

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

Purpose

The Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services was last briefed on the work of the Task Force on Poverty (TFP) on 11 July 2011. This paper reports the latest progress.

Background

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

Work Progress of the TFP

3. TFP has duly followed up all of CoP's 53 recommendations. A summary of their latest position is at **Annex**. In the past five years, notable progress has been made. The ensuing sections highlight the key developments in the past year.

Supporting the unemployed and the working poor

Promoting Employment Opportunities

4. For the unemployed and working poor, the key to poverty alleviation lies in sustaining and promoting economic growth to create more job opportunities. 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. Over the past five years, the capital works expenditure rose

substantially from \$20.5 billion in 2007-08 to \$58.4 billion in 2011-12. In 2012-13, the capital works expenditure is expected to increase to \$62.3 billion, providing 66 700 job opportunities.

5. The development of social enterprises (SEs) can help enable the socially disadvantaged to be self-reliant through employment. Since 2006, the Home Affairs Department has been implementing the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership (ESR) Programme to provide seed grants to eligible non-profit-making organisations for the establishment of SEs. So far, 128 new SE projects have been approved under the ESR Programme, creating 2 100 job opportunities.

Employment, Training and Retraining Support

6. Various departments and training bodies have been offering specialised programmes to help the non-engaged youth secure employment. For example, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has rolled out the Special Training and Enhancement Programme (My STEP) to help Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) recipients aged 15 to 29 rejoin the workforce or return to mainstream schooling. Structured motivational and disciplinary training, personalised career counselling and other supportive services are provided. Over 50% of the programme participants have secured full-time employment or returned to mainstream schooling. To enhance the effectiveness of employment assistance services and achieve synergy, SWD will integrate My STEP with other employment assistance services under the CSSA Scheme in January 2013.

7. Adopting an integrated approach for the delivery of training and employment assistance, the Labour Department (LD) set up a pioneer Employment in One-stop service centre in Tin Shui Wai in December 2011. The service centre aims to streamline, integrate and enhance the existing employment and training/retraining services provided by LD, SWD and the Employees Retraining Board (ERB). In addition to providing ordinary employment support services, the service centre provides job-seekers who require more intensive employment support with highly customised employment assistance, such as in-depth psychological counselling by social workers and case management services. The ERB part of the Employment in One-stop service centre also offers a wide range of services, including personalised training consultancy service and enrolment service for ERB courses offered in the vicinity.

8. To help employed persons from low-income households meet the cost of travelling to and from work and encourage them to stay in employment, the Government launched the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy (WITS) Scheme in October 2011. With effect from March 2012, the income and asset limits of the means test under the WITS Scheme have been relaxed. Up to 6 July 2012, LD had received 49 573 applications involving 54 298 applicants. Discounting applicants who had submitted second-round applications, the net number of applicants was 40 521. Total subsidy payment of \$138 million has been granted. We shall carry out a mid-term review by the end of 2012 to take account of the operational experience in the first year.

Supporting children and youth

9. CoP's recommendations on children and youth seek to promote child development and reduce inter-generational poverty. Bureaux and departments have been paying special attention to the needs of children and youth from a disadvantaged background, providing them with the support necessary for effective learning and whole-person development.

Comprehensive Child Development Service (CCDS)

10. The Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB), Education Bureau, Department of Health, Hospital Authority and SWD jointly launched the CCDS in 2005 on a trial basis. 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 half of the target population in Hong Kong. The service will be extended to all 18 districts within 2012-13.

Child Development Fund (CDF)

11. The Government set up the \$300 million CDF in April 2008. With funding from CDF and the assistance of volunteer mentors, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) organise specially designed projects for children from a disadvantaged background, teaching them how to formulate personal development plans and implement them using their own savings and matching donations. CDF is well received by the community. The third batch of 18 projects commenced in early 2012. Together with the first two batches, more than 4 400 children have benefited from CDF. A consultant has been conducting a longitudinal study of the first batch CDF

projects and it is expected to be completed in 2012. LWB will review and consider the long-term model of CDF taking into account the experience of the three batches of projects and the study findings.

