

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2862/11-12
(These minutes have been seen
with the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

Panel on Home Affairs

Minutes of meeting
held on Friday, 9 December 2011, at 8:30 am
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP
Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP
Hon Tanya CHAN

Members absent : Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, BBS, JP

Public Officers : Agenda item III
attending

Home Affairs Bureau

Ms Florence HUI Hiu-fai, JP
Under Secretary for Home Affairs

Mr CHENG Yan-chee, JP
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)

Ms Candy LAU Li-yan
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs
(Community Care Fund)

Home Affairs Department

Miss Dora FU Ha-man, JP
Assistant Director of Home Affairs (3)

Education Bureau

Ms Esther LEUNG Yuet-yin, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (6)

Development Bureau

Mr Ryan CHIU Pit-ming
Principal Assistant Secretary for Development
(Planning & Lands)³

Building Department

Mr CHEUNG Tin-cheung
Assistant Director of Buildings
(Existing Buildings 2)

Hospital Authority

Dr CHEUNG Wai-lun, JP
Director (Cluster Services)

Social Welfare Department

Ms Caran WONG Ka-wing
Assistant Director of Social Welfare
(Family & Child Welfare)

Executive Committee on the Community Care Fund

Dr LAW Chi-kwong, SBS, JP
Chairman

Agenda item IV

Home Affairs Bureau

Ms Florence HUI Hiu-fai, JP
Under Secretary for Home Affairs

Home Affairs Department

Mrs Pamela TAN, JP
Director of Home Affairs

Miss Dora FU Ha-man, JP
Assistant Director of Home Affairs (3)

Clerk in attendance : Mr Thomas WONG
Chief Council Secretary (2)2

Staff in attendance : Ms Alice LEUNG
Senior Council Secretary (2)2

Miss Jasmine TAM
Council Secretary (2)2

Miss Emma CHEUNG
Legislative Assistant (2)2

Ms Carol LAM
Clerical Assistant (2) 2

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I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

Members noted the following papers issued since the last meeting -

- (a) referrals from Legislative Council Members' meeting with Sha Tin District Council members on 2 June 2011 (LC Paper Nos. CB(2)401/11-12(01)-(03)); and
- (b) the Administration's response on burial policy relating to indigenous inhabitants (LC Paper No. CB(2)458/11-12(01)).

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[Appendices I and II to LC Paper No. CB(2)485/11-12]

2. Members agreed that the following items would be discussed at the next regular meeting on 13 January 2012 at 8:30 am -

- (a) Use of public open space; and
- (b) Governance and monitoring of and funding for National Sports Associations.

III. Community Care Fund

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)485/11-12(01) and (02)]

3. Under Secretary for Home Affairs ("USHA") briefed members on the work progress of the Community Care Fund ("CCF") which had launched 12 assistance programmes covering the education, home affairs, medical and welfare areas for various beneficiary groups. These programmes were expected to benefit more than 300 000 people/households. The CCF had also implemented a programme to provide a one-off allowance of \$6,000 to new arrivals from low-income families. Chairman of the Executive Committee on the Community Care Fund ("Chairman of ECCCF") informed members that the relevant Sub-committees under CCF were deliberating on three proposed assistance programmes, viz. enhancing after-school child care service to support low-income families with both parents employed, providing financial assistance on dental services (including dentures) for the elderly, and subsidy for low-income elderly tenants in private housing. He hoped that these new programmes would be implemented soon.

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Contribution from the business sector

4. Noting that the Administration could so far only receive a donation of around \$680 million from the business sector and secure pledges of a further \$1.12 billion, some of which would be paid on installments over three years, Mr WONG Sing-chi expressed concern about whether the Administration's target of securing \$5 billion donation from the business sector would remain unchanged, and if so, how to meet the target especially when the economy was receding. He asked whether the Administration would disclose the names of the business organizations/individuals which did not live up to their pledges to donate to CCF. USHA advised that the relevant business organisations had made donations to CCF as pledged and CCF was operating smoothly. Some business organizations had also expressed interest in making donations to CCF after the implementation of its assistance programmes. It was expected that more donations would come to CCF when its assistance programmes proved effective.

5. Pointing out that the business sector had been asked by the Government to donate to CCF but had no say in how the donations would be used, Ms Miriam LAU called on the Administration to review the appropriateness of this arrangement and why CCF had not been well received by the business sector. USHA advised that the business sector had been supportive of the operation of CCF and they had been encouraged to contribute to CCF on top of its existing donations to charities.

6. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed support for CCF, as its primary objective was to improve the life of the underprivileged in need of care and support. He considered that the primary funding source of CCF should come from the public purse, as the business sector might not support CCF continuously. The Financial Secretary should make in his Budget a long-term arrangement for incorporating the programmes under CCF which had proved feasible into the Government's regular assistance and service programmes. USHA reiterated that CCF should be able to gain more support from the business sector if operated smoothly and proved effective. The Government would evaluate the assistance programmes of CCF and consider incorporating appropriate programmes into its regular assistance and service programmes.

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Sustainability of programmes under CCF

7. Noting that the programmes under CCF would be short-term and transitional, Mr KAM Nai-wai asked about their duration and how they could fit in with the Government's existing regular assistance and service programmes. Chairman of ECCCCF advised that all programmes under CCF would be evaluated. Taking into account the outcome of evaluation, the Government would consider incorporating appropriate programmes into its regular assistance and service programmes. USHA advised that in assessing the feasibility of incorporating a programme under CCF into the Government's regular assistance and service programmes, relevant factors including the number of beneficiaries of the programme and its effectiveness would be taken into account.

One-off allowance of \$6,000 for new arrivals

8. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming noted that as at end-November 2011, CCF received around 120 000 applications for the one-off allowance of \$6,000 for new arrivals from low-income families who had entered Hong Kong for settlement, and the allowance had been disbursed to over 29 700 eligible applicants. He asked whether the allowance could be disbursed to all eligible applicants before the 2012 Lunar New Year. Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1) ("DSHA(1)") said that CCF started to receive the applications on 3 October 2011 and disbursed the allowance to the first batch of eligible applicants on 9 November 2011. The actual time required for an eligible applicant to receive the allowance would depend on the actual number of applications received by CCF. It was expected that the CCF would receive more applications at the early stage of the programme.

Subsidy for low-income elderly tenants in private housing

9. Mr KAM Nai-wai, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong, Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming and Ms Miriam LAU expressed support for the proposed provision of a subsidy to low-income elderly tenants in private housing ("the proposed subsidy").

10. Mr KAM Nai-wai called on CCF to take the initiative to locate and help poor hidden elderly tenants in private housing who were not recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") but were pressured by the rising inflation and cyclical rental increase in recent years. USHA said that the Government would promote the

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programme through various publicity channels and would invite the District Elderly Community Centres and the Neighbourhood Elderly Centres, which were operated by non-governmental organisations ("NGOs") subvented by the Social Welfare Department ("SWD"), to assist in implementing the programme so as to facilitate the elders to lodge applications and make enquiries.

11. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong and Mr James TO suggested that the income eligibility requirements for the proposed subsidy should not be too strict. A flexible approach might be adopted by providing a certain proportion of the subsidy to elderly tenants in need, even though their income exceeded the specified threshold. Chairman of ECCCCF said that at whatever income limit specified, some people would inevitably be rendered ineligible under the programme. Practical difficulties were anticipated in drawing up appropriate guidelines for accepting applications whose income exceeded the specified limit.

12. Mr James TO considered that while there was currently no rental subsidy for low-income elderly tenants in private housing, the Administration might make reference to the implementation experience of the proposed subsidy when considering the need to introduce a rental subsidy scheme for tenants in private housing in future. The proposed subsidy could also facilitate the Administration to collect more useful data about low-income elders not living in public rental housing estates. Chairman of ECCCCF said that CCF could consider Mr James TO's views in deliberating further the details of the programme.

13. Mr WONG Sing-chi also considered that the proposed subsidy should help the Administration to identify more hidden elders in need. He asked whether SWD would join hands with NGOs to conduct visits to local districts to provide care to and understand the needs of such elders. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family & Child Welfare) of the Social Welfare Department advised that should SWD identify elders with special needs, it would refer them to the appropriate services. Chairman of ECCCCF added that the Administration had provided additional resources to District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres to identify hidden elders since 2008. The proposed subsidy programme should complement with the Administration's existing support measures for such elders.

14. Ms Miriam LAU considered the proposed subsidy insufficient for helping the needy elderly and called on the Administration to consider making it a regular assistance. USHA advised that the proposed subsidy

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would be useful for assisting the elderly tenants in need. After evaluating the programme, the Administration could consider the feasibility of making it a regular assistance.

15. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che asked whether elders in homes for the aged would be eligible for the proposed subsidy. Chairman of ECCCCF advised that this group of elders was not planned to be covered under the programme at the moment.

Financial assistance on dental services for the elderly

16. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming and Ms Miriam LAU expressed support for the proposed financial assistance on dental services (including dentures) for the elderly aged 60 or above who were receiving "Integrated Home Care Services" ("IHCS") or "Enhanced Home and Community Care Services" ("EHCCS") subvented by SWD but were not recipients of CSSA. Ms Miriam LAU sought information on the number of the beneficiaries and the amount of the financial assistance to be received by each beneficiary. She also sought clarification on whether the participating dentists would need to subsidize the beneficiaries. Chairman of ECCCCF advised that about 12 000 needy elders would benefit from the proposed assistance programme. It was hoped that the participating dentists need not subsidize the beneficiaries, as the charges for the dental services to be provided by them would be set on a cost recovery basis.

17. Mr CHEUNG Hok-ming asked when the proposed assistance programme would be launched and why the eligible elderly had to be referred by the relevant NGOs. Chairman of ECCCCF advised that the NGOs implementing IHCS or EHCCS could help identify the elders in need among the clients they were serving. The proposed programme would be launched after the details were finalised.

Support for the severely disabled persons

18. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che asked whether there was any progress on exploring the possibility of offering support to the severely disabled persons for the use of ventilators. Director (Cluster Services) of Hospital Authority advised that the Medical Subcommittee under CCF had noted the concern. Various options were being explored with SWD with a view to providing a comprehensive care package. The proposal, if ready, would be reported to relevant Subcommittee(s) under CCF.

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IV. Enhanced support services for ethnic minorities and new arrivals from the Mainland

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)485/11-12(03) and (04)]

19. USHA briefed members on the initiatives to strengthen the support services for ethnic minorities ("EMs") and new arrivals from the Mainland ("NAs") by the Home Affairs Department ("HAD") in 2011-2012.

Discrimination against EMs and NAs

20. Mr WONG Sing-chi and the Chairman expressed concern about the unfriendliness of some frontline personnel of government departments towards EMs and NAs. Mr WONG Sing-chi expressed his understanding of the heavy work stress of such frontline personnel. However, he pointed out that the self-esteem and capacity for self-reliance of EMs and NAs had been low. If the government personnel discriminated against them, they might not even dare to make enquiries relating to support services. He said that under the Ambassador Scheme to be introduced by the Administration in early 2012 as mentioned in paragraphs 11 to 13 of the Administration's paper, volunteers would be recruited to provide outreach services to disadvantaged groups of EMs and NAs. He suggested that to facilitate their exchanges with EMs and NAs, the relevant government departments providing services to them should employ individuals with background and experience similar to those of EMs or NAs as ambassadors to help them understand the support services provided or to be provided by the Government. Focus group meetings and sharing sessions should be held so that such ambassadors could share their experiences with EMs and NAs. The Administration should also provide training to frontline personnel to enhance their skills to show care and politeness to EMs and NAs.

21. USHA advised that the Administration had introduced initiatives to facilitate the integration of EMs and NAs into the local community, such as launching the Ambassador Scheme under which persons with similar background and experience were arranged to proactively contact the disadvantaged EMs and NAs, and the District-based Integration Programmes through which districts organizations or NGOs had brought support services to EMs and NAs in need. USHA added that the Administration would endeavor to improve the support services taking into account the users' feedbacks.

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22. Ms Emily LAU asked whether HAD had received any complaint about discrimination against EMs and NAs, including those relating to government personnel's unfriendliness towards them, and if yes, whether HAD would co-ordinate the handling of the complaints received. Director of Home Affairs ("DHA") advised that the frontline offices of HAD had not received such complaints but some EMs had come to the support service centres to express their experiences of being unfriendly treated. The Administration would continue to strive for culturally sensitive practices in the provision of public services for EMs and NAs.

Support for EMs and NAs

23. Ms Emily LAU suggested that more EMs might be employed to strengthen the simultaneous interpretation services in public hospitals. USHA advised that the Administration had been funding a social enterprise under the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme to employ EMs as simultaneous interpreters and the Hospital Authority had been their major client. The Administration would provide information on the operation of interpretation services to facilitate EMs to access services of public hospitals and clinics for Members' information after the meeting.

