

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1750/04-05
(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 9 May 2005 at 10:00 am
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, JP (Chairman)
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, SBS, JP
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Albert Jinghan CHENG

Members absent : Hon Bernard CHAN, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP

Member attending : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan

Public Officers : All items
attending

Ms Linda LAI
Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Family and Women)

Mr Freely CHENG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Family)

Mr FUNG Pak-yan
Assistant Director of Social Welfare
(Family and Child Welfare)

Miss Cecilla LI
Chief Social Work Officer (Family and Child Welfare)¹
Social Welfare Department

Item V

Miss Dora FU Ha-man
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Women)

Mrs Brenda FUNG
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food
(Elderly Services and Social Security)

Deputations : Item IV
by invitation

Society for Community Organization

Ms SZE Lai-shan
Community Organizer

Concern Group on the Rights of New Immigrant Women

Ms YAU Yik-yung
Representative

Dr AU Chor-fai
Professional Consultant

港島單親互助社

Ms HO Chun-lai

Mr HO Ki-kit

Single Parents Network

Ms LI Kwai-chun
Member

Ms TANG Wai-ling
Member

Single Mothers Concern Group

Ms HO Foei-lin
Deputy Chairman

Ms CHU Yau
Member

Christian Family Service Centre Lai Chi Centre

Ms TAM Chau-yin
Social Worker

Ms Jenny CHAN
Service User

Mutual Aid Centre for Single Parent Families

Ms WONG Chi-kan
Supervisor

Mr MUI Kwan-wai
Team Leader

Item V

Society for Community Organization

Ms SZE Lai-shan
Community Organizer

Concern Group on the Rights of New Immigrant Women

Ms YAU Yik-yung
Representative

Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions

Ms CHEUNG Lai-ha
Chairperson, Women Affairs Committee

Ms LAM Ying-hing
Organizing Secretary

Hong Kong Women Workers' Association

Ms WU Mei-lin
Coordinator

Ms LAI Chau-chong
Ex-co Member

The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

Mr CHUA Hoi-wai
Business Director
Policy Advocacy and International Networks

Oxfam Hong Kong

Mr WOO Man-lung
Manager for Hong Kong Programme

Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union

Ms IP Pui-yu
General Secretary

Ms LAI Suet-mui
Yuen Long District Committee Member

Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centre

Mr TAM Wai-pang
Education Officer

Hong Kong Association for the Survivors of Women Abuse
(Kwan Fook)

Ms FUNG Mei-yong
Member

Ann
Member

Ms LUI Lok-man

Association for the Advancement of Feminism

Ms CHOI Wing-sze
Organizer

Ms Polly TSANG
Member

The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions Women Affairs
Committee

Ms LAM Kam-yi
Director

Ms CHAN Yun-hi
Committee Member

Clerk in attendance : Ms Doris CHAN
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

Staff in attendance : Miss Mary SO
Senior Council Secretary (2) 8

Miss Maggie CHIU
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

I. Confirmation of minutes

(LC Paper No. CB(2)1425/04-05)

The minutes of meeting held on 20 April 2005 were confirmed.

II. Information paper issued since the last meeting

2. There was no information paper issued since the last meeting.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1426/04-05(01) and (02))

3. Members agreed to discuss the research report on “Social Security System in Support of the Elderly in Poverty in Selected Places” prepared by the Research and Library Services Division of the Legislative Council Secretariat at the next regular meeting scheduled for 13 June 2005. Members further agreed to invite deputations to give views on the issue of social security for the elderly in poverty in Hong Kong.

4. Members also agreed to hold a special meeting on 2 June 2005 at 8:30 am to discuss and listen to the views of non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on lump sum grant subvention on the cessation of the tide-over grant in the next financial year.

