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## **Paper for Panel on Welfare Services**

### **Report of the Subcommittee on Poverty Alleviation**

#### **Purpose**

This paper reports on the deliberations of the Subcommittee on Poverty Alleviation ("the Subcommittee").

#### **The Subcommittee**

2. At the meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services ("the Panel") on 12 January 2009, members agreed that a Subcommittee should be appointed to study policies and measures relating to poverty alleviation and to make recommendations where necessary. The terms of reference and membership of the Subcommittee are set out in **Appendices I and II** respectively.

3. Approval from the House Committee was obtained on 15 January 2010 for the Subcommittee to continue to work in the 2009-2010 session in accordance with House Rule 26(c).

4. Under the chairmanship of Hon Frederick FUNG, the Subcommittee held 12 meetings, including 11 meetings with the Administration. The Subcommittee also received views from deputations at three meetings on a number of issues of concern. A list of the deputations which have given views to the Subcommittee is in **Appendix III**.

#### **Deliberations of the Subcommittee**

##### Review of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") Scheme

5. Issues relating to the poverty situation of the low-income families on CSSA and the poor elderly were discussed by the Subcommittee on Review of the CSSA Scheme and the Subcommittee on Elderly Services formed under the Panel in the Third Legislative Council. A number of recommendations were made for the

Administration's consideration. In the light of members' concern about the follow-up actions taken by the Administration in response to the reports of the two former Subcommittees, the Subcommittee considers it necessary to examine issues that are relevant to the CSSA Scheme.

*Level and adjustment of CSSA payments*

6. According to the Administration, the CSSA Scheme aims to provide a safety net for those who cannot support themselves financially to meet their basic and essential needs. Most members are concerned about the adequacy of the CSSA payments in meeting the basic needs of the recipients having regard to the fact that the prevailing set of CSSA payment rates has been determined based on the findings of the CSSA Review conducted in 1996. In their view, the basic items of goods and services referred to in the Review are outdated and are not compatible with the present needs. For instance, there is no provision for internet access charges for students in receipt of CSSA under the CSSA Scheme. Members take the view that a comprehensive review of the CSSA Scheme has long been overdue. They strongly urge the Administration to ascertain that nowadays goods and services are covered under the CSSA Scheme.

7. The Subcommittee has met with deputations to gauge views on whether and how the CSSA Scheme should be refined. Members note with concern that CSSA households face financial hardship at times of inflation. Specifically, over one half of CSSA households living in private housing are paying actual rental higher than the maximum levels of rent allowance ("MRA") under the CSSA Scheme, and they have to cut other daily expenses so as to meet the soaring rental expenses. Members have called for a review of the adjustment mechanism for rent allowance and MRA. As the rental in the urban areas is higher than other districts, a suggestion has also been made to set different MRAs for different districts.

8. On the concern about MRA, the Administration has explained that rent allowance is payable as a standard special grant to all CSSA recipients to meet the cost of accommodation. The amount of the allowance is the actual rent paid or the prescribed maximum level by household size, whichever is the less. The Administration has pointed out that CSSA recipients are free to choose their accommodations. As they live in different types of premises (such as cubicles and suites) and the rental levels can be affected by a variety of factors (such as floor area, facilities, location and age of the property), the rent levels of premises may vary widely even if such premises are within the same district. The Administration considers it inappropriate to set different MRAs for different districts. Currently, MRA has been adjusted annually in accordance with the movement of rent index for private housing of the Consumer Price Index (A). The Administration also considers that it will not be prudent to use public money to guarantee an increase in MRA to keep pace with the actual rental paid by CSSA households in the private housing rental market.

9. The Administration has further explained that under the existing mechanism, the CSSA standard payment rates are adjusted according to the movement of the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices ("SSAIP") annually in order to maintain the purchasing power of payments. The Administration has pointed out that when compared with the 1999-2000-based SSAIP, the weightings of the 2004-2005-based SSAIP remained fairly stable. Apart from a decrease of one percentage point for meals bought away from home and an increase of two percentage points for electricity, gas and water, the differences for other sections of goods and services were within one percentage point. The Administration has informed the Subcommittee that a new round of Household Expenditure Survey ("HES") on CSSA Households is being conducted between October 2009 and September 2010 to update the latest expenditure patterns of CSSA households and the weighting of SSAIP.

10. The Subcommittee has been informed that the average monthly CSSA payment of a four-person CSSA household is comparatively higher than the average monthly income of a four-person non-CSSA household in the lowest 20% income group. In addition, CSSA recipients can choose to spend the payments, in the form of cash assistance, on goods and services based on their personal preference. Apart from standard rates, the CSSA Scheme also provides supplements and special grants to help different categories of recipients to meet their special needs.

11. The Administration has stressed that the CSSA Scheme, which is non-contributory, aims to provide a safety net for those who cannot support themselves financially to meet their basic needs. This apart, there are other Government social services covering education, housing, health and welfare available to those in need, such as medical waivers, and school-based grants for after-school activities for students from needy households. Moreover, an adjustment to CSSA standard payment rates was made in August 2008 ahead of the normal cycle in order to ease the impact of inflation on CSSA recipients. Besides, two additional months and one additional month of CSSA payment rates were paid to CSSA recipients in 2008 and 2009 respectively to ease the inflationary pressure on social security. Since the current annual adjustment mechanism of the CSSA standard payment rates has worked effectively, the Administration does not see the need for conducting a fresh review of the adequacy of the CSSA standard payment rates.

12. Members express dissatisfaction at the Administration's reluctance to conduct a comprehensive review of the CSSA standard payment rates despite their repeated requests. They consider that the updating of the weighting system of SSAIP is related to the relative importance of individual items of goods and services consumed by CSSA recipients, but not the basic needs items to be included. The updating exercise should by no means be regarded as a review of the adequacy of the CSSA standard rates. Members remain of the view that the Administration should conduct a comprehensive review of the CSSA Scheme expeditiously.

*Internet access for students receiving CSSA*

13. Members are of the view that web-based learning and research on the Internet have become an integral part of education. The Subcommittee received views from deputations at one of its meetings on the subject matter. Noting that some CSSA households cannot afford to own a computer and pay the recurrent Internet access charges, members are concerned about the lack of Internet access as it will impede the learning and development of children from CSSA families, and will result in inter-generational poverty. Members have urged the Administration to recognise that access to computer facilities and the Internet is the basic needs of students, and to include the relevant expenses in the items of services covered under the CSSA Scheme.

14. The Administration has advised that in recognising computers and Internet access being useful learning tools, the Education Bureau ("EDB") has partnered with the Environmental Protection Department to launch a two-year Computer Recycling Programme ("CRP") in February 2009 to provide recycled computers to needy students. Students in receipt of CSSA or School Textbook Assistance administered by the Students Financial Assistance Agency are eligible. Each successful applicant will be provided with a refurbished computer together with one-year free Internet access service.

15. The Subcommittee notes that according to the findings of a survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department ("C&SD") between July and September 2008, about 2.9% of children aged 10 or above did not have computers at home. Pointing out that CRP is not exclusive for children on CSSA, some members have expressed concern on the adequacy of recycled computers to meet the full demand of students on CSSA. More importantly, members are concerned how CSSA students can meet the Internet access charges after the expiry of the one-year free service plan. Instead of relying on the Internet service providers to provide free access services, the Administration should review the CSSA Scheme with a view to meeting the expenses by CSSA payments.

16. The Administration has advised that the CSSA Scheme has taken care of the special needs of children, though not their development needs. Nevertheless, the Administration will collect information on the expenditure on all commodities and services (including Internet access charges) consumed by CSSA households when conducting the next round of HES on CSSA Households in 2009-2010, with a view to updating the relative weighting of basic items of goods and services covered by the CSSA Scheme.

17. The Administration has further advised that EDB has reserved \$25 million for implementing CRP. EDB is negotiating with the Internet service provider on a favourable service plan for a further two years after the initial year of free service. The Administration will monitor the implementation closely, and will seek additional

funding if necessary. Apart from applying for CRP, many schools and community centres provide computers with Internet access for free use by their students and the public respectively. In response to the concerns about the difficulties encountered by needy students in using such services after school, the Administration has informed members that schools are encouraged to open computer rooms and facilities for the use of needy students after school. Students can also have free access to these facilities at public libraries and Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres even in evenings or during weekends. In addition, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department will standardise the opening days of their major and district libraries to seven days a week from 1 April 2009 with opening hours increased by about 10 hours to 71 hours a week.

18. Some members remain of the view that the Administration should ensure that CRP can meet the full demand for access to the Internet from eligible students. While free computers and Internet facilities are available to students in schools, public libraries and youth centres, students encounter a number of difficulties in using such facilities due to the limited opening hours, long waiting time and short time slots. Instead of relying on Internet service providers to provide free access service, the Administration should review the CSSA Scheme with a view to meeting the expenses by CSSA. These members have also urged the Administration to start the review on CRP before the end of the two-year programme so that CRP will be provided for needy students without interruption, if it is to be turned into an on-going programme. The Administration has stressed that it will closely monitor the implementation and will review its effectiveness before making a decision on the way forward.

19. The Subcommittee notes that the Financial Secretary has announced in the 2010-2011 Budget that a two-pronged approach will be adopted to help primary and secondary school students from low-income families with Internet learning, i.e. providing a subsidy for Internet access charges, and encouraging the market to provide them with economical Internet services. In brief, \$1,300 for Internet access charges will be given to each family receiving CSSA with children studying in primary or secondary schools in the 2010 school year. This apart, a full subsidy of \$1,300 or half subsidy of \$650 will be granted to each family with children eligible for School Textbook Assistance, depending on the outcome of their means test.

