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**Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee**

**Minutes of the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting**  
**held at the Conference Room A**  
**on Wednesday, 12 December 2007, at 9:00 am**

**Members present:**

Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon James TIEN Pei-chun, GBS, JP  
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP  
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBM, GBS, JP  
Hon Margaret NG  
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong  
Hon WONG Yung-kan, JP  
Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS  
Hon Patrick LAU Sau-shing, SBS, JP  
Hon KWONG Chi-kin

**Members absent:**

Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon SIN Chung-kai, JP  
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP

**Public Officers attending:**

Miss Amy TSE, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Mrs Sarah KWOK, JP	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Alfred FOK	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Mrs Mimi BROWN TSANG Mui-fan, JP	Deputy Commissioner of Rating and Valuation
Mr Michael Scott TANNER	Rating Adviser, Rating and Valuation Department
Mr Kenneth CHENG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)(R)
Miss Cathy CHU, JP	Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)
Mr Stephen CHAN, JP	Deputy Director/Regulatory Services, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department
Mr WOO Kin-ming	Assistant Director/Railway, Electrical and Mechanical Services Department
Mrs Hedy CHU	Principal Assistant Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport)
Mr Paul TANG, JP	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Ms Carol YIP	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)
Miss Helen TANG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Poverty)

**Clerk in attendance:**

Ms Debbie YAU	Senior Council Secretary (1)1
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**Staff in attendance:**

Ms Pauline NG	Assistant Secretary General 1
Ms Guy YIP	Council Secretary (1)1
Mr Justin TAM	Council Secretary (1)3
Ms Alice CHEUNG	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Mr Frankie WOO	Legislative Assistant (1)2

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The Chairman drew members' attention to an information paper (ECI(2007-08)10) provided by the Administration, which provided an update on the latest changes in the directorate establishment approved since 2002. According to the Administration, there would be a net increase of one supernumerary post in the directorate establishment of civil servants if the proposals to be considered at the meeting were endorsed and then approved by the Finance Committee (FC).

**EC(2007-08)12      Proposed creation of one permanent post of Assistant Commissioner of Rating and Valuation (D2) to be offset by deletion of the permanent post of Rating Adviser (D2) in Rating and Valuation Department to reflect more flexibility in manpower deployment; and deletion of the grade and rank of Rating Adviser (D2)**

2.      The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Financial Affairs was consulted on the proposal at the meeting on 5 November 2007.

3.      Prof Patrick LAU enquired about the professional qualifications required of the proposed permanent Assistant Commissioner of Rating and Valuation (ACRV) (D2) post. The creation of the post, if approved, would be offset by the deletion of a permanent post of Rating Adviser (RA) (D2). In response, the Deputy Commissioner of Rating and Valuation (DCRV) advised that the required qualifications were similar to other ACRVs within the Rating and Valuation Department (RVD). The post holder should possess a recognized professional qualification in valuation and in addition be well-versed in statistical methodology.

4.      Members noted that for the large part of the past 28 years since the creation of the RA post in 1979, the specialized post was filled by direct recruitment from the market because the required expertise was not available in-house. However, after the departure of the previous post holder in 2004, the RA post had been filled by a Valuation Surveyor (VS) grade staff. On the readiness of VS grade staff in taking up the specialist post, Ms Emily LAU enquired about the provision of local/overseas special training, if any, for the relevant staff.

5.      DCRV explained that the existing RA was created in 1979 to provide specialist advice on modern techniques and methods pertaining to the mass appraisal of properties for rating and other taxation purposes. The RA had helped develop a comprehensive computer-assisted mass appraisal (CAMA) system which was now widely used within the RVD. During this time, professional VS staff members in RVD had become acquainted with the CAMA techniques through in-service training to support the department's core business. Directorate staff in the VS grade, in particular, were given opportunities to undertake overseas training and widen their exposure to the latest development of the technology worldwide.

6.      Mr James TIEN expressed concern on whether the deletion of the RA post would affect the Government's effective role in conducting property valuation. Given the price fluctuation in the property market, in particular those of luxurious flats and Grade A offices which had risen sharply in the recent two years, he was worried that in the absence of the RA who was recruited directly from the market and had provided independent advice, the Government's valuation would not adequately reflect the market situation. Mr TIEN also enquired about the mechanism for aggrieved property owners or occupiers to raise objection against the Government's valuation.