IV. Implementation of the Integrated Family Service Centre Model and Closure of Time-limited Single Parent Centres

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1426/04-05(03) to (04) and CB(2)1479/04-05(01) to (06))

Deputations’ views

5. The Chairman invited deputations to give their views on the closure of the five Single Parent Centres (SPCs) in April 2004, details of which were set out in their submissions (LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1426/04-05(04), CB(2)1479/04-05(01) to (05) and CB(2)1661/04-05(02)). Notably, deputations urged the Administration to re-commission NGOs to operate SPCs as they considered the Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) could not meet their special needs. It

was pointed out that a survey conducted by Dr AU Chor-fai to gauge the effectiveness of the operation of the two now-defunct subvented SPCs revealed high user satisfaction as well as a level of service meeting or even exceed all the service benchmarks set down by the Social Welfare Department (SWD). The success of the operation of SPCs in Hong Kong had also led the Government of Macao to spend \$20 million a year to operate five SPCs on a pilot basis.

The Administration's stance

6. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family and Child Welfare) (ADSW(FCW)) explained to the meeting the background to the implementation of the service delivery model of IFSCs and the closure of the five time-limited SPCs, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1426/04-05(03)).

Discussion

7. Referring to the deputations' view that the existing IFSCs could not totally replace the services provided by SPCs and the positive findings of the survey on the effectiveness of SPCs conducted by Dr AU Chor-fai, Dr Fernando CHEUNG requested the Administration to re-commence funding NGOs to run SPCs and on a permanent basis.

8. Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Family and Women) (DSHWF(F&W)) responded that although the Administration was well aware that users of SPCs had a sense of belonging there, this should not prevent the Administration from working towards more effective and efficient use of resources through re-engineering of existing family resources into IFSCs. In the process which had just been completed, the Administration had been able to reduce service overlapping and achieve an overall re-distribution of resources based on population and different social needs in the districts. As compared with the five SPCs, IFSCs were more accessible because there were 61 IFCSs all over the territory. IFCSs also provided additional services not available in SPCs, such as intensive counselling, assessment for compassionate rehousing, arrangement for clinical psychological services, etc.

9. DSHWF(F&W) pointed out that the decision to re-engineer existing family services into IFCSs was based on positive outcomes of the evaluative studies conducted by the University of Hong Kong on the new IFSC service model and in the 15 IFSC pilot projects. From the experience of the pilot projects, it was revealed that this new service delivery model was well received by the widowed, divorced or separated, who made up 30% of the total number of IFSC users. This demonstrated that the services of IFSCs could also serve single parents.

10. DSHWF(F&W) further said that as the re-engineering of IFSCs had just been completed, she hoped that members would allow some time for the Administration to fine-tune the new service delivery model in the light of operational experience to ensure that the needs of various target groups, such as single parents, were catered for. The opportunity would also be taken to see how best IFSCs could collaborate with other service providers including the former SPCs, which had secured other sources of funding to refocus their services to serve the vulnerable targets including single parents, to fill service gap(s), if any, in providing support and assistance to single parents. DSHWF(F&W) also said that the future review of IFSCs would take into account whether the existing level of resources would be adequate to cope with the rising trend in the number of single parents.

11. Dr Fernando CHEUNG remarked that it was unreasonable for the Administration to cease funding NGOs to operate SPCs despite high user satisfaction evidenced by the positive findings of the survey conducted by Dr AU Chor-fai mentioned in paragraph 5 above. Such a decision was at variance with the Administration's practice of formulating policy based on evidence.

12. Ms LI Fung-ying noted that SWD had assisted four SPCs to secure other sources of funding to enable them to continue operating on a project basis, which showed that the Administration considered the existence of SPCs was worthy of support. In the light of this, Ms LI wondered whether saving money was the real reason behind for not continuing to provide funding to NGOs to operate SPCs.

13. ADSW(FCW) responded that the reason for not continuing to fund NGOs to operate SPCs was not to save money. The reasons for doing so were already set out in paragraphs 6-7 of the Administration's paper and also explained by DSHWF(F&W) in paragraphs 8-10 above. ADSW(FCW) further said that the nature of those Centres transformed from the SPCs was different from the former SPCs. The new centres' focus was on developing social capital through fostering mutual help and serving vulnerable groups, whereas that of the SPCs was on providing services to single parents which was now provided by IFSCs.

