

**立法會**  
***Legislative Council***

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seen by the Administration)

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**Finance Committee of the Legislative Council**

**Minutes of the 34<sup>th</sup> meeting**  
**held at Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex**  
**on Saturday, 12 July 2014, at 2:30 pm**

**Members present:**

Hon NG Leung-sing, SBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Dr Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP  
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH  
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP, PhD, RN  
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, GBS, JP  
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, SBS, JP  
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP  
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP  
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP  
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che  
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS  
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP

Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP  
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Hon WONG Yuk-man  
Hon Claudia MO  
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP  
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP  
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin  
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming  
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH  
Hon YIU Si-wing  
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai  
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP  
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP  
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen  
Hon CHAN Han-pan, JP  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP  
Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, JP  
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung  
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan  
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, JP  
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
Hon TANG Ka-piu, JP  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP  
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

**Members absent:**

Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP  
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP  
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC  
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau  
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP

Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Kenneth LEUNG  
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung  
Hon Dennis KWOK  
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP  
Hon IP Kin-yuen  
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan

**Public officers attending:**

Ms Elizabeth TSE Man-yee, JP	Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Ms Esther LEUNG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1
Mr Alfred ZHI Jian-hong	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Mr Kevin YEUNG Yun-hung, JP	Under Secretary for Education
Mr Wallace LAU	Acting Deputy Secretary for Education (1)
Ms Pecvin YONG Pui-wan	Acting Deputy Secretary for Education (1)
Miss Susie HO, JP	Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology)
Mr Joe WONG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology)
Mr Edward TO	Principal Assistant Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology) A
Mr TAI Keen-man, JP	Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Programmes)
Miss Leonia TAI, JP	Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Developments)
Mr LEUNG Chi-wah	Head (Engineering), Radio Television Hong Kong

Miss Agnes WONG Tin-yu, JP	Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing)
Mr Anson LAI Yat-ching	Assistant Director of Housing (Strategic planning)
Mr CHIU Pak-lung	Acting Chief Manager (Management) (Support Services 2), Housing Department
Mrs Julie MA LEUNG Lai-fun	Acting Chief Manager (Management) (Support Services 2), Housing Department
Miss Maria LAU	Acting Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)
Mr NG Wai-kuen	Chief Social Security Officer (Social Security) 1, Social Welfare Department
Ms Gracie FOO Siu-wai, JP	Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)
Mr Vincent FUNG Hao-yin	Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic Affairs) 1

**Clerk in attendance:**

Mr Andy LAU	Assistant Secretary General 1
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**Staff in attendance:**

Mr Derek LO	Chief Council Secretary (1)5
Mr Daniel SIN	Senior Council Secretary (1)7
Mr Ken WOO	Senior Council Secretary (1)5
Miss Queenie LAM	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)2
Mr Frankie WOO	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3
Ms Christy YAU	Legislative Assistant (1)7

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Action

**Item No. 12 – FCR(2014-15)15**

**HEAD 156 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT : EDUCATION BUREAU**

**Subhead 700 General Non-recurrent**

**New Item "Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme"**

**Subhead 000 Operational expenses**

**HEAD 173 – STUDENT FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE AGENCY**  
**Subhead 000 Operational expenses**

The meeting continued to deliberate on the item.

Necessity of the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme

2. Pointing out that the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme ("MUSSS") provided an additional pathway for school leavers, Ms Starry LEE, Mr YIU Si-wing, Mr Tony TSE, Dr LAM Tai-fai and Mr MA Fung-kwok supported the proposal. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok and Mr Jeffery LAM relayed the Business and Professionals Alliance for Hong Kong's support for the proposal. Ir Dr LO and Mr YIU Si-wing further opined that Mainland universities provided more types of academic programmes than their counterparts in Hong Kong, which facilitated the diversification of local tertiary education.

3. Mr WONG Yuk-man considered that the academic standards of the Mainland universities were low and plagiarism occurred even in some famous universities. Pointing out that the academia and the mass media in the Mainland served the Chinese Communist Party, Mr WONG was concerned about the effectiveness of MUSSS and whether MUSSS would cause Hong Kong's universities to admit more undergraduates from the Mainland given that a number of local talents would leave Hong Kong to study in the Mainland under MUSSS. On academic standards, Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok pointed out that the Mainland ranked the second and the fifth internationally in terms of the number of research papers published internationally and the number of citations of papers.

