

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)473/13-14

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Ref : CB2/HS/1/12

Subcommittee on Poverty

**Minutes of the ninth meeting
held on Monday, 17 June 2013, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 2 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Members present : Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon TANG Ka-piu

Members absent : Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Charles Peter MOK

Member attending : Hon IP Kin-yuen

Public Officers attending : Item III

Mr Eddie NG
Secretary for Education
Education Bureau

Mrs Angelina CHEUNG
Deputy Secretary for Education (6)
Education Bureau

Mr WONG See-man
Controller
Student Financial Assistance Agency (Ag.)

Item IV

Mr Matthew CHEUNG, GBS, JP
Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr Stephen SUI
Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms Jane LEE
Principle Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Poverty)
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms IP Ling-bik
Principle Assistant Secretary (Education Commission
and Planning)
Education Bureau

Miss Dora FU, JP
Assistance Director of Home Affairs (3)
Home Affairs Department

Mrs Tonia LEUNG, JP
Assistant Commissioner of Labour (Employment
Services)
Labour Department

Mr LAM Ka-tai
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Rehabilitation and
Medical Social Services)
Social Welfare Department

Mr FUNG Man-chung
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family and Child
Welfare)
Social Welfare Department

**Clerk in
attendance** : Mr Colin CHUI
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

**Staff in
attendance** : Ms Catherina YU
Senior Council Secretary (2) 4

Ms Ivy CHENG
Research Officer (2) 2

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Action

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

I. Proposed overseas duty visit to Taiwan and Japan
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1338/12-13(01) and IN24/12-13]

2. The Subcommittee agreed that an overseas duty visit should be conducted to Taipei and Tokyo from 20 to 29 August 2013 to study their experience in alleviating poverty, particularly elderly poverty and working poverty, and the visit should be open to non-Subcommittee Members.

Action

II. Subjects to be discussed at meetings in July and October 2013

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1338/12-13(02)]

3. The Subcommittee agreed to the subjects to be discussed at meetings in July and October 2013 as set out in LC Paper No. CB(2)1338/12-13(02).

III. Student financial assistance schemes for needy students of various education levels

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1338/12-13(03) and (04)]

4. The Subcommittee requested the Administration to provide responses to the following members' suggestions before the next meeting –

- (a) the existing arrangement of deducting comprehensive social security allowance ("CSSA") and rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme payable to CSSA households whose family members were receiving grant and loan from the Student Financial Assistance Agency ("SFAA") should be critically reviewed. The level of financial assistance payable to these CSSA households should not be affected and needy students should be allowed to opt for CSSA or grant/loan provided by SFAA;
- (b) the family income thresholds for different tiers of student financial assistance provided by SFAA should be adjusted correspondingly after the setting of the poverty line;
- (c) the mode of subsidy for after-school tutorial and extra-curriculum activities should be reviewed. The Administration could consider providing schools with accountable subsidy to run these activities. To ensure a balanced provision of after-school tutorial and extra-curriculum activities, the Administration should set the percentages of subsidy to be allocated to different categories of activities. Provision of subsidy for tutorial classes offered by non-subvented organizations should also be considered;
- (d) financial support for students enrolled in sub-degree programmes should be enhanced; and

Action

- (e) the Administration's paper(s) for a meeting of the Subcommittee should contain the following: (i) existing poverty alleviation policies; (ii) policies under review by the Commission on Poverty; and (iii) policies to which changes were proposed to be made and/or would be made.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response to issues concerning financial assistance for needy students was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1547/12-13(01) on 8 July 2013.)

IV. Support for persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)823/12-13(03) to (04), CB(2)1331/12-13(01), CB(2) 1371/12-13(01) and CB(2)1372/12-13(01)]

5. The Subcommittee requested the Administration to provide information on the engagement of ex-mentally ill persons and persons with disabilities ("PWDs") in the Hospital Authority and services provided by the Social Welfare Department in helping mentally ill persons and PWDs.

