

**For discussion on
11 July 2011**

**Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
Work Progress of the Task Force on Poverty**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the progress of the work of the Task Force on Poverty.

Background

2. The Government attaches great importance to poverty alleviation work. With the conclusion of work of the former Commission on Poverty (CoP), the Government set up in October 2007 the Task Force on Poverty (TFP), headed by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare and with senior officials from relevant bureaux/departments as members, to monitor the progress in implementing the 53 recommendations made by CoP and co-ordinate efforts across the Government in poverty alleviation.

Progress of the Work of the TFP

3. TFP has duly followed up all CoP's recommendations. A summary of their latest position is at **Annex**. Notable progress has been made in helping specific disadvantaged groups (including children and youth, the unemployed and the elderly) and in implementing district-based poverty alleviation measures. Details are set out below.

Children and Youth

4. TFP's work for children and youth focuses on promoting child development and reducing inter-generational poverty. Apart from investing heavily in education, we pay special attention to the needs of children and youth from a disadvantaged background and provide them with the support necessary for effective learning and whole-person development.

Comprehensive Child Development Service (CCDS)

5. Launched in 2005 on a trial basis, CCDS is a joint initiative of the

Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB), Education Bureau (EDB), Department of Health, Hospital Authority and Social Welfare Department (SWD). The service identifies, at an early stage, at-risk pregnant women as well as needy mothers and children, and refers them to the appropriate health and welfare service units to receive follow-up and support services. Over the years, CCDS has been extended to cover about half of the population in Hong Kong. With additional recurrent funding of \$48 million earmarked in the 2011-12 Budget, the service will be extended to all 18 districts in phases from 2011-12 onward.

Child Development Fund (CDF)

6. The Government accepted CoP's recommendation and set up the \$300 million CDF in April 2008. CDF funds projects which promote the longer-term development of children from a disadvantaged background and encourage them to develop an asset-building habit, with a view to reducing inter-generational poverty. CDF is well received by the community. So far, two batches of 22 projects have been rolled out, benefiting a total of 2 270 children. LWB plans to roll out two more batches of CDF projects in 2011-12 to provide 5 000 more places. Our target is to benefit some 13 600 children eventually. The Panel on Welfare Services of the Legislative Council (WS Panel) was briefed on the progress of CDF in June 2011.

Enhancing Support to Students from a Disadvantaged Background

7. To follow up CoP's recommendation, EDB has implemented the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes (SALSP) to provide funding for schools and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to organise after-school activities for the disadvantaged students. These activities seek to improve the participants' learning effectiveness, broaden their learning experiences, as well as raise their understanding of the community and instill in them a sense of belonging, with a view to facilitating their whole-person development. Since 2010-11, the annual provision for SALSP has increased from \$75 million to \$175 million. In the 2010/11 school year, 853 schools had participated in SALSP and 309 community-based projects submitted by NGOs had been approved, benefiting about 163 400 and 68 600 students respectively.

8. The Government has also implemented other new initiatives to enhance the support to needy students. For example,

- (i) subsidy for Internet access charges has been provided for low-income families since the 2010/11 school year. Around

410 000 students from 300 000 families are expected to benefit from the scheme;

- (ii) financial support for needy students will be enhanced starting from the 2011/12 school year. Apart from increasing the flat-rate grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme and making corresponding adjustments to the flat-rate grant for school-related expenses under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme, the Government will also relax the means test mechanism of the Student Financial Assistance Agency so that the number of students who are able to receive full level of assistance will substantially increase from around 114 000 to 212 000, representing about 59% of all beneficiaries. Assistance for students requiring examination fee remission and academic expenses grants for post-secondary students will also be enhanced; and
- (iii) the After-school Learning Support Partnership Pilot Scheme will be launched from the 2011/12 school year to provide after-school homework guidance for economically disadvantaged students with academic needs in selected primary schools.

The Unemployed

9. For those ready to join the workforce, employment is the key to poverty alleviation and self-reliance. By promoting economic growth, the Government can sustain employment and create more job opportunities. We also help the unemployed enhance their employability and provide them with effective employment support.

Promoting Employment Opportunities

10. In addition to strengthening the four pillar industries and developing the six industries where Hong Kong enjoys clear advantages, the Government continues to press ahead with construction projects of various scales, including the ten major infrastructure projects and minor works projects, to create employment opportunities. Over the past four years, the capital works expenditure rose substantially from \$20.5 billion in 2007-08 to \$49.8 billion in 2010-11. The estimated capital works expenditure for 2011-12 will reach a record high of over \$58 billion, providing 63 600 job opportunities. The funding allocation for minor works in 2011-12 also stays high at \$8.36 billion.

11. The Government supports the development of social enterprises (SEs) to enable the socially disadvantaged to be self-reliant through employment, and to meet the needs of different community groups. In 2006, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) launched the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership (ESR) Programme to help NGOs set up SEs. So far, about 110 new SE projects have been approved under the ESR Programme, and these projects are expected to create some 1 800 jobs. A Social Enterprise Advisory Committee was set up in January 2010 to advise the Government on the formulation of policies and strategies for supporting the sustainable development of SEs. Since the first quarter of 2011, HAD has implemented a number of improvement measures for ESR. The WS Panel was briefed on this early this year. A sum of \$150 million has also been earmarked for implementing the ESR Programme for another five years.