Enhancing Support to Students from a Disadvantaged Background

12. The Government has been encouraging schools, particularly those located in Yuen Long and other districts lacking community facilities, to open up their premises for after-school activities. Funding has been provided through the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programmes for schools and NGOs to organise such activities for the disadvantaged students. The annual provision had increased from \$75 million in the 2006-07 financial year to \$204 million in the 2011-12 financial year.

Supporting the elderly

13. 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.

Promoting Active and Healthy Ageing

14. LWB and the Elderly Commission (EC) have jointly launched the Elder Academy Scheme to promote life-long learning since early 2007. By the 2011/12 school year, 113 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.

Subsidised Residential and Community Care Services

15. CoP recommended better planning for subsidised residential and community care services for the elderly to meet the increasing demand of an ageing population. Regarding residential care services (RCS), the Government had allocated funding in the past five years (i.e. from 2007-08 to 2011-12) to provide 3 600 additional subsidised places. From now to 2014-15, more than 1 700 subsidised places are expected to come into service. Separately, SWD has earmarked sites in 11 development projects for the construction of new residential care homes for the elderly.

16. On community care services (CCS), the Government had allocated additional funding from 2007-08 to 2011-12 to provide 2 000 additional

places, including 1 500 home care places and 500 day care places. The Administration will provide an additional 185 day care places for the elderly in the three years starting from 2012-13, and will increase the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services places by 500 in the current financial year. The Government will also implement a four-year pilot scheme on CCS voucher for the elderly in 2013-14 to provide subsidy directly to eligible elders, enabling them to choose the services which best suit their needs.

Healthcare for elderly

17. The Government has been injecting more resources 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, introduced in January 2009, has been extended for another three years starting from January 2012, with the annual voucher amount increased from \$250 to \$500 per eligible elder.

District-based initiatives

18. 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. This is particularly important for the less well-off districts, such as Sham Shui Po, Wong Tai Sin, Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing, Tuen Mun, Yuen Long, Tin Shui Wai and North districts.

19. Since July 2007, LD has organised 40 large-scale job fairs in the less well-off districts. Five of them were organised between July 2011 and June 2012, offering 13 600 vacancies and attracting some 10 200 visitors.

20. 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 Tin Shui Wai in September 2009 to provide construction-related training courses for them. As at the end of May 2012, around 500 students had graduated from its full-time construction skill training courses and about 1 700 students had graduated from its basic safety training courses. CICTA has also helped 390 of its full-time training graduates secure employment within three months after graduation.

21. As mentioned in paragraph 5 above, 128 SEs projects have been approved under the ESR Programme. About half of them are being, or will be, carried out in the less well-off districts.

Understanding Poverty

22. TFP has been assuming a major role in understanding poverty through various data analyses and studies, including those on the general economic situation and income disparity.

23. With the economy attaining another year of above-trend growth in 2011, coupled with the implementation of statutory minimum wage in May 2011, the income and poverty situations in 2011 improved over the past year. Despite a moderation in economic growth on entering 2012, the labour market held firm and remained in a state of full employment, with the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate staying low at 3.2% in March – May 2012. The number of CSSA cases has also continued to exhibit a stable downward trend, declining to 274 464 at end-May 2012.

24. Regarding income disparity, the Gini Coefficient¹ (GC) for Hong Kong, rose slightly from 0.533 in 2006 to 0.537 in 2011. The GC has risen primarily because demographic changes have worked to increase household income disparity. As our population ages, there are more economically inactive households. Our average household size has also become smaller. These are the causes for the rise in GC. Meanwhile, taxation and social benefits have played an important role in income redistribution. If compiled based on post-tax post-social transfer household income, the GC for Hong Kong has remained stable, at 0.475 both in 2006 and 2011.

25. However, Hong Kong's on-going transformation towards a knowledge-based economy inevitably results in rising income disparity. To tackle this, the Government will continue to improve the business environment and promote economic growth to create job opportunities, invest in education, training and retraining to enhance workers' competitiveness and upward mobility, as well as consider suitable taxation and social benefits. Many of these measures have formed part of our poverty alleviation work for different disadvantaged groups.