14. Noting the deputations' call for the Administration to resume funding NGOs to operate SPCs, Ms LI Fung-ying asked whether the Administrations had truly listened to the views of service users of SPCs before ceasing to fund these Centres.

15. ADSW(FCW) responded that SWD had made it clear to the agencies concerned from the outset that funding to SPCs was limited to three years from 1 February 2001 to 31 January 2004. With the service agreement of SPCs coming to an end, and taking into account the objective to integrate services for single parent families with mainstream IFSCs, subvention for the five time-limited

SPCs therefore ceased in April 2004. With the objective to enable smooth closure and service transformation of SPCs to focus on development of social capital through fostering mutual help and serving vulnerable groups, SWD agreed that the agencies concerned could use the unspent contract sum to continue running the service on the same premises starting from 1 April 2004 until the exhaustion of the contract sum or on a self-financing basis. SWD had also assisted four agencies concerned to secure other sources of funding. To date, one SPC had obtained funding to run an Intensive Employment Assistance Project for three years since October 2003, while three other agencies had each obtained a grant of \$1.5 million to \$2 million from the Community Inclusion and Investment Fund to run a three-year community project to serve the vulnerable, including single parent families. District Social Welfare Officers, in collaboration with all the NGOs operating SPCs, had also worked out transitional arrangements to ensure the needs of the service users were met. These included arranging for needy users to be familiarised with other community resources, observational visits to other service units, networking with or referring them to mainstream services such as IFSCs in the locality.

16. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that he failed to see it was a more effective and efficient use of resources by deploying resources on operating SPCs to IFSCs, when the former had proven to be successful in helping single parents whereas the effectiveness of the latter in helping single parents had yet to be confirmed.

17. DSHWF(F&W) responded that responses from users of IFSCs, many of whom were single parents, were positive. This could be explained by the greater accessibility of IFSCs (61 IFSCs as compared to only five SPCs) and the fact that apart from the service components of SPCs, IFSCs were providing additional services not available in the SPCs. DSHWF(F&W) further said that the cessation of funding for NGOs to operate SPCs did not mean that the Administration did not consider that SPCs had been effective in helping single parents to overcome their problems arising from single parenthood. The reason for not continuing to fund NGOs to run SPCs was to integrate services for single parent families into the mainstream IFSCs, which were set up to reduce service overlapping and achieve an overall re-distribution of resources based on population and different social needs in the districts.

18. In order to retain and develop the positive outcomes from the operation of SPCs, DSHWF(F&W) said that SWD had assisted the agencies concerned to secure other sources of funding to launch projects to foster mutual help and to serve the vulnerable groups in the district in the form of building social capital and community building and keep the premises for the purpose. As mentioned by some of the deputations at the meeting, there were instances of IFSCs referring single parent cases to the transformed centres for follow-up. As the re-engineering of IFSCs had just been completed, the Administration was

Action

presently monitoring the operation of IFSCs, including their collaboration with outside organisations, and would make improvements where appropriate to ensure needs of various target groups, including single parents, were catered for.

19. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan urged the Administration to give serious consideration to providing funding to the agencies concerned to operate SPCs on a permanent basis, if it agreed that SPCs served a useful purpose in providing support and assistance to single parents. While supporting the implementation of IFSCs, Dr YEUNG Sum agreed that there might be a need for exploring the role of the former SPCs in supporting single parents.

20. DSHWF(F&W) responded that it was the Administration's intention to review the effectiveness of the operation of IFSCs one year after the completion of the re-engineering of IFSCs. It would take into account whether the existing level of resources would be adequate to cope with the rising trend in the number of single parents. DSHWF(F&W) added that the Caritas-Hong Kong Mutual Aid Centre for Single Parent Families might also explore other funding support if it could come up with a useful and meaningful service proposal within the funding ambit.