4. Ms Claudia MO opposed the proposal and questioned its effectiveness. Ms MO was dissatisfied that in view of the fact that more and more tertiary education places were taken up by applicants from the Mainland, the Administration encouraged local talents to study in the Mainland by launching MUSSS instead of increasing the number of subsidized tertiary education places in Hong Kong. She was also concerned that successful applicants of MUSSS studying programmes in education and journalism would be subject to the Mainland's influence and there would be adverse impact if such graduates worked in the education sector or mass media of Hong Kong. The confrontation between Hong Kong and the Mainland might further be intensified. Ms MO pointed out that Mainland people studying in local universities for a number of reasons including more freedom, the existence of an international environment, better education in English and the opportunities to stay in Hong Kong. Ms MO also lamented that MUSSS categorized young

people in Hong Kong as students from the better-off families could study in overseas universities while students from the grass-root families had to study in the Mainland. She further pointed out that Mainland universities might need to provide preferential treatment for successful applicants of MUSSS.

5. Dr LAM Tai-fai, Mr Jeffrey LAM, Ms Starry LEE and Mr MA Fung-kwok considered it inappropriate to politicize the proposal by equating it as providing brainwashing education in the Mainland. Mr Jeffrey LAM further pointed out that participants of MUSSS could improve their Putonghua. Many overseas universities had also organized exchange programmes in the Mainland for their students.

#### Implementation of the Mainland University Study Subsidy Scheme and the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions

6. Mr Michael TIEN supported the proposal. He pointed out that he had met a number of Hong Kong students studying in Mainland higher education institutions like the Tsinghua University and they thought that studying in the Mainland would benefit their work and further studies in both Hong Kong and the Mainland, and could help them to establish personal networks. He learnt that in the academic year 2013/14, over 1 000 Hong Kong students were admitted by Mainland higher education institutions under the Scheme for Admission of Hong Kong Students to Mainland Higher Education Institutions ("the Admission Scheme"). However, only around 300 to 400 successful applicants actually accepted the offers. Observing that only half of the participating institutions of the Admission Scheme were institutions under "Project 211" (which were top notch universities in the Mainland), Mr TIEN enquired whether most of the successful applicants of the Admission Scheme accepted offers of institutions under "Project 211" only. He considered that the Admission Scheme should cover more higher education institutions under "Project 211" and enquired whether the Administration had a timetable on the issue. He enquired whether the Administration had directly liaised with institutions under "Project 211", and if so, about the progress.

7. While agreeing that the Administration should eventually increase the number of local tertiary education places, Dr LAM Tai-fai opined that MUSSS could serve as an interim measure to relieve the existing heavy demand on tertiary education. Dr LAM was of the view that the Administration should enhance MUSSS by catering for the needs of and promoting bi-literacy and tri-lingualism among students and step up publicity on MUSSS and the Admission Scheme. Dr LAM also urged the Administration to liaise with the Ministry of Education of the People's

Republic of China ("MoE") and relevant parties at regional level of the Mainland so that MUSSS could include more institutions under "Project 211" as local students had lower preference for institutions in the second and third-tier cities or distant provinces, where the cultural differences were greater. However, it would be more appropriate to enhance MUSSS in phases. For instance, MUSSS might suffer from under-enrolment if all institutions under "Project 211" were included in the Admission Scheme in one go. Dr LAM further opined that senior Government officials might set examples by sending their children to study in the Mainland.

8. Mr MA Fung-kwok opined that the Admission Scheme should increase the number of participating institutions by covering higher education institutions jointly established by local and Mainland universities as Hong Kong people had more confidence in these institutions. Pointing out that the proposal could partially relieve the heavy demand on local tertiary education and that Renminbi might continue to appreciate, Mr MA suggested that both the number of places and the amount of subsidy of MUSSS should be increased.

9. Under Secretary for Education ("USED") responded that the Administration was aware that successful applicants of the Admission Scheme tended to accept offers of institutions under "Project 211" or institutions in large cities in the Mainland. Acting Deputy Secretary for Education (1) ("Ag. DS(ED)1") supplemented that the Administration would liaise with the relevant parties so that the Admission Scheme would include more higher education institutions under "Project 211" and "Project 985". While the Administration mainly liaised with the MoE, it would also contact relevant parties of the Mainland at regional level and relay views and suggestions to MoE as appropriate. Ag. DS(ED)1 stressed that the existing list of participating institutions of the Admission Scheme had catered for the needs of various types of students. For instance, some participating institutions outside "Project 211" actually provided programmes in certain specialized/professional fields like music and fashion design. The Administration would try to add both institutions under "Project 211" and other institutions to the Admission Scheme's list of participating institutions as appropriate. At Mr Michael TIEN's request, USED undertook to provide relevant information on the Admission Scheme in the academic year 2013/14, including acceptance of offers by successful applicants.