Conclusion

26. In the past five years, TFP has monitored Hong Kong's poverty

¹ GC is a summary statistic commonly used to analyse income disparity. The value of GC ranges from 0 to 1, and a larger GC represents greater income disparity.

situation, as well as served as a platform for bureaux and departments to exchange views on poverty alleviation and align their efforts in helping the disadvantaged groups. TFP's work has built a solid foundation for the new Administration to take forward its poverty alleviation agenda.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
July 2012

**Recommendations of the Former Commission on Poverty
Progress Update (as at June 2012)**

(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 bureaux 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.	<p>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” (SPPRG) Scheme to the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology (HKUST). This project, which lasts for five 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. The first stage household survey has been completed and the second stage will be conducted in 2013.</p> <p>Another research project proposed by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, entitled “Trends and Implications of Poverty and Social Disadvantages in Hong Kong: A Multi-disciplinary and Longitudinal Study”, was awarded SPPRG in January 2012. This longitudinal study will conduct two rounds of sampling survey in 2013 and 2015 respectively to collect data on the measurement of poverty, deprivation and social exclusion in Hong Kong. The study is expected to be completed in 2017.</p>
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 longitudinal study on the first batch of Child Development Fund (CDF) pioneer projects. The study is expected to be completed in 2012.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
5	Track the impact of taxation and social benefits on household income, in particular on the lower-income group.	<p>Based on the data collected in 2008, the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) has conducted a Study on Impact of Taxation and Social Benefits on Household Income. The final report is available at LWB's website.</p> <p>On 18 June 2012, C&SD released its Thematic Report on Household Income Distribution in Hong Kong. It presented an updated set of Gini Coefficients, compiled using data collected in the 2011 Population Census, and discussed the impact of taxation and social benefits on household income. The thematic report is available at C&SD's website.</p>
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 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 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 in 2012.</p> <p>CPU and HKUST co-organised an international conference on "Social Inequality and Mobility in Chinese Societies" in December 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 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	The Food and Health Bureau (FHB) is spearheading the development of a territory-wide patient-oriented eHealth Record (eHR) Sharing System.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
	long-term development of a territory-wide health record infrastructure.	<p>The eHR Office conducted a two-month public consultation on the Legal, Privacy and Security Framework for eHR Sharing from December 2011 to February 2012. The eHR Office aims at enacting the legislation for eHR sharing in 2013-14 and implementing the eHR Sharing System by the end of 2014.</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) has completed a strategic review of its future directions with a view to enhancing and upgrading its training and retraining services, and briefed the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Manpower in April 2009. ERB has since fully implemented the recommendations. It will continue to keep under review its service provision and ensure that it is market-driven and takes into account the needs of the unemployed.
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 2012-13, ERB plans to offer 130 000 training places in about 900 courses. It has also reserved adequate resources to provide an additional 30 000 training places should the need arise.</p> <p>ERB will continue its work in providing training which leads to recognised qualifications, including both full-time placement-tied courses and part-time skills upgrading 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, LD set up a pioneer "Employment in One-stop" service centre in TSW in December 2011. The centre provides case management and employment support services, rendered by registered social workers, to those job-seekers with special employment difficulties, so as to help them secure employment effectively.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
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.	LD will closely monitor the operation of “Employment in One-stop” service centre and review its effectiveness after two years.
13	Promote economic development with particular attention to sectors which provide job opportunities for low-skilled workers.	<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 Tuen Mun – Chek Lap Kok Link, the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link, South Island Line (East), the Kai Tak Development First Stage works including the Cruise Terminal, Public Rental Housing and the District Cooling System have commenced.</p> <p>The expansion projects of the Hong Kong Disneyland and the Ocean Park were in good progress. The first berth of the new cruise terminal at Kai Tak is expected to commence operation in mid-2013. The LegCo Finance Committee approved \$150 million in April 2012 for the Mega Events Fund to continue supporting various mega arts, cultural, sports and entertainment events.</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>The Home Affairs Department (HAD)’s Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership (ESR) Programme provides seed grants to eligible non-profit-making organisations 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 128 SE projects have been approved under the ESR Programme, and these projects are expected to create over 2 100 job opportunities.</p> <p>A pilot scheme to facilitate SEs in bidding government contracts was introduced in early 2008. In the third phase of the scheme in 2011, 42 cleansing and gardening contracts were made available for priority bidding by SEs, with a total contract value amounting to some \$22 million. HAB and HAD are conducting a review on the scheme.</p> <p>The Social Enterprise Advisory Committee has been set up to advise the Government on the development of SEs.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
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>Of the 128 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, Yuen Long (YL), Tung Chung (TC) and Kwun Tong.</p> <p>LD has provided, on a pilot basis, 18 vacancy search terminals (VST) to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) operating placement services for residents in remote districts including TC, Tseung Kwan O, Kwai Tsing and Southern District. In view of the positive responses from participating NGOs to the pilot scheme, LD has extended the VST scheme to Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong districts in the second quarter of 2012.</p> <p>Between July 2007 and May 2012, LD has organised 1 386 job fairs in various districts. In 2012-13, LD will continue to organise job fairs in various locations having regard to the employment situation in individual districts.</p>
16	Give more attention to social and demographic considerations such as population, employment, supporting facilities and other people-based issues during the planning process.	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.
17	Monitor and review the implementation of the pilot Transport Support Scheme (TSS), and consider the appropriate form of incentives to encourage work.	The eligibility criteria of TSS was relaxed, and the duration of the subsidy period extended, in July 2008. Subsequently, to relieve the burden of transport expenses on low-income earners and encourage them to stay in employment, the Government launched a territory-wide Work Incentive Transport Subsidy (WITS) Scheme in October 2011 to replace TSS. The income and asset limits of the means test under the WITS Scheme have been relaxed through updating with effect from March 2012.
18	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.	Apart from setting up the “Employment in One-stop” service 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. SWD will, starting from January 2013, integrate and improve these programmes with a view to enhancing effectiveness and achieving synergy.

