

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)172/13-14
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seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/HS/1/12

Subcommittee on Poverty

**Minutes of the eleventh meeting
held on Tuesday, 9 July 2013, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

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

Members absent : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP

**Public Officers : Item II
attending**

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education
Education Bureau

Ms Michelle LI, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)
Education Bureau

Item III

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

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

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

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

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

Mr Michael LEE
Chief Housing Manager (Applications)
Housing Department

Item IV

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

Ms Pecvin YONG
Principal Assistant Secretary (Further Education)
Education Bureau

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

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

Ms Judy TING
Council Secretary (2) 6

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Action

I. Subjects to be discussed at meeting in October 2013
[LC Paper No. CB(2)1485/12-13(01)]

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

2. The Subcommittee agreed that the Chief Secretary for Administration, as Chairman of the Commission on Poverty ("CoP"), should be invited to a meeting to be held in October 2013 to brief members on the Commission on Poverty Summit and work progress of CoP and its Task Forces.

II. Qualifications framework
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1485/12-13(02) and (03)]

3. The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings attached at

Action

Annex).

4. The Subcommittee requested the Administration to provide information on—

- (a) the number of students enrolled in the vocational English courses under the Vocational English Enhancement Programme; and
- (b) the numbers of applicants who had been offered 75% and 100% of subsidies to meet application fees under the Recognition of Prior Learning mechanism.

III. Support for new-arrivals and single-parent families

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)823/12-13(03) to (04) and CB(2)1528/12-13(01)]

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

IV. Any other business - Community Care Fund Project: To enhance the flat rate grant under the "Student Textbook Assistance Scheme" of the Student Financial Assistance Schemes and to enhance the assistance for needy students enrolling into below-sub-degree programmes

[LC Paper No. CB(2)1547/12-13(01)]

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

7. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:58 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
29 October 2013

**Proceedings of the eleventh meeting of the
Subcommittee on Poverty
on Tuesday, 9 July 2013, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
<i>Agenda item I – Subjects to be discussed at meeting in October 2013</i>			
000857 - 001855	Chairman Mr LEE Cheuk-yan Mr Ronny TONG Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung Mr TANG Ka-piu	<p>Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's suggestion that the Commission on Poverty ("CoP") should be invited to give an interim report on its work at a Subcommittee meeting to be held in October 2013.</p> <p>Mr Ronny TONG's suggestion that the Subcommittee should hold a meeting to further discuss the subject of poverty line before CoP made the relevant announcement; and enquiry about whether the setting of poverty line would be reviewed by CoP on a regular basis.</p> <p>Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's suggestion that the Administration should be invited to further exchange views with the Subcommittee on the subject of poverty line.</p> <p>Mr TANG Ka-piu's view that the Subcommittee should first find out when CoP would announce how the poverty line would be set before deciding on the discussion of the subject.</p> <p>The Chairman's information on poverty line that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Subcommittee had deliberated the subject and submitted its report to the House Committee on 31 May 2013; (b) members of CoP had reached a consensus that the poverty line should be set at 50% of the monthly median household income; (c) CoP had announced that it would not hold further consultation on the subject; and (d) according to CoP, review of poverty line would be carried out as and when required. <p>The Chairman's suggestions that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) concluding members' discussion, the Subcommittee should invite the Chief Secretary for Administration, as Chairman 	

