

**For discussion on
23 January 2014**

LC Paper No. CB(2)704/13-14(02)

Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services

2014 Policy Address

Policy Initiatives of the Home Affairs Bureau

INTRODUCTION

This paper briefs members on details of the policy commitments in respect of the Family Council, social enterprise (SE) and Community Care Fund (CCF) in the Chief Executive's 2014 Policy Address.

OUR VISION

2. Cherishing the family is a core value of our community. We strive to collaborate with various sectors in the community to create a pro-family environment. On SEs, some of them have successfully established a solid footing in Hong Kong and have diversified in their business and social objectives. Capitalizing on this success, we will collaborate with the Social Enterprise Advisory Committee (SEAC) and implement various support measures while running the Enhancing Self-reliance Through District Partnership (ESR) Programme in the coming year, so as to encourage SEs to continue to develop and scale up. As regards the CCF, it will take account of the needs of different groups and launch more assistance programmes to support the underprivileged and low-income families.

NEW INITIATIVES

20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family

3. 2014 marks the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family (IYF)¹. The themes for the 20th anniversary of the IYF, as

¹ The International Year of the Family was first promulgated by the United Nations in 1994.

adopted by the United Nations, will focus on exploring family-oriented policies and strategies aiming at (a) alleviating family poverty; (b) ensuring work-family balance; and (c) advancing social integration and intergenerational solidarity.

4. The Family Council, in collaboration with relevant stakeholders including the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region, will organise the following activities to echo the themes of the IYF –

- (a) a series of territory-wide publicity programmes throughout the year of 2014 to underline the importance of family;
- (b) a Family Symposium to be held on the International Day of Families on 15 May 2014 and a regional symposium in the fourth quarter of 2014 to raise public awareness on family-related issues and promote intergenerational solidarity and work-family balance; and
- (c) production of family education packages to address the needs of young families and New Arrival families for release in the third quarter of 2014.

Community Care Fund

5. Since its establishment in 2011, the CCF has launched 24 assistance programmes to identify and provide assistance to those who fall outside the existing social safety net or the coverage of the Government's short-term relief measures. As at end December 2013, more than 600 000 people have benefited under these programmes, which involved a total commitment of about \$2.9 billion. In addition, CCF programmes, which are proven to have effective poverty alleviation impact or are meeting the needs of the target beneficiaries, will be incorporated into the Government's regular assistance and service. So far, three CCF programmes have been regularised. Starting from April this year, the Government will progressively regularise another seven programmes.

6. Taking into account the views of the public and stakeholders, the CCF Task Force under the Commission on Poverty (CoP) will make good use of the CCF's resources to launch more appropriate

programmes in collaboration with other task forces under the CoP. To further enhance support to low-income people, the Government invites the CCF to consider launching various assistance programmes to address the needs of different beneficiary groups. This includes the provision of a one-off subsidy again to low-income households not living in public rental housing and not receiving the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance in the coming year.

ON-GOING INITIATIVES

Family Council

(i) Family Perspectives in Policy Formulation

7. Since 1 April 2013, a mandatory assessment of family implications has been introduced for all policies. Bureaux/departments (B/Ds) are required to use the three sets of family core values (i.e. “love and care”, “respect and responsibilities” and “communication and harmony”) as identified by the Family Council, as well as the impact on family’s structure and functions, as the basis for assessing the policies’ impact on families. They are also encouraged to consult the Family Council on new policies which may affect the family. Since the implementation of the mandatory assessment, various B/Ds have proactively consulted the Family Council on policies which carry family implications. In 2014, we will continue to work with the Family Council to ensure that due weight is given to family perspectives in our policy formulation process.

(ii) Advocate for cherishing the family and research on family

8. In 2014, the Family Council will continue to launch initiatives to promulgate family core values and create a pro-family environment. To promote and encourage the wider adoption of family-friendly employment practices, the Family Council is organizing the “Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme” for the second time to give recognition to business firms as well as organizations that implement such practices. Following the close for applications on 17 January 2014, the Family Council will conduct the adjudication process with a view to announcing the results and staging a prize presentation

ceremony in the second quarter of 2014.

9. To promote better understanding of matters relating to the family, the Family Council has been engaging tertiary institutions / research organizations to conduct researches and surveys. Having briefed the Family Council on the preliminary findings from “The phenomenon of divorce in Hong Kong” Study and “2013 Family Survey”, the research teams will present the final findings to the Council in 2014. Relevant B/Ds will also be invited to consider the research findings to facilitate their formulation of policies and strategies for supporting and strengthening the family.

Social Enterprises

10. The Government will continue to facilitate the development of SEs through a range of support services, including funding support for individual projects, support for capacity building for the SE sector, and initiatives to enhance public awareness and promote cross-sector collaboration.

(i) ESR Programme

11. The Government will continue to provide seed grants to eligible non-profit-making organisations for setting up SEs under the ESR Programme in order to create job opportunities for the socially disadvantaged and encourage self-reliance. Since its launch in 2006, the ESR Programme has approved grants of around \$170 million for 153 SE projects. At present, 17 approved SE projects have yet to commence operation. Upon their establishment, it is anticipated that a total of 2 300 job opportunities will have been created under the Programme.

(ii) SE Summit, SE Award and Friends of SE Award Scheme

12. To promote cross-sector collaboration for the development of SEs, the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) will continue to provide funding support for the community-led annual Social Enterprise Summit, which has become a key platform for experience sharing and promoting collaboration among SEs and stakeholders in Hong Kong and other parts of the world. HAB also launched the second SE Award Scheme

in 2013 and will arrange various promotional activities to promote the success stories of the 14 outstanding SEs both within the sector and to the wider community. The Friends of SE Award Scheme organized by the Home Affairs Department (HAD) in 2013 has given recognition to individuals/organizations who/which have demonstrated support to SEs in Hong Kong to promote partnership for SEs.

(iii) Training, research and other promotion work

13. “The Hong Kong SE Challenge” has attracted a total of about 4 000 students in the past six years. In 2014, we will continue to commission tertiary institutions to organize the event to promote SE entrepreneurship to the younger generation. In addition, we will continue to sponsor training courses with a view to building up a talent pool for SEs in Hong Kong. HAD has organized the Social Enterprise District Carnival since 2012 to bring the products and services of SEs to the local community. The Sham Shui Po Social Enterprise District Carnival cum Kick-off of Youth Festival was held on 24 November 2013, with the participation of 23 SEs. The next SE District Carnival will be held in Kowloon City in late 2014.

14. We have commissioned the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service to conduct a research study to provide information on the latest profile and service needs of SEs and facilitate future planning. This study will be concluded in 2014. In addition, under a new funding scheme launched in October 2013, HAB will support more sector-wide impact studies, which will aim to help us better understand the contributions of the SE sector to the community.

ADVICE SOUGHT

15. Members are invited to note the initiatives in respect of the Family Council, SE and CCF as set out above.

Home Affairs Bureau
January 2014