

The Legislative Council Meeting on 18 June 2014
Motion on ‘Report of the delegation of the Subcommittee on Poverty to study the experience of poverty alleviation in Taiwan and Japan’

Progress Report

Introduction

At the 18 June 2014 meeting of the Legislative Council, a Member moved and the Council passed the motion that it ‘notes the Report of the delegation of the Subcommittee on Poverty to study the experience of poverty alleviation in Taiwan and Japan’. During the motion debate, Members focused on the areas of working poor, retirement protection and community support. This paper sets out progress in these areas since the passage of the motion.

Working Poor

Low-income Working Family Allowance

2. The Low-Income Working Family Allowance (LIFA) has been proposed to provide financial assistance to low-income working families, particularly those with children. The design of the LIFA Scheme is to encourage self-reliance through employment and to promote upward mobility. While the Finance Committee (FC) of the Legislative Council approved at its 11 July 2014 meeting the manpower proposals necessary for taking forward the implementation of the LIFA Scheme, the funding requirements to plan and prepare for the implementation of the LIFA Scheme are awaiting FC’s consideration. We would require, barring unforeseeable circumstances, a lead time of 15 to 18 months after obtaining such funding approval before launching the LIFA Scheme.

Retirement Protection

3. Last year, the Commission on Poverty (CoP) commissioned a consultancy study by a team, with Professor Nelson Chow as the chief consultant, to assess various retirement protection schemes on the basis of the multi-pillar approach advocated by the World Bank and to make recommendations on the way forward. The Government has received the report submitted by the consultancy team and is internally studying it.

The Government will release the report in full immediately after the CoP has met to consider it in the first place.

Community Support

4. There are various ongoing and upcoming initiatives which help promote community support for the benefits of the needy.

Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund

5. For supporting poverty relief in Hong Kong, the Social Innovation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund Task Force under the CoP aims to engage committed and credible practitioners in the social innovation field as ‘intermediaries’ to help build an ecosystem conducive to social entrepreneurs and innovative ideas. The Task Force conducted an open invitation exercise from 28 February to 11 April 2014 for interested organisations to apply for becoming the first batch of intermediaries focusing on ‘Capacity Building’ and/or ‘Innovative Programmes’. Over 40 proposals were received. Selected intermediaries will be appointed once assessments are completed.

Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged

6. The Government plans to inject \$400 million into the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged (PFD) which was established in 2005 to further encourage cross-sectoral collaboration in launching welfare projects catering for various needs of the disadvantaged. Of this sum, \$200 million will be dedicated to launching more after-school learning and support programmes for primary and secondary students from grassroots families. Having consulted the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services on the injection proposal in July 2014, we plan to seek FC’s approval to increase the commitment for PFD by \$400 million in the fourth quarter of 2014. Subject to funding approval by FC, we will publicise the dedicated fund to welfare non-governmental organisations and schools through briefing sessions, press release as well as district social welfare offices, and invite their applications for the dedicated fund for launching after-school learning and support programmes.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
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