*Requiring the elderly to apply for CSSA on a household basis*

20. Members have expressed grave concern whether the CSSA payments are adequate to meet the basic needs of the elderly. Members also take the view that the requirement for elders living with their family members to apply for CSSA on a household basis has given rise to the problem of elders in poverty.

21. The Administration has advised that the rationale for requiring elders living with their family members to apply for CSSA on a household basis is to encourage family members to support each other. Nonetheless, discretion will be exercised if there are special circumstances, for example, where an elderly applicant has poor

relationship with his/her family members or there are special reasons for children of an applicant not being able to provide support to him/her.

*Disregarded earnings arrangements ("DE")*

22. The Subcommittee notes that the provision of DE seeks to allow CSSA recipients who work to be financially better off than those relying entirely on CSSA. Under the existing arrangements, if CSSA recipients have worked for not less than two months, they can retain the first \$800 of earnings from employment and half of the remaining earnings until the total amount of DE reaches the maximum limit of \$2,500.

23. Members generally agree with the rationale for adopting the DE arrangements, and have called upon further relaxation of the DE arrangements so as to encourage those who can work to find and remain in employment. Furthermore, most members consider that the "no DE for the first two months" rule is at variance with the objectives of DE to provide incentive for CSSA recipients to find work and remain in employment. As such, members take the view that the rule should be abolished.

24. The Administration has explained that the DE arrangements, together with the Active Employment Assistance Programme and the Community Work Programme, are the three main components of the Support for Self-reliance Scheme which aims at assisting able-bodied CSSA recipients to enhance their employability, thereby moving towards self-reliance. However, the provision of DE under the CSSA Scheme is a very complex issue. It needs to strike a balance between providing financial incentives for CSSA recipients to find and remain in employment, and maintaining DE at a level which will not become a disincentive for employable recipients to leave the CSSA net. The Administration has from time to time reviewed the DE arrangements. Notably, in December 2007, the "no reduction" limit for DE has been raised from \$600 to \$800 and the criteria for allowing CSSA recipients to be eligible for DE has been relaxed from not less than three months on CSSA to not less than two months. The Administration has further advised that the DE arrangements aim to encourage CSSA recipients to find and remain in employment. The proposal of abolishing the "no DE for the first two months" rule altogether will mean that it will be possible for those who are in employment and at income level higher than those currently eligible for CSSA to come under the CSSA safety net.

25. Noting that the Administration will review the DE arrangements in 2010, the Subcommittee has urged the Administration to expedite the review as early as practicable.

*Residence requirements under the CSSA Scheme*

26. Under the existing arrangements, to be eligible for CSSA, a person must have been a Hong Kong resident for at least seven years (i.e. the seven-year residence requirement), and have resided in Hong Kong continuously for at least one year

immediately before the date of application. Absence from Hong Kong up to a maximum of 56 days during the one-year period is considered as residence in Hong Kong (i.e. the one-year-continuous-residence requirement).

27. The Subcommittee has examined the poverty problems given rise by the seven-year residence requirement. Deputations have informed the Subcommittee that many new-arrived single mothers face great financial hardship for being unable to meet the residence requirement. They are unable to find suitable employment because of the low-education attainment and the need to take care of their young children. Given that these new arrivals are not eligible for CSSA, they have to rely on their child(ren)'s CSSA for a living.

28. The Administration has explained that Hong Kong residents aged below 18 are exempted from the residence requirement under the CSSA Scheme. The residence requirements were introduced in 2004 in line with the recommendations in the Report of the Task Force on Population Policy. The requirements provide a rational basis on which the public resources are allocated, help sustain a non-contributory social security system with an increasing demand and strike a balance between the interests of various sectors of the community. Specifically, the seven-year residence requirement aims to encourage new arrivals who can work to be self-reliant rather than relying on welfare assistance. It underlines the need for potential immigrants to plan carefully and ensure that they have sufficient means to be self-supporting before settling in Hong Kong.

29. The Administration has advised that the Director of Social Welfare ("DSW") will take into account all relevant factors of each case to establish whether there is a genuine hardship for exercising his discretion to waive the seven-year residence requirement. Assistance will be provided to newly-arrived single mothers who are in genuine hardship, where appropriate. Each case will be considered on its own merits. The main factors that will be taken into consideration include –

- (a) the applicant's means of livelihood after arrival;
- (b) the cause of present hardship;
- (c) resources available and other possible sources of assistance in Hong Kong;
- (d) whether other forms of assistance are available; and
- (e) the possibility of the applicant returning to his place of origin.

Between 1 January 2004 and 31 March 2009, discretion was exercised on 5 315 CSSA applications in which the applicants did not meet the seven-year residence requirement.

30. Most members are of the view that the exercising of discretion under the CSSA Scheme to waive the seven-year residence requirement still has a lot of room for improvement, for instance, the process for exercising discretion can be further streamlined and expedited. They strongly urge the Administration to review and relax the seven-year residence requirement.

31. Members have also expressed grave concern about the impact of the one-year-continuous-residence requirement on Hong Kong permanent residents who have lived and worked outside Hong Kong for some time, but have returned to Hong Kong due to loss of jobs amidst the financial tsunami. These unemployed persons are not eligible for CSSA even though they are in genuine hardship simply because they cannot meet the one-year-continuous-residence requirement. Members have queried the rationale for imposing the one-year-continuous-residence requirement on permanent residents who, for various reasons, have lived outside Hong Kong for a period of time, and have called upon the Administration to abolish such requirement which is unfair and unacceptable.

32. The Administration has advised that the one-year-continuous-residence requirement aims to discourage people who have lived outside Hong Kong for a long time from relying on CSSA as soon as they return to Hong Kong. When considering whether to exercise discretion to waive the one-year-continuous-residence requirement, DSW will take into account all resources available to the applicants and their family members, including savings and assistance from friends and relatives. In addition, when an applicant works to support his family members, discretion will normally be exercised to waive the residence requirements in consideration of his efforts to become self-supporting. Up to 31 March 2009, 2 858 CSSA applications were exempted from the requirement since 1 June 2007.

33. Notwithstanding the Administration's explanation, some members consider that the Administration should enhance the transparency and consistency in exercising discretion to waive the residence requirements. They also urge the frontline staff in the Social Security Field of the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") to be more forthcoming in understanding the difficulties encountered by the new arrivals, so that timely and appropriate social services can be provided. Some deputations have suggested that the Administration should delegate the authority to exercise discretion to waive the residence requirements to frontline social workers in SWD, as the latter have better understanding of the applicants' needs.

34. The Administration has stressed that when a CSSA application involving any person not meeting the residence requirements is received by a Social Security Field of SWD, the caseworker will explain to the applicant, among other things, DSW's discretionary power to waive the residence requirements for genuine hardship cases. To enhance transparency, SWD has also prepared a pamphlet on residence requirements to facilitate the public's understanding of the residence requirements under the CSSA Scheme and the main factors that DSW will take into consideration in exercising discretion. Furthermore, there are internal communication channels, such



as regular briefings and discussions, for Senior Social Security Officers (District) to share their experience in handling applications for waiving the residence requirements to ensure consistency in the process.

35. Some members hold a strong view that it is unreasonable to impose the one-year-continuous-residence requirement on Hong Kong permanent residents. Some members have queried whether the one-year-continuous-residence requirement has contravened the Basic Law, which stipulates that Hong Kong residents should have the right to social welfare in accordance with the law. At the request of the Subcommittee, the legal adviser to the Subcommittee has provided a paper on the issue, issued vide LC Paper No. LS 18/09-10. The Subcommittee notes that the question of the constitutionality of the one-year-continuous-residence requirement for CSSA will likely be considered by the Court of First Instance in a judicial review application to be heard in May 2010.

#### Residential care services for the needy elderly

36. In the light of the ageing population, members have expressed grave concern about the waitlisting situation of and the long-term planning on the provision of subsidised residential care places for the needy elderly. Members have enquired about the progress of the Consultancy Study on Residential Care Services for the Elderly initiated by the Elderly Commission given that the Administration has previously undertaken to revert on the subject in the first quarter of 2009.

37. The Administration advised that as the consultant encountered difficulties in recruiting targets for interviews, the expected completion date of the study was deferred to the second quarter of 2009. The Administration subsequently briefed the Panel on the findings and recommendations of the Consultancy Study on 11 January 2010. Members note that in view of the consultant's recommendation to further develop community care services, the Elderly Commission will conduct an in-depth study on possible service enhancement. The Administration stresses that it has not formed a position on the findings and recommendations of the Report of the Consultancy Study. It is working with the Elderly Commission to examine how to enhance the community care services for the elderly, with a view to avoiding premature and unnecessary institutionalisation.

38. Notwithstanding that the Administration has yet to formulate the long-term planning for residential care services for the elderly, members have raised concerns about the provision of residential care services for the needy elders in the coming years.

39. The Administration has advised that to meet the growing care needs of elders, the Government has been increasing the supply of subsidised residential care places through the construction of contract residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHes"), which provide both care-and-attention places and nursing home places. The care-and-attention places in contract homes are required to provide a continuum of

care so that elders can continue to stay in the same home when their health conditions deteriorate to a level that required nursing care. The Administration has stressed that it will continue to identify suitable sites for the construction of new contract RCHEs and explore with existing contract RCHEs to convert some of the care-and-attention places into nursing home places so as to shorten the waiting time for nursing home places.

40. The Administration has pointed out that while SWD has from time to time liaised with relevant departments to identify suitable sites for the construction of new contract RCHEs or convert vacant government premises/school sites into RCHEs, it is noteworthy that most of the vacant sites are available for temporary use only and are therefore not suitable for development of RCHEs. Moreover, as stipulated under section 20 of the Residential Care Homes (Elderly Persons) Regulation (Cap. 459 sub leg A) ("the Regulation"), no part of a residential care home shall be situated at a height more than 24 metres (equivalent to the height of seven to eight storeys) above the ground floor owing to fire safety considerations.

