

立法會
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Subcommittee on Poverty

Paper for the meeting on 22 December 2015

Proposed extension of work of Subcommittee on Poverty

Purpose

This paper seeks members' views on the need for the Subcommittee on Poverty ("the Subcommittee") to extend the period of its work until the end of the 2015-2016 session in mid-July 2016.

Background

2. The Subcommittee was appointed by the House Committee ("HC") in October 2012 to study relevant policies and measures for easing the disparity between the rich and the poor as well as alleviating poverty, follow up the work of the Government's Commission on Poverty ("CoP") and make timely recommendations.

Work of the Subcommittee

3. Since 5 November 2012, the Subcommittee has held 34 meetings with the Administration and received views from deputations at 18 of these meetings. Issues discussed by the Subcommittee include –

- (a) poverty line;
- (b) elderly poverty;
- (c) working poverty (including the Administration's proposed Low-income Working Family Allowance scheme);
- (d) measures to unleash labour force for increasing the grassroots income;
- (e) women in poverty;

- (f) alleviating poverty by developing community economy and bazaars;
- (g) promoting the development of social enterprises;
- (h) support for disadvantaged groups¹;
- (i) policy initiatives relating to CoP's work set out in the Chief Executive's 2014 and 2015 Policy Address;
- (j) work of CoP and its Task Forces;
- (k) injection of \$15 billion into CoP's Community Care Fund ("CCF") and work progress of CCF;
- (l) student financial assistance schemes for needy students of various education levels; and
- (m) relationship between housing and poverty.

4. The Subcommittee has completed two reports, one on poverty line and the other on working poverty, and forwarded them to CoP for consideration and response. In addition, a delegation of the Subcommittee had conducted a duty visit to Taiwan and Japan in 2013 to study their experience in alleviating poverty and the findings of the visit were discussed by the Subcommittee. The delegation's report, which contained the findings and the Subcommittee's deliberations, was subsequently prepared and a motion debate on the report was held at the Council meeting of 18 June 2014.

Need for continuation of work in the 2015-2016 session

5. The Subcommittee has yet to study the following issues which have been identified for its discussion –

- (a) social security system;
- (b) intergenerational poverty (including children and youth in poverty); and
- (c) relationship between public health condition and poverty.

¹ These groups include persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, new-arrivals and single-parent families.

6. The Subcommittee is tasked to follow up the work of CoP, the current term of which will expire on 30 June 2017. The Subcommittee therefore needs to continue monitoring the progress of CoP and its Task Forces in taking forward poverty alleviation initiatives. The Subcommittee will also study issues which have been discussed by CoP and its Task Forces.

7. Apart from the above work, the Subcommittee will be consulted prior to the Administration's launching of brand-new CCF programmes which are pilot in nature and the funding provision of which is expected to exceed \$100 million. The Subcommittee will also be briefed regularly on the funding position of CCF and the implementation progress of its programmes every six months.

Proposed extension of period of work

8. Rule 26(c) of the House Rules provides that if a subcommittee on a policy issue appointed by HC considers it necessary to work beyond 12 months of its commencement, it should report to HC and give justifications for an extension of the 12-month period. In accordance with the said House Rule, approval was previously given by HC at its meeting on 15 November 2013 for the Subcommittee to extend the period of its work until 18 January 2015. With further approval by HC at its meeting on 9 January 2015, the period of the Subcommittee's work has been further extended to 31 January 2016.

9. Having regard to the outstanding matters which need to be followed up by the Subcommittee as set out in paragraphs 5 to 7 above, members may wish to consider the need for the Subcommittee to continue to work for completing the tasks mentioned above. If members decide to do so, it is envisaged that the Subcommittee will need to continue its work for about 5.5 months until the end of the 2015-2016 session in mid-July 2016.

Advice sought

10. Members' views are sought on whether the Subcommittee should seek an extension of its work until mid-July 2016. Subject to members' views, the proposal will be submitted to HC for endorsement.