Employment and Training Programmes for Non-engaged Youth

12. Various departments and training bodies have been offering specialised programmes to help the non-engaged youth secure employment. For example,

- (i) the Labour Department (LD) has combined the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) into a “through-train” programme – “YPTP&YWETS”. The programme has also been enhanced to provide seamless and comprehensive training and employment support to school leavers aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below. By the end of May 2011, over 26 400 applications had been received;
- (ii) LD also launched a special employment project in collaboration with NGOs in July 2010. The purpose is to strengthen the employment support to vulnerable young people aged between 15 and 24 who find it very hard to secure employment owing to low educational attainment, emotional/behavioural problems or learning difficulties. A total of 109 youngsters have participated;
- (iii) the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) has collaborated with training bodies to launch the Youth Training Programme (YTP). It offers a wide range of courses to help non-engaged youths aged 15 to 20 enhance their capabilities, better understand their career preferences, cultivate a positive attitude to life and build

self-confidence. Placement support services will also be provided to the graduated trainees. Currently, there are 49 courses offered under YTP; and

- (iv) SWD rolled out the third phase of the Special Training and Enhancement Programme (My STEP) in 2009. My STEP is a specialised employment assistance project to help CSSA recipients aged 15 to 29 rejoin the workforce or return to mainstream schooling. Structured motivational and disciplinary training, personalised career counseling and other supportive services are provided. So far, more than 50% of the participants in this phase of My STEP have secured full-time employment or returned to mainstream schooling.

Retraining

13. CoP suggested that the Government should review the provision of training, re-training, skills upgrading and life-long learning holistically. To this end, ERB has completed a strategic review on its future directions to enhance and upgrade its training and retraining services. ERB will continue to be market-driven and employment-oriented, and will endeavour to provide multi-faceted, placement-tied courses as well as generic skills courses to the low-skilled, displaced workers and the disadvantaged. In 2011-12, ERB plans to offer 130 000 training places, and has earmarked resources for providing an additional 30 000 places should the need arise.

Enhancing Employment Support

14. CoP recommended an integrated approach for the delivery of training and employment assistance. To take this forward, LD will set up a pioneer one-stop employment and training centre (OSS) at Tin Shui Wai (TSW) in late 2011. OSS will streamline, integrate and enhance the existing employment and training/retraining services provided by LD, SWD and ERB. Apart from ordinary employment support services, OSS will provide job-seekers who require much more intensive employment support with highly personalised and customised employment assistance, such as in-depth psychological counseling by social workers and case management services. The co-located ERB Service Centre will also provide a full range of training support services. In its first year of operation, OSS will provide employment services to 500 unemployed able-bodied CSSA recipients in TSW and will serve more people after gaining more operational experience.

15. As recommended by CoP, the Government introduced, on a pilot basis,

a Transport Support Scheme (TSS) in June 2007. TSS provides time-limited transport allowance for needy job-seekers and low-income employees residing in four designated remote districts, to encourage them to “go out” and seek jobs or work across districts. To better serve the needs of employees from low-income households and encourage them to stay in employment, the Government will launch a new Work Incentive Transport Subsidy (WITS) Scheme to replace TSS. Unlike TSS, the WITS Scheme is territory-wide and the payment of allowance is not limited to 12 months. Self-employed persons and part-timers will also benefit. We expect the WITS Scheme to receive applications from October 2011.

The Elderly

16. CoP suggested that the Government promote active and healthy ageing, and further improve the support for the elderly based on the principles of shared responsibility and financial sustainability. Moreover, public resources should target the elderly most in need of assistance.

Promoting Active and Healthy Ageing

17. LWB and the Elderly Commission (EC) have jointly launched the Elder Academy Scheme to promote life-long learning since early 2007. By the 2010/11 school year, 109 elder academies have been set up in primary, secondary schools and tertiary institutions. An Elder Academy Development Foundation was also set up to ensure the sustainable development of the Scheme. With the support of the Government and EC, a dedicated and user-friendly portal for the elderly was launched in June 2010 to provide information on elderly services and the silver hair market.

18. To enhance the outreach and support services for hidden and singleton elders, additional recurrent funding has been provided to all District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres in the territory to recruit additional staff. Over the past two years, the elderly centres have made use of the additional resources to reach and support about 12 000 singleton or hidden elders. It is expected that 2 000 new cases will be served every year.

Subsidised Residential and Community Care Services

19. CoP recommended better planning for subsidised residential and community care services for the elderly to meet the increasing demand of an ageing population. To this end, EC completed a consultancy study in

late 2009 on residential care services for the elderly. Arising from the consultant's recommendation that community care services in Hong Kong should be enhanced, EC embarked on another consultancy study in April 2010 to examine how to strengthen community care services for the elderly through a more flexible and diverse mode of service delivery. The aim is to promote "ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up". The findings and recommendations of the study will be presented to the WS Panel.