21. In closing, the Chairman said that members did not object to the pooling of family resources units to form IFSCs, but they were of the view that funding for SPCs should continue after the expiry of their three years' funding period. It was regrettable that the Administration ignored the request made by the Panel at the meeting on 10 November 2003 that the Administration should continue to fund the SPCs until there were findings to support that IFSCs could meet the needs of single parents. The Panel looked forward to the Administration's response to the issue of the re-opening of SPCs after the completion of its review on IFSCs in one year's time.

Admin

V. Policy on assisting women in poverty

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1426/04-05(04) to (07), CB(2)1479/04-05(07) to (10) and CB(2)1499/04-05(01))

Deputations' views

22. The Chairman invited deputations to give their views on the existing policy on assisting women in poverty, details of which were set out in their submissions (LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1426/04-05(04), (06) to (07), CB(2)1479/04-05(07) to (10), CB(2)1499/04-05(01) and CB(2)1661/04-05(01)). A list of suggestions made by the deputations for implementation by the Administration to address the problem of poverty in women was summarised as follows -

Combating poverty

- (a) establishing a poverty line to ensure that the basic needs of the poor were met;
- (b) expediting the studies on long term healthcare financing and long term care insurance, in view of the growing ageing population;

Enhancing the status of the Women's Commission

- (c) elevating the Women's Commission (WoC) from an advisory body to a body with the authority to effect the implementation of Government policies to address the special needs of women and eradicate poverty in women;
- (d) revamping the composition of the WoC to include people from different sectors of the community such as new arrivals;

Promoting social participation of women

- (e) increasing the participation of more grassroot women in statutory and advisory bodies so that their needs could be heard by the WoC, the Commission on Poverty and all Government bureaux/departments;

Gender mainstreaming

- (f) taking into account women's needs and perspectives in the formulation of fiscal budget;
- (g) setting up a comprehensive database on gender mainstreaming to better help policy-makers in taking into account women's needs and perspectives in their policy formulation, implementation and legislation;

Public education

- (h) stepping up public education to eliminate gender stereotyping which caused stress to women and also restricted the full development of women's potential;

Legislation and enforcement

- (i) establishing statutory minimum wage to address the problem of

working poverty. At the outset, priority should be given to establishing statutory minimum wage for low or non-skilled jobs such as local domestic helper;

- (j) establishing statutory maximum working hours to address the problem of long working hours;
- (k) enacting legislation against age discrimination to address the difficulties faced by middle-aged and grassroots women in getting employment;
- (l) enacting legislation to ensure the implementation of the principle of “equal pay for work of equal value” (EPEV) by employers;
- (m) enacting legislation to provide labour protection to part-time workers, in view of the casualisation of labour, of which women made up the majority;
- (n) amending the Employment Ordinance to provide labour protection to people who were not employed under a continuous contract (i.e. persons who were employed for less than four weeks and whose working hours were less than 18 in each week);
- (o) including new arrivals from the Mainland in the legislation against racial discrimination;
- (p) amending the Co-operative Society Ordinance to better help the setting up of women co-operatives as a means of economic empowerment of women;
- (q) stepping up the enforcement of the Attachment of Income Order, to avoid women from falling into financial difficulty because of their failure to receive maintenance payments;

Training and re-training

- (r) formulating comprehensive training and re-training policies for middle-aged and grassroots women to enhance their employability and earning power;

Retirement protection

- (s) establishing retirement protection for all Hong Kong citizens to ensure that people, such as low-income earners and homemakers,

could live a dignified life in their old age;

Welfare support

- (t) removing the seven-year residence requirements for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and public housing;
- (u) maintaining the existing policy of not requiring single parents on CSSA with youngest child of age below 15 to participate in the Active Employment Assistance Programme under the Support for Self-reliance Scheme, until there was adequate child care support and training had been provided to single parents to prepare them for taking up employment;
- (v) strengthening child care support for working mothers, such as extending service hours of child care centres and reducing/waiving fee for after school care service, and stepping up assistance to help new arrivals to integrate in the local community;