41. Some members have queried the justifications for imposing a height restriction on RCHEs as this has unduly limited the capacity of RCHEs. The Administration has explained that the residents of RCHEs are all frail elders. Many of them are wheelchair-bound or even bed-ridden. They need intensive assistance to escape in case of fire or other emergencies. At present, most RCHEs, particularly the private ones, are located in multi-storey domestic or composite buildings which do not usually provide designated lifts and fire escapes for RCHEs. Despite the advances in firefighting facilities, it remains an arduous task to assist and escort large groups of elders with mobility problems to the ground during emergencies. The evacuation operation may also pose safety risks to other users of the building. Therefore, the shorter the vertical distance of an RCHE is from the ground, the safer it is for elderly residents and other users of the building in case of emergencies. Nevertheless, SWD has discussed with the relevant departments, including the Fire Services Department ("FSD"), to explore possible relaxation of the height restriction on premises in which RCHEs are accommodated.

42. While acknowledging that the main purpose of the height restriction is to ensure the safety of elders in case of fire or other emergencies, members consider that such requirement imposes restrictions on site selection and the capacity of RCHEs. They take the view that the Administration should consider relaxing the restriction so that more premises can be used for operating RCHEs and that RCHEs located in stand-alone buildings can expand their capacity by constructing additional storeys.

43. After considering members' views, the Administration has informed the Subcommittee that the Regulation already allows DSW to relax the height restriction of individual RCHEs. Subject to the professional advice of FSD, DSW will consider and approve applications for relaxation of the height restriction if the applicants can demonstrate the need for accommodating RCHEs at a height higher than 24 metres above ground and that the safety issues can be properly addressed. The

Administration has further informed the Subcommittee that having taken into account the advice of FSD, SWD will first look into the safety issue when considering applications for relaxation of height restriction. Therefore, DSW will only consider relaxing the height restriction of an RCHE that fulfils the following additional requirements –

- (a) those parts of the RCHE that are higher than 24 metres from the ground are only used for non-dormitory purposes (e.g. kitchens, laundry rooms, general offices and auxiliary facilities for elderly residents, etc);
- (b) the entire building is purpose-built and the facilities therein (including the RCHE) are under a single management;
- (c) the facilities for evacuation and rescue must be provided to the satisfaction of DSW; and
- (d) there should be appropriate evacuation, contingency and fire drill plans to the satisfaction of DSW.

The Administration has stressed that SWD will continue to identify suitable sites throughout the territory for construction of new RCHEs with a view to increasing the supply of subsidised residential care places.

44. The Subcommittee considers it appropriate for the Subcommittee on Residential and Community Care Services for Persons with Disabilities and the Elderly appointed by the Panel to follow up the provision of residential care places for the needy elderly.

#### Development of social enterprises ("SEs")

45. Members have expressed concern about the development of SEs in helping the unemployed and disadvantaged. Some members note with concern that most SEs are operated by non-governmental organisations ("NGOs") which lack personnel with a business mindset in running the business, and consequently many SEs are running at a loss and are unable to sustain. They take the view that the Administration should create an enabling environment for the development of SEs. In this connection, these members have made some suggestions for the Administration's consideration. These include offering tax concession to SEs and accepting applications for the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme ("ESR Programme") from organisations which have yet to be recognised as non-profit making organisations under Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112). More importantly, the Administration should formulate a long-term plan to support and foster the development of SEs.

46. The Administration has stressed that similar to commercial enterprises, SEs should operate like a business and be self-financing in their operation. Under the

ESR Programme, seed grants have been provided for eligible organisations to run SEs during their initial operations. While welcoming the private sector to participate in operating SEs, the Administration is of the view that applicants for the ESR Programme should be non-profit making organisations within the meaning of Section 88 of the Inland Revenue Ordinance so as to ensure the prudent use of public money. Since the launch of the ESR Programme in June 2006, a total of grant of about \$88 million has been approved to about 90 new SE projects in the first five phases of applications, creating some 1 500 jobs for the socially disadvantaged. Having regard to the impact on the operation of SEs amidst the financial tsunami, the Administration has approved 16 applications from ESR SEs for additional grants.

47. Apart from the ESR Programme, the Administration has advised that it will continue to organise and/or support NGOs to organise Summit on SE in order to enable participants from various sectors (e.g. business, NGOs and academics) to share their views on the development of SEs. The Administration will continue with the Social Enterprises Partnership Programme which provides a platform to enhance and facilitate partnership among different sectors of the community through a matching forum and the mentorship scheme under which entrepreneurs/professionals are linked up with SEs so that the former can offer voluntary professional and business advisory services to the latter. This apart, the Social Enterprise Advisory Committee, which comprises SE operators, members of the business sector, academics and persons aspired to promote SE development, has been set up recently to provide advice on ways to further promote SE development.

48. To foster the further development of SEs, the Administration has informed the Subcommittee that under a pilot scheme introduced in 2008, 38 government cleansing service contracts were reserved for priority bidding by SEs, and 16 contracts were awarded to SEs.

49. Some members have pointed out that some of the service contracts identified for priority bidding by SEs are indeed beyond the capacity and capability of SEs. These members take the view that the Administration should identify and reserve government service contracts for priority bidding by specific SEs in accordance with their size and nature of business. In addition to cleansing service contracts and gardening service contracts, the Administration may consider identifying some minor maintenance works and repairs in the Housing Department and relax the tender requirements for priority bidding by SEs. Furthermore, the Administration may consider specifying in the contracts the need to employ a certain percentage of socially disadvantaged and local residents as well as to offer the minimum wage level.

50. The Administration has stressed that concerted efforts have been made by government departments in identifying suitable government service contracts for priority bidding by SEs. In the light of the positive feedback from participating SEs and departments, the Administration has continued the scheme in 2009-2010. Out of the 38 cleansing service contracts reserved for priority bidding by SEs in 2008, 33 will continue to be included in the scheme in 2009. This apart, 21 additional service

contracts (including 14 cleansing service contracts and seven gardening service contracts) have been identified for priority bidding by SEs in 2009-2010. It is estimated that over 400 job opportunities will arise from the 54 service contracts. As for maintenance contracts of the Housing Department, the Administration has pointed out that while the existing tender requirements are devised taking into account the need to ensure the safety and quality of the works undertaken by contractors, the Housing Department has provided for in some of the security and cleaning service contracts for public rental housing estates in Tin Shui Wai the requirement for the service providers to employ a certain percentage of local residents.

51. Some members hold the view that SEs are not profit maximising enterprises, the Administration should show more dedicated policy support for the development of SEs. Consideration should be given to raising the amount of seed grants under the ESR Programme to facilitate the development of larger-sized SEs. With reference to overseas experience in fostering the development of SEs, some members believe that subsidising the operation costs of SEs will help bring down the expenditure on welfare consequent upon the employment of the socially disadvantaged by SEs. Moreover, the Administration should consider appointing a commissioner to oversee the development of SEs and introducing a registration regime for SEs.

52. The Administration has emphasised that too much financial assistance to or regulation of the operation of SEs may hinder the healthy development of SEs which should be operated in accordance with commercial principles. Nonetheless, the Social Enterprises Support Unit has been established under the Home Affairs Department ("HAD") to co-ordinate and implement various programmes and support measures for SEs. The Administration has undertaken to continue with the four-pronged approach in promoting the development of SEs, viz. enhancing public understanding, strengthening support for SEs, promoting cross-sector collaboration and nurturing more social entrepreneurs, as well as drawing reference from the successful experience of overseas countries in the further development of SEs.

#### Monitoring of poverty situation

53. Members note with concern that the Gini Co-efficient of Hong Kong ranks almost the highest in the very human development economies. Members have expressed grave concern about the poverty situation in Hong Kong, and the Administration's measures in place to monitor and tackle the problem.

54. The Administration has assured members that it attaches great importance to poverty alleviation work. According to the Administration, the former Commission on Poverty<sup>1</sup> ("CoP") had fully deliberated and recommended the adoption of a set of 24 multi-dimensional poverty indicators (six are community-based indicators and 18

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<sup>1</sup> The Chief Executive announced in the Policy Address 2005 that a CoP to be chaired by the Financial Secretary would be established to alleviate poverty. The membership of CoP was announced on 27 January 2005. CoP submitted a report to the Government in June 2007 summarising its work and making a number of recommendations. CoP was dissolved on 30 June 2007.

are life-cycle-based indicators) for monitoring the poverty situation in Hong Kong and providing the basis for the formulation and evaluation of policies to assist the needy. The Task Force on Poverty<sup>2</sup> has duly followed up on the 53 recommendations of the former CoP, and of which have been implemented and their progress has been reported to the Panel. A summary of the latest position of each of the 53 recommendations of the former CoP and a list of 24 poverty indicators are in **Appendices IV and V**.

55. Some members have queried the usefulness and effectiveness of the adoption of 24 poverty indicators. They point out that the phenomenon of a widening gap between the rich and the poor is not something new to the community. Instead of using the indicators to measure merely the number of persons falling within different categories of disadvantaged (such as unemployed persons, persons living in workless households and CSSA recipients), members take the view that the Administration should set concrete targets for alleviating poverty and assessing the effectiveness of the poverty alleviation measures. Given that the 24 poverty indicators are updated annually by using the data in the preceding year, the indicators fail to reflect the latest poverty situation in Hong Kong. To better understand the magnitude of the poverty situation and to formulate immediate relief measures, the Administration should consider updating the indicators more frequently.

56. The Administration has advised that as the poverty situation is attributable to various factors, such as the economic environment, it will be very difficult to set any target to reduce poverty. Notwithstanding this, the Administration will continue to make use of the 24 multi-dimensional indicators to monitor the poverty situation in Hong Kong from different perspectives and identify the needs of different disadvantaged groups and people across different districts. This will provide the basis for the formulation and evaluation of policies to assist the needy.