Healthcare for elderly

20. CoP also noted the elderly's demand for primary health care services. The Government's recurrent funding for health has increased from \$31.6 billion in 2007-08 to \$39.9 billion in 2011-12. The Government has been using the increased funding to improve public healthcare services, including strengthening the support for people with mental illness and healthcare services for the elderly. In particular, the Elderly Health Care Voucher Pilot Scheme will be extended on a trial basis for another three years, and the voucher amount will increase from \$250 to \$500 per person per year. To further promote the use of preventive care services by the elderly, the Government will make available a voluntary, protocol-based elderly health check programme at affordable prices for elderly people. In addition, the Government has recently launched a pilot project in partnership with NGOs to provide free outreach primary dental care and oral health services to the elderly residing in residential care homes or attending day care centres. The Government expects that 15 NGOs will participate in the pilot project, providing more than 100 000 attendance and benefiting some 80 000 elderly over the three-year pilot period.

District-based Initiatives

21. In view of the unique situations and characteristics of individual districts, CoP recommended a district-based approach to poverty alleviation, to complement centrally-driven measures. Since then, relevant bureaux and departments have implemented various district-based initiatives to meet the specific needs of local residents.

Housing and Advisory Service Team (HAST)

22. The Hong Kong Housing Authority (HKHA) set up HAST in 2008 to assist new tenants in adapting to the new living environment, and to foster community building for public rental housing (PRH) estates in TSW. Most of

the HAST staff are recruited from the neighbourhood. Apart from assisting Estate Management Advisory Committees which carry out community building activities in partnership with NGOs, HAST provides outreaching services to PRH tenants and refers needy families to other service units for assistance as appropriate. HAST was well received by TSW residents. Having regard to the successful experience of the scheme, the HKHA has extended the services to other 22 estates in Tuen Mun, Yuen Long and Tung Chung with effect from April 2010.

Providing More Job Opportunities to Less Well-off Districts

23. Since July 2007, LD has organised 35 large-scale job fairs in less well-off districts such as TSW, Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing, Tuen Mun and the North District. Altogether, these job fairs offered more than 71 500 job vacancies and attracted some 46 000 job seekers.

24. To help residents in the North West New Territories seek employment in the construction industry, the Construction Industry Council Training Academy (CICTA) established a training centre in TSW in September 2009 to provide construction-related training courses for them. As at the end of May 2011, around 255 students had graduated from its full-time construction skill training courses and about 890 students had graduated from its basic safety training courses. CICTA has also helped around 195 of its full-time training graduates secure employment within three months after graduation.

25. As mentioned in paragraph 11 above, 110 SEs projects have been approved under the ESR Programme. About half of them are being, or will be, carried out in less well-off districts such as Kwun Tong, Sham Shui Po, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, TSW and Tung Chung.

Latest Poverty Situation

26. TFP has been closely monitoring the poverty situation of Hong Kong through a set of 24 multi-dimensional indicators recommended by CoP. Although the poverty situation deteriorated in 2009 owing to the outbreak of global financial tsunami and the ensuing economic recession, it showed noticeable improvement in 2010 because of sustained strong economic growth with improving labour market and income conditions. If household income¹ is employed as the sole criterion to define the size of the poor

¹ Reference is made to the average payment of CSSA. CoP considered it appropriate to use this benchmark for delineating whether an individual was living in poverty because it was widely used and recognised as being able to meet basic living requirements in our community.

population, and taking into account also elderly persons in poverty², preliminary statistics indicate that some 759 900 persons were living in poverty in 2010. This is 78 400 (or 9.4%) lower than the figure of 838 300 in 2009.

27. More recently, the labour market continued to show broad-based improvement, with the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate declining progressively to 3.4% in the first quarter of 2011. Despite the slight rise-back to 3.5% in March – May 2011 (provisional), it was still close to the post-1997 low of 3.3% in mid-2008. With the concerted efforts of departments and training bodies concerned, the unemployment rates of youth aged 15-19 and 20-24 likewise fell distinctly from a high of 28.5% and 13.1% respectively in mid-2009 to 16.7% and 8.6% in March – May 2011 (provisional). These favourable developments, as well as the progressive pick-up in earnings, should continue to provide support to the improving poverty situation in 2011.

Way Forward

28. TFP will continue to co-ordinate the Government's efforts in poverty alleviation and monitor the progress in implementing CoP's recommendations. It will also monitor the poverty situation in Hong Kong and explore new measures to help alleviate poverty.

Advice Sought

29. Members are invited to note this progress report.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
July 2011

² Elderly persons in poverty refer to recipients of old-age CSSA and/or those living in private temporary housing and private shared units.