7. In reply, DCRV advised that available channels had already been provided under the Rating Ordinance (Cap 116) for aggrieved parties to raise objections against the Government's valuation. She further explained that originally, the main duty of the RA was to provide specialist advice on CAMA techniques pertaining to the mass appraisal of properties for rating and other taxation purposes. However, over the years, the role of RA had been expanded to also include overseeing the department's overall information technology development and the strategic direction of mass appraisal for the modernization of valuation practice and business process. The regrading of the post therefore would not affect the quality of valuation.

8. Mr James TIEN said that he had no objection in principle to the current staffing proposal as the additional post would be offset by the deletion of a post of comparable rank.

9. Dr KWOK Ka-ki pointed out that it was a normal practice to create supernumerary posts to cope with additional workload arising from time-limited tasks. For the current proposal, he said that while he had no strong view on the proposed creation of the ACRV post as it would offer better promotion prospect for the VS grade staff, he nevertheless noticed that unlike other permanent ACRVs whose main duties were related to management and administration, the tasks to be undertaken by the post holder were mainly technical in nature, i.e. developing CAMA and overseeing the development and operation of various geographical information systems and administrative systems. As these tasks had largely been completed, Dr KWOK therefore doubted the need for retaining the RA/ACRV post in RVD.

10. In response, DCRV stressed that there was continued need for the RA/ACRV post in RVD. She said that at present, the valuation of about 85% of properties in the territory, i.e. major residential buildings and offices, were assessed by CAMA. The Administration planned to extend the scope of CAMA to cover the valuation of other properties to increase efficiency. In addition, the CAMA techniques were ever-evolving along with the modernization of valuation practices. The proposed ACRV post would be required to develop a network with overseas counterparts and professional bodies to keep up with new developments in the application of CAMA and other automated valuation systems. On the responsibilities of the proposed ACRV post, she advised that in addition to performing professional duties relating to valuation, the incumbent would also provide advice on the strategic direction of RVD.

11. The item was voted on and endorsed.

**EC(2007-08)13 Proposed creation of one permanent post of Government Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (D2) in Electrical and Mechanical Services Department (EMSD) to be offset by deletion of one permanent post of Chief Electrical and Mechanical Engineer (D1) in Transport Branch of Transport and Housing Bureau of Government Secretariat with effect from 1 February 2008; transfer the Hong Kong Railway Inspectorate in the Transport Branch to EMSD; and adjustment to the establishment ceiling in 2007-08 under the Transport Branch and the EMSD**

12. The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Transport (TP Panel) was consulted on the proposal at the meeting on 23 November 2007.

Proposed upgrading of the head of the Hong Kong Railway Inspectorate

13. Considering that the monitoring of railway safety had all along been the function of Hong Kong Railway Inspectorate (HKRI), Mr James TIEN questioned the need for upgrading the head of HKRI from D1 to D2 level. The Deputy Secretary for Transport and Housing (Transport) (DS(T)) remarked that with the increase in the number of new railway projects, several areas in HKRI's regulatory functions ought to be further enhanced. In particular, with regard to assessing and approving new railway projects, the Government was pursuing a number of new railway projects which involved many complicated technical issues. For instance, underground stations of the West Island Line would be located deeper than existing stations, and the Express Rail Link would be operating in a tunnel longer than any of the existing lines. Taking into account the increasing number and complexity of new railway projects, the Administration considered it necessary to upgrade the head of HKRI to D2 level so that the incumbent would have the required experience and expertise to be more effective in the approving of new projects.

14. Mr James TIEN was not convinced. He opined that assessing and approving new railway projects were already part of the functions of HKRI as new railway lines were commissioned from time to time. Given that two non-directorate engineering posts would be created to assist the head of HKRI under the current proposal, Mr TIEN expressed doubts on the justification for upgrading the head of HKRI to D2 level.

15. In response, DS(T) said that in addition to the present arrangement of examining regular submissions of railway corporation to monitor their safety performance trends, the Administration considered that the monitoring by HKRI could be made more comprehensive and strategic by taking into account the potential safety risk areas during different phases of a life cycle of each railway. As such, HKRI would adopt the "risk-based" approach to monitor the safety-critical areas and their potential associated risks under different scenarios, and review the priority of these risks regularly to ensure safe operation throughout the life cycle of a railway. In view of the enhanced regulatory functions, the head of HKRI needed to be a seasoned professional who was equipped with the necessary management

perception to monitor railway safety in a more strategic manner. He should also be well versed with the engineering and safe operation of the railway systems to enable early identification of potential risk areas. Since the head of HKRI had to carry out these strategic tasks which required thorough analysis, the Administration considered it necessary for the head to be a D2 officer.