57. The Administration has further advised that the 24 poverty indicators are compiled mainly based on the data collected in the General Household Survey conducted by C&SD, and it takes time to compile the indicators. Notwithstanding that the latest poverty indicators provide an overview of the movement of performance for 2006 to 2008, the Administration is mindful of the less optimistic situation in 2009 when making reference to the indicators. In response to members' request, the Administration has subsequently provided an update on the life-cycle-based poverty indicators for January - September 2009.

58. Members remain of the view that the Administration should consider seriously updating the indicators at a shorter interval. Moreover, the performance of all the indicators, including the life-cycle-based poverty indicators, should be updated by districts in order to monitor the performance of indicators in different districts, thereby facilitating the formulation of policies and measures to meet the specific needs of different disadvantaged groups in the less well-off districts.

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<sup>2</sup> The Task Force on Poverty, headed by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, was set up in 2007 to co-ordinate efforts across the Government in tackling poverty-related issues.

59. The Administration has explained that the samples for the General Household Survey are selected in accordance with a scientifically designed sampling method, and it is not advisable to subjectively over-sample specific target groups or specified districts as this will affect the representativeness of the survey results. Given the relatively small sample size, there may not be sufficient data for compiling certain life-cycle-based poverty indicators by districts. Nonetheless, the six community-based poverty indicators seek to reflect the general well-being of different districts, in addition to the 18 life-cycle-based poverty indicators, to help the Administration keep track of the poverty situation. The six community-based poverty indicators are updated regularly and continue to provide useful reference for bureaux and departments to implement district-based measures for the needy. The respective District Officers ("DOs") of HAD and District Social Welfare Officers of SWD will in the light of these indicators work together in formulating measures to improve the poverty situation in the districts. Various district-based measures to assist the disadvantaged have been carried out over the years, for instance, HAD has launched the ESR Programme which supports some 90 SE projects. Many of these projects are carried out in less well-off districts such as Sham Shui Po and Tin Shui Wai.

#### District-based poverty alleviation measures

60. According to the Administration, it has adopted a 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 help raise the competitiveness and skills of the workforce and enhance social mobility and reduce inter-generational poverty. On the other hand, having regard to the challenges faced by different sectors and the unique situation and characteristics of individual districts, the Administration has implemented targeted measures to meet the specific needs of individual districts. DOs, in collaboration with District Councils ("DCs"), have been cooperating with other sectors in providing community involvement 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.

61. Members share the view that the relevant bureaux and departments should have regard to the unique situation and population profile of each district in devising concrete measures to meet the specific needs of local residents. Taking into account the relatively poor performance of the six community-based poverty indicators for some less well-off districts, the Subcommittee has identified four less well-off districts, viz. Yuen Long, North District, Kwai Tsing and Sham Shui Po, and examined in-depth the specific poverty alleviation work in these districts. The Subcommittee also gauge views from deputations on the implementation of district-based poverty alleviation initiatives. The written submissions are available at the LegCo website at <http://www.legco.gov.hk>.

*Poverty alleviation initiatives in Yuen Long and North District*

62. The Subcommittee notes that about half of the population of Yuen Long live in the newly and rapidly developed Tin Shui Wai new town. Around 61.5% of Tin Shui Wai residents reside in public rental housing, and many of them are either relocated from other districts or new arrivals from the Mainland. The educational attainment of the labour force in Yuen Long and North District is relatively low, and the unemployment rate in the two districts is higher than that in the whole territory. Having regard to the remote location of Yuen Long and North District and the district profile, members have urged the Administration to create local job opportunities and enhance employment services for the low-income and low-skilled workers as well as strengthen children and youth services and community facilities in the two districts. Specifically, the Administration should inject economic activities at the district level with a view to creating job opportunities for the low-income and low-skilled workers in the districts by, say, establishing hawker bazaars in vacant sites, developing tourist attractions, expediting the implementation of large-scale development projects in these districts through the collaboration of different bureaux and departments, and setting up new Government offices in the districts.

63. In view of the limited job opportunities in Yuen Long and North District, members have repeatedly called upon the Administration to expedite the review on the way forward of the pilot Transport Support Scheme. Consideration should be given to developing the pilot Scheme into a longer-term scheme and extending it to all districts in a bid to facilitate and encourage residents of remote districts to find jobs in other districts and remain in employment.

64. The Administration has explained that the objective of the Transport Support Scheme is 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 is underway, the Administration is expected to report the findings and the way forward for the Transport Support Scheme to the Panel on Manpower by the end of 2010.

65. The Administration has also advised that having regard to the challenges faced by different sectors, it has 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 have been implemented in Yuen Long to build up social capital and encourage mutual support in the neighbourhood. The development of the Hong Kong Geopark and the cycle track in North District will also attract more tourists to the district. Specific measures implemented in these two districts are detailed in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)756/09-10(01)).

66. In response to members' concerns about the implementation of development projects in Tin Shui Wai to promote local economic activities and create job



opportunities for the low-income workers, the Administration and the Hong Kong Housing Society ("HKHS") have briefed members on the Integrated Elderly Community Project in Tin Shui Wai Area 115 and the short term land use projects in Site B of Tin Shui Wai Area 112 and Area 115 Phase II site, which will be implemented by HKHS. According to the Administration and HKHS, the Integrated Elderly Community Project in Area 115 will provide 1 000 residential units for the elderly with diversified and integrated facilities. The project will create about 300 jobs during the construction phase and no fewer than 1 200 jobs after its completion. Apart from providing employment opportunities, the project and its facilities, such as the hotel, the care centre and recreation facilities, will attract tourists to Tin Shui Wai, injecting economic activities in the area, which in turn will have a positive effect on the social and economic development of the region. As regards the short term land use projects in Site B of Tin Shui Wai Area 112 and Area 115 Phase II, HKHS anticipates that the projects will create around 200 to 300 employment opportunities in the elderly services, site construction, food and beverage, retail and exhibition sectors. The vocational training centre to be operated in Area 112 will also provide the much needed vocational training to Tin Shui Wai residents. This will enhance vocational training for local residents as well as the competitiveness of the human resources in the community.

67. Members generally agree with the objective, as announced by the Chief Executive at the Summit on Social Enterprise in 2007, of making use of land available in Tin Shui Wai, in particular Tin Shui Wai Area 112 and 115, to promote social and economic development in the area. They consider that the Administration should make the best use of the two sites and provide maximum economic impetus and employment opportunities to the Tin Shui Wai community, in particular the low-income group. In this regard, some members urge HKHS to accord priority to employ local residents in the Integrated Elderly Community Project and its facilities. Some members also call upon the Administration and HKHS to explore further plans that will bring upon more direct employment opportunities and economic activities to the community.

#### *Poverty alleviation initiatives in Kwai Tsing*

68. Regarding the district profile of Kwai Tsing, the Subcommittee notes that the number of single-parent households with income below the average CSSA payments in the district is relatively large, the unemployment rate is relatively higher and the educational attainment of the labour force relatively low as compared to other districts. To address the specific needs of the district, members urge the Administration to put in place specific measures to enhance family and children services and provide more job opportunities and enhance employment services in Kwai Tsing.

69. The Subcommittee has been informed that to tackle the unemployment situation in Kwai Tsing, in addition to the provision of training and retraining programmes, the Administration has organised large-scale job fairs in the district. Moreover, 42 target buildings have been identified under the Operation Building

Bright project in Kwai Tsing. Owners of these buildings will receive grants for relevant maintenance works, which will create job opportunities and boost the local economy. Specific measures implemented in Kwai Tsing are detailed in the Administration's papers for the Subcommittee (LC Paper No. CB(2)965/09-10(01)).

*Poverty alleviation initiatives in Sham Shui Po*

70. The Subcommittee notes that about 21% of the population in Sham Shui Po are aged 60 and above and about 15% of the households are elderly households, ranking second among all 18 districts, and residents who are new arrivals rank first among the 18 districts. In view of the district profile, members urge the Administration to increase the provision of elderly services and child care services through the participation of SEs. Apart from addressing the residential and nursing care needs of the poor elderly population, the provision of elderly services will help create local job opportunities.

71. The Administration has advised that having regard to the relatively high proportion of elders in Sham Shui Po, bureaux and departments concerned have strengthened elderly services 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. In addition, three historic buildings in Sham Shui Po, namely Lai Chi Kok Hospital, North Kowloon Magistracy and Mei Ho House, have been awarded to three non-profit-making organisations for adaptive re-use through operating SEs under the Revitalising Historic Buildings through Partnership Scheme. Apart from providing employment opportunities under these projects, other related job opportunities will also be created, thereby bringing about a positive impact on the local economy. Specific measures implemented in Sham Shui Po are detailed in the Administration's papers for the Subcommittee (LC Paper No. CB(2)965/09-10(01)).

*Effectiveness of district-based poverty alleviation measures*

72. According to the Administration, given the overall economic growth and specific measures implemented in the districts concerned, the performance of the community-based poverty indicators in Yuen Long, North District, Kwai Tsing and Sham Shui Po have generally improved over the years.

73. To further strengthen the poverty alleviation measures, members are of the view that the Administration should ensure that the targeted measures meet the specific needs of various disadvantaged groups in different districts. To this end, the DOs concerned should take a more proactive role in identifying the district needs and collaborating cross-sectoral efforts, including DCs, district organisations and government departments, to carry out specific initiatives to promote local economy and create job opportunities for local residents, as well as monitor the progress and performance of these initiatives in assisting the disadvantaged.

74. To reduce poverty, some members consider that it is of paramount importance for the Administration to devise an overall policy and measures to tackle poverty from the policy perspectives. To demonstrate its commitment, these members take the view that the Administration should re-establish CoP to actively study and formulate long-term policies to solve the problem.

