

**Measures proposed by Members to tackle the problem of poverty
and to assist the disadvantaged groups during motion debates in 2000-2004**

Subject/concern	Proposed measures	*Responsible officer/ bureau/department
I. Study on the problem of poverty and disparity between the rich and the poor	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Government should set up a governmental inter-departmental committee to comprehensively examine the disparity between the rich and the poor. 2. The Government should comprehensively study the causes of the problem and coordinate the efforts of various departments in formulating corresponding policies to narrow the gap between the rich and the poor, to reduce social conflicts and to promote harmonious social development. 3. The Government should establish a poverty line. 	<p>CE, CS</p> <p>CS, FS (and relevant bureaux/departments)</p> <p>CS, FS, SHWF</p>
II. Adequacy of the existing social welfare policies and the social security systems	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. The Government should review its social welfare policy to ensure adequate care can be provided to the needy (particularly the elderly). 5. The Government should improve the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA)-based safety net to ensure reasonable and effective utilisation of resources. 	<p>SHWF</p> <p>SHWF</p>

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	<p>6. The Government should relax the eligibility criteria for the elderly to apply for CSSA, relax the absence restriction for Old Age Allowance (OAA) recipients, and increase the amount of OAA.</p> <p>7. The Government should also consider other forms of assistance, such as a voucher system, elderly livelihood subsidy scheme, subsidies on rent and medical expenses, etc. for the elderly in need.</p> <p>8. The Government should also consider other forms of assistance, such as living allowance, transport subsidy, etc. for the low-income earners.</p> <p>9. The Government should consider setting up an old age pension scheme (or universal retirement protection scheme) to ensure the elderly will receive a basic income to support their living after retirement.</p> <p>10. The Government should restore the CSSA rates to the level prior to 1 June 2003.</p> <p>11. The Government should conduct a study on the basic and essential needs, and re-determine the CSSA rates based on such study findings.</p> <p>12. The Government should consider raising the level of disregarded earnings.</p>	<p>SHWF</p> <p>SHWF</p> <p>SHWF</p> <p>SHWF, SFST, SEM</p> <p>SHWF</p> <p>SHWF</p> <p>SHWF</p>

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III. Creating employment, employment support and manpower training	<p>13. The Government should review the economic/ financial/immigration policies to –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(a) attract long-term investments and develop economic development;(b) promote industrial diversification;(c) enhance the business environment, reduce the burden on small and medium enterprises (e.g. reducing licence fees and streamlining licensing procedures);(d) attract investment immigrants and professionals to settle in Hong Kong; and(e) revive local manufacturing industries and attract re-location of industries back to Hong Kong. <p>14. The Government should assist industries (e.g. traditional industries, waste recycling industries, tourism and logistics industries) in order to provide jobs to workers who cannot find jobs in high-technology and innovative sectors.</p> <p>15. The Government should formulate long-term education policy to encourage low-skill people to pursue further education such as concessions on school fees, low-interest loans and tax allowances.</p>	<p>SEM, SCIT, S for S, SEDL</p> <p>SCIT, SEDL</p> <p>SEM</p>

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	<p>16. The Government should increase subsidized formal education places for unemployed young people, so as to upgrade the skills of the working population.</p> <p>17. The Government should strengthen support for the unemployed, such as providing more vocational training and retraining (particularly information technology skills), reviewing the curriculum of vocational training courses to meet the market demand, arranging job placement and providing tax concessions to employers who employed those completed retraining courses.</p> <p>18. The Government should create more job opportunities by –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) expediting the implementation of infrastructure projects; (b) creating short-term jobs; and (c) reviewing its foreign domestic helpers policy. <p>19. The Government should make better use of the Labour Advisory Board which is a tripartite discussion forum for employment-related issues.</p>	<p>SEM</p> <p>SEM, SEDL, SFST</p> <p>SEDL, SETW, SHPL, S for S</p> <p>SEDL</p>