**Recommendations of the Former Commission on Poverty
Progress Update (as at the end of June 2011)**

(I) Understanding Poverty

No.	Recommendation	Progress
1	Monitor and track the indicators of poverty, and where appropriate, improve them by taking into account the changing needs of the society.	Ongoing. The indicators of poverty are updated regularly and uploaded onto the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) website.
2	Draw reference to the indicators of poverty as well as other relevant data and information during policy formulation and implementation, and consider the impact of public policies on the different disadvantaged groups and communities.	Ongoing. Updated indicators of poverty are sent to all relevant bureaus and departments regularly for reference.
3	Conduct and encourage relevant institutions to conduct further poverty researches and analysis in order to facilitate a more informed public policy discourse on the subject.	In 2008-09, the Research Grant Council awarded a research project in the area of “Poverty, Inequality, and Social Disadvantages in Hong Kong” under the “Strategic Public Policy Research Grants” Scheme. This project, which lasts for 5 years, will track changes in the social and economic status of households and individuals in Hong Kong in the areas of employment, education, housing, mobility, etc.
4	Conduct evaluative studies on poverty alleviation measures.	Evaluation is conducted as necessary. For instance, LWB has commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to conduct a consultancy study on the first batch of Child Development Fund (CDF) pioneer projects. The study is scheduled for completion in mid-2012.
5	Track the impact of taxation and social benefits on household income, in particular on the lower-income group.	The Census and Statistics Department has studied the impact of taxation and social benefits on household income. The final report is available at LWB’s website.
6	Track the situation of social and earnings mobility in Hong Kong, and carry out longitudinal studies on children and other major vulnerable groups.	<p>The former Commission on Poverty commissioned the University of Hong Kong (HKU) to conduct a study on earnings mobility and intergenerational earnings mobility in Hong Kong over the period 1996-2005. The Government has commissioned HKU to update the study over the period 1998-2008 and the final report is available at LWB’s website.</p> <p>In March 2008, the Central Policy Unit (CPU) co-organised the “Conference on Social Inequality and Social Mobility in Hong Kong” with the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Centre of Asian Studies of HKU.</p> <p>CPU has commissioned HKU to carry out a study on the social and economic integration of new arrivals from the Mainland. The study is expected to be completed by the end of 2011.</p>
7	Develop indicators or conduct studies to reflect the strength of community networks.	<p>CPU conducted three studies on Tin Shui Wai (TSW), including social networks, communal living, and a comparison between TSW and Sham Shui Po (SSP). The three studies had been completed and a symposium on “Woes and Hopes in Tin Shui Wai” was organised in October 2009.</p> <p>LWB has commissioned independent consultants to conduct an evaluation study on the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund. The study commenced in October 2010 and is expected to be completed in early 2012.</p>
8	Facilitate the collection of data and statistics 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.	<p>The Food and Health Bureau (FHB) is spearheading the development of a territory-wide patient-oriented eHealth Record (eHR) sharing system. An eHR Office has been set up for this purpose. Stakeholders, including the private healthcare and information technology sectors, are engaged in the initiative.</p> <p>The Hospital Authority (HA) launched the Public Private Interface - Electronic Patient Record Sharing Pilot Project in 2006 to allow participating private healthcare providers, with patients’ consent, to view their patients’ health record kept in HA. In early November 2010, FHB extended the pilot to over 230 homes for the aged and day care centres covering 33 non-governmental organisations (NGOs) undertaking healthcare related services.</p> <p>Regular international studies on education performance of Hong Kong students will continue to be conducted by the Education Bureau (EDB) to cover, inter alia, correlation between Hong Kong students’ social economic status and their achievements.</p>