(III) Children and Youth

No.	Recommendation	Progress
19	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.	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.
20	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.	The \$300 million CDF was established in April 2008. To date, three batches of 40 projects have been rolled out, benefiting more than 4 400 children aged between 10 and 16. Taking into account the results and recommendations of the longitudinal study on the first batch pioneer projects, which is expected to be completed in 2012, and having regard to the practical experience in implementing the projects, LWB will consider the long-term model of CDF for promoting child development in Hong Kong.
21	Further develop the CDF into a longer-term model 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 commissioned a longitudinal study to evaluate the first batch of CDF pioneer projects, and will consider the way forward for CDF having regard to the consultant's recommendations and practical experience. The study is expected to be completed in 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.	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. School social workers will identify and help students with academic, social or emotional problems maximise their educational opportunities and develop their potentials.
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. The Administration will extend it to all 18 districts in 2012-13.
26	Strengthen parent education, with particular	Ongoing. Apart from various parent education

No.	Recommendation	Progress
	focus on the needs of the disadvantaged and hard-to-reach families	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 (PEVS) 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 (KCFRS). Starting from the 2011/12 school year, a number of enhancement measures for KCFRS has been implemented so as to provide more assistance to needy families. In the 2012/13 school year, the fee remission ceilings for KCFRS (including the voucher subsidy) for half-day and whole-day kindergartens will be further adjusted in accordance with the weighted average fees of the non-profit-making kindergartens eligible for PEVS.</p> <p>A new cash subsidy scheme for Internet access charges has been implemented from the 2010/11 school year to enable needy students receiving full-time education at primary and secondary levels to access the Internet for learning at home.</p> <p>Starting from the 2011/12 school year, the income ceiling for full level of assistance under the means test mechanism of the Student Financial Assistance Agency applicable to all levels of study has been relaxed and the tiers of assistance for eligible post-secondary students have been adjusted so that more needy students can receive full or a higher amount of assistance under various financial assistance schemes.</p> <p>The amount of academic expenses grant to eligible post-secondary students and the flat-rate grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme provided to eligible primary and secondary students have also been increased starting from the 2011/12 school year.</p> <p>The Examination Fee Remission Scheme is extended to school candidates sitting for the Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination or the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination who are receiving either full or half level of assistance, needy school candidates sitting for the same examination for the second time in the</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>immediate following year and eligible needy non-Chinese speaking students sitting for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (Chinese) Examination with effect from the 2011/12 school year.</p> <p>In tandem with the increase in flat rate grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme, corresponding adjustments have been made to the flat-rate grant for selected items of school-related expenses under the CSSA Scheme.</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 was increased from \$75 million to \$175 million in 2010-11, and was further increased to \$204 million in 2011-12 upon relaxation of the income threshold under the means test mechanism of the Student Financial Assistance Schemes.</p> <p>EDB rolled out the three-year After-school Learning Support Partnership Pilot Scheme in the second term of the 2011/12 school year. In this school term, 43 primary schools have participated and over 200 tutors have been engaged to provide after-school learning support to needy 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 over 50 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> <p>SWD will integrate various employment assistance services under the CSSA Scheme,</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		including My STEP, starting from January 2013.

