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Subject

LC Paper No. CB(2)277/06-07(06)

(English version only)

Dear Mr. Tsang and Honourable Officials,

Subsidising Early Childhood Education - "Education Voucher"

We are parents of kindergarten students. Some of our students are studying in non-profit making kindergartens with school fees more than 24,000 per annum. Not all of us have high income as Mr. Tsang thinks. Our children study in "high income class non-profit making kindergartens" just because the schools are close, have primary schools, good principles, etc.

We consider the government's principles and policy of "Education Voucher" are inconsistent, contradictory, discriminating and unfair when comparing with other proposals such as "Replacement of pre-Euro and Euro I diesel commercial vehicles with Euro IV vehicles & reduction of first registration tax for purchasing vehicles with low emissions and high fuel efficiency".

With reference to Mr. Tsang's 2006 / 2007 policy, "providing quality education for our next generation is an integral part of government support for the family. The government will focus resources to support the family by easing the financial burden of parents. The government will provide fee assistance to parents of children aged three to six in the form of an "education voucher" Any local non-profit-making kindergartens that charge fees not more than \$24,000 per annum will be eligible to redeem the "education voucher" according to their student intake. Ninety per cent of students aged three to six will benefit from the scheme, while more than 80% of kindergartens will be eligible.

Although Mr. Tsang claimed to provide quality education for our next generation and support for the family, not all students aged three to six can benefit. There are restrictions that include students must study in non-profit-making kindergartens which charge fees not more than \$24,000 per annum. Mr. Tsang considers those families which can afford school fees more than \$24,000 per annum are high income group, they do not have no financial burden and therefore do not require the government's support.

On the contrary, the government allow 30% reduction in first registration tax to **all private vehicle owners, including** those who own Mercedes Benz S-Class, BMW 7 series, etc. (we do not intend to offend those who own Mercedes Benz S-Class, BMW 7 series, we just want to illustrate the inconsistent and contradictory principles.)

1. Do the government mean that pre-school childhood education is not a must, but to own a car is a must?
2. Do the government mean that all car owners or potential car owners need subsidy, but not all families with children?
3. Are all families which can afford school fees more than \$24,000 per annum are high income group while Mercedes Benz, BMW and other luxurious car owners are not

so they cannot afford the 30% first registration tax when buying new cars?

4. Do the government mean that they should subsidize all vehicles owners / potential owners but not all kindergarten students? The government do not have the budget problem, and that vehicle owners / potential owners will not change / own cars as they will have financial burden in doing so? On the other hand, all families which can afford school fees more than \$24,000 per annum must be high income group?

5. Do the government have budget concern just in childhood education? How can the government justify reduction of income from vehicle first registration tax? Is it this the reason for imposing GST? How can the government get the budget for reduction of “30% first registration tax”? Do the government really utilize the income effectively?

6. Does Mr. Tsang think that lower income families cannot choose kindergartens that charge school fees more than even \$24,000 per year? And that they are not eligible for school fee subsidy if they do so?

7. If the government really concern the environment, why don't the government consider vehicles with low emissions and high fuel efficiency or with “smaller c.c.” when purchasing new cars for our honourable officials? Why don't the government encourage the officials and citizens use public transportation instead? Why don't the government levy higher vehicle first registration tax for “higher c.c. “ instead of subsidization inclusive of “high income group” ?

8. If the government have budget concern, why don't they use same budget but reduce the subsidized amount for each children so that all children to benefit from the scheme. The government can also calculate / control the budget easier because they can know the exact number of students.

9. Mr. Tsang is promoting harmony, but **“Education Voucher”** policy can disturb families with children studying in kindergartens. It is because there will be disputes or conflicts among parents / kindergartens regarding changing schools, relocation, inequalities, etc.? How can Mr. Tsang foster a harmonic family and society in this way?

We hope and expect the government will explain and answer the above questions and **to revise** the policy of **“Education Voucher”** without discrimination - **to allow all students** aged three to six who study in any local non-profit-making kindergartens **without limitation to the amount of school fees (at least)** to benefit from the scheme. If possible the policy should allow all students who study in any kindergarten can benefit

Please reply your comments.

Thank you for your kind attention.  
From some kindergarten students' parents

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