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		<p>of CoP, to brief the Subcommittee on the Commission on Poverty Summit and work progress of CoP and its Task Forces at a meeting to be held in October 2013;</p> <p>(b) the new subject of "Ways to provide posts or types of work offering higher pay, and to assist members of the public in starting up businesses and earning more income for improving their poverty situation", which was agreed by members at the Subcommittee meeting on 8 July 2013 for discussion at a future meeting, would be added to the list of discussion items of the Subcommittee; and</p> <p>(c) the subject of "Support for needy students to participate in extra-curricular and after-school activities" would be discussed at a future meeting of the Subcommittee.</p>	
<i>Agenda item II – Qualifications framework</i>			
001900 - 002528	Chairman Administration	The Administration's briefing on the development of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework ("QF") and how QF promoted social mobility.	
002529 - 003046	Mr LEE Cheuk-yan Administration Chairman	<p>Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's sharing of information that under the Construction Industry Council ("CIC"), a construction workers registration system was implemented to, among others, raise the status of construction workers by statutorily recognizing their skill levels; and a group of general workers recently requested to be registered as semi-skilled or skilled workers under CIC with a view to having their skills recognized and wages increased.</p> <p>Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's enquiries about whether any salary scales had been put in place by those industries implementing the Recognition of Prior Learning ("RPL") mechanism under which workers' salaries were specified in accordance with different QF levels, i.e. Level 1 to Level 7; and the progress of promoting the Specification of Generic (Foundation) Competencies ("SGC"), which were skills and knowledge shared across different industries and trades.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) a number of industries had joined QF and developed Specification of Competency Standards ("SCSs") to facilitate staff</p>	

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		<p>recruitment, training and promotion;</p> <p>(b) the Administration would continue its efforts to promote QF to other industries;</p> <p>(c) the QF Secretariat would discuss with CIC how the latter could implement QF;</p> <p>(d) SGC covered four strands of foundation skills, namely English, Chinese, Numeracy and Information Technology; and</p> <p>(e) the Education Bureau had invited the Vocational Training Council to launch a pilot project, the Vocational English Enhancement Programme ("VEEP"), on the development of vocational English courses based on SGC.</p>	
003047 - 003658	Mr TANG Ka-piu Administration Chairman	<p>Mr TANG Ka-piu's enquiries about –</p> <p>(a) whether any tracking surveys had been carried out to study the career advancement of employees under the RPL mechanism;</p> <p>(b) the distribution of applications for assessment of qualifications among the eight industries implementing the RPL mechanism;</p> <p>(c) the number of RPL applications made by employees of the three industries for which the five-year transitional period had been extended for an additional two years; and</p> <p>(d) whether the salary of an employee would be increased when he or she advanced to a higher QF level.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) no tracking survey had been carried out to study the career advancement of employees under the RPL mechanism;</p> <p>(b) according to the feedback from the existing 19 Industry Training Advisory Committees ("ITACs"), QF was found to be effective in helping the development of industries and providing progression pathways for employees;</p> <p>(c) as at the end of May 2013, over 7 400 applications involving more than 14 600 clusters of competencies at QF levels 1 to 4</p>	

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		<p>had been processed. Almost all applicants (99.3%) were successfully awarded Statements of Attainment in recognition of their competencies. A large number of applications were generated from the property management industry;</p> <p>(d) the five-year transitional period for the first three industries implementing the RPL mechanism expired on 31 May 2013. The ITACs concerned decided to extend the RPL transitional period for the relevant industries for an additional two years to 31 May 2015; and</p> <p>(e) QF was gaining acceptance by some industries as useful guides for the development of human resources management, such as staff recruitment and promotion.</p>	
003659 - 004248	Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung Administration Chairman	<p>Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's views that the implementation of the RPL mechanism might give rise to a situation where employers dismissed or reduced the salaries of those employees whose qualifications were not recognized; and it was important to conduct tracking survey to study the career advancement of employees.</p> <p>The Administration's response that QF benefited both employers and employees, as it helped employers to assure employees' qualifications and provided employees clear progression pathways; and individual industries awarded promotion or salary increase to employees on the basis of merit and in accordance with their specific human resources policies.</p>	
004249 - 004922	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Administration Chairman	<p>Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che's enquiries about –</p> <p>(a) the feasibility of uploading a salary guideline matching various QF levels onto the relevant Government website for reference by employers and employees;</p> <p>(b) whether services were available for assessing the qualifications achieved by individuals outside Hong Kong; and</p> <p>(c) whether subsidies were offered to needy individuals in studying training programmes and applying for the recognition of qualifications under the RPL mechanism.</p>	