(IV) The Elderly

No.	Recommendation	Progress
31	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><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. A new phase of the NAAP was launched in April 2012 to promote harmonious family relationship and enhance the neighbourhood support network through more than 60 district projects.</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 improve their home environment. By the end of March 2012, some 47 000 applications had been received, and works for about 34 400 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 2011/12 school year, a total of 113 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	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><u>Addressing the long-term care needs of elders</u></p> <p>The Government has accepted EC’s recommendation to test the idea of a community care service (CCS) voucher for the elderly. The Government will introduce a four-year pilot scheme on CCS voucher starting from 2013-14, under which subsidy</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>will be provided directly to elders who have been assessed to be eligible for subsidised long-term care service. The Government will finalise the details of the pilot scheme this year.</p> <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 2012, about 10 790 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 the end of May 2012, 11 678 public rental housing (PRH) households were receiving rent assistance provided by the Hong Kong 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>A total of 200 additional social worker posts have been created under these two new initiatives. The elderly centres have made use of the additional resources to reach and support over 16 000 singleton or hidden elders. As at the end of December 2011, there were about 7 000 active cases in which hidden/singleton elders were receiving counseling and referral services provided by DECCs / NECs. It is expected that 2 000 new cases will be served every year.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
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 outreach service. 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 for the poor and vulnerable by putting in place sustainable health care financing arrangements as soon as possible.	FHB is taking forward various healthcare reform initiatives based on the outcomes of the second stage public consultation on healthcare reform, including formulating detailed proposals for the implementation of the 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 three-year Elderly Health Care Voucher Pilot Scheme in January 2009 to provide five health care vouchers of \$50 each per year to eligible elders aged 70 or above to partially subsidise them in using primary care services in the private sector. The Pilot Scheme has been extended for another three years starting from January 2012, with the annual voucher amount increased from \$250 to \$500 per eligible elderly in the extended pilot period.</p> <p>FHB will continue to implement various pilot projects through the Hospital Authority (HA) to strengthen support for chronic disease patients, including the elderly, in the community.</p> <p>FHB has introduced the Elderly Vaccination Subsidy Scheme since 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. FHB launched a pilot project in collaboration with NGOs for three years starting from April 2011 to provide elderly people in residential care homes or day care centres with outreach primary dental care and oral health care services free of charge.</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	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.