V. Any other business

6. Members noted that the next meeting of the Subcommittee would be held on Monday, 8 July 2013 at 3:30 pm.

7. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:56 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
10 December 2013

**Proceedings of the ninth meeting of the
Subcommittee on Poverty
on Monday, 17 June 2013, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 2 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
<i>Agenda item I – Proposed overseas duty visit to Taiwan and Japan</i>			
000205 - 000527	Chairman Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che	Members' concurrence that the Subcommittee should conduct a duty visit to Taipei and Tokyo from 20 to 29 August 2013 to study their experience in alleviating poverty, particularly elderly poverty and working poverty, and the visit should be open to non-Subcommittee Members.	
<i>Agenda item II – Subjects to be discussed at meetings in July and October 2013</i>			
000528 - 000613	Chairman	Members' agreement to the subjects to be discussed at meetings in July and October 2013 as set out in LC Paper No. CB(2)1338/12-13(02).	
<i>Agenda item III – Student financial assistance schemes for needy students of various education levels</i>			
000614 - 001000	Chairman Administration	Briefing by the Administration on the student financial assistance schemes provided by the Government through the Student Financial Assistance Agency ("SFAA").	
001001 - 001631	Dr KWOK Ka-ki Administration Chairman	<p>Dr KWOK Ka-ki's view that subsidy should be provided for children of low-income families to participate in extra-curriculum activities and after-school tutorial. To help the impoverished families to escape poverty, sub-degree programmes should be fully funded by the Government.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) while needy children would not receive direct subsidy for extra-curriculum activities and after-school tutorial, the Administration would provide subsidy for schools and the non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") concerned to conduct these activities. The amount of subsidy for extra-curriculum activities and after-school tutorial provided for children of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") households and recipients of the School Textbook Assistance Scheme was over \$200 million in the 2012-2013 school year; and</p>	

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		(b) grant and loan would be provided to eligible students pursuing full-time publicly-funded programmes at sub-degree and above levels and full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree/degree programmes through SFAA.	
001632 - 002134	Deputy Chairman Administration Chairman	<p>The Deputy Chairman's concern about the long waiting time for the Special Child Care Centres ("SCCCs") and Integrated Programme in Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres ("IP"). His enquiry about whether the Administration would put in place a mechanism under which the Education Bureau ("EDB") and the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") would collaborate with a view to solving the problem of inadequate provision of pre-school rehabilitation services for children with disabilities.</p> <p>The Administration's response that the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education under EDB, which comprised representatives from the Social Welfare Department ("SWD"), would make concrete recommendations to EDB on the implementation of free kindergarten education in the context of 15-year free education.</p>	
002135 - 003115	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Mr Alan LEONG Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung Administration Chairman	<p>Views of Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung that the existing arrangement of reducing CSSA and rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme payable to households with family members receiving assistance from SFAA should be critically reviewed. The level of financial assistance payable to these CSSA households should not be affected.</p> <p>Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che's view that needy students should be allowed to opt for CSSA or grant/loan provided by SFAA.</p> <p>Mr Alan LEONG's concern about the assistance provided for student loan borrowers to tide over financial difficulties in the first few years after their graduation.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) it was actively exploring ways to help the students who were receiving financial assistance from SFAA including those who were from CSSA households; and</p> <p>(b) to alleviate the financial burden of loan borrowers, it had lowered the interest rate of</p>	

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		loan and extended the loan repayment period. Loan borrowers who graduated in 2013 could opt for deferring the repayment of their loan to one year after their graduation.	
003116 - 003833	Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung Administration Chairman	<p>Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's view that –</p> <p>(a) the mode of subsidy for after-school tutorial and extra-curriculum activities should be reviewed. The Administration could consider providing subsidy to parents or providing schools with accountable subsidy to run these activities. To ensure a balanced provision of after-school tutorial and extra-curriculum activities, the Administration should set the percentages of subsidy to be allocated to different categories of activities; and</p> <p>(b) schools should be provided with more resources to employ administrative assistants to take up the administrative work relating to after-school tutorial and extra-curriculum activities in order to relieve teachers' workload.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) providing subsidy directly to schools and NGOs for organizing extra-curriculum activities and after-school tutorial could better meet students' needs and was more cost effective; and</p> <p>(b) EDB had launched a pilot scheme under which a subsidy amounting to \$450,000 was provided for schools which participated in the scheme to improve their administrative work. It would draw on the experience of the pilot scheme and consider extending the scheme to cover more schools.</p>	
003834 - 004233	Miss CHAN Yuen-han Administration Chairman	<p>Miss CHAN Yuen-han's view that –</p> <p>(a) the existing CSSA arrangements for students who were receiving financial assistance from SFAA should be reviewed; and</p> <p>(b) the Administration should assist loan borrowers who had great difficulties in repaying the loan.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) it was actively exploring ways to help the</p>	