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10. Pointing out that the public was generally unaware of the fact that higher education institutions under "Project 211" were the top notch institutions in the Mainland, Dr LAM Tai-fai called on the Administration to step up its publicity (especially at secondary school level) and organize more

exchange tours in the Mainland. He considered that the Administration should carefully implement MUSSS, which might have substantial potential. Dr LAM further referred to the suggestion of some members of the Panel on Education ("ED Panel") that MUSSS should be opened up for supporting Hong Kong students studying in Macau and Taiwan. He also opined that the Admission Scheme should not be regarded as a "national education programme" or an "enhance course in Putonghua". It could actually supplement local tertiary education as the Mainland institutions offered more programmes in certain specialized/professional fields like Chinese medicine. Dr LAM called on the Administration to convey such message in promoting MUSSS and the Admission Scheme.

11. In response to Ms Starry LEE's enquiry about whether the Administration would implement subsidy schemes for self-financing undergraduate programmes and associate degree programmes, USED remarked that it was envisaged that nearly 70% of Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education ("HKDSE") candidates attaining the relevant admission requirements would be able to enroll for University Grants Committee ("UGC")-funded and self-financing post-secondary programmes in the academic year 2016/17.

12. Pointing out that some local outbound tour escorts enjoyed better careers by applying for relevant licences in the Mainland, Mr YIU Si-wing opined that Hong Kong should not overlook the Mainland market. He also suggested that the Administration should implement similar subsidy scheme for other industries like tourism.

#### Adoption of means test for the Scheme

13. Mr Tony TSE and Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok enquired about the reason for adopting the means test applicable to secondary students (with two tiers of assistance) instead of the one applicable to post-secondary students (with five tiers of assistance) for MUSSS. Mr TSE also asked when the last review on means test applicable to secondary students was conducted.

14. Ag. DS(ED)1 responded that MUSSS adopted the means test applicable to secondary students instead of the one applicable to post-secondary students because the amount of subsidy involved was relatively small and that if the latter was adopted, some successful applicants might only receive a subsidy of just a few hundred HK dollars. He undertook to provide information on the time of last review on the former.



15. Dr Helena WONG recalled that when the proposal was discussed by ED Panel, a number of Panel members pointed out that most applicants of MUSSS would come from the grass-roots families. Dr WONG questioned the necessity of conducting means test given that most applications would likely be approved and pointed out that the personnel cost saved by dropping the means test could be used to provide additional subsidized places under MUSSS. Dr WONG also urged the Administration to minimize the proposal's administrative costs.

16. USED responded that the means test was necessary as MUSSS involved the use of public money. It was envisaged that there would be an upward trend in both the number of Hong Kong people studying in Mainland higher institutions and the number of places under MUSSS. Apart from conducting means test, holders of the proposed three time-limited civil service posts would liaise with both the participating Mainland institutions and successful applicants studying in the Mainland. In response to Dr Helena WONG's view that the Administration should consider abolishing the means test for MUSSS if the majority of applications in the first year were approved, USED reiterated that relevant procedures including the means test had to be in place to ensure the prudent use of public money. The background of applicants might also vary from year to year. Nevertheless, the Administration would review MUSSS to formulate measures to minimize the administrative costs.

#### Recognition of academic qualifications awarded by overseas universities

17. Mr WU Chi-wai pointed out that a number of graduates of overseas and Mainland universities had applied for recognition of academic qualifications and enquired whether the Administration would, based on the results of such applications, provide a list of overseas and Mainland universities by which the academic qualifications awarded would be recognized in Hong Kong. Mr WU also enquired whether it was necessary for individual graduates of overseas and Mainland universities to submit applications for recognition of academic qualifications if applications submitted by graduates of the universities concerned had been successful in the past.