75. The Administration has assured members that the Administration attaches great importance to poverty alleviation work and has all along adopted a pragmatic and multi-pronged approach to assist the socially disadvantaged. It considers that the key to tackling poverty lies in promoting economic growth, thereby creating more job opportunities. A district-based approach is adopted to complement the centrally-driven poverty alleviation measures. The Task Force on Poverty has coordinated efforts across the Government in tackling poverty related issues, and has duly followed up on the former CoP's recommendations. The Task Force will continue its efforts and monitor the progress in implementing the CoP's recommendations, as well as explore possible new initiatives and measures which will assist the disadvantaged groups and people in need.

#### Duty visit

76. The Subcommittee conducted a duty visit to Taiwan and the Republic of Korea from 19 to 25 July 2009 to study the experience of both places in the development of social enterprises and the formulation and implementation of anti-poverty strategies. The delegation submitted its report (LC Paper No. CB(2)23/09-10) to the Panel and the House Committee on 14 and 23 October 2009 respectively.

#### **Recommendations of the Subcommittee**

77. The Subcommittee recommends that the Administration should –

- (a) conduct a comprehensive review of the CSSA Scheme expeditiously, including –
  - (i) the items which should be classified as basic needs for the purpose of inclusion in the CSSA standard rates; and
  - (ii) recognising access to the computer facilities and the Internet is basic needs of students in receipt of CSSA;

with a view to ensuring that the different standard CSSA rates are adequate to meet the essential needs of different categories of recipients;

- (b) review the requirement for the elderly to apply for CSSA on a household basis;

- (c) start the review on CRP before the end of the two-year programme so that CRP will be provided for needy students without interruption;
- (d) expedite the review of the DE arrangements, and further relax the DE arrangements so as to encourage those who can work to find and remain in employment;
- (e) consider removing the seven-year and one-year-continuous residence requirement under the CSSA Scheme;
- (f) extend the Transport Support Scheme to low-income workers in all districts;
- (g) consider providing tax credit for the working-poor households;
- (h) formulate a long-term plan and provide policy support to foster the development of SEs and advice on the operation of SEs;
- (i) stipulate in the government service contracts the requirement of employing a certain percentage of socially disadvantaged and local residents;
- (j) encourage SE operators to accord priority to employ local residents;
- (k) raise the amount of seed grants under the ESR Programme to facilitate the development of larger-sized SEs;
- (l) encourage the respective DOs to take a more proactive role in collaborating with DCs concerned, district organisations and government departments to identify the needs of disadvantaged having regard to the unique situation and district profile, formulate targeted poverty alleviation initiatives as well as monitor the performance and effectiveness of the measures;
- (m) inject economic activities at the district level so as to create job opportunities for the low-income and low-skilled workers in the district concerned;
- (n) set performance targets for reducing poverty and evaluate the effectiveness of the poverty alleviation measures in achieving the targets; and
- (o) re-establish CoP to actively study and formulate long-term policies to alleviate the poverty problem.

78. The Subcommittee also recommends that the agreement of the Panel and the House Committee should be sought for the priority allocation of a debate slot to the Chairman of the Subcommittee under House Rule 14A(h) for moving a motion on the Subcommittee's report at a Council meeting in June 2010.

**Advice sought**

79. Members are invited to note the deliberations and support the recommendation of the Subcommittee made in paragraph 78 above.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
10 June 2010

**Panel on Welfare Services**

**Subcommittee on Poverty Alleviation**

**Terms of reference**

The Subcommittee will study policies and measures relating to poverty alleviation and to make recommendations where necessary.

**Panel on Welfare Services**

**Subcommittee on Poverty Alleviation**

**Membership List**

<b>Chairman</b>	Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
<b>Members</b>	Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
	Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
	Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
	Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
	Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
	Hon WONG Sing-chi
	Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
	Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
	Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC (up to 28 January 2010) (rejoined on 24 May 2010)
	Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung (up to 28 January 2010) (rejoined on 24 May 2010)
	(Total : 11 Members)
<b>Clerk</b>	Miss Betty MA
<b>Legal adviser</b>	Mr YICK Wing-kin
<b>Date</b>	24 May 2010

**List of the deputations/individuals which/who have given views to the  
Subcommittee on Poverty Alleviation**

1. Association for Concern for Legal Rights of Victims of Domestic Violence
2. Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong, Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers (NT)
3. Christian Action
4. Children Rights Association
5. Concerning CSSA Review Alliance
6. Community Development Alliance
7. Concerning Group for Women Poverty
8. Elderly Rights League (H.K.)
9. Grassroots Housing Group
10. Hong Kong Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood
11. Hong Kong Association for the Survivors of Women Abuse (Kwan Fook)
12. Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association, Social Security Assistants Branch
13. Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association, Social Work Officer Grade Branch
14. Hong Kong Christian Institute
15. Internet Society Hong Kong
16. Joint Alliance for Universal Retirement Protection
17. Justice and Peace Commission of the Hong Kong Catholic Diocese
18. Labour Rights Commune
19. Ms PONG Scarlett Oi-lan, member of Sha Tin District Council
20. Mr LUK Chung-hung, member of Yuen Long District Council
21. New Immigrants' Mutual Aid Association



22. New Women Arrivals League
23. North District Employment Concern Group
24. Oxfam Hong Kong
25. Rights for Basic Living Security Association
26. Sham Shui Po Community Association
27. Society for Community Organization
28. The Against Elderly Abuse of Hong Kong
29. The Boys' & Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong
30. The Chinese Grey Power
31. The Forthright Caucus
32. The Hong Kong Council of Social Service
33. 港島單親互助社
34. 理工大學關注基層組
35. 風雨同路
36. 爭取基層生活保障聯盟
37. 關注天水圍小販大聯盟
38. 天水圍北交通關注組
39. 推動天水圍經濟發展大聯盟
40. 荃灣綜援關注組

Written submissions only

1. Dr YANG Mo, member of Southern District Council
2. Hong Kong People Returned from Mainland Group
3. Mr YEUNG Wai-sing, MH, member of Eastern District Council

**Summary of Progress in implementation of  
the recommendations of the then Commission on Poverty**

**(I) Understanding Poverty**

No.	Recommendation	Progress
1	<b>Monitor and track the indicators of poverty</b> , and where appropriate, improve them by taking into account the changing needs of the society.	Ongoing. The <b>indicators of poverty have been uploaded</b> to Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) website and will be updated regularly.
2	Draw reference to the indicators of poverty as well as other relevant data and information during <b>policy formulation and implementation</b> , and consider the impact of public policies on the different disadvantaged groups and communities.	Ongoing. <b>Updated indicators of poverty have been sent to</b> all relevant bureaus and departments regularly for reference.
3	Conduct and encourage relevant institutions to conduct <b>further poverty researches and analysis</b> in order to facilitate a more informed public policy discourse on the subject.	In 2008-09, the Research Grant Council <b>awarded two research projects in the area of “Poverty, Inequality, and Social Disadvantaged in Hong Kong”</b> under the “Strategic Public Policy Research Grants” Scheme.
4	Conduct <b>evaluative studies</b> on poverty alleviation measures.	LWB has <b>commissioned</b> the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to conduct a <b>consultancy study on the first batch of Child Development Fund (CDF) pioneer projects</b> .
5	<b>Track the impact of taxation and social benefits</b> on household income, in particular on the lower-income group.	The then Commission on Poverty (CoP) <b>commissioned</b> the University of Hong Kong (HKU) to conduct a <b>study on earnings mobility and intergenerational earnings mobility</b> in Hong Kong over the period 1996-2005, which was completed in late 2006. The Government has commissioned HKU to update the study which is scheduled for completion in the second half of 2009.
6	<b>Track the situation of social and earnings mobility</b> in Hong Kong, and carry out longitudinal studies on children and other major vulnerable groups.	The <b>“Conference on Social Inequality and Social Mobility in Hong Kong”</b> , co-organised by the Central Policy Unit (CPU), the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies at the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Centre of Asian Studies at HKU, was held on 14 March 2008.  As stated in item (5) above, the updated study on earnings mobility in Hong Kong is scheduled for completion in the second half of 2009.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
7	Develop indicators or conduct studies to reflect the <b>strength of community</b> networks.	CPU is conducting <b>three studies in Tin Shui Wai (TSW)</b> , including a comparison between TSW and Sham Shui Po (SSP) which aims to examine the social network and communal living in TSW.  <b>Evaluative study on the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF)</b> will commence by phases starting from 2009-10.
8	Facilitate the <b>collection of data and statistics</b> to enhance poverty researches and analysis systematically, e.g. the collection of health data or statistics to be taken into account in the long-term development of a territory-wide health record infrastructure.	The Food and Health Bureau (FHB) will seek the LegCo Finance Committee's approval to set up an <b>eHealth Record (eHR) Office</b> to coordinate the development of a territory-wide eHR sharing infrastructure.  <b>Regular international studies</b> on education performance of Hong Kong students will continue to be conducted to cover, inter alia, correlation between Hong Kong students' social economic status and their achievements.

