through operating SEs under the Revitalising Historic Buildings through Partnership Scheme. It was estimated that around 200 full-time staff and 100 part-time staff would be employed in the coming years. When these buildings were in operation, other related job opportunities would also be created, thereby bringing about a positive impact on the local economy</p>	
013309 - 013936	Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung Administration	<p>View that the Administration should put more efforts to enhance the employability of and create job opportunities for middle-aged low-educated and low-skilled workers</p> <p>The Administration's response that it had been providing training and retraining opportunities to raise the competitiveness and skills of the workforce, in particular the middle-aged and low-income earners. Specifically, the Employees Retaining Board and Vocational Training Council had provided a wide range of training and retraining programmes to the target groups in the light of the development of the six industries under the policy initiatives and the employment needs of the workforce, including the middle-aged and low-income earners</p>	
013937 - 014414	Chairman Administration	<p>View that the Administration should put more collaborated efforts in devising overall policy and measures to tackle poverty and promote the development of SEs from the policy perspective on the one hand, and encourage DOs concerned to work jointly with relevant bureaux and departments on district-based poverty alleviation measures on the other</p> <p>The Administration's response that relevant bureaux and departments had made concerted efforts in the poverty alleviation work. With regard to the development of SEs, the newly established Social Enterprise Advisory Committee, which comprised SE operators, the business sector, academics and persons aspired to promote SE development, would study ways to further promote SE development</p>	
014415 - 014714	Chairman Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che	Date of next meeting and work plan of the Subcommittee	