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s)	Action required
		<p>The Administration's response that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) there had been no matching of salaries to various QF levels as QF was a hierarchy to order and support different qualifications. Nonetheless, the Administration was pleased to note that some industries/employers had made good use of QF in human resources management, such as staff recruitment and performance assessment; (b) under the RPL mechanism, individuals might apply for recognition of qualifications at QF Levels 1 to 3 by producing documentary proofs of their years of working experience, without the need to take any formal assessment tests. Application fees under the RPL mechanism could be refunded by two stages; (c) the Continuing Education Fund subsidized adults with learning aspirations to pursue continuing education and training courses; (d) the Employees Retraining Board provided a diverse range of courses to help individuals to attain recognized qualifications; low-income individuals could apply for course fee waiver; and (e) the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications provided assessment services for the general public on qualifications awarded outside Hong Kong. 	
004923 - 005209	Mr CHAN Kin-por Administration Chairman	<p>Mr CHAN Kin-por's enquiries about –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the number of students enrolled in the vocational English courses under VECP; (b) whether any studies had been carried out to ascertain the effectiveness of such courses; and (c) the usage of the resources approved by the Language Fund to continue providing VECP for another three years starting from November 2012. <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) evaluation of the vocational English courses had been carried out; the large number of enrolment demonstrated that such courses 	Admin

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		<p>were well received by students;</p> <p>(b) the Administration would provide information on the number of students enrolled in these courses; and</p> <p>(c) the Administration would continue its efforts to promote these courses to benefit more employees.</p>	
005210 - 005751	Mr KWOK Wai-keung Administration Chairman	<p>Mr KWOK Wai-keung's view that it was important to ensure salary increase for employees when they achieved a higher QF level; and request for information on the numbers of applicants who had been offered 75% and 100% of subsidies to meet application fees under the RPL mechanism.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) to facilitate social mobility, the Government launched QF to establish an accessible articulation pathway to promote lifelong learning among those who prepared to join or had joined the workforce;</p> <p>(b) training programmes and packages developed under various SCSs could be adopted on an industry-wide basis;</p> <p>(c) a comprehensive review of Qualifications Framework Support Schemes ("QFSS") would be carried out later in 2013 to consider the way forward for QFSS beyond the 2013-2014 financial year; and</p> <p>(d) the Administration undertook to provide information requested by Mr KWOK in relation to assessment subsidies provided for applicants under the RPL mechanism.</p>	Admin
005752 - 010301	Mr WONG Yuk-man Administration Chairman	<p>Mr WONG Yuk-man's views that –</p> <p>(a) the implementation of QF was not effective in alleviating poverty;</p> <p>(b) QF merely helped middle-aged people with low-skill to find work by providing a reference of the qualifications they achieved; and</p> <p>(c) staff turnover was particularly high among the eight industries implementing the RPL mechanism, such as hairdressing, property management and Chinese catering. In staff</p>	

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		<p>recruitment, employers of these industries did not necessarily make reference to the attainment of QF qualifications but the practical skills of staff.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) QF aimed to promote lifelong learning with a view to encouraging learners to pursue further studies and career development; (b) the Administration was exploring the development of the credit accumulation and transfer system, under which practitioners could accumulate the credits of different qualifications attained and transfer the accumulated credits into other qualifications to minimize the possibility of repeated learning; and (c) QF provided a common platform and a standardized benchmark to facilitate the arrangement of credit accumulation and transfer among different sectors and training institutions. 	
010302 - 010828	Chairman Administration	<p>The Chairman's views that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) QF should aim to alleviate poverty and facilitate social mobility; (b) a mechanism should be implemented to link various QF levels with the academic qualifications to facilitate the pursuit of further education and employment by individuals; (c) the Administration should take the lead by employing individuals whose qualifications were recognized under QF; and (d) there was a need to enhance the promotion of various initiatives of QF. <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Award Titles Scheme ("ATS") was introduced with the aim of standardizing and simplifying the use of titles and qualifications recognized under QF; ATS covered qualifications at all QF levels in the academic, vocational and continuing education sectors; 	