## (II) The Unemployed and the Working Poor

No.	Recommendation	Progress
9	<b>Review the provision of training, retraining, skills upgrading and life-long learning</b> holistically to ensure that they are market-oriented and have taken into account the needs of the unemployed and the working poor.	The <b>Employees Retraining Board (ERB)</b> completed a <b>strategic review</b> on future directions to enhance and upgrade ERB's training and retraining services for the local labour force in December 2007. Having considered the views collected in the public consultation exercise, ERB finalised the final recommendations. The LegCo Panel on Manpower was briefed in April 2009. <b>ERB has been implementing</b> the recommendations in phases.
10	<b>Further strengthen training and retraining efforts</b> , including making use of the levies collected from the employers of foreign domestic helpers when the resources could be used.	ERB has <b>started drawing down the levy from 1 December 2007</b> to support its existing operation and services. In 2009-10, ERB plans to offer 123 000 training places and has reserved resources for providing an additional 20 000 places in anticipation of an increasing training demand.  ERB has also embarked on provision of <b>part-time skills enhancement courses</b> for in-service workers to upgrade their vocational skills.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
11	Adopt an <b>integrated approach in the delivery of training and employment assistance</b> in order to make the best use of the resources available and provide more targeted assistance to the “difficult-to-employ”.	<p>ERB set up a new pilot <b>Training cum Employment Resource Centre (TERC)</b> to offer multi-faceted training and employment services to people in need in October 2008.</p> <p>Separately, the Government is finalising the implementation details of a full-fledged one-stop centre.</p>
12	Review holistically how to achieve the target of <b>“one-stop shop”</b> in the provision of employment assistance, so that able-bodied persons, especially those who are “difficult-to-employ”, can access relevant training and employment assistance more easily.	See item (11) above.
13	<b>Promote economic development</b> , with particular attention to sectors which provide job opportunities for low-skilled workers.	<p><u>Major Infrastructure Projects and Minor Works</u></p> <p>The 10 Major Infrastructure Projects introduced in the Policy Address 2007 will create, from commissioning to a mature stage, <b>some 250 000 additional jobs</b>. Among these projects, the construction works of the cruise terminal at Kai Tak is expected to commence by end-2009 and create about 900 jobs, including those for low-skilled workers. Moreover, a sum of \$8.5 billion has been earmarked in 2009-10 for implementing minor works projects, whereby creating <b>over 12 000 jobs</b>.</p> <p><u>Encouraging local employment</u></p> <p>To increase the job opportunities for residents in TSW, the Housing Department has awarded <b>four contracts for the provision of security and cleansing services in seven estates in TSW</b>. These contracts provided job opportunities for 486 workers, out of which 402 (i.e. 83%) were taken up by TSW residents. In addition, staff of Housing Advisory and Service Team in TSW are mainly locally recruited.</p> <p><u>Encouraging employment for persons with disabilities</u></p> <p><b>The LWB, together with the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee</b>, have conducted visits to solicit support and collaboration of different sectors, including business sector, the 18 District Councils (DCs) and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in <b>promoting the employment of persons with disabilities</b>.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
14	Support the development of <b>social enterprises</b> to assist those who are “difficult-to-employ” to integrate into the job market and capture job opportunities.	<p>The Home Affairs Department (HAD) introduced the <b>Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme (the ESR Programme)</b> in June 2006 to provide seed money for NGOs and district organisations to set up Social Enterprises (SEs) with a view to providing employment opportunities for the socially disadvantaged groups and promoting their self-reliance. So far, some 90 SE projects have been approved under the Programme, and these projects are expected to create some 1 500 jobs for the socially disadvantaged groups.</p> <p>A <b>Summit on Social Enterprises</b> was held on 20 December 2007. It was attended by some 600 participants from the welfare, academic, commercial and other sectors. Participants provided useful views on ways to facilitate further development of SEs.</p> <p>A <b>pilot scheme to facilitate SEs in bidding government cleansing contracts</b> was introduced in early 2008. Under the pilot scheme, 38 government cleansing contracts have been set aside for eligible SEs to bid. As a result, a total of 16 contracts, with a total contract value amounting to some \$6.6 million, have been awarded to SEs. The pilot scheme will be continued in 2009-10, with a total of 53 contracts (including cleansing and gardening services) setting aside for SEs to bid.</p> <p>The HAD launched a <b>dedicated website on SEs</b> in June 2008 to enhance public awareness and understanding of SEs. The website provides information on the Government’s measures to promote the development of SEs, including the SE Directory, SE booklet, leaflet, video, API, the SEs Partnership Programme, and the relevant funding schemes.</p>
15	<b>Strengthen employment support at the district level</b> , particularly in those districts with stronger needs for more targeted support, coupled with local economy and social enterprise development as well as investment in public works and infrastructural projects.	See item (14) above.
16	Give more attention to social and demographic considerations such as population, employment, supporting facilities and other people-based issues <b>during the planning process</b> .	In preparing physical land use plan for a new town/new development area, the <b>Planning Department undertook to duly take into consideration</b> socio-economic needs, infrastructure provision, environmental impacts and urban design.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
17	Monitor and review the implementation of the pilot Transport Support Scheme, and consider the appropriate form of <b>incentives to encourage work</b> .	As approved by the LegCo Finance Committee, the <b>eligibility criteria of applicants and the period of allowance have been relaxed</b> since July 2008. A review will be conducted on the way forward.
18	Consider how to provide <b>suitable support to the able-bodied unemployed and the working poor</b> so that the system will provide the necessary incentives for those who have the ability to work to springboard to employment and achieve self-reliance.	ERB set up a new pilot <b>TERC</b> to offer multi-faceted training and employment services to people in need in October 2008.  Separately, the Government is finalising the implementation details of a full-fledged one-stop centre.

### (III) Children and Youth

No.	Recommendation	Progress
19	Adopt a <b>holistic and family perspective</b> in policies and measures in assisting children and youth, with particular emphasis on early identification and intervention, evidence-based policy making and intersectoral collaboration.	The <b>Family Council</b> was established in December 2007 to provide a high-level platform for discussion of major issues from the family perspective and strategic directions as well as priorities on family-related policies.
20	Implement the <b>Child Development Fund (CDF)</b> and try out an <b>asset-based model</b> (including a targeted savings element and a mentoring scheme) which encourages longer-term personal development of children from a disadvantaged background.	The LegCo Finance Committee approved the allocation of \$300 million to establish the CDF in April 2008. <b>The first batch of seven pioneer projects was rolled out in December 2008.</b>
21	Further develop the CDF into a <b>longer-term model</b> to promote child development in Hong Kong after the trial stage, and consolidate different resources and funding sources in order to promote a more child-based, asset-based and family-based model.	LWB has <b>commissioned a consultancy study on the experience of the first batch of CDF pioneer projects</b> , with a view to considering the longer-term model to promote child development.
22	Improve the <b>impact assessment</b> of existing efforts on the development of children from a disadvantaged background.	LWB is conducting a <b>consultancy study on the first batch of CDF pioneer projects.</b>
23	Make appropriate use of <b>schools as a platform</b> to help address the development needs of the disadvantaged children, particularly for the “hidden cases”, through collaboration between the social services and the education sectors	<u>Opening Up School Premises</u>  Some schools in Yuen Long District have opened up their schools premises for public use. A <b>School Network on the Opening Up School Premises of Yuen Long District</b> has been formed to exchange views on the arrangements of opening up school premises.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>An <b>education centre in Tung Chung</b>, which offers community-based cultural activities for residents, has been in operation under the 3-year project funded by the Opening Up School Premises for Community Use Scheme.</p> <p><u>Employment Opportunities for Youth</u></p> <p>To enhance the employability of young people, LWB has made available <b>3 000 3-year temporary positions for secondary school leavers</b> starting from 2008-09. All these positions have been allocated to subvented welfare NGOs, some of which would provide support to the social workers stationed in schools.</p>
24	The work of the <b>Family Commission</b> , if set up, should take into account the needs of children and families from a disadvantaged background.	The <b>Family Council</b> was established to, amongst others, bring under one roof family related work being undertaken by various commissions and committees responsible for handling issues regarding different age groups and gender. Through the work of the Family Council, the Government aims to strengthen the family by formulating social policies and services to meet the needs of different members of the family.
25	<b>Extend the Comprehensive Child Development Service (CCDS)</b> to all districts in phases and strengthen follow-up social services support to children and families at risk.	CCDS has been <b>extended to Kwun Tong, Tsuen Wan and Kwai Tsing</b> . Further expansion of CCDS is subject to review.
26	<b>Strengthen parent education</b> , with particular focus on the needs of the disadvantaged and hard-to-reach families	<b>Ongoing.</b> Under the CDF pioneer projects, training and guidance are provided to the parents/guardians of the participating children to engage them in the life planning and financial planning for the children.
27	Ensure the <b>education system</b> provides opportunities for children to learn and excel regardless of their socio-economic background, and to provide additional assistance to students with weak family support where appropriate.	<b>Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme (PEVS)</b> , commenced in 2007-08 school year, provides fee subsidy for parents of children attending local non-profit-making kindergartens regardless of their socio-economic background. Needy families may apply for additional fee assistance through the existing Kindergarten and Child Care Centre Fee Remission Scheme.
28	Promote school-based and community-based <b>after school programmes</b> for primary and secondary students from disadvantaged families, through promoting intersectoral collaboration among schools and non-governmental / local community	Ongoing. The Education Bureau will continue to monitor and review at appropriate time the <b>\$75 million School-based After-school Learning and Support Programme</b> , which aims to provide funding support for schools and NGOs to organise

No.	Recommendation	Progress
	organizations.	suitable programmes for disadvantaged students.
29	Strengthen efforts to tackle the problem of <b>non-engaged youths (NEYs)</b> and take into account the assessment conducted by the Task Force on Continuing Development and Employment-related Training for Youth.	A paper on how to take forward the recommendations of the Task Force was <b>issued to the LegCo Panel on Manpower and Panel on Home Affairs</b> in July 2008.
30	Provide a <b>more intensified form of assistance to youths</b> who have remained on CSSA for a long period and cannot benefit from existing programmes, and evaluate their needs in order to provide targeted and timely assistance.	<p>The Social Welfare Department (SWD) introduced the <b>Special Training and Enhancement Programme (My STEP)</b> in 2006 to assist hard-core CSSA unemployed youth to rejoin the workforce or return to mainstream schooling.</p> <p>Following the completion of the first phase of My STEP in TSW and Yuen Long in September 2007, SWD launched four 2-year projects under the second phase of My STEP in the districts of Kwun Tong &amp; Wong Tai Sin/Sai Kung; TSW/Yuen Long; Tuen Mun &amp; Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing and Tai Po/North &amp; Sha Tin to help more than 600 long-term able-bodied unemployed CSSA recipients aged between 15 and 29.</p> <p>SWD is actively planning to launch another phase of My STEP upon completion of the current phase in September 2009.</p>