(II) The Unemployed and the Working Poor

No.	Recommendation	Progress
9	Review the provision of training, retraining, skills upgrading and life-long learning holistically to ensure that they are market-oriented and have taken into account the needs of the unemployed and the working poor.	The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) completed a strategic review on the future directions to enhance and upgrade its training and retraining services, and briefed the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Manpower in April 2009. ERB has been implementing the recommendations in phases. ERB expects to have implemented all the recommendations by 2011-12.
10	Further strengthen training and retraining efforts, including making use of the levies collected from the employers of foreign domestic helpers when the resources could be used.	<p>ERB has been using the levy to support its operation and services. In 2011-12, ERB plans to offer 130 000 training places and has earmarked resources for providing an additional 30 000 places.</p> <p>ERB will continue to focus on providing training which leads to recognised qualifications, including both full-time placement-tied courses and part-time courses. ERB will step up the promotion of its courses with a view to encouraging more eligible persons to engage in training and continuous skills upgrading.</p>
11	Adopt an integrated approach in the delivery of training and employment assistance in order to make the best use of the resources available and provide more targeted assistance to the “difficult-to-employ”.	To streamline, integrate and enhance the existing employment and training/retraining services of the Labour Department (LD), the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and ERB, a pioneer one-stop employment and training centre will be set up in TSW in late 2011. The centre will assess the job-seekers’ employment needs with a view to providing them with targeted services and assistance.
12	Review holistically how to achieve the target of “one-stop shop” 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	Promote economic development, with particular attention to sectors which provide job opportunities for low-skilled workers.	<p><u>Major Infrastructure Projects</u></p> <p>The 10 Major Infrastructure Projects introduced in the Policy Address 2007 will create, from commissioning to a mature stage, some 250 000 additional jobs. So far, the works of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, the Kai Tak Development Plan Stage 1 and the cruise terminal at Kai Tak have commenced.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p data-bbox="898 208 1273 237"><u>Encouraging local employment</u></p> <p data-bbox="898 271 1453 427">Staff of the Housing Department's Housing Advisory and Service Team (HAST) in TSW as well as other districts are mainly recruited from the neighbourhood. See also item (48) below.</p> <p data-bbox="898 461 1453 524"><u>Encouraging the employment of persons with disabilities</u></p> <p data-bbox="898 557 1453 748">LWB, together with the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, have conducted visits to solicit the support of different sectors, including the business sector, the 18 District Councils (DCs) and NGOs in promoting the employment of persons with disabilities.</p>
14	Support the development of social enterprises (SEs) to assist those who are "difficult-to-employ" to integrate into the job market and capture job opportunities.	<p data-bbox="898 784 1453 1227">The Home Affairs Department (HAD)'s Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership (ESR) Programme provides seed grants to eligible non-profit-making organizations to set up SEs. The ESR Programme seeks to promote sustainable poverty prevention and alleviation efforts at the district level that help enhance the skills and capacities of the underprivileged, provide opportunities for the underprivileged and promote their self-reliance. So far, about 110 SE projects have been approved under the ESR Programme, and these projects are expected to create some 1 800 job opportunities.</p> <p data-bbox="898 1261 1453 1518">A pilot scheme to facilitate SEs in bidding government cleansing contracts was introduced in early 2008. In the second phase of the scheme in 2009, 33 cleansing and gardening contracts were awarded to SEs, with a total contract value amounting to some \$11 million. The third phase of the scheme is being implemented.</p> <p data-bbox="898 1552 1453 1709">In 2010, the Social Enterprise Advisory Committee, which advises the Government on the development of SEs, was set up. A Social Enterprise Summit 2010 was also held in November.</p>
15	Strengthen employment support at the district level, 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.	<p data-bbox="898 1742 1453 1899">Of the 110 SEs projects funded by the ESR Programme (see item (14) above), about half are being carried out in less well-off districts such as TSW, SSP, Tuen Mun (TM), Yuen Long (YL), Tung Chung (TC) and Kwun Tong.</p> <p data-bbox="898 1933 1453 2060">LD has provided, on a pilot basis, 18 vacancy search terminals to NGOs operating placement services for residents in remote districts including TC, Tseung Kwan O, Kwai Tsing and</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>Southern District.</p> <p>Since July 2007, LD has organised 975 job fairs in various districts. In 2011-12, LD will continue to organise job fairs in various locations having regard to the employment situation in individual districts.</p>
16	<p>Give more attention to social and demographic considerations such as population, employment, supporting facilities and other people-based issues during the planning process.</p>	<p>In preparing the land use plan for a new town/new development area, the Planning Department will take into consideration socio-economic needs, infrastructure provision, environmental impact and urban design.</p>
17	<p>Monitor and review the implementation of the pilot Transport Support Scheme (TSS), and consider the appropriate form of incentives to encourage work.</p>	<p>The eligibility criteria of TSS have been relaxed, and the duration of the subsidy period extended, since July 2008. To relieve the burden of transport expenses on low-income earners and encourage them to stay in employment, the Government will launch a territory-wide Work Incentive Transport Subsidy (WITS) Scheme in October 2011 to replace TSS.</p>
18	<p>Consider how to provide suitable support to the able-bodied unemployed and the working poor 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.</p>	<p>Apart from setting up a one-stop employment and training centre in TSW (see item (11) above) and introducing TSS and WITS Scheme to encourage work (see item (17) above), the Government has also been implementing various employment assistance programmes under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme to help able-bodied CSSA recipients springboard to employment and achieve self-reliance.</p>