No.	Recommendation	Progress
	waiver mechanism.	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.
39	Provide greater relief on medical fees for needy elders, whether they are on CSSA or not.	<p>FHB is taking forward various healthcare reform initiatives based on the outcomes of the second stage public consultation on healthcare reform, including formulating detailed proposals for the implementation of the HPS.</p> <p>FHB will in parallel work on proposals for further strengthening the public healthcare safety net.</p>
40	Facilitate elderly applicants to apply for 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 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, arrangement to grant eligible elders with licences to stay in PRH under the Compassionate Rehousing Scheme as per SWD's recommendation. The licences will be turned into normal PRH tenancies upon the licencees' fulfilment of the eligibility criteria for the General Waiting List. As at the end of May 2012, 115 applicants had been housed pursuant to the above arrangement and 54 of them had had their licences converted to normal PRH tenancies.</p>
41	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>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 CCS and residential care services (RCS) for the elderly and enhancing the services.</p> <p>On CCS, the Government had allocated funds from 2007-08 to 2011-12 to provide 2 000 additional places of CCS, including 1 500 home care places and 500 day care places. The Administration will provide an additional 185 day care places for the elderly in the three years starting from 2012-13, and will increase the Enhanced Home and Community Care Services places by 500 in the current financial year.</p> <p>At the same time, the Government has</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>accepted EC's recommendation to test the idea of a CCS voucher for the elderly. (See also item (32) above).</p> <p>On RCS, in the past five years, the Government had allocated funds to provide 3 600 additional subsidised residential care places. More than 1 700 additional subsidised places are expected to commence service from now to 2014-15. The Government has also earmarked sites in 11 development projects for the construction of new contract RCHEs.</p> <p>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 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 • 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. 	<p>The Government has accepted EC's recommendation to test the idea of a CCS voucher scheme for the elderly. (See also item (32) above).</p>
43	<p>Encourage further SE development in the provision of elderly services.</p>	<p>Out of the 128 SE projects approved under the ESR Programme (see item (14) above), 15 target 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>We expect the introduction of the CCS Voucher for elderly in 2013-14 to encourage different types of service providers, including SEs, to join the market, and will bring about a much more diverse and innovative community care sector.</p>

No.	Recommendation	Progress
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 limits have been adjusted upwards by 5.3% with effect from 1 February 2012. At present, the asset limits for elders are higher than those for able-bodied adults. The Administration will adjust the asset limits in accordance with the established mechanism.
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.	CPU is refining its studies on the retirement protection system in Hong Kong. Action includes conducting a territory-wide household survey on Hong Kong elders' retirement planning and financial situation. Initial results of the survey are expected to be available by the end of 2012 at the earliest for detailed analysis. The Administration will consider the way forward after CPU has completed its studies.

(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 the district level.	Ongoing. Updated indicators of poverty, including the community-based indicators, are sent to all relevant bureaux and departments 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>In 2012-13, HA will allocate additional funds to enhance hospital services (e.g. increase the number of beds) in the New Territories West cluster and the Kowloon East cluster. It also piloted 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 indoor swimming pool and sports centre inside the Public Library cum Indoor Recreation Centre were opened in November 2011 and February 2012 respectively and the public library will be opened in 2013; the Sports Centre and Community Hall in

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>Area 101 is expected to be completed in mid-2012; and</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ in SSP, the conversion works of the secondary pool of Lai Chi Kok Park Swimming Pool into an indoor heated pool have been completed and the pool is expected to be re-opened in July 2012. <p>More new facilities will be completed in the coming years.</p> <p><u>Employment and training opportunities</u></p> <p>The Hong Kong 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 “Employment in One-stop” service centre was set up in TSW in December 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 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 2012, around 500 students had graduated from its full-time training courses and about 1 700 students had graduated from its basic safety training courses. CICTA has helped about 390 graduates secure employment within three months after graduation.</p> <p>As mentioned in item (14) above, some 128 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	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>Recent examples of district-based initiatives to help the needy and the disadvantaged include :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ short-term food assistance service projects run by NGOs commissioned by SWD to help individuals and families in need. In December 2011, an additional \$100 million was allocated for continuation and improvement of the service. As at the end of May 2012, about 88 000 people had benefited from

No.	Recommendation	Progress
		<p>the projects.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 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. By the end of March 2012, more than 8 600 carers had been trained. ➤ The pilot Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP) was completed 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 regularised NSCCP has been implemented since October 2011 and extended to all 18 districts.
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, District Councils (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 people have 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	There are established inter-departmental platforms in the districts to engage

No.	Recommendation	Progress
	needs and responses, comprising Government officials, NGOs and district leaders.	stakeholders in tackling poverty. HAB will continue to make use of the established platforms and networks to implement programmes which cater for the needs of the districts.