Employment and labour protection

- (w) stepping up the implementation of policies, strategies and measures on promoting employment through economic development;
- (x) granting tax incentive to employers who provided child care services to their employees;
- (y) establishing a central compensation fund for work-related injury;

Promoting self-reliance

- (z) strengthening the existing promotion of self-reliance initiatives to help women of low educational attainment and low skill to join the labour force, such as implementing more special employment programmes to help low-skilled workers;
- (aa) establishing a re-employment support scheme to encourage the hiring of middle-aged women of low educational attainment and low skill by NGOs and labour groups through contracting-out jobs; and
- (ab) establishing a fund to provide seed money to women for starting their own businesses.

The Administration's stance

23. Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Women) (PAS/HWF(W)) briefed members on the policies, strategies and measures to address the needs of women in poverty, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1426/04-05(05)).

Discussion

24. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed opposition to the Administration's plan to deduct CSSA payments for single parent recipients with youngest child of age below 15 if they refused to take up part-time jobs. Although the objective of such a plan to help single parents on CSSA to achieve self-reliance was well-intentioned, Mr LEE was of the view that single parents who did not feel ready for employment and/or who could not find someone/some place to look after their young children while they worked should not be penalised for refusing to take up part-time employment. Moreover, given the unemployment rate of low or non-skilled workers still stood at over 7%, to push single parent CSSA recipients, which numbered about 40 000, to fight for low-skilled jobs would inevitably further lower the wages of these jobs thereby aggravating the problem of working poverty. Mr LEE further said that the Administration should refrain from sending a message to the public that single parents on public assistance who refused to seek jobs were lazy people, as their contributions in taking care of their families were equally important and should be respected. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung echoed similar views.

25. Ms FUNG Mei-yong of Kwan Fook told the meeting that she had to turn down a job which required her to work 30 days a month from 11:00 am to 3:00 pm because she could not find anyone or any organisation to look after her young children while she worked. Ms FUNG said that it would be very unfair to women in her situation if their CSSA payments were to be deducted for refusing to take up part-time jobs. Noting the Administration's plan to require single-parents on CSSA to work 32 hours a month or eight hours a week, Ms FUNG expressed doubt as to whether there would be any employers who would hire someone to work for such a short duration.

26. Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Elderly Services and Social Security) (PAS/HWF(ES&SS)) responded that there was no question of the Administration planning to force single parents on CSSA with youngest child of age below 15 off CSSA if they could not find work. PAS/HWF(ES&SS) pointed out that in view of the fivefold increase in the number of single parent CSSA cases over the past 10 years and the long time span this group of recipients were generally on CSSA, there was a need for the Administration to come up with measures to help them lead a more valued way of

living through social participation. According to overseas experience, the best way to achieve such was through work, even for several hours a week. A paper outlining the rationale and the full package of the proposed measures to help single parents on CSSA to achieve self-reliance would shortly be submitted to the Panel's Subcommittee on Review of the CSSA Scheme for discussion on 24 May 2005. The Administration would take into account the views of the Subcommittee, the concerned groups and the public at large before finalising the implementation details of the measures to help single parents on CSSA to achieve self-reliance.

27. PAS/HWF(ES&SS) further said that the Administration was well aware of the impact of the additional workforce on the low-skill job market and on the lower-end income level and the need for adequate child care service and after school care services to be put in place. To this end, it was the Administration's plan to introduce these measures in phases with the pilot to be conducted in selected districts in the beginning to find out their impacts on the labour market and wages as well as their viability.

28. Miss LAM Ying-hing of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions sought the Administration's response to the following -

- (a) whether there were any measures to narrow down the difference of \$2,000 between the median monthly income of women and men, if so, what they were;
- (b) whether there were any measures to reduce the number of women earning less than \$5,000 a month; if so, what they were; and
- (c) when would the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) come up with a strategy to take forward the implementation of the principle of EPEV by employers which had already been covered in the Sex Discrimination Ordinance.