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		<p>students who were receiving financial assistance from SFAA including those from CSSA households; and</p> <p>(b) there was an effective loan deferment mechanism in place to assist individual loan borrowers who had difficulty in repaying their loans. Loan borrowers might approach SFAA for assistance.</p>	
004234 - 004813	Mr Albert HO Administration Chairman	<p>Mr Albert HO's view that the Administration should simplify the calculation for travel subsidy under the Student Travel Subsidy Scheme to save administrative costs.</p> <p>The Administration's response that the calculation of travel subsidy was based on the public transport cost between the home and school address of the students.</p>	
004814 - 005446	Mr WONG Yuk-man Administration Chairman	<p>Mr WONG Yuk-man's view that instead of providing members with information regarding the existing student financial assistance schemes, the Administration should inform members of the measures which were under consideration to assist students with financial difficulties.</p> <p>The Chairman's call for allowing post-secondary students to opt for either CSSA or SFAA's grant/loan.</p>	
005447 - 005806	Dr KWOK Ka-ki Administration Chairman	<p>Dr KWOK Ka-ki's view that the provision of subsidy for tutorial classes offered by non-subsented organizations should also be considered and financial support for students enrolled in sub-degree programmes should be enhanced.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) providing subsidy directly to schools and NGOs for organizing extra-curriculum activities and after-school tutorial could better meet students' needs and was more cost effective ; and</p> <p>(b) grant and loan would be provided to eligible students pursuing full-time publicly-funded programmes at sub-degree and above levels and full-time locally-accredited self-financing sub-degree/degree programmes.</p>	
005807 - 010220	Deputy Chairman Administration Chairman	<p>The Deputy Chairman 's view that –</p> <p>(a) the reduction of CSSA and rent allowance from households with family members</p>	

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		<p>receiving assistance from SFAA had caused family conflicts. The Administration should critically review the arrangement and rectify the problem immediately; and</p> <p>(b) under the existing means test mechanism administered by SFAA, families with monthly income at about 50% of the median household income ("MHI") would be eligible for full level of assistance. The Administration should relax the eligibility benchmark for full level of assistance to 75% of MHI.</p> <p>The Administration's response that the income ceiling for full level of assistance had been relaxed substantially in the 2011-2012 academic year. Since then, the percentage of students eligible for full level of assistance had risen from around 30% to around 60%.</p> <p>The Administration would keep in view the family income thresholds for different tiers of student financial assistance.</p>	
010221 - 010730	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Administration Chairman	<p>Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che's view that the Administration should provide grant for adult learners who enrolled in evening secondary courses offered by tertiary institutions</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) it had offered financial assistance in the form of tuition fee reimbursement to adult learners attending evening secondary courses at designated centres. Students who met the prescribed criteria for tuition fee reimbursement might receive non-means-tested reimbursement of 30% of the tuition fees. Students who had passed the means test and were eligible for full level or half level of assistance might receive reimbursement of 100% or 50% of the tuition fees respectively; and</p> <p>(b) financial assistance would be provided for eligible students pursuing publicly-funded or locally-accredited self-financing post-secondary programmes.</p>	
010731 - 011305	Miss CHAN Yuen-han Chairman Administration	<p>Miss CHAN Yuen-han's view that the Administration should provide timely responses to members' concern.</p> <p>The Chairman's request that the Administration's</p>	

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		<p>paper(s) for a meeting of the Subcommittee should contain the following –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) existing poverty alleviation policies; (b) policies under review by CoP; and (c) policies to which changes were proposed to be made and/or would be made. <p>The Administration undertook to provide a response to the issues raised at the meeting before the next meeting.</p>	<p>Admin (paragraph 3 of the minutes)</p>
<i>Agenda item IV – Support for persons with disabilities and ethnic minorities</i>			
011306 - 012436	Chairman Administration	Briefing on the support for persons with disabilities ("PWDs") and ethnic minorities ("EM") by the Administration.	
012437 - 013154	Dr KWOK Ka-ki Administration Chairman	<p>Dr KWOK Ka-ki's view that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Administration should take the lead to set targets for government departments or public organizations in the employment of ex-mentally ill persons. Organizations which were willing to employ ex-mentally ill persons should be given higher rating when they bid for government contracts; and (b) on-the-job assistance should be provided to ex-mentally ill persons and their employers should be educated on how to work with them. <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) there were currently over 3 300 civil servants with disabilities (i.e. about 2% of the strength of the civil service). About 330 of them were ex-mentally ill persons. Heads of government bureaux/departments were encouraged to employ more PWDs and ex-mentally persons. Publicity would be stepped up to encourage the private sector and NGOs to employ PWDs and ex-mentally ill persons; (b) social enterprises ("SEs") which had hired PWDs or ex-mentally ill persons would be invited to participate in restricted tenders for certain government service contracts; (c) the Administration would provide an incentive amounting to \$1,000 to encourage workplace mentorship for employees with 	