(III) Children and Youth

No.	Recommendation	Progress
19	<p>Adopt a holistic and family perspective in policies and measures in assisting children and youth, with particular emphasis on early identification and intervention, evidence-based policy making and intersectoral collaboration.</p>	<p>The Family Council was established in December 2007 to provide a high-level platform for discussion of major issues from the family perspective. It also considers the strategic directions and priorities in formulating family-related policies.</p>
20	<p>Implement the Child Development Fund (CDF) and try out an asset-based model (including a targeted savings element and a mentoring scheme) which encourages longer-term personal development of children from a disadvantaged background.</p>	<p>The \$300 million CDF was established in April 2008. To date, two batches of 22 projects have been rolled out, benefiting 2 270 children aged between 10 and 16. Two more batches of projects will be rolled out in 2011-12, benefiting a total of 5 000 children.</p>
21	<p>Further develop the CDF into a longer-term model to promote child development in Hong</p>	<p>LWB has commissioned a longitudinal study to evaluate the first batch of CDF pioneer</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
	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.	projects, and will consider the way forward for CDF having regard to the consultant's recommendations and practical experience. The study is scheduled for completion in mid-2012.
22	Improve the impact assessment of existing efforts on the development of children from a disadvantaged background.	See item (21) above.
23	Make appropriate use of schools as a platform 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.	<p>EDB has facilitated the opening up of school premises such as schools in YL and TC for educational purpose. EDB will continue to encourage schools, particularly those located in districts lacking community facilities for educational purpose, to open up the school premises and share their facilities with the community.</p> <p>School social workers will identify and help students with academic, social or emotional problems maximise their educational opportunities and develop their potentials.</p>
24	The work of the Family Commission, if set up, should take into account the needs of children and families from a disadvantaged background.	The Family Council was set up in December 2007 to discuss major issues from the family perspective, and consider the strategic directions and priorities in formulating family-related policies.
25	Extend the Comprehensive Child Development Service (CCDS) to all districts in phases and strengthen follow-up social services support to children and families at risk.	Currently, CCDS covers around half of the population in Hong Kong. We will extend it to all 18 districts in phases from 2011-12 onwards.
26	Strengthen parent education, with particular focus on the needs of the disadvantaged and hard-to-reach families	Ongoing. Apart from various parent education programmes provided/supported by EDB and SWD, training and guidance are also provided to the parents/guardians of children participating in CDF projects so that they can help their children draw up personal development plans.
27	Ensure the education system 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.	<p>The Pre-primary Education Voucher Scheme provides fee subsidy for parents of children attending eligible 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.</p> <p>A new cash subsidy scheme for Internet access charges was implemented in the 2010/11 school year to enable needy students to access the Internet for learning at home.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>The Student Financial Assistance Agency would implement a series of measures to enhance student financial assistance provided to needy students from the 2011/12 school year, including relaxing the means test mechanism and increasing the grants provided to needy students.</p> <p>In tandem with the increase in flat rate grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme, corresponding adjustments to the flat-rate grant for school-related expenses under CSSA Scheme will also be made.</p>
28	<p>Promote school-based and community-based after-school programmes for primary and secondary students from disadvantaged families, through promoting intersectoral collaboration among schools and non-governmental/local community organizations.</p>	<p>Ongoing. EDB will continue to implement the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes which provides funding support for schools and NGOs to organise suitable programmes for disadvantaged students. The annual provision has been increased to \$175 million starting from 2010-11.</p> <p>EDB has earmarked \$110 million to launch the After-school Learning Support Partnership Pilot Scheme in the 2011/12 school year. This scheme will provide after-school homework guidance for disadvantaged primary school students.</p>
29	<p>Strengthen efforts to tackle the problem of non-engaged youths (NEYs) and take into account the assessment conducted by the Task Force on Continuing Development and Employment-related Training for Youth.</p>	<p>ERB has launched a pilot Youth Training Programme (YTP) in collaboration with the Vocational Training Council since the third quarter of 2008-09 to provide basic vocational and skills training for NEYs aged between 15 and 20 and help them better understand their career preferences. Job placement support services for six to nine months would be provided upon completion of the programme. Since the latter half of 2009-10, ERB has invited other training bodies to take part in YTP in order to widen the range of courses. Based on the experience from the pilot, ERB has devised a refined model, which comprises more preparatory and guidance activities to help NEYs land on jobs or pursue further studies. There are at present 49 courses under YTP.</p>
30	<p>Provide a more intensified form of assistance to youths 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>	<p>Since 2006, SWD has been running a Special Training and Enhancement Programme (My STEP) to help long-term able-bodied unemployed CSSA recipients aged between 15 and 29 rejoin the workforce or return to mainstream schooling.</p>

(IV) The Elderly

No.	Recommendation	Progress
31	<p>Promote active and healthy ageing as an integral part of the elderly policy to enhance their quality of life and to enable the elderly to live with dignity.</p>	<p><u>Promoting active ageing</u></p> <p>LWB and the Elderly Commission (EC) have jointly launched the “Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project” (NAAP) since early 2008 to promote active ageing. A total of 75 district projects contributing to this initiative have been completed.</p> <p><u>Improving the home environment for the elderly</u></p> <p>SWD launched the Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly in June 2008 to help elders lacking family support and financial means to improve their home environment. As at the end of March 2011, some 33 000 applications had been received, and works for about 23 000 of them had been completed</p> <p><u>Promoting life-long learning for elders</u></p> <p>LWB and the EC have jointly launched the Elder Academy Scheme since early 2007. In the 2010/11 school year, a total of 109 elder academies are operating in primary, secondary schools and tertiary institutions.</p> <p>An Elder Academy Development Foundation was set up to ensure the sustainable development of the scheme.</p> <p><u>Setting up a dedicated portal for the elderly</u></p> <p>A dedicated and user-friendly portal for the elderly was launched in June 2010 to provide information on elderly services and the silver hair market.</p>
32	<p>Further improve our support systems for the elderly based on shared responsibility and financial sustainability, and consider more vigorous targeting in using public resources to take care of the elderly most in need of assistance.</p>	<p><u>Addressing the long-term care needs of elders</u></p> <p>EC commissioned the HKU to conduct a consultancy study on residential care services in 2009. The consultant recommended, among other things, further development of community care services in order to promote ageing in place. EC therefore embarked on another study in 2010 to examine how to strengthen community care services through a more flexible and diverse mode of service delivery and financing. The findings and recommendations of the study will be presented to the LegCo Panel on Welfare Services (WS Panel).</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p><u>Strengthening housing support for families with elderly persons</u></p> <p>Under the new Harmonious Families Priority Scheme (HFPS), families may opt to live in one flat or two nearby flats in their chosen district(s), subject to flat availability. This helps foster harmonious familial relations and encourage families to support their elderly members. As at the end of May 2011, about 8 400 families had benefited from the HFPS.</p> <p>The eligibility criteria for elderly families under the Rent Assistance Scheme have been relaxed since August 2007. As at 31 May 2011, 12 100 PRH households were receiving rent assistance provided by the Housing Authority. About half of them are elderly households and they have been granted a rent reduction of 50%.</p>
33	Enhance understanding of the problem of the elderly in poverty, 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.	See item (8) above.
34	Strengthen efforts to reach out and identify “hidden” and singleton elders, 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.	<p>Since January 2008, additional recurrent funding has been provided to all District Elderly Community Centres (DECCs) and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres (NECs) in the territory to recruit additional staff to enhance the outreach services provided for hidden and singleton elders.</p> <p>Since June 2008, further recurrent funding has been provided to all DECCs to recruit additional staff to strengthen their counselling and referral services.</p> <p>Over the past two years, the elderly centres have made use of the additional resources to reach and support about 12 000 singleton or hidden elders. It is expected that 2 000 new cases will be served every year.</p>
35	Encourage social inclusion 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 recruit more staff to mobilise volunteers, including “young-olds”, for the outreaching work. Elders are also recruited to help implement the NAAP projects mentioned in item (31) above.
36	Ensure equitable and affordable access to health care services and provide a safety net	FHB launched the second stage public consultation on healthcare reform on 6 October