18. USED explained that each application for recognition of academic qualifications had to be considered on a case-by-case basis. The approving authority would consider a number of factors including the institutions, programmes and actual courses taken by the applicants. As institutions might change the structures of their academic programmes from time to time, the approving authority would not process an application by solely making

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reference to the results of relevant applications in the past. Mr WU Chi-wai was perplexed by the Administration's response, which seemed to him to imply that graduates of certain prestigious universities like the Oxford University and the Cambridge University had to apply for recognition of academic qualifications. He requested the Administration to provide a list of overseas and Mainland universities of which the applications for recognition of academic qualifications in Hong Kong had been successful.

19. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. At the request of Mr CHAN Chi-chuen, the Chairman ordered a division. The Chairman announced that 41 members voted for and 5 members voted against the item. One member abstained from voting. Individual voting results were as follows –

*For:*

Mr Albert HO Chun-yan  
Mr CHAN Kam-lam  
Mr TAM Yiu-chung  
Mr Frederick FUNG Kin-kee  
Prof Joseph LEE Kok-long  
Mr Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen  
Ms Cyd HO Sau-lan  
Dr LAM Tai-fai  
Dr Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun  
Mr WONG Kwok-kin  
Mr Michael TIEN Puk-sun  
Mr Frankie YICK Chi-ming  
Mr YIU Si-wing  
Mr Charles Peter MOK  
Miss CHAN Yuen-han  
Dr Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung  
Dr Helena WONG Pik-wan  
Mr Martin LIAO Cheung-kong  
Mr TANG Ka-piu  
Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok  
Mr Tony TSE Wai-chuen  
(41 members)

Mr LEE Cheuk-yan  
Ms Emily LAU Wai-hing  
Mr Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan  
Mr WONG Kwok-hing  
Mr Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung  
Mr WONG Ting-kwong  
Ms Starry LEE Wai-king  
Mr CHAN Hak-kan  
Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che  
Mr Alan LEONG Kah-kit  
Mr Steven HO Chun-yin  
Mr WU Chi-wai  
Mr MA Fung-kwok  
Mr CHAN Han-pan  
Miss Alice MAK Mei-kuen  
Mr SIN Chung-kai  
Dr Elizabeth QUAT  
Mr POON Siu-ping  
Dr CHIANG Lai-wan  
Mr Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun

*Against:*

Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Mr WONG Yuk-man  
Mr CHAN Chi-chuen  
(5 members)

Mr Albert CHAN Wai-yip  
Mr Gary FAN Kwok-wai

*Abstained:*  
Ms Claudia MO  
(1 member)

20. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

**Item No. 13 – FCR(2014-15)3**  
**HEAD 156 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT :**  
**EDUCATION BUREAU**  
**Subhead 700 General non-recurrent**  
**New Item "Qualifications Framework Fund"**

21. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval of a new commitment of \$1 billion for establishing the Qualifications Framework ("QF") Fund.

22. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, Chairman of the Panel on Manpower, reported that the Panel was consulted on the proposal on 27 January 2014. Panel members did not oppose to the proposal in principle. Some Panel members were concerned about the usage of QF Fund and the relevant recurrent expenditure, and requested the Administration to elaborate in the paper for FC the proposed usage of QF Fund. Mr LEE also declared that the Education Foundation of Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions had applied funding from QF Support Schemes for QF-related work.

Benefits of the Qualifications Framework for the labour sector

23. Mr TANG Ka-piu declared that he had been a member of the Committee on Recognition of Prior Learning ("RPL") Subcommittee under the Automotive Industry Training Advisory Committee ("ITAC"). While pointing out that QF and RPL might enhance the status of some practical and "non-academic" industries, Mr TANG relayed the concerns of the labour sector about QF. Firstly, the salaries and social status of industry practitioners participating in QF might not be raised and the Administration should conduct research and assessment on the issue. Besides, some employers might require their employees to take relevant training courses to obtain relevant recognition under QF without raising the employees' salaries. Employees without relevant recognition under QF might also find it more difficult to seek jobs. Thirdly, some industries (like the automotive industry) that had implemented the RPL mechanism might still encounter difficulties in staff recruitment.