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		<p>(b) QF credit was also introduced to measure the size and volume of learning, enabling learners to know the extent of effort to be spent in order to complete a learning programme and acquire the relevant qualification. QF credit would facilitate articulation between different qualifications;</p> <p>(c) The Diploma of Secondary Education was roughly at QF Level 3 while a bachelor's degree was at QF Level 5; and</p> <p>(d) the promotion and publicity of QF would be stepped up to enhance the recognition of QF.</p>	
010829 - 011132	Mr KWOK Wai-keung Administration Chairman	<p>Mr KWOK Wai-keung's view that in alleviating poverty, QF should ensure salary increase for employees when they achieved a higher QF level; and enquiry about the assessment of qualifications acquired on the Mainland.</p> <p>The Administration's response that in establishing network with QF and quality assurance authorities of other places, the QF Secretariat and the Guangdong Occupational Skill Testing Authority signed the "Letter of Intent on Enhancing the Exchange on and Transferability of Vocational Standards and Qualifications Recognition between Hong Kong and Guangdong", enabling the Hong Kong QF and the national vocational qualification system to articulate with each other in the future. In fact, the "One Examination, Multiple Certification System" had already been launched in the beauty care and hairdressing industries. After successfully taking the examinations administered by either the Vocational Training Council or the Guangdong Occupational Skill Testing Authority, candidates would be awarded certifications by Hong Kong, the national vocational qualification of the Mainland and awards by the International Professional Standards Network.</p>	
011133 - 011538	Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung Administration Chairman	<p>Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's view that as long as the relationship between employers and employees was not on a level playing field, those employees whose qualifications were not recognized under QF would lose out.</p> <p>The Administration's response that industries would need to take into account a number of objective factors in setting salaries.</p>	

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<i>Agenda item III – Support for new-arrivals and single-parent families</i>			
011539 - 011754	Chairman Administration	On the setting of poverty line, the Administration's response that CoP would not make any announcements in the coming few weeks since the relevant work was still underway, but it would do so before the end of 2013.	
011755 - 012324	Chairman Administration	The Administration's briefing on the support services provided for new-arrivals from the Mainland and single-parent families.	
012325 - 013122	Dr KWOK Ka-ki Administration Chairman	<p>Dr KWOK Ka-ki's views that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) it was a wrong decision for the Administration to replace the former Post-Migration Centres ("PMCs") by Integrated Family Service Centres ("IFSCs"), given that the services provided by IFSCs could not address the needs of new-arrivals; (b) it was necessary to find out the reasons for the low success rate of the New Dawn Project, only 29% of the applicants had secured paid employment up till the end of December 2012; and (c) the seven-year residence requirement should be waived so as to allow new-arrivals to apply for public rental housing ("PRH"). <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the replacement of former PMCs by IFSCs was well received in the community given that the latter provided better co-ordination of family services. A study conducted by the University of Hong Kong during 2008 – 2010 recognized IFSC as a better service model which met the multiple needs of new-arrivals in a holistic manner; (b) the Special Needs Group Task Force under CoP had set up a working group to explore ways to enhance child care support for low-income families, including new-arrivals and single-parent families; and (c) under the present system, new arrivals could apply for PRH, but at least half of the family members must have lived in Hong Kong for seven years before allocation was made; and 	

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		under the Compassionate Rehousing Scheme ("CRS"), the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") might recommend to the Housing Department ("HD") new-arrivals or single parent families for PRH, if they had difficulties in meeting their genuine, imminent and long-term housing needs.	
013123 - 013643	Mr CHAN Kin-por Administration Chairman	<p>Mr CHAN Kin-por's views and enquiries that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) there was a need to implement the Expectation Management Programme ("EMP") in the manner of case management with a view to better understanding the needs of individual new-arrivals; (b) whether there were cases that after having joined EMP, prospective settlers from the Mainland decided not to reside in Hong Kong because of its many problems such as living conditions; (c) consideration should be given to making use of the implementation of EMP to collect information on "doubly non-permanent resident ("DNR") children" living on the Mainland in respect of their plan to permanently live in Hong Kong, to facilitate the planning of education and housing by the Government; and (d) it was necessary to review the effectiveness of the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project ("NSCCP"). If it was found to be effective, the Administration should consider regularizing the project. <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the Census and Statistics Department regularly conducted population censuses, and shared information relating to the needs and profile of new-arrivals with various bureaux to facilitate their formulation of policies; (b) according to the 2011 Population Census, there were a total of 171 322 persons from the Mainland who resided in Hong Kong for less than seven years; (c) in order to better grasp the service needs and profile of new-arrivals, both the Home Affairs Department and the Immigration Department had been conducting 	