#### (IV) The Elderly

No.	Recommendation	Progress
31	Promote <b>active and healthy ageing</b> as an integral part of the elderly policy to enhance their quality of life and to enable the elderly to live with dignity.	<p><u>Promoting Active Ageing</u></p> <p>LWB and the Elderly Commission (EC) have jointly launched the “<b>Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project</b>” (NAAP) since early 2008 to promote the message of active ageing. There are currently 3 initiatives under the NAAP, with a total of 75 district projects being organized:</p> <p>(a) The 2-year <b>Pilot Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project (PNAAP)</b> was launched across the territory in early 2008 to promote the concept of active ageing and enhance neighbourhood support with a view to creating a harmonious society. 19 district projects are in operation;</p>



No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>(b) Another 2-year pilot project namely <b>PNAAP – Caring for Elders</b> was carried out in September 2008 to promote the prevention of elder abuse in the community through education, prevention and support, and to foster inter-generational integration and harmonious family life. 29 district projects covering the whole territory are in operation; and</p> <p>(c) A 2-year <b>PNAAP – Prevention of Elderly Suicide</b>, which seeks to enhance community efforts to prevent elderly suicide through establishing neighbourhood support networks, was launched in 2009. 33 district projects are in operation.</p> <p><u>Improving home environment for the elderly</u></p> <p>SWD launched the <b>Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly</b> in June 2008 to help elders lacking family support and financial means to improve their home environment. It is estimated that a total of 40 000 elderly households will benefit from this five-year scheme. As at end March 2009, some 7 000 out of 10 000 applications have been approved. About 3 000 cases were completed with the necessary services provided to the elders.</p> <p><u>Promoting life-long learning for the elders</u></p> <p>LWB and the EC have jointly launched the <b>Elder Academy Scheme</b> since early 2007. At present, there are 78 elder academies in primary and secondary schools, with another 20 elder academies in primary and secondary school coming on stream within 2009. Eight tertiary institutions have also actively participated in the Scheme.</p> <p><u>Setting up a dedicated portal for the elderly</u></p> <p>As a new initiative in the 2009-10 Budget, LWB is co-ordinating with relevant parties the setting up of a <b>dedicated portal for the elderly</b> to provide <b>one-stop information service on elderly services and the silver hair market</b>. Interested parties are invited to submit proposals to the Government by 28 July 2009. Our target is to launch the portal in early 2010.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
32	Further improve our support systems for the elderly based on shared responsibility and financial sustainability, and consider <b>more vigorous targeting in using public resources</b> to take care of the elderly most in need of assistance.	<p><u>Studying the Issues</u></p> <p><b>EC has embarked on a consultancy study</b> on residential care services for the elderly, which is expected to be completed within 2009.</p> <p><u>Strengthening housing support for families with elderly persons</u></p> <p>The Housing Authority <b>streamlined in January 2009 different schemes which aimed to foster harmonious families and encourage family support for elderly.</b> Under the new Harmonious Families Priority Scheme (HFPS), the families concerned may opt to live in one flat or two nearby flats subject to the availability of flats in their chosen district(s). As at April 2009, about 5 000 families have benefited from the HFPS.</p> <p>The <b>eligibility criteria for elderly families under the Rent Assistance Scheme have been relaxed</b> since August 2007. This was well received by public housing tenants. From August 2007 to March 2009, about 7 000 families benefited from the relaxed scheme.</p> <p><u>Strengthening support for private care homes for the elderly</u></p> <p>The Hospital Authority has <b>allocated additional resources to extend the psychogeriatric outreach programme to private care homes for the elderly</b> since July 2008. In 2008-09, some 10 000 outreach attendances were provided. The target is to provide additional 10 000 outreach attendances in 2009-10.</p>
33	<b>Enhance understanding of the problem of the elderly in poverty</b> , including exploring ways to facilitate further poverty researches and analysis, e.g. the collection of health data or statistics to be taken into account in the longer-term development of a territory-wide health record infrastructure.	FHB will seek the LegCo Finance Committee's approval to set up an <b>eHR Office</b> to coordinate the development of a territory-wide eHR sharing infrastructure.
34	Strengthen efforts to <b>reach out and identify "hidden" and singleton elders</b> , bring them out of isolation, and refer those in need to the existing public support network, and better leverage on the existing resources including volunteers to address the needs of the hidden elderly.	Since January 2008, <b>additional recurrent funding of \$42 million</b> has been provided to <b>the 41 District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) and the 115 Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs)</b> to recruit a total of 156 additional staff to enhance the outreaching work to hidden and singleton elders.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		Since June 2008, <b>further recurrent funding of \$18 million</b> has been provided to all <b>DECCs</b> to recruit additional staff to strengthen their counselling and referral services.
35	Encourage <b>social inclusion</b> and participation of the elderly in society, and mobilise healthy retirees who are a valuable pool of human resources to help those who are needy in the community.	The above additional resources have enabled the DECCs and NECs to <b>recruit more staff to mobilise volunteers, including “young-olds”, for the outreaching work.</b>
36	Ensure <b>equitable and affordable access to health care</b> services and provide a safety net for the poor and vulnerable by putting in place sustainable health care financing arrangements as soon as possible.	FHB initiated the first-stage <b>public consultation on health care reform and financing</b> in 2008. FHB will launch the second stage of public consultation after formulating detailed proposals.
37	<b>Strengthen primary healthcare</b> service for the elderly at the community level, including health promotion and preventive care, and make use of the private doctor network at the community level.	FHB launched a 3-year pilot scheme in January 2009 to provide five <b>health care vouchers</b> of \$50 each per year to senior citizens aged 70 or above to partially subsidise them to use primary care services in the private sector. FHB will conduct an interim review of the voucher pilot scheme one year after the launch.  FHB will also launch various 3-year pilot programmes through the Hospital Authority to <b>improve care for chronic disease patients</b> , including the elderly, in the community in 2009-10.
38	Improve the accessibility of subsidised medical service for non-CSSA recipients, in particular the elderly, through further improving the <b>medical fee waiver mechanism</b> , e.g. further simplify the procedures and lengthen the period waivers of the medical fee waiver mechanism.	The <b>coverage of period waiver for the elderly has been extended</b> to include services of the General Out-Patient Clinics without pre-scheduled appointment starting from March 2008.
39	Provide greater relief on <b>medical fees for needy elders</b> , whether they are on CSSA or not.	The question of safety net would be considered in the context of <b>health care reform and financing</b> . FHB initiated the first-stage public consultation in 2008 and will launch the second stage of public consultation after formulating detailed proposals.
40	Facilitate elderly applicants to apply for public rental housing, and <b>assist those living in private old buildings</b> who are owner-occupiers but with low income.	<u>Shortening the waiting time for family applicants with elderly persons</u>  The <b>minimum waiting time</b> for family applications with elderly persons has been <b>shortened from 24 to 18 months</b> with effect

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>from October 2007.</p> <p><u>Providing special arrangement for elderly property owner-occupiers under the Compassionate Rehousing Scheme</u></p> <p>Regarding assistance to elderly property owner-occupiers living in private dilapidated buildings, the Housing Authority has introduced, since 2004, arrangements to assist these elderly owners by <b>granting them licences to stay in Public Rental Housing (PRH) under the Compassionate Rehousing Scheme</b>. The licences will be turned into normal tenancies upon the licences' fulfillment of the General Waiting List eligibility criteria. Since its implementation, 87 applicants have been housed successfully and 34 of them have their licences converted into normal PRH tenancies.</p>
41	<p>Provide better <b>long-term planning</b> on the provision of subsidised residential care places for the elderly as well as community care services in the light of increasing demand from an ageing population.</p>	<p><b>EC has embarked on a consultancy study</b> to explore these issues which is expected to be completed within 2009.</p> <p>LWB will continue to <b>enhance the provision of subsidised elderly services</b>. In 2008-09, an additional 810 places of home-based care services for frail elders, 107 subsidised residential care places and 177 subsidised day care places for the elderly were provided. In 2009-10, LWB will provide an additional 642 subsidised residential care places and an additional 80 day care places in districts that have high service demand.</p>
42	<p><b>Increase the choices</b> of quality residential care places and community care services through a combination of measures –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consider whether the subsidised residential care service should be <b>means-tested</b>;</li> <li>• examine means to enable a greater extent of <b>co-payment of fees</b> among the individuals, their families and the Government, including a means-tested voucher system and assistance to the needy in selecting different services; and</li> <li>• encourage a more robust market comprising quality self-financing and private residential care homes for the elderly providing different services, as well as <b>multiple sources of financing</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>EC has embarked on a consultancy study</b> to explore these issues which is expected to be completed within 2009.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
	from the individuals and their families.	
43	Encourage <b>further social enterprise development</b> in the provision of elderly services.	Out of the 90 new <b>SE projects</b> approved under the ESR Programme, <b>10 projects target to provide services to the elderly</b> , such as provision of health care services, sale of elderly products, cleaning and minor repair service for the elderly.  In connection with the Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly launched in June 2008, <b>SWD has provided a list of SEs and community organisations to the delivery agencies</b> of the Scheme, and encouraged the delivery agencies to engage them as service providers in the Scheme.
44	Consider a more <b>relaxed asset limit for elderly CSSA recipients</b> on compassionate grounds, without changing the nature of CSSA as a scheme of last resort for those genuinely in need.	The CSSA asset limit has been <b>upward adjusted</b> by 2.6% with effect from 1 February 2009.
45	Consider how to provide <b>financial security</b> for the future elderly generations as soon as possible, taking into account the outcome of the on-going study on the sustainability of the three pillars of retirement protection for Hong Kong, viz. the publicly funded CSSA and Old Age Allowance, the Mandatory Provident Fund schemes, and voluntary private savings.	Studies in progress.