24. Acting Deputy Secretary for Education (1) ("DS(ED)1") responded that QF aimed at promoting lifelong learning with a view to continuously enhancing the quality, professionalism and competitiveness of the workforce and it might not be appropriate to assess QF's effectiveness solely by examining changes in the salaries of the participants of QF. The Administration was aware that some employers would take RPL qualifications into account in conducting their employees' performance appraisals. While participation in QF was voluntary, the Administration hoped that QF would have a wider coverage so that more employers and employees could gain its benefits. DS(ED)1 added that the Administration was not aware of any case where an employee was not employed owing to the lack of RPL qualifications. On the other hand, the Administration noted that some recruitment advertisements mentioned elements of QF, which provided alternative qualifications for people to apply for the jobs. People without the relevant academic background might apply for such jobs as long as they had obtained the QF-recognised qualifications.

25. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan conveyed the support of Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong for the proposal, which facilitated the upward mobility of the youth by providing promotion ladders. Pointing out that certain employers in the beauty industry might not raise the salaries of practitioners in the industry despite their having obtained the relevant qualifications under QF, Dr CHIANG called on the Administration to step up publicity of QF. Dr CHIANG also enquired whether the Administration would set an example by adding QF elements to the recruitment advertisements for civil service jobs and raising the starting salaries of its new staff with the relevant qualifications under QF.

26. DS(ED)1 responded that while the Education Bureau was examining the issue of adopting QF elements in civil service's recruitment advertisements, in consultation with the Civil Service Bureau, the unique features of the civil service should be taken into account. Meanwhile, the Administration would step up the promotion of QF, particularly in industries in which ITAC was established. A rising trend in the use of QF by employers was observed.

27. Mrs Regina IP supported QF as it enhanced the quality, professionalism and competitiveness of the workforce. Pointing out that Hong Kong had the potential to become a beauty and hairdressing hub in the region, Mrs IP enquired whether the Beauty industry and the Hairdressing industry were covered by QF. She also enquired whether the standards set under QF were in line with international standards.

28. DS(ED)1 responded that the Beauty industry and the Hairdressing industry had established their own ITACs. The RPL mechanism for the Beauty industry was recently launched on 2 July 2014. DS(ED)1 added that while QF was a local recognition system and did not need to benchmark with the relevant international standards, individual industry could determine the qualification requirements having regard to the prevailing circumstances.

Using the Qualifications Framework to tackle the shortage of labour in specific tasks

29. Mr Michael TIEN pointed out that there was a shortage of labour in certain tasks which under the Government's regulation could only be performed by qualified persons. Mr TIEN considered that these tasks could be placed under QF to increase the potential supply of labour in the related fields. For instance, there was an acute shortage of registered nurses in residential care homes for the elderly ("RCHE") sector for performing the task of "Two Tubes and One Injection" ("TTOI"). Mr TIEN called on the Administration to consider placing TTOI under QF to tackle the shortage of frontline staff.

30. DS(ED)1 responded the Elderly Care Service ("ECS") had already established its own ITAC, in which a representative from the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") was one of the members. ECS ITAC had drawn up the draft Specification of Competency Standards ("SCS") for various kinds of tasks in the industry and could liaise with the relevant government departments, including SWD, as necessary. In response to Mr Michael TIEN's remark that representatives of ECS ITAC had approached him pointing out the Administration's reluctance to consider the suggestion he mentioned, USED pointed out that the requirements for performing TTOI had to be clarified first before deciding its interface with QF.

31. Prof Joseph LEE supported the establishment of QF Fund and noted that a number of new measures would be implemented upon its establishment as set out in FCR(2014-15)3. Referring to Mr Michael TIEN's view on TTOI, Prof LEE pointed out that ECS ITAC had discussed the relevant issue. He considered it inappropriate to add TTOI to QF in a broad-brush approach. Prof LEE hoped that QF could benefit different industries and considered that the Administration should report the benefits of QF in various industries to the relevant Panels of the Legislative Council.

Future development of the Qualifications Framework

32. Mr POON Siu-ping declared that the Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions assisted in the implementation of the RPL mechanism for the Chinese catering industry. Mr POON sought details on the future development of QF including the number of new industries to be included. Mr POON also enquired when QF Fund would be exhausted.

33. DS(ED)1 responded that the Cross-Industry Training Advisory Committee for the Human Resource Management sector under QF was recently established on 1 July 2014, which brought the number of ITACs to 20 and increased their coverage from 46 % to 48 % of the workforce in Hong Kong. DS(ED)1 added that as set out in the proposal, the actual annual expenditure of the Qualification Framework Support Scheme varied from \$5 million to \$29.4 million in the period from 2008-09 to 2013-14, which was lower than the estimated annual investment income of QF Fund of around \$50 million. Part of the annual investment income of QF Fund could be used to perform new tasks like stepping up support to ITACs, promoting QF and conducting QF-related studies/projects.

34. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

**Item No. 14 – FCR(2014-15)14**

**HEAD 160 – RADIO TELEVISION HONG KONG**

**Subhead 603 – Plant, Vehicles and Equipment**

**New Commitment "Establishment of Fill-in Stations for the Digital Terrestrial Television Service of Radio Television Hong Kong"**

35. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval of a new commitment of \$64.2 million for establishment of fill-in stations for the digital terrestrial television ("DTT") service of Radio Television Hong Kong ("RTHK").

36. Mr WONG Yuk-man, Chairman of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting, reported that the Panel was consulted on the proposal on 9 December 2013 and 10 March 2014. The majority of Panel members supported the proposal. Some members called on the Administration to increase the penetration rate of RTHK's DTT service.

37. Noting that the network coverage of RTHK's DTT service would extend to 99% of Hong Kong's population, Dr LAM Tai-fai enquired whether the network coverage could be extended to 100% of Hong Kong's population, and if not, the reasons for not doing so.

38. Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology) responded that it would be difficult to achieve complete network coverage given Hong Kong's hilly terrain. Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Developments) supplemented that the attainment of complete network coverage, while technically possible, would require the establishment of a large number of fill-in stations. The coverage of 99% of population achieved by the existing proposal would match that of the commercial DTT broadcasters. In the long run, RTHK would explore the feasibility of achieving 100% network coverage of Hong Kong's population.

39. Mr Albert CHAN cautioned that upon the implementation of the proposal, the Administration should avoid the occurrence of the scenario that some places in Hong Kong were able to receive signals of the Mainland network but not that of RTHK.

40. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

**Item No. 15 – FCR(2014-15)19**

**RECOMMENDATION OF THE PUBLIC WORKS  
SUBCOMMITTEE MADE ON 19 MARCH 2014**

41. The Chairman said that the item sought the Committee's approval of the recommendation of the Public Works Subcommittee made at its meeting on 19 March 2014.

42. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

**Item No. 16 – FCR(2014-15)27**

**HEAD 62 – HOUSING DEPARTMENT**

**Subhead 700 General non-recurrent**

**New Item "Special rent payment for public housing tenants"**

**HEAD 170 – SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT**

**Subhead 700 General non-recurrent**

**New Item "Additional provision for social security recipients"**

43. The Chairman said that the item sought the Committee's approval of –

- (a) a new non-recurrent commitment of \$1,063 million for the provision of one month's rent for tenants/licencees living in the public rental units of the Hong Kong Housing Authority ("HA") and the Hong Kong Housing Society ("HKHS"); and
- (b) a new non-recurrent commitment of \$2,674 million for the provision of an extra payment to Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") recipients equal to one month of the CSSA standard rates, and an extra payment to Old Age Allowance (including those payable under the Guangdong Scheme), Old Age Living Allowance and Disability Allowance recipients equal to one month of the allowances.

44. Mr WONG Kwok-hing, Chairman of the Panel on Housing, reported that the Panel discussed the rent payment proposal on 7 April 2014. Panel members supported the proposal. However, some Panel members pointed out that some tenants of public rental housing ("PRH") were greatly dissatisfied with the Administration's decision to pay only one month's rent as opposed to two in previous Budgets. Some Panel members called on the Administration to launch on-going measures to relieve the burden of applicants on the waiting list of PRH who were not CSSA recipients.

45. Miss CHAN Yuen-han, Chairman of the Panel on Welfare Services, reported that the Panel discussed the proposals on the one-off relief measures for social security recipients on 12 May 2014. Panel members supported the proposals. Some members urged the Administration to regularize similar one-off relief measures.

46. Mr WONG Kwok-hing supported the proposals and hoped that they could be implemented quickly. He called on members to expedite the scrutiny of the remaining funding proposals.

47. Mr James TIEN relayed the Liberal Party's support for the proposals. He considered it inappropriate to regularize the one-off relief measures as the Administration might need to raise tax to maintain such measures during the economic downturn.