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		<p>questionnaire surveys on new-arrivals from the Mainland;</p> <p>(d) the greatest difficulties encountered by new-arrivals were to adapt to the living conditions and work in Hong Kong;</p> <p>(e) on service needs, about half of new-arrivals would need support to find jobs and apply for PRH;</p> <p>(f) there was no information from EMP on the number of prospective settlers from the Mainland who gave up the prospect of living in Hong Kong;</p> <p>(g) upon the review of its effectiveness and demand, NSCCP was regularized and extended to all 18 districts in October 2011; and</p> <p>(h) according to the record of SWD, about 23% of the households that benefitted from NSCCP services between April 2012 and March 2013 were single-parent families.</p>	
013644 - 014205	Mr TANG Ka-piu Administration Chairman	<p>Mr TANG Ka-piu's requests that assistance should be provided for newly arrived single mothers who could not find work because they needed to take care of their children; and the Administration should exercise discretion to allow some newly arrived single mothers living in PRH to be eligible for rental reduction. Many of the spouses of these single mothers passed away and the single mothers had subsequently registered as the principal tenant of their PRH units, but they were however not eligible for rental reduction due to certain administrative regulations.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) it was a general rule that Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") applicants must have been Hong Kong residents for at least seven years. The requirement provided a rational basis for the allocation of public resources and helped sustain a non-contributory social security system;</p> <p>(b) the Director of Social Welfare ("DSW") might exercise discretion to waive the residence requirement in cases involving applicants with genuine hardship. This</p>	

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		<p>discretion would normally be exercised as a recognition of a new-arrival's efforts to become self-reliant when he or she worked to support his or her family members; and</p> <p>(c) special assistance was provided to newly arrived single parents under the CSSA Scheme. As at 31 March 2013, there were 4 760 cases involving newly arrived single parents who were granted CSSA even though they did not meet the seven-year residence requirement.</p>	
014206 - 014814	Mr WONG Yuk-man Administration Chairman	<p>Mr WONG Yuk-man's request for the Administration to address the difficulties faced by those single-mothers who were holders of two-way permits and travelled frequently to Hong Kong to look after their children.</p> <p>The Administration's response that although non-Hong Kong residents were not allowed to be added into PRH tenancies, SWD might refer new-arrivals or single parent families to HD for PRH under CRS, if they had difficulties in meeting their genuine housing needs.</p>	
014815 - 015330	Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che Administration Chairman	<p>Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che's requests for the Administration to look into the cases where ethnic minority people were not paid statutory minimum wage ("SWM") for their work and consider allowing holders of two-way permits to work into Hong Kong to ease the labour shortage of certain sectors, such as the elderly care.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) it would look into the cases where ethnic minority people were not paid SMW and invited Mr CHEUNG to provide further information on these cases; and</p> <p>(b) under the Immigration Ordinance, holders of two-way permits were not allowed to seek employment in Hong Kong, although the Administration had considered the proposal before.</p>	
015331 - 015932	Miss CHAN Yuen-han Administration Chairman	<p>Miss CHAN Yuen-han's views that –</p> <p>(a) the existing support provided for new-arrivals and single-parent families was piecemeal and ineffective;</p> <p>(b) there had to be a complete overhaul of existing policies; and</p>	