29. PAS/HWF(W) responded that in 2001 EOC was granted \$2 million to commission consultants to conduct a study on how to implement the principle of EPEV in Hong Kong. The study comprised three phases. The first phase was to analyse, under the scope of EPEV, whether unequal situations existed amongst civil servants and employees of a public organization, and at what posts or positions. The second phase was to look at companies with over 200 employees. The third phase was to study the small enterprises. In response to members, PAS/HWF(W) said that to her understanding the consultants had submitted a report on the first phase study to EOC, and EOC would announce the results of the first phase study shortly.

Action

Admin

30. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed concern about the long time taken by EOC to come up with a strategy to take the implementation of the principle of EPEV forward. Mr LEE said that the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) should be requested to provide a progress report in this regard to the relevant Panel(s). Members expressed support. DSHWF(F&W) undertook to convey members' request to HAB.

31. Regarding the issues raised in paragraph 28(a) and (b) above about the low wages of women as compared to men, DSHWF(F&W) said that the reasons why there was a difference between the median monthly income of women and men and why more women were in the low-income group than men were due to the facts that women generally had lower educational attainment than men and were prone to take up the traditional role of homemaker after marriage. The phenomenon of women earning lower wages than men was further aggravated by the fact that new arrivals from the Mainland were mostly women who generally had low educational attainment and very little or no skill. It was however noted that the wage discrepancy between women and men had not deteriorated in recent years.

32. DSHWF(F&W) further said that the Administration was equally concerned about the low wages for non-skilled workers, many of whom were women. To improve their livelihood, the long term solution was to enhance the employability and earning power of women of low educational attainment and low skill through the various subsidised education opportunities set out in paragraph 33 of the Administration's paper. A wide range of child care services had been developed to meet the needs of low-income families (including women and single parents) and to facilitate them to take up employment. These included day nurseries, day crèches and occasional child care services. Extended hour services were provided in some of these centres to meet the special needs of working parents who needed longer hours of child care. Action in this regard would continue to be stepped up to better meet the special needs of working mothers.

33. Miss LAM Ying-hing of the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions, Mr TAM Wai-pang of the Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centre and Ms CHOI Wing-sze of the Association for the Advancement of Feminism were of the view that the lack of progress made by the Administration in incorporating women's needs and perspectives in the policy making had not helped to alleviate poverty in women., and urged that work in this regard be sped up. Although the Administration had developed a gender mainstreaming checklist as an analytic tool to help Government officials to implement gender mainstreaming in a systemic manner, Ms CHOI Wing-sze pointed out that so far only SWD staff, the Police and officers of the Administrative Officer grade had participated in the training programme to enhance civil servants' understanding and awareness of gender-related issues.

34. Mrs Sophie LEUNG said that the WoC could not work alone in addressing the problem of poverty in women, which was a world-wide issue and a complicated one. Mrs LEUNG hoped that the welfare sector could be more forthcoming with ideas on how to tackle this problem in a more creative manner, as it was not financially feasible for the Administration to continue to inject public money into providing welfare support to needy women given resources constraint. The WoC considered the setting up of co-operatives a viable way to promote women's social and economic participation, and would welcome an opportunity to exchange views with interested groups to explore this further. Mrs LEUNG further said that the WoC would continue its work on building women's capacity, advising the Administration in rolling out the Gender Mainstreaming checklist to more policy areas, and collaborating with the community to create synergy in promoting the interests and well-being of women in Hong Kong.

Admin

35. In summing up, the Chairman said that the approach adopted by the Administration to combat poverty in women was too piecemeal and remedial in nature. She requested the Administration to take into account the views expressed by deputations and come up with a comprehensive policy to address the problem. Members agreed.

36. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:12 pm.