No.	Recommendation	Progress
	for the poor and vulnerable by putting in place sustainable health care financing arrangements as soon as possible.	2010 to consult the public on the proposals of establishing a Health Protection Scheme (HPS). By enabling more people to use private healthcare on a sustained basis, the HPS aims to better focus the public healthcare system on its target service areas.
37	Strengthen primary healthcare 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.	<p>FHB launched a 3-year pilot scheme in January 2009 to provide five health care vouchers of \$50 each per year to senior citizens aged 70 or above to partially subsidise them in using primary care services in the private sector. Having regard to the findings of the interim review, FHB recommended extending the pilot scheme for a further period of three years starting from January 2012, and increasing the annual voucher amount from \$250 to \$500 per eligible elderly person in the extended pilot period.</p> <p>FHB launched various pilot projects through HA to improve the care for chronic disease patients, including the elderly, in the community in 2009-10.</p> <p>FHB introduced the Elderly Vaccination Subsidy Scheme in 2009-10 to provide subsidy for eligible elders aged 65 and above to receive seasonal influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations at private doctors' clinics.</p> <p>A Task Force on Primary Dental Care and Oral Health has been set up under the Working Group on Primary Care to among other things, provide advice on initiatives to promote and enhance primary dental care and oral health.</p>
38	Improve the accessibility of subsidised medical service for non-CSSA recipients, in particular the elderly, through further improving the medical fee waiver mechanism, e.g. further simplify the procedures and lengthen the period waivers of the medical fee waiver mechanism.	<p>The coverage of period waiver for the elderly has been extended to include services of the General Out-Patient Clinics without pre-scheduled appointment starting from March 2008.</p> <p>HA and SWD have further enhanced the medical fee waiver mechanism in February 2010. Patients who meet the eligibility criteria may be granted period waivers of up to 12 months.</p>
39	Provide greater relief on medical fees for needy elders, whether they are on CSSA or not.	The question would be considered in the context of health care reform and financing. Also see item (36) above.
40	Facilitate elderly applicants to apply for public rental housing (PRH), and assist those living in private old buildings who are owner-occupiers but with low income.	<p><u>Advance allocation of PRH flats to families with elderly members</u></p> <p>With effect from January 2009, priority is given to processing applications from families</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>with elderly members under the HFPS. See also item (32) above.</p> <p><u>Elderly property owner-occupiers</u></p> <p>To assist elderly property owner-occupiers living in private dilapidated buildings, the Housing Authority has introduced, since 2004, arrangements to grant them licences to stay in PRH under the Compassionate Rehousing Scheme. The licences will be turned into normal tenancies upon the licencees' fulfilment of the eligibility criteria for the General Waiting List. To date, 107 applicants have been housed successfully and 54 of them have had their licences converted to normal PRH tenancies.</p>
41	<p>Provide better long-term planning 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>It is the Government's policy to promote "ageing in place as the core, institutional care as back-up". To this end, we have been increasing the provision of subsidised community and residential care services for the elderly and enhancing the services.</p> <p>On community care services, an additional 1 500 places for Enhanced Home and Community Care Services and 210 day care places will be provided in 2011-12.</p> <p>On residential care services, there will be about 2 300 additional subsidised places by 2014-15. Seven new contract residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) will commence operation in the same period. The Government has also earmarked sites in another ten development projects for the construction of new contract RCHEs.</p> <p>At the same time, EC has studied these services to identify room for improvement. The findings and recommendations of EC's current study on community care services will be presented to the LegCo WS Panel.</p> <p>Meanwhile, LWB will continue to enhance the provision of subsidised elderly services.</p>
42	<p>Increase the choices of quality residential care places and community care services through a combination of measures –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • consider whether the subsidised residential care service should be means-tested; • examine means to enable a greater extent 	<p>These are issues examined/ being examined by EC in its studies on residential and community care services for the elderly. See also item (32) above.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
	<p>of co-payment of fees among the individuals, their families and the Government, including a means-tested voucher system and assistance to the needy in selecting different services; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> encourage a more robust market comprising quality self-financing and private residential care homes for the elderly providing different services, as well as multiple sources of financing from the individuals and their families. 	
43	Encourage further SE development in the provision of elderly services.	<p>Out of the 110 SE projects approved under the ESR Programme (see item (14) above), 10 are targeted at providing services to the elderly, such as health care services, cleaning and minor repair services, and the sale of products for use by the elderly.</p> <p>In connection with the Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly launched in June 2008 (see item (31) above), SWD has provided a list of SEs and community organisations to the delivery agencies of that scheme and encouraged the delivery agencies to engage them as service providers.</p> <p>EC has studied the long term care services for the elderly to identify room for improvement. The findings and recommendations of EC's current study on community care services will be presented to the LegCo WS Panel.</p>
44	Consider a more relaxed asset limit for elderly CSSA recipients 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 adjusted upwards by 2.8% with effect from 1 February 2011. At present, the asset limit for elders is higher than that for able-bodied adults.
45	Consider how to provide financial security 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	Enhance understanding of characteristics and needs of districts, and take them into account in formulating and implementing policies at	Ongoing. Updated indicators of poverty, including the community-based indicators, are sent to all relevant bureaus and departments