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IV. Labour protection and minimum wage	20. The Government should review the employment-related ordinances and consider enacting legislation to – (a) impose a maximum number of working hours; (b) establish a minimum wage (may be in selected occupations and trades); and (c) reduce age discrimination in employment. 21. The Government should explore the feasibility of an unemployment insurance system.	SEDL SEDL
V. Assistance to people with disabilities	22. The Government should press public transport operators to – (a) offer half-fare concessions to people with disabilities; and (b) improve their facilities to cater for the needs of such people (e.g. increase the number of buses with lowered platforms, provide lifts (with Braille buttons) and ramps at shopping arcades and public transport interchanges, provide facilities for the blind, widen the fire escape passageway at public places to facilitate wheelchair users, etc.)	SETW

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	<p>23. The Government should improve the Rehabus service by –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) increasing the number of rehabuses; (b) allowing a flexible booking system for Rehabus, provide more frequent services and wider route coverage; (c) providing subsidies for people with disabilities to use taxis and other means of public transport <p>24. The Government should take the lead in introducing an employment quota system in government departments for people with disabilities and extend the quota system to the private sector.</p> <p>25. The Government should suspend the implementation of reduction of CSSA rates for the elderly and people with disabilities which has come into effect on 1 October 2004; and</p> <p>26. The Government should create a properly-designed assistance scheme for people with disabilities to help them find employment and become self-reliant, instead of becoming reliant on CSSA.</p>	<p>SHWF</p> <p>SEDL</p> <p>SHWF</p> <p>SHWF</p>

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VI. Protection of the rights of child	27. The Government should fully implement the Convention on the Rights of the Child to Hong Kong. 28. The Government should formulate a comprehensive policy on children (particularly impoverished children). 29. The Government should ensure the rights of the child to education and healthy development are protected.	SHA SHA, SEM, SHWF SEM, SHWF

- * CE – Chief Executive
- CS – Chief Secretary for Administration
- FS – Financial Secretary
- SHWF – Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
- SFST – Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
- SEM – Secretary for Education and Manpower
- SCIT – Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology
- SEDL – Secretary for Economic Development and Labour
- S for S – Secretary for Security
- SHA – Secretary for Home Affairs

Note

The information in the paper is based on the motion debates in 2000-2004 as detailed in the **Appendix**.

Appendix

Motions moved by Members at Council meetings in 2000-2004

Meeting	Meeting Date	Motion
Legislative Council	18 October 2000	Motion on “Impoverishment of marginal workers” moved by Hon CHAN Yuen-han
		Motion on “Creating employment opportunities” moved by Hon Fred LI Wah-ming
	8 November 2000	Motion on “Enhancing the welfare for the elderly” moved by Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung
	7 November 2001	Motion on “Reviewing the Old Age Allowance Scheme” moved by Dr Hon YEUNG Sum
	21 November 2001	Motion on “Alleviating the disparity between the rich and the poor” moved by Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee
	9 January 2002	Motion on “The Convention on the Rights of the Child” moved by Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
	24 April 2002	Motion on “Safeguarding the reasonable and legitimate rights and interests of employees” moved by Hon LEUNG Fu-wah
		Motion on “The problem of “working poverty”” moved by Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
	15 May 2002	Motion on “Family problems” moved by Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin

	10 July 2002	Motion on “Giving priority to employment” moved by Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
	9 October 2002	Motion on “Solving the problem of unemployment” moved by Hon TAM Yiu-chung
	13 November 2002	Motion on “Ageing of the population” moved by Hon TAM Yiu-chung
	22 January 2003	Motion on “Assisting low-income earners and the poor elderly” moved by Hon CHAN Yuen-han
	26 February 2003	Motion on “Opposing cutbacks in welfare benefits” moved by Hon WONG Sing-chi
	12 March 2003	Motion on “Medical fee waiver mechanism” moved by Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee
	8 October 2003	Motion on “Facing up to the transport needs of people with disabilities” moved by Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
	22 October 2003	Motion on “Elderly persons taking up permanent residence in the Mainland” moved by Hon CHAN Kam-lam
	12 May 2004	Motion on “Public housing rent policy” moved by Hon LAU Ping-cheung
	13 October 2004	Motion on “Minimum wage, maximum working hours” moved by Hon CHAN Yuen-han
		Motion on “Facilitating the integration of people with disabilities into society” moved by Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
	3 November 2004	Motion on “Alleviating the disparity between the rich and the poor” moved by Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee

	24 November 2004	Motion on “Restoring the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance rates to the level prior to 1 June 2003” moved by Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
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