

Finance Committee Meeting on 5 December 2008

FCR(2008-09)47 – Short-term Food Assistance Supplementary Information

Purpose

This note provides supplementary information on the following issues as requested by the Chairman of the Finance Committee regarding the new commitment of \$100 million for providing short-term food assistance –

- (a) frequency of food assistance;
- (b) promotion to service users and assessment of needs;
- (c) allocation of fund;
- (d) utilisation of fund; and
- (e) relationship between the new commitment of \$100 million for providing short-term food assistance and the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged.

Frequency of food assistance

2. As mentioned in paragraph 8 of FCR(2008-09)47, each service user will receive food assistance for a maximum of six weeks but provision of short-term food assistance beyond the six-week period may be considered and allowed on an exceptional basis having regard to the merit of the individual case. Service users will receive dry rations in one-go, according to the required level assessed.

Promotion to service users and assessment of needs

3. As mentioned in paragraph 10 of FCR(2008-09)47, the operating non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are required to put in place effective measures to publicise the service among target service users and encourage community groups / district networks to proactively identify and refer the target

service users to them for assistance. The operating NGOs should also, in collaboration with the Government and other district organisations, proactively get in touch with individuals or families who have not benefited from the relief measures announced by the Government over the past year and publicise the food assistance initiative among this group, especially tenants of bedspace apartments, cubicle apartments, rooftop structures and squatter areas.

4. Individuals and families may also approach the operating NGOs directly or be referred by any Government department, NGO, local organisation, Legislative / District Councillor, school and so on for short-term food assistance.

5. The operating NGOs will be responsible for assessing the eligibility and needs of target service users as well as the level and type of assistance to be provided, so as to ensure that the assistance rendered will be proper and adequate to meet the basic needs of service users.

6. In order to ensure that those in need are provided with assistance as soon as possible and to minimise the administrative cost, the operating NGOs will be advised to keep the application and assessment procedures as simple as possible, including requiring basic documentary support like HKID card and proof of income etc. The Social Welfare Department will ensure that comparable procedures and consistent criteria are being adopted by the operating NGOs.

Allocation of fund

7. As specified in paragraph 13 of FCR(2008-09)47, a total of \$60 million, out of the \$100 million funding, will be allocated to cover the operational expenses of the service projects (i.e. \$12 million for each of the five projects). In addition, \$27.5 million will be reserved for meeting demand in excess of the provisions allocated to operating NGOs in the first round, according to the service needs of individual areas.

8. If required by an operating NGO, a maximum of \$2.5 million will be allocated as a one-off setting-up provision for the service project.

Utilisation of Fund

9. The first payment of 10% of the operational expenses (i.e. a total of

\$6 million) will be made to the operating NGOs in advance, while the remaining 90% will be allocated in instalments according to the utilisation rate of individual projects with each instalment equals to 10% of the allocation.

10. If required, the one-off setting-up provision will be released to the operating NGOs in advance upon approval of their applications to run the short-term food assistance projects and signing of the service agreement.

11. The estimated cash flow is as follows –

Year	Estimated Cash Flow			Total (\$million)
	One-off Setting-up Provision (\$ million)	Operational Expenses of the Service Projects (\$million)	Reserve for meeting additional service demand (\$million)	
2008-09	12.5	6.0	Nil	18.5
2009-10	Nil	18.0	9.0	27.0
2010-11	Nil	18.0	9.0	27.0
2011-12	Nil	18.0	9.5	27.5
Total	12.5	60.0	27.5	100.0

Relationship between the new commitment of \$100 million for short-term food assistance and the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged

12. The Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged was set up to promote the development of a tripartite partnership among the Government, the business community and the welfare sector in assisting the disadvantaged and creating a harmonious society. The Fund is disbursed in the form of a matching grant to incentivise the welfare sector to seek corporate participation in organising projects. Priorities will be given to projects which can address the needs of people from disadvantaged circumstances and meet the criteria of the Fund, including but not limited to short-term food assistance service projects. The \$100-million short-term food assistance initiative, on the other hand, is focused solely on the provision of food assistance as a measure to help individuals and families in need.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
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