No.	Recommendation	Progress
	the district level.	regularly for reference. They are also available at LWB's website.
47	Provide more opportunities to less well-off districts, including physical infrastructure (community facilities), economic and employment opportunities, and enhanced measures.	<p><u>Medical services</u></p> <p>HA has allocated additional provision to enhance hospital services in the New Territories West cluster in 2011-12. It also launched the "TSW Primary Care Partnership Project" in 2008 to purchase primary care services for TSW residents.</p> <p><u>Community facilities</u></p> <p>Over the past few years, more leisure, cultural and community hall facilities have been provided in less well-off districts. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ in TC, the Indoor Recreation Centre cum Library and Community Hall, and the Swimming Pool Complex opened in 2010 and 2011 respectively; ➤ in TSW, the Sports Centre cum the Public Library will open in 2011; the Sports Centre and Community Hall in Area 101 is expected to be completed in mid-2012; and ➤ in SSP, the conversion works of the secondary pool of Lai Chi Kok Park Swimming Pool into an indoor heated pool is expected to be completed in mid-2012. <p>More new facilities will be completed in the coming years.</p> <p><u>Employment and training opportunities</u></p> <p>The Housing Authority has let accommodation in a multi-storey car park building in Tin Heng Estate in TSW North to the Hong Kong Jockey Club for the setting up of a Telebet Centre cum Volunteers and Training Centre. At present some 2 000 workers are employed.</p> <p>As mentioned in item (11) above, a pioneer one-stop employment and training centre will be set up in TSW in late 2011 to streamline, integrate and enhance existing services of LD, SWD and ERB in this regard.</p> <p>The Construction Industry Council Training Academy (CICTA) also established a training centre in TSW in September 2009. The centre can provide about 700 full-time training places</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>for new entrants to various trades including steel-fixing, plumbing and painting. Basic safety training courses are also provided. Up to the end of May 2011, around 255 students had graduated from its full-time training courses and about 890 students had graduated from its basic safety training courses. CICTA has helped about 195 graduates secure employment within three months after graduation.</p> <p>As mentioned in item (14) above, some 110 SE projects have been approved under HAD's ESR Programme, about half of which are being or will be implemented in less well-off districts.</p>
48	<p>Encourage district-based initiatives 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>Recent examples of district-based initiatives to help the needy and the disadvantaged include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Since 2010, HAST services have been extended to PRH estates in TM, YL, TSW and TC. HAST provided orientation briefings to new tenants and advisory/counselling services to all tenants. HAST also organised community building activities to foster neighbourliness and strengthen tenants' sense of belonging. ➤ short-term food assistance service projects run by NGOs commissioned by SWD to help individuals and families in need. As at the end of April 2011, more than 50 700 people had benefited from the projects. ➤ the District-based Scheme on Carer Training provides seed money for DECCs and NECs to organise training programmes for carers of elders and provide carer services in collaboration with local organisations. About 7 800 carers have been trained so far and another 300 carers are undergoing training. ➤ The Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP) was launched by SWD to provide needy families with more flexible forms of day care services for children aged under six. At the same time, it fosters mutual help and care in the community. The NSCCP will be regularised and extended to all 18 districts within 2011.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
49	Put in place suitable institutional structure 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 new internal mechanism for problem resolution has been put in place to deal with district problems requiring inter-departmental collaboration.
50	Strengthen the role of District Officers (DOs) to enhance cross-sector collaboration to address district needs; this should be complemented by central policy support.	<p>DOs have been provided with additional staffing resources 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 greater flexibility since the new term of 2008-11 to use not more than 10% of its funds for employing contract staff to help launch community participation activities. So far, more than 200 staff has been employed by the 18 DCs. DCs will also engage local organisations in launching the activities.</p>
51	Give DOs a clearer mandate 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 community involvement programmes, both DOs and DCs will be in a better position to cater for district needs, including the needs of the under-privileged.
52	Encourage districts to strengthen their capacities through taking the essential steps in analysing and identifying genuine and unmet local needs, mapping out clear and longer-term directions, engaging stakeholders and encouraging cross-sector collaboration, and evaluating effectiveness of poverty alleviation and prevention programmes.	Ongoing. HAD will, through the DC committees and the District Management Committees, continue to work closely with district organisations to implement community projects, 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 district-based platforms or mechanisms to identify district needs and responses, comprising Government officials, NGOs and district leaders.	There are established inter-departmental platforms in the districts to engage stakeholders in tackling poverty. HAD will continue to make use of the established platforms and networks to implement programmes which cater for the needs of the districts.