16. Mr James TIEN remained concerned. He considered that the rail merger should render the monitoring of safe operation of the railway lines a simpler and easier task for the incumbent. DS(T) advised that despite the post-merger railway corporation was required to employ the services of an independent expert to review its safety management system at a regular interval of not more than three years, HKRI would not be complacent but would conduct audits on special topics to enable the railway corporation to implement enhancement measures early for problems that might be identified through these audits to minimize occurrence of incidents. The Administration considered it important for HKRI to pursue with the railway corporation the adoption of early preventive measures and to ensure the safe operation throughout different phases of a life cycle of a railway. It was also necessary for HKRI to follow up with the senior management of the railway corporation to deal with the audit outcome in a timely manner. This approach was particularly useful in time of rail merger to ensure that changes in relation to merger would not affect the corporation's safety performance. The Deputy Director/Regulatory Services, EMSD (DDEMS) added that rail merger would also involve a lot of changes and integration on both infrastructure and safety management sides which would take place in the coming years, including the modification of the interchange stations to facilitate seamless interchange, integration of control centers to allow control of all railway lines, etc. To ensure all such merger-related safety issues could be seamlessly carried out throughout the integration process, a D2 officer would be required to lead the team to follow through all these complicated tasks.

17. Ms Emily LAU shared Mr TIEN's concern. Given that the proposed upgrade would bring about an additional full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, of \$354,000, she urged the Administration to exercise prudence in making proposed changes to directorate establishment. Noting from the Administration's paper that an additional staff cost of \$4,459,440 would be incurred by the current proposal, Ms LAU sought further details about the changes in non-directorate establishment.

18. DS(T) clarified that with the transfer of HKRI from the Transport Branch of the Transport and Housing Bureau (TB of THB) to EMSD, the eight non-directorate posts in TB of THB would also be transferred to EMSD on the same date. The permanent redeployment of these non-directorate posts was cost-neutral. Subject to FC's endorsement of the proposal, supplementary provision for the remainder of 2007-08 would be provided to EMSD under delegated authority, to be offset by the same amount under TB of THB. In response to Ms Emily LAU's further enquiry on the cost implication arising from the creation of the two non-directorate engineering posts, DDEMS said that the staff cost for the two posts would be met from within EMSD's approved allocations.

19. Noting the Administration's clarification, Ms Emily LAU expressed concern that the presentation of the Administration's paper was untidy and the relevant figures were not set out clearly. She requested the Administration to present the information in a more systematic manner in future for members' ease of reference. Ir Dr Raymond HO echoed Ms LAU's view that the discussion paper should be better presented to avoid confusion.

20. Ms Emily LAU noted that the Administration had reviewed with railway experts on how the role and functions of the HKRI could be further enhanced taking into account overseas experience and practices. In this connection, she was concerned about the overseas experience that had been drawn on by the Administration in the proposed enhancement of HKRI. DS(T) advised that the enhancement proposal was drawn up having regard to similar experiences in the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, Singapore and some European economies. The Administration considered that the railway corporation should be persistently vigilant in adopting the best international safety practices in railway operations. As such, HKRI needed to enhance its networking with overseas railway regulators for the purpose of experience sharing and keeping track of the latest technology developments and trend of regulatory practices overseas, so as to equip itself with strengthened support and knowledge in this area, with a view to enhancing its monitoring and ensuring that the railway corporation was continuously adopting the most appropriate international standards and practices to safeguard the safety of the traveling public.

21. Dr KWOK Ka-ki agreed that HKRI's regulatory functions under paragraphs 7(a) to (c) of the Administration's paper were existing duties. On the function of assessing and approving new railway projects, he was concerned that the implementation or otherwise of many new railway projects, such as Shatin to Central Link and South Island Line, had yet to be decided. He therefore questioned the need to upgrade the post of the head of HKRI from D1 to D2 level.

22. DS(T) remarked that new railway projects were in the pipelines. For instance, the construction of Express Rail Link to the Mainland would commence in 2009. As for the duties other than assessing and approving new railway projects, the head of HKRI had to adopt a more focused and strategic approach to monitor railway safety and steer the railway corporation to implement enhanced safety preventive measures. He also needed to build up connections with overseas railway regulators more systematically and equip the HKRI with up-to-date insight and experience in railway safety monitoring. In view of the additional measures to be adopted in safety monitoring and the expansion of the railway network at the same time which would lead to an increase in HKRI's workload, it was essential to upgrade the head of HKRI to take up these elevated responsibilities.