Coverage of the rent payment proposal

48. Noting that the proposal on rent payment would only cover tenants/licencees living in the public rental units of HA and HKHS, Mr Frederick FUNG enquired why tenants/licencees living in the Tai Hang Sai Estate ("THSE"), which was a private housing estate providing rental flats for low-income families and owned and managed by the Hong Kong Settlers Housing Corporation Limited ("HKSHCL"), were not covered by the proposal. Mr FUNG considered that the rent payment proposal should extend to tenants/licencees living in THSE given that similar rent payment proposals announced in the past Budgets (as one of the one-off relief measures) were gradually extended to HKHS tenants/licencees.

49. Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Housing) ("DS(H)") responded that the estimated one-off expenditure incurred in the one month's rent payment for HA and HKHS tenants/licencees were \$1.12 billion and \$51 million respectively. As HKSHCL was a private company and the nature of tenants/licencees of THSE was different from those of HA and HKHS, the rent payment proposal did not cover THSE. DS(H) added that as the tenants/licencees of HA and tenants of the HKHS Group A estates were similar in nature, the rent payment proposal also covered HKHS tenants/licencees.

Adequacy of the proposed relief measures

50. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan relayed the Labour Party's request for reviewing whether the existing CSSA Scheme was sufficient to cover its recipients' basic living expenditures and the need of setting up universal retirement protection for all people in Hong Kong.

51. Acting Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration), Social Welfare Department ("Atg DDSW(Adm)") responded that in drawing up the one-off relief measures to be included in 2014-15 Budget, the Financial Secretary ("FS") had taken into account the series of recurrent measures introduced by Government earlier to help the grassroots, the economic outlook for the 2014-15 financial year, especially a slight slowdown in inflation, and the financial position in the 2013-14 financial year. The Administration considered the package of one-off relief measures proposed in 2014-15 Budget adequate. Atg DDSW(Adm) added that payment rates under CSSA and the Social Security Allowance Scheme were adjusted annually in accordance with the established mechanism to maintain the purchasing power of the recipients. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan opined that the Administration, in adjusting the payment rates under CSSA Scheme, should not only focus on changes in the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices but also consider the actual needs of the

recipients (such as their need for using the Internet). The Chairman suggested that Mr LEE should pursue the issue at the Panel on Welfare Services.

52. Mr WONG Yuk-man was dissatisfied with the Administration's proposal to pay only one month's rent as opposed to two in previous Budgets. Mr WONG pointed out that the living standard of the grass-roots community was actually declining. He was also concerned about the HA's decision to raise the rent of PRH by 10% without providing any waiver. Pointing out that the Administration enjoyed a substantial fiscal reserve, Mr WONG considered it the duty of the Administration to help the needy in the society and that the grass-roots should not be made to "beg" for assistance.

53. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung shared Mr WONG Yuk-man's views given HA's decision to increase PRH rent by 10%. He opined that the recent increase in PRH rent by the HA was attributed to the introduction of the rent adjustment mechanism in 2008 under which PRH rent could be adjusted upwards or downwards according to changes in the household income of PRH tenants. He also questioned about the rationale for waiving rates for the first two quarters of 2014-15 given that people required to pay rates were usually the better-off.

54. DS(H) pointed out that the rent payment proposal and the rent review for PRH were two separate issues and that FS had explained the rationale for paying one month's rent in the 2014-15 Budget. DS(H) considered that she was not in a position to explain the rationale for FS's other one-off relief measures such as the waiving of rates.

55. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

#### **Item No. 17 – FCR(2014-15)20**

#### **Head 53 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT :**

#### **HOME AFFAIRS BUREAU**

#### **Subhead 700 General non-recurrent**

#### **New Item "Multi-faceted Excellence Scholarship"**

56. The Chairman said that the item sought the Committee's approval of the creation of a new commitment of \$100 million under Head 53 – Government Secretariat: Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") to establish a Multi-faceted Excellence Scholarship ("the Scholarship").

57. Mr MA Fung-kwok, Chairman of the Panel on Home Affairs ("HA Panel"), reported that the Panel discussed the proposal on 24 March 2014. A number of Panel members expressed support for the proposal. Some Panel members suggested that the Administration should increase the annual number of scholarship places. Some Panel members called on the Administration to encourage universities and tertiary institutions to admit students who had excellent non-academic achievements yet whose examination results did not meet the basic university admission requirements.