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		<p>(c) specific support should be provided for newly-arrived women who were subject to a recognizance condition and lived off the CSSA payment granted to their children.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) various Government departments had been providing dedicated support services for new-arrivals and single-parent families;</p> <p>(b) care should be exercised on the allocation of public resources as CSSA was a non-contributory social security system and was supported by tax revenue; and</p> <p>(c) DSW could exercise discretion to waive the residence requirement in cases involving applicants with genuine hardship.</p>	
015933 - 020518	Mr LEE Cheuk-yan Administration Chairman	<p>Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's views that the provision of 720 places under NSCCP among 18 districts was insufficient to meet the demand for child care services; and it was necessary to pay SMW to carers providing home-based child care services with a view to optimizing NSCCP.</p> <p>The Administration's responses that –</p> <p>(a) 720 places was the minimum requirement set by SWD. Service operators had the flexibility to increase the number of home-based child care places on top of the minimum requirement to meet the actual service demand;</p> <p>(b) members of the working group set up under the Special Needs Group Task Force of CoP visited the service operators of NSCCP in Sham Shui Po and Tin Shui Wai in late June 2013 to know more about the project and related child care services; and</p> <p>(c) NSCCP was a mutual-aid scheme instead of an employment project. Its objective was to foster community participation and mutual help in the neighbourhood, and provide needy families with flexible child care support service. The child care services under NSCCP were well received in the community.</p>	
020519 - 021052	Deputy Chairman Administration	The Deputy Chairman's views that –	

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	Chairman	<p>(a) there was a need to resume the operation of PMCs and single-parent centres, given that these centres helped to foster a sense of mutual support among new-arrivals and single parents;</p> <p>(b) the wide scope of services provided by IFSCs could not meet the specific needs of new-arrivals and single parents; and</p> <p>(c) planning should be carried out by the Steering Committee on Population Policy ("SCPP") for providing specific support for new-arrivals and single-parent families.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) IFSCs provided better co-ordination of family services to meet multiple needs of new-arrivals and single-parent families in a holistic manner;</p> <p>(b) there was no plan to resume the operation of PMCs and single-parent centres; and</p> <p>(c) SCPP planned to conduct public consultation to collect the community's views on various population issues.</p>	
021053 - 021418	Mr Frankie YICK Administration Chairman	<p>Mr Frankie YICK's views that while members belonging to the Liberal Party did not support a universal provision of assistance, they considered it necessary to enhance the support for new-arrivals and single-parent families facing financial hardship; and there was a need to make structural changes to the existing policies with a view to improving support services for these two groups of people.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <p>(a) whilst being the gatekeeper to ensure proper allocation of social resources, DSW could exercise discretion to waive the residence requirement in granting CSSA to applicants who were in genuine need of assistance;</p> <p>(b) DSW took into account all relevant factors of each case to establish whether there was a genuine hardship to justify the exercise of the discretion; and</p> <p>(c) the Administration recognized the need to review certain policies such as those relating to the optimization of the working</p>	

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		population, and would do so in CoP and SCPP.	
021419 - 022044	Chairman Administration	<p>The Chairman's requests that CoP should look into ways to help newly-arrived single parents to be eligible for CSSA and PRH even though they did not meet the residence requirement, as well as to find work; and the criteria for CRS should be relaxed so as to meet the housing needs of newly-arrived and single-parent families.</p> <p>The Administration's response that –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) under the existing PRH arrangements, if family members fulfilled all the eligibility criteria, including the income and asset tests, newly arrivals could immediately apply for PRH through registration on the Waiting List; (b) at the time of allocation, as long as half of the family members had resided in Hong Kong for a minimum of seven years and were still living in Hong Kong, the household was regarded as having satisfied the resident requirement and would be allocated PRH; and (c) CoP would, through the Special Needs Groups Task Force, give special attention to people with special needs, including new-arrivals and single parents. 	
<i>Agenda item IV – Any other business - Community Care Fund Project: To enhance the flat rate grant under the "Student Textbook Assistance Scheme" of the Student Financial Assistance Schemes and to enhance the assistance for needy students enrolling into below-sub-degree programmes</i>			
022045 - 022824	Chairman Administration	<p>The Administration's briefing on the following two proposals to be considered by CoP –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) enhancing the flat rate grant under the School Textbook Assistance Scheme; and (b) enhancing the financial assistance for needy students pursuing programmes below sub-degree level. 	
022825 - 022906	Chairman	The Chairman's reminder that the Chief Secretary for Administration, as Chairman of CoP, would be invited to brief the Subcommittee on the Commission on Poverty Summit and work progress of CoP and its Task Forces at a meeting to be held in October 2013.	

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
29 October 2013