23. In reply to Dr KWOK Ka-ki's enquiry on the selection of the incumbent, DS(T) said that the post holder should have sound knowledge on electrical and mechanical engineering and rich experience in the safety operation of the railway systems in Hong Kong. In addition, he should be well versed with the legislative

framework and regulatory mechanism in monitoring rail safety. Moreover, the head of HKRI was expected to demonstrate good analytical capability and management skills to develop strategic safety plans to monitor the safety compliance of the railway corporation. As such, the Administration considered it more appropriate that the incumbent should be selected from within the Government in order to enhance the independence of HKRI's monitoring role.

#### Proposal to integrate HKRI into EMSD

24. Ir Dr Raymond HO supported in principle the proposal to integrate the HKRI into EMSD. Highlighting the importance of enhancing the HKRI's regulatory functions to respond to railway incidents and ensuring railway safety particularly after the rail merger, he considered that housing HKRI under EMSD would enhance HKRI's operational efficiency as EMSD could render in-house professional support to HKRI for the purpose of overseeing the safe operation of railway lines as well as the Automated People Mover in Hong Kong International Airport.

25. Ms Emily LAU recapped TP Panel's concern that owing to the need for the head of HKRI to report to two senior officials in EMSD after the integration, HKRI might have difficulty in responding to railway incidents the very instance they occurred. DS(T) highlighted that at present, technical or manpower support would be sought from EMSD from time to time, especially when major railway incidents occurred. Housing HKRI under EMSD would ensure that the latter's in-house professional support could be provided even more promptly to HKRI as and when necessary. EMSD could also provide stronger electrical and mechanical engineering support for HKRI in handling railway incidents. On the response time, she pointed out that the relevant legislation had already empowered HKRI to respond quickly and independently to railway incidents. As such, DS(T) assured members that HKRI's integration into EMSD would only enhance its efficiency and effectiveness in responding to railway incidents.

#### Engagement of overseas experts in the investigation of railway incidents

26. Ms Emily LAU noted with concern that the Government had engaged overseas experts to investigate into major railway incidents despite HKRI's responsibility for the safety of the railway lines. The engagement of overseas experts to investigate into the cabin dislodgement incident of Ngong Ping Cable Car was an example. She enquired if this reflected that HKRI staff were not capable of undertaking the investigation of major incidents.

27. DS(T) assured that HKRI and his team would continue to be at the forefront of investigations into railway incidents in accordance with the law. Overseas experts would be engaged only under very exceptional circumstances where complicated issues were involved. As she recalled, the East Rail underframe equipment mounting incident was the only incident in recent years that overseas consultants had been engaged in the investigation. On the incident of Ngong Ping Cable Car, DS(T) clarified that being an aerial ropeway, Ngong Ping Cable Car was



not part of the railway system subject to the monitoring of HKRI. DDEMS added that safe operation of ropeway was under the jurisdiction of EMSD too. In view of the seriousness of the incident, the Government had appointed overseas experts to conduct the investigation with the participation of EMSD and to provide independent advice on the safety of the ropeway.

28. Given that manpower of HKRI would be strengthened under the current proposal, Ms Emily LAU considered that it should strive to build up a professional image and to impress upon the public that they were fully capable of conducting independent investigation into railway incidents in an impartial and professional manner. External consultants should be engaged only under very exceptional circumstances. Taking note of Ms LAU's view for consideration, DS(T) said that investigation into railway incidents was one of the main functions of HKRI and it would keep abreast of the latest practices and techniques in conducting the investigations.

29. Ir Dr Raymond HO also questioned the need to engage external consultants to assist in the investigation of railway incidents. He recalled that in the investigation of the aforesaid East Rail incident, the consultant was reluctant to draw concrete conclusion on many issues. He considered that with the support of relevant in-house professionals in EMSD, HKRI should be capable of conducting investigation into railway incidents independently. Mr Howard YOUNG, however, held a different view. While supporting the current proposal, he considered that it might be necessary for the Administration to engage external consultants to provide professional advice on those incidents where complicated issues were involved.

30. Ms Emily LAU enquired whether HKRI had received any invitation to take part in the investigation into overseas railway incidents. She was also concerned about the performance of Hong Kong's train service when compared to international standard.