24. The Chairman pointed out that there were a considerable number of South Asians born in Hong Kong in the Western District. They could speak fluent Cantonese but had difficulty in writing in Chinese. He asked whether the Administration would co-operate with District Councils ("DCs") to enhance the tutoring services in Chinese writing for EMs outside schools. DHA advised that the Government was currently funding NGOs to operate four support service centres for EMs in Hong Kong. The Administration hoped to extend such services to other districts and provide more after-school tutorial classes for EMs in need. In response to the Chairman's enquiry on whether such support service centres would be established in every district, DHA advised that the Administration would consider strengthening the resources for EMs gradually, having regard to such considerations as demand of individual districts and utilisation of resources. In addition, the District-based Integration Programmes had been implemented by the relevant District Offices in those districts with higher demand for services for EMs and NAs to facilitate their integration into the community.

25. Referring to HAD's Expectation Management Programmes ("EMP") implemented by NGOs in Shenzhen and Guangzhou to help prospective settlers have a better understanding of Hong Kong as mentioned in

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paragraph 9 of the Administration's paper, Mr KAM Nai-wai asked about the details of how EMP had been conducted, the target number of prospective settlers to be covered by EMP and how prospective settlers could contact the NGOs concerned. USHA advised that EMP aimed at helping One-way Permit entrants prepared for their settlement in Hong Kong. In November 2011, a series of activities under EMP were conducted for prospective settlers, including exhibitions introducing social, medical, welfare and educational services in Hong Kong, visits to Hong Kong and various training courses. Brochures on various kinds of useful information relating to living in Hong Kong had also been provided. It was anticipated that about 20,000 participants would benefit from EMP. The Administration would provide Members with copies of brochures about the programme in due course.

26. Mr CHAN Hak-kan expressed concern about the employment problems of EMs and asked whether HAD would provide more pre-employment training and job vacancy information to EMs in the 18 District Offices in collaboration with the Labour Department. USHA advised that the Labour Department was responsible for employment services. If needed, the Administration would consider incorporating employment support services in the District-based Integration Programmes being implemented by the relevant District Offices.

27. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che noted that there were difficulties in differentiating EMs whose face features and names were similar. As they might not understand the legal restrictions in Hong Kong, some of them shared the same identity card. DHA advised that the Administration had published the Living Guides in various EM languages and with cartoons to help EMs understand the way of life in Hong Kong, and would beef up the contents to facilitate their understanding of the cultural differences they might experience when living in Hong Kong. The Administration would also consider adding the content about the proper use of identity cards in the Living Guide in the future.

28. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che asked whether the Administration had conducted any survey on the social and economic situations of EMs and NAs to facilitate the formulation of appropriate measures to address their needs. USHA advised that the Administration cared about the needs of EMs and NAs, and had collected information about them from various sources, including the population census. The Administration had also conducted regular surveys on NAs, and understood the needs of EMs through the population census and relevant community organizations.

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Education of EM students

29. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong expressed concern about the education of EMs and in particular the unhealthy situation of two types of schools having EM students, namely schools which only admitted students from EMs, and schools which had an overwhelming majority of local Chinese students and only a few EM students. The EM students in the first type of schools might find it difficult to integrate into the local Chinese community, as their peer groups were mostly non-Chinese. The students in the second type of schools might be easily neglected unless the schools devoted a lot of resources to them. The most ideal situation was that a school had a reasonable percentage of students coming from EMs. The Administration should address the root of the problem by stepping up anti-discrimination education and publicity activities at schools and in the community. USHA responded in the affirmative and advised that the Administration would enhance its co-operation with the media and community organizations to conduct more anti-discrimination and experience-sharing programmes and activities.

30. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong and Ms Emily LAU expressed concern about the low percentage (less than 1%) of EM students at the post-secondary level. Ms Emily LAU asked whether HAB had any measure to improve the situation, and called on HAB to facilitate the co-ordination of various government bureaux/departments in supporting EMs. USHA advised that in addition to the measures implemented by the Education Bureau, HAD operated the Harmony Scholarship Scheme to award scholarships to students to give recognition to their participation in school and community services (in particular racial harmony building activities), academic results and conduct.

31. Noting that there were scholarships for elite athlete students admitted to local universities, Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong asked whether the Administration would similarly set up a scholarship for EM students admitted to local universities or self-financing programmes offered by local universities. USHA advised that the existing Harmony Scholarship Scheme implemented by HAD catered for primary and secondary students only. She undertook to convey Mr CHEUNG's suggestion to the Education Bureau for consideration.

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V. Any other business

32. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 10:25 am.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
28 September 2012