#### Implementation of the Multi-faceted Excellence Scholarship

58. Dr LAM Tai-fai supported the proposal. He was concerned about the adequacy of the number of scholarship places (which was set at around 20 per year) and enquired whether it could be increased. Pointing out that members of the Assessment Panel ("AP") might not be familiar with all the three areas of multi-faceted excellence, namely, sport, arts and/or community service, and might tend to nominate candidates in the area with which they were familiar, Dr LAM was concerned about whether the scholarship places could be allocated in an impartial manner and suggested that a quota should be set for each of the three areas of multi-faceted excellence.

59. Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1) ("DSHA(1)") responded that in formulating the Scholarship, the Administration had consulted relevant stakeholders including the Commission on Youth, the Heads of Universities Committee and the regional school heads associations. It was considered appropriate that the Scholarship would start at about 20 scholarship places per year. The Administration would review the Scholarship, including the number of scholarship places, after it had been operated for two to three years' time. DSHA(1) added that as the profile of the candidates and AP's decision were uncertain at the application stage, it would not be appropriate to set a quota on each area of multi-faceted excellence. Besides, each secondary school principal would be allowed to nominate only one HKDSE student in their school and the secondary school principal would know the most suitable candidate in the school.

60. Noting that nomination by secondary school principals would be invited before end-2014, Dr LAM Tai-fai sought details of AP's composition including the total number of members, whether a set of objective criteria on the selection of members would be compiled and whether the Administration already had preferred candidates.

61. DSHA(1) responded that AP would consist of around four to five members coming from the fields of education, sport, arts and community

service. The Administration would select AP members prudently upon approval of the proposal.

62. Mr WONG Yuk-man and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung held the view that the number of scholarship places should be increased. Pointing out that the quality of programmes run by self-financing tertiary institutions varied greatly, Mr WONG suggested that the Scholarship should specify certain conditions like completion of the programmes chosen so that the relevant resources would not be wasted.

63. DSHA(1) responded that members' views on the sufficiency of scholarship places would be taken into account when the Scholarship was reviewed. She stressed that the Scholarship allowed students to select their preferred programmes and their choices would be respected. DSHA(1) added that the existing UGC-funded institutions might not provide programmes in certain specialized areas and awardees might need to select programmes run by self-financing tertiary institutions. Awardees were required to fulfill certain criteria including the basic university admission requirements and any further requirements stipulated by individual faculties/departments. It was envisaged that most awardees would be able to complete the programmes chosen. While some awardees might need to apply for suspension to participate in competitions/events, many tertiary institutions had experience in making the relevant arrangements.

64. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen was concerned about whether a set of objective criteria would be provided for the area of community service. He enquired whether a person not participating in the community service organized by traditional organizations like the Red Cross or promoting social movements (like being an active member of the Scholarism) would be considered.

65. DSHA(1) responded that applicants and referees in the area of community service could specify relevant information in the application forms including the serving institutions, nature, time and targets of the community service. While agreeing that the provision of scholarship on the basis of community service was a relatively new measure, DSHA(1) pointed out that the Administration and the community had relevant experience like the Outstanding Youth Commendation Scheme jointly organized by the Commission on Youth and HAB. The guideline on the Scholarship to be released in due course would not restrict the scope of activities or the serving institutions.

Autonomy of the tertiary sector in admission

66. While supporting the proposal, Dr Kenneth CHAN stressed that universities' autonomy in admission should be respected. Dr CHAN opined that AP should recommend more than 20 nominees as some nominees might not be able to attain basic university admission requirements or any further requirements stipulated by individual faculties/departments. The Administration should let the public know that the universities would play a gate-keeping role.

67. DSHA(1) confirmed that AP would recommend more than 20 nominees. She also pointed out that the Scholarship would not impose a stringent upper limit of 20 scholarship places. There might be more than 20 awardees in practice.

68. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was concerned that the relevant tertiary institutions might admit awardees unconditionally given that no additional resources would be incurred on them. Mr LEUNG also suggested that the transparency of the award of scholarship should be enhanced.

69. DSHA(1) responded that AP would come up with more than 20 nominees and the tertiary institutions would decide whether to admit the nominees. If deemed necessary, the universities might conduct further interviews with the nominees to assess whether they had the aptitude for the programme chosen. It was envisaged that the universities would give conditional offers to the nominees that they intended to admit, which meant that the offers would be conditional upon the nominees attaining basic university admission requirements or any further requirements stipulated by individual faculties/departments.

70. There being no further questions from members, the Chairman put the item to vote. The Chairman declared that the Committee approved the item.

71. The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat  
11 November 2014