31. DS(T) said that while HKRI did not receive any invitation for assisting in the investigation of overseas railway incidents, the train service performance of the MTR Corporation (MTRC) and the former Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation (KCRC) ranked very high amongst major metro systems in the world. To benchmark train service performance with international best practices, MTRC and KCRC had joined the Community of Metros, a forum for the world's largest urban railways, and NOVA, a consortium of medium sized metro systems respectively.

32. Noting the good performance of the train service in Hong Kong, Ir Dr Raymond HO suggested that the Administration should seek opportunities to share experience with other railway regulators and take part in the investigation of railway incidents in other places. He considered that this would help boost public confidence in HKRI's role of monitoring the safe operation of the railways of Hong Kong.

33. The item was voted on and endorsed.

**EC(2007-08)14      Proposed creation of one supernumerary post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Labour and Welfare Bureau of Government Secretariat for a period of three years with effect from 10 March 2008 to support the work on poverty alleviation**

34.      The Chairman informed members that the Panel on Welfare Services (Welfare Panel) was consulted on the proposal at the meeting on 12 November 2007.

35.      Mr KWONG Chi-kin indicated his support for the Administration's staffing proposal. Nevertheless, as poverty alleviation was a long-term policy of the Government, he considered that rather than creating the supernumerary Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2) post for a period of three years, consideration should be given to creating the post on a permanent basis.

36.      In response, the Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (PSLW) remarked that the staffing need for supporting the work on poverty alleviation would be reviewed in the light of the progress of work. He elaborated that the new Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) only came into operation on 1 July 2007, and one of its main responsibilities was to oversee and co-ordinate poverty alleviation matters on an on-going basis. To ensure the prudent use of public funds, the Administration had put forward the current proposal to create a supernumerary AOSGC post, designated as Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Poverty) (PAS(P)), for an initial period of three years. He assured members that subject to the outcome of a review to be conducted in three years' time, the Administration would consider the continued need for the post.

37.      Dr KWOK Ka-ki expressed support for the current staffing proposal. However, he was dissatisfied that the post was only created for three years. He echoed Mr KWONG Chi-kin's view that the provision of a senior officer created on a longer-term basis would help combat poverty. He pointed out that issues relating to poverty alleviation was previously spearheaded by the high-level Commission on Poverty (CoP) chaired by the Financial Secretary. In the present proposal, LWB was made responsible for overseeing and co-ordinating poverty alleviation matters. This downgrading arrangement already indicated weakening of the Administration's commitment in this area. Dr KWOK also noted with concern that the proposed PAS(P) would mainly be responsible for two areas of work, viz. the establishment and implementation of the Child Development Fund (CDF) and the study on how best to put in place a "one-stop" employment service. Whilst commenting the scope of work on poverty alleviation was far more than these two areas of work, he also criticized the Administration for its slow progress in pressing ahead with these two initiatives, in particular, the CDF, which aimed to help reduce inter-generational poverty.

38.      In response, PSLW stressed that the Administration attached great importance to alleviating poverty. To this effect, CoP was established in February 2005 to, inter alia, make policy recommendations to alleviate poverty. It had

completed its work in June 2007 and made a total of 53 recommendations on the direction for future work to alleviate poverty. With the conclusion of the work of CoP, the Chief Executive announced the establishment of an inter-bureau/departmental Task Force on Poverty (the Task Force), headed by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW) with senior officials from relevant bureaux/departments (B/Ds) as members, to co-ordinate efforts across the Government in poverty alleviation and monitor their overall progress, including taking forward the recommendations of CoP. As LWB was the dedicated bureau, SLW and other directorate staff would attend to matters relating to poverty alleviation and co-ordinate relevant efforts among various B/Ds. Apart from serving as the secretary and providing support to the Task Force, the proposed PAS(P) also played a key role in overseeing the work in relation to CDF and the "one-stop" employment service which were spearheaded by LWB.

39. Ms Emily LAU expressed similar concern about the Administration's lack of commitment in taking forward poverty alleviation work. While she considered that efforts had to be stepped up to take forward the 53 CoP's recommendations, she was also concerned about the practicability of assigning a D2 officer to co-ordinate the efforts of senior officials in other relevant B/Ds in undertaking work associated with the CoP's recommendations. On the two specific duties to be undertaken by the proposed PAS(P), she was very concerned that no progress had been made on CDF despite a total of \$300 million had been earmarked in the 2007-08 Budget for its establishment. As for the "one-stop" employment service, it appeared to her that the task was under the purview of the Labour Department (LD).