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		<p>disabilities to facilitate their adaptation to new jobs; and</p> <p>(d) CoP's Special Needs Groups ("SNG") Task Force was studying measures to promote the employment of PWDs.</p>	
013155 - 013826	Mr TAM Yiu-chung Administration Chairman	<p>Mr TAM Yiu-chung's view that the Administration should consider employing more civil servants with disabilities. Given the prevailing low unemployment rate and hence a shortage of labour supply, it was an opportune time to encourage the employment of PWDs.</p> <p>Mr TAM's enquiry about –</p> <p>(a) information regarding the number of PWDs employed by subvented organizations ; and</p> <p>(b) the number of EM students who had participated in after-school extended Chinese learning activities.</p> <p>The Administration 's response that –</p> <p>(a) it would continue its efforts in providing employment opportunities for PWDs;</p> <p>(b) many NGOs had set a percentage of employees with disabilities by making reference to the percentage of civil servants with disabilities;</p> <p>(c) it had launched a scheme under which employers of PWDs would receive a one-off subsidy of up to \$20,000 for procurement of assistive devices and carrying out workplace modification to enable their employees with disabilities to enhance their work efficiency; and</p> <p>(d) more than 50% of non-Chinese speaking ("NCS") secondary students in schools having a critical mass of NCS students had been provided with after-school support through the Chinese Language Learning Support Centre commissioned to the University of Hong Kong in the 2012-2013 school year. Another 70% of NCS students had benefitted from the after-school extended Chinese learning activities for NCS students which would be expanded in the 2013-2014 school year.</p>	
013827 - 004120	Mr TANG Ka-piu Administration Chairman	In response to Mr TANG Ka-piu's request for the provision of Work Incentive Transport Subsidy ("WITS") for PWDs who worked in sheltered	

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		workshops, the Administration explained that since the PWDs concerned were not employees but trainees of sheltered workshops, providing them with WITS might have an implication on the prevailing policy. Nevertheless, the Administration would explore the feasibility of this suggestion in the review of the WITS Scheme.	
004121 - 014428	Miss CHAN Yuen-han Administration Chairman	Miss CHAN Yuen-han's view that – (a) the Administration should set a concrete target for employment of civil servants with disabilities; and (b) to encourage the employment of PWDs, the Administration should specify in its tender documents that additional marks would be awarded to bidders who would employ a certain number of PWDs. The Administration's response that, where appropriate, additional marks would be awarded according to the number of PWDs the bidders would employ.	
014429 - 014807	Mr Albert HO Administration Chairman	Mr Albert HO's view that – (a) the Administration should require subvented organizations to provide the number of employees with disabilities when these organizations sought government funding; (b) tax concession should be provided to encourage private organizations to employ PWDs; and (c) language proficiency requirement for EM for civil service posts should be further relaxed. EM who met the language proficiency requirement for either Chinese or English should be considered for appointments to the civil service. The Administration's response that some NGOs had publicized in their annual reports the number of PWDs they had employed and the Administration would consider the suggestion of tax concession.	
014808 - 015406	Mr LEUNG Che-cheung Administration Chairman	Mr LEUNG Che-cheung's view that – (a) the Administration should consider setting up training centres for children with disabilities; (b) engaging ex-mentally ill persons or PWDs to work in rehabilitation organizations would be	