## (V) District-based Approach

No.	Recommendation	Progress
46	<b>Enhance understanding of characteristics and needs of districts</b> , and take them into account in formulating and implementing policies at the district level.	Ongoing. Updated <b>indicators of poverty</b> , including the community-based indicators, have been sent to all relevant bureaus and departments regularly for reference.
47	Provide <b>more opportunities to less well-off districts</b> , including physical infrastructure (community facilities), economic and employment opportunities, and enhanced measures.	<u>Enhancing medical services in less-well off districts</u>  The Hospital Authority has allocated <b>additional provision to enhance hospital services</b> in the New Territories West and Kowloon East Clusters respectively in 2008-09 and 2009-10. The Hospital Authority also launched the “ <b>TSW Primary Care Partnership Project</b> ” in 2008 to purchase primary care services for TSW residents.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p><u>Providing more facilities for less well-off districts</u></p> <p><b>Leisure, cultural and community hall facilities have been/will be provided in less well-off districts in the coming years.</b> For example, more open spaces have been developed in Tung Chung and TSW. The construction of the indoor recreation centre, a community hall cum library, and the swimming pool complex in Tung Chung is expected to be completed by late 2009 and late 2010 respectively. The construction of the library cum indoor recreation centre next to TSW MTR Station and the sports centre and community hall in North TSW is expected to be completed by mid-2011 and mid-2012 respectively. In SSP, stage 2 of the SSP Park completed in August 2008, and the construction works of the conversion of the secondary pool of the Lai Chi Kok Park Swimming Pool into an indoor heated pool will commence in early 2010.</p> <p>The Housing Authority will also complete the construction works of the Amenity and Community Building in TSW in late 2010.</p> <p><u>Providing more employment opportunities and training places for less-well districts</u></p> <p>The Housing Authority has let accommodation in a multi-storey car park building in Tin Heng Estate in <b>TSW North</b> to the <b>Hong Kong Jockey Club for setting up a Telebet Centre cum Volunteers and Training Centre</b> (the Centre). Phase 1 of the Centre has commenced its operation with about 900 workers employed. Another 1 500 workers will be recruited in September 2009 upon the commencement of Phase 2 of the Centre.</p> <p><b>The Construction Industry Council Training Academy will establish a training centre in TSW</b> by the second half of 2009. The centre will provide 700 full-time training places for new entrants to various trades including steel-fixing, plumbing and painting. Basic safety training courses will also be provided.</p> <p>HAD introduced <b>the ESR Programme</b> in June 2006 to provide seed money for NGOs and district organisations to set up SEs with a view to providing employment opportunities for the socially disadvantaged groups and</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>promoting their self-reliance. So far, some 90 SE projects have been approved under the Programme, and these projects are expected to create some 1 500 jobs for the socially disadvantaged groups.</p>
48	<p>Encourage <b>district-based initiatives</b> as necessary supplements to formal services provision through providing additional funding sources, better information dissemination of existing funding sources, as well as rationalising and streamlining different funding sources in the longer run.</p>	<p><u>Providing assistance for new tenants of public housing estates</u></p> <p>The Housing Authority <b>set up a pilot Housing Advisory Service Team (the HAST) in TSW</b> in April 2008 to assist local Estate Management Advisory Committees (EMACs) in carrying out community building activities, in particular, assisting new tenants in adjusting to the new living environment. Apart from giving advice to the new tenants on the availability of social/community/educational services in the district and running a hotline, the HAST has maintained close contact with the EMACs, NGOs, Government departments and DC Members. The service has been well received by residents in TSW. The Housing Authority will review this pilot scheme towards the end of 2009.</p> <p><u>Providing Food Assistance to people in need</u></p> <p>SWD commissioned five NGOs in February 2009 to operate five <b>short-term food assistance</b> service projects, covering the whole territory, to help individuals and families in need. The services projects are expected to benefit at least 50 000 persons.</p> <p><u>Enhancing support services for carers</u></p> <p>LWB launched the <b>District-based Trial Scheme on Carer Training</b> (the Trial Scheme) in October 2007 and provided seed money of \$50,000 each to 11 DECCs in three SWD administrative districts (i.e. Eastern and Wanchai, Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung, as well as Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong) to <b>organise carer training programmes and provide carer services in collaboration with local organisations</b>. As of December 2008, 765 individuals have completed training under the Trial Scheme and more than 6 100 elders have received services provided by the carer-helpers. In view of the encouraging response, LWB has extended the Trial Scheme to 22 DECCs in other districts. The first round of training commenced in March 2009.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p><u>Strengthening child care services at district level</u></p> <p>In October 2008, SWD launched a <b>3-year pilot Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project</b> with a view to providing more flexible forms of day care services for children aged under 6 to meet the needs of parents at the neighbourhood level. So far, SWD has already awarded 11 projects, one in each SWD administrative district. Subsidy is also available for families in need of financial assistance.</p> <p><u>Encouraging district care and support</u></p> <p>LWB has allocated a sum of \$8.5 million to SWD to launch a <b>District Caring and Support Trial Scheme</b> in 2009-10. The aim of the scheme is to support district-based initiatives which can address the specific needs of individual districts, particularly in the face of the current financial tsunami.</p>
49	Put in place <b>suitable institutional structure</b> for districts to escalate problems which cannot be dealt with at the district level to the Government so that policy barriers could be removed in a timely manner.	Since March 2008, a <b>new mechanism has been in place</b> to raise government capacity to resolve district problems requiring inter-departmental collaboration.
50	Strengthen the <b>role of District Officers</b> to enhance cross-sector collaboration to address district needs; this should be complemented by central policy support.	<p><b>DOs have been provided with additional staffing resources</b> to carry out various community involvement programmes to help strengthen their community network and further promote district administration.</p> <p>Separately, DCs have been given <b>greater flexibility</b> since the new term of 2008-11 to <b>use not more than 10% of its funds for employing contract staff</b> to help the launch of community participation activities. As at mid-May 2009, more than 200 full-time and part-time staff have been employed by the 18 DCs.</p>
51	Give District Officers a <b>clearer mandate</b> to coordinate inter-departmental efforts at the district level on key concern areas relating to poverty alleviation and prevention, in order to better respond to local needs, remove local barriers and achieve greater impact.	With the additional staffing resources for DOs and funding for DCs to carry out <b>community involvement programmes</b> , both DOs and DCs collaborate to put forward various community projects to cater for the district needs, including helping the under-privileged and alleviating local poverty.
52	Encourage districts to <b>strengthen their capacities</b> through taking the essential steps in analysing and identifying genuine and unmet local needs, mapping out clear and	Ongoing. HAD will, through the DC committees and the District Management Committees, continue to <b>work closely with district organisations to provide</b>



No.	Recommendation	Progress
	longer-term directions, engaging stakeholders and encouraging cross-sector collaboration, and evaluating effectiveness of poverty alleviation and prevention programmes.	<b>community projects</b> , with a view to identifying and addressing the local needs, as well as creating a people-oriented network of care and mutual support.
53	Encourage the establishment of <b>district-based platforms</b> or mechanisms to identify district needs and responses, comprising Government officials, NGOs and district leaders.	There are <b>established inter-departmental platforms</b> in the districts to engage stakeholders on poverty issues. The Home Affairs Bureau will continue to make use of the established platforms and networks to provide programmes which cater for the needs of the districts.

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
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## Appendix V

### Indicators of Poverty

<b>Children / youth (aged 0-14 / 15-24)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Children aged 0-5 and 6-14 living in workless households</li><li>2. Children aged 0-5 and 6-14 living in households with income below average CSSA payment</li><li>3. Children aged 0-5 and 6-14 with single parent and in households with income below average CSSA payment</li><li>4. CSSA recipients aged 0-5 and 6-14, and those aged 15-21 who are on child rate</li><li>5. School attendance rate of youth aged 16-19</li><li>6. Persons aged 20-24 with tertiary education</li><li>7. Non-engaged youth aged 15-19 and 20-24</li><li>8. Children aged 0-5 and 6-14 living in private temporary housing and private shared units</li></ol>
<b>Working people / adults (aged 15-59)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>9. Persons aged 15-19 and 20-59 living in workless households</li><li>10. Persons aged 15-19 and 20-59 living in households with income below average CSSA payment</li><li>11. Unemployed persons aged 15-19, 20-24 and 25-59</li><li>12. Persons unemployed for 6 months or longer, and 12 months or longer</li><li>13. Employed persons aged 15-19, 20-24 and 25-59 working 35 hours or above per week and with monthly employment earnings less than 50% of the median</li><li>14. Adult able-bodied CSSA recipients having been on CSSA for 1 year or less, and longer than 1 year</li><li>15. Adult recipients of permanent disability / temporary disability / ill health CSSA</li></ol>
<b>Older people (aged 60 or above)</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>16. Recipients of old-age CSSA</li><li>17. Number of elderly patients under the medical fee waiver mechanism of public hospitals and clinics</li><li>18. Elderly persons living in private temporary housing and private shared units</li></ol>
<b>Community</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>19. Workless households by district</li><li>20. Households with income below average CSSA payment by district</li><li>21. Single parent households with income below average CSSA payment by district</li><li>22. Median monthly household income by district</li><li>23. Median monthly employment earnings by district</li><li>24. Unemployed persons and unemployment rate by district</li></ol>