40. PSLW reiterated that the Task Force, headed by SLW, was given the responsibility to monitor the progress on and co-ordinate the Government's efforts in implementing the 53 recommendations made by CoP. He said that the Task Force would report regularly to the Chief Secretary for Administration. LWB would also make regular reports to the Welfare Panel or the Subcommittee to Study the Subject of Combating Poverty on the work of the Task Force. On the progress of the two aforesaid initiatives, PSLW said that the Administration would brief Members on the proposed establishment of CDF at the Welfare Panel meeting in January 2008. For the second initiative, he clarified that the "one-stop" employment service would cover more than the employment services currently provided by LD by adopting an integrated approach in the delivery of training and employment assistance in order to make the best use of the resources available. He elaborated that assistance from the Efficiency Unit had been sought to study on how best to put in place the initiative. The proposed PAS(P) would work closely with the Efficiency Unit in this regard.

41. Ms Margaret NG said that she was not optimistic about the achievements to be accomplished by the proposed PAS(P). She recalled that when the Establishment Subcommittee scrutinized the staffing proposal for the creation of two supernumerary posts in the Financial Secretary's Office to provide support to the work of CoP at its meeting on 18 May 2005, members had urged the Administration to conduct a comprehensive review of its policies which could have adverse impact on poverty alleviation work, and provide a report for tackling the problem. However, the Administration had failed to come up with any concrete proposals

despite members' urge. To facilitate an interim or full evaluation on the cost-effectiveness of the proposed PAS(P), Ms NG requested that the Administration should draw up performance pledges for poverty alleviation work and specify the tasks to be undertaken by the post holder.

42. Recapping that the proposed PAS(P) would assist in the various initiatives co-ordinated by the Task Force in combating poverty, PSLW highlighted the Administration's commitment to take forward the 53 CoP's recommendations. For instance, a Pilot Transport Support Scheme had been launched in June 2007 to provide an incentive in encouraging the needy to find jobs and work across districts; the Family Council was set up on 3 December 2007 to advise the Government on the formulation of policies and strategies for supporting and strengthening the family; the Summit on Social Enterprise had been scheduled to be held on 20 December 2007 to promote understanding of social enterprises and provide a platform for various bodies to explore the way forward for the further development of social enterprises in Hong Kong, etc.

43. Ms Margaret NG remained concerned about the Administration's dedication to combat poverty in Hong Kong as she failed to see how the Administration's measures, such as the Summit on Social Enterprise, would bring material improvements to the livelihood of the needy. She reminded the Administration that members' support for the creation of proposed PAS(P) to strengthen the work on poverty alleviation was predicated on the assumption that the Administration would undertake dedicated work resulted in deliverables serving as indicators for the objective evaluation on the cost-effectiveness of the said post. The Chairman echoed Ms NG's request and asked whether tasks to be undertaken by the proposed PAS(P) could be specified at the outset to serve as performance pledges and facilitate a meaningful assessment of the work accomplished by the proposed PAS(P) in future.

44. PSLW emphasized that the Administration would strive to implement all the 53 CoP's recommendations, and the progress made would be an indication of the Administration's performance on poverty alleviation. He remarked that the proposed PAS(P)'s main duty would be to provide dedicated support relating to poverty alleviation work for the whole LWB. He said that a review on the continued need for the proposed post would be conducted and reported to members before it lapsed in March 2011.

Admin 45. At the request of the Subcommittee, PSLW undertook to provide an information paper setting out the following:

- (a) the implementation timetable of each of the 53 recommendations made by CoP (to be presented in table form);
- (b) the list of initiatives, among the 53 CoP's recommendations, that were going to be implemented during the next three years with the involvement of the proposed PAS(P), the expected progress of implementation for each of them, and whether and how far the

proposed PAS(P) could effectively co-ordinate efforts across B/Ds in undertaking various poverty alleviation initiatives; and

- (c) the work and achievements accomplished by the two supernumerary posts, which were created in the Financial Secretary's Office from 1 September 2005 to 31 August 2007, to help alleviate poverty.

*(Post-meeting note: The information paper provided by the Administration has been issued to members and other FC members vide ESC15/07-08 on 7 January 2008.)*

46. The item was voted on and endorsed. Ms Emily LAU requested that the item be voted separately at the FC meeting to be held on 11 January 2008.

47. The Subcommittee was adjourned at 10:15 am.

Council Business Division 1  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
10 January 2008