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		<p>of great help to the mentally ill persons and PWDs. The Administration should step up promotion in this regard; and</p> <p>(c) the Administration should provide more organized mainstream Chinese learning programmes in schools for EM.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) SWD provided a range of vocational rehabilitation services for PWDs. The Vocational Training Council and the Employees Retraining Board also offered vocational training courses and job placement support services for PWDs to enhance their employability. District-based vocational training for PWDs would be strengthened if necessary;</p> <p>(b) EDB would revise the mode of funding support to schools in the 2013-2014 school year to enhance NCS students' learning of the mainstream Chinese Language curriculum; and</p> <p>(c) the Hospital Authority ("HA") had involved a number of ex-mentally ill persons in the provision of services to mentally ill persons. SWD had also set up Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness in all 18 districts to provide community support services. The Administration would continue to promote the acceptance of ex-mentally ill persons through education and publicity.</p> <p>At the request of Mr LEUNG, the Administration undertook to provide information on the engagement of ex-mentally ill persons and PWDs in the Hospital Authority and the services provided by SWD in helping mentally ill persons and PWDs.</p>	Admin (paragraph 4 of the minutes)
015407 - 015749	Mr CHAN Kin-por Administration Chairman	Mr CHAN Kin-por's concern that some employers participating in the On the Job Training Programme for People with Disabilities ("OJT") and Sunnyway (On the Job Training Programme for Young People with Disabilities) might dismiss the employees with disabilities after the end of the subsidy period. The Administration should review the existing mode of operation of these programmes so as to encourage a longer-term employment of PWDs.	

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		The Administration's response that it would follow up on both the employers and employees under OJT and Sunnyway for at least six months.	
015750 - 020320	Chairman Administration	<p>The Chairman's view and concern that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) policy should be formulated to require a minimum percentage of employees with disabilities in government departments and subvented organizations. Bidders for government contracts should also fulfill such a requirement. Government departments should set the percentage at not less than 2% while bidders for government contracts could start with a lower target; (b) instead of providing fund to SEs for a maximum of two years, the Administration should draw reference from the governments of Taiwan and of South Korea and assist SEs to continue their operation even if they did not make profits; and (c) many EM students could not meet the university admission requirements on Chinese proficiency and hence were unable to pursue tertiary education. Alternative examination arrangements for Chinese Language should be explored for EM students. <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) it would continue to keep track of the percentage of civil servants with disabilities; (b) as PWDs might not meet the work requirements of all government contracts, it would be difficult to require service providers to hire a certain number of PWDs. Nevertheless, the Administration would consider suitable ways to encourage employment of PWDs in its tendering exercises; (c) some SEs had continued with their operations successfully after the expiry of the funding period of two years; and (d) alternative Chinese qualifications including the General Certificate of Secondary Education, International General Certificate of Secondary Education, General Certificate of Education Advanced Subsidiary Level and 	

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		Advanced Level were accepted for consideration for admission to University Grants Committee-funded institutions through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System.	
020321 - 020826	Miss CHAN Yuen-han Administration Chairman	<p>Miss CHAN Yuen-han's view that to encourage employers to offer longer-term employment opportunities to PWDs, the subsidy period for the vocational rehabilitation programmes should be extended. Long-term policies for promoting employment of and creating employment opportunities for PWDs should be formulated to solve the problems.</p> <p>The Administration explained that a number of vocational rehabilitation services were in place to meet the diversified needs of PWDs and incentives were provided to employers under certain programmes to encourage the employment of PWDs. The Administration had enhanced some of these services by increasing the allowances or extending the subsidy period. Providing incentives to employers on a long-term basis would involve major policy change. However, the Administration would carefully study members' views and suggestions.</p>	
020827 - 021205	Chairman Administration	<p>The Chairman's reiteration of his request that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Administration should make it mandatory that the number of employees with disabilities should not be less than 2% in government bureaux/departments and subvented organizations; (b) employment of a prescribed percentage of PWDs should be a tender requirement for government contracts if the work could be performed by PWDs; (c) the Administration should encourage developing SE projects which were tailor-made for PWDs; (d) there should not be any cap on the funding period for SEs which were properly run by PWDs but had made a loss. A ceiling of the deficit could however be imposed for these SEs; and (e) alternative Chinese Language admission requirements for tertiary education for EM students should be considered. 	

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		The Administration's response that CoP's Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund Task Force and SNG Task Force had been considering measures to help the development of SEs and to facilitate EM students' effective learning of Chinese respectively. The Administration would convey members' views to these Task Forces.	
<i>Agenda item V – Any other business</i>			
021206 - 021247	Chairman	Date of next meeting	

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
10 December 2013