

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)619/08-09  
(These minutes have been  
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

**Panel on Welfare Services**

**Minutes of meeting**  
**held on Monday, 8 December 2008, at 10:45 am**  
**in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

**Members present** : Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip (Chairman)  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP  
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP  
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH  
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC  
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC  
Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP  
Hon WONG Sing-chi  
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS

**Members absent** : Hon Albert HO Chun-yan  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

**Member attending** : Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun

**Public Officers attending** : Item IV

Mr Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung, GBS, JP  
Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Miss Eliza LEE  
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1

Miss Hinny LAM  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare  
(Welfare) 2

Mrs Anna MAK  
Assistant Director of Social Welfare  
(Family and Child Welfare)

Item V

Mr D C CHEUNG  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare  
(Welfare) 4

Miss Nancy LAW, JP  
Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)

Ms LEUNG Kwai-ling  
Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Social Security)

Mr LUI Hong-kwong  
Chief Social Security Officer 3  
Social Welfare Department

Mr Victor LAM Wai-kiu  
Assistant Government Chief Information Officer  
(Business Transformation)  
Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

**Clerk in attendance** : Miss Betty MA  
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

**Staff in attendance** : Mr YICK Wing-kin  
Assistant Legal Adviser 8

Mr Chris LAI  
Senior Council Secretary (2) 5

Miss Maggie CHIU  
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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**I. Confirmation of minutes**

[LC Paper No. CB(2)321/08-09]

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2008 were confirmed.

**II. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting**

2. Members noted that no information papers had been issued since the last meeting.

**III. Items for discussion at the next meeting**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)341/08-09(01) and (02)]

3. The Chairman said that the Administration had proposed the following items for discussion by the Panel at the next meeting to be held on 12 January 2009 at 10:45 am –

- (a) Progress on the introduction of a licensing scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities; and
- (b) District-based Scheme on Carer Training.

4. The Chairman referred members to a letter dated 1 December 2008 from the Fight for Social Welfare Alliance (the Alliance) tabled at the meeting which requested the Panel to discuss the salary adjustment arrangements for staff in non-governmental organisations (NGOs) subvented under the Lump Sum Grant (LSG) subvention system. He sought members' views on whether the subject should be discussed at the next meeting.

5. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed support for the proposal to discuss the item at the next meeting.

6. Ms LI Fung-ying was concerned that there would be insufficient time to discuss all the items at the next regular meeting, if the proposed item was added to the agenda of the meeting.

7. Responding to the Chairman, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1 (DSLW(W)1) advised that the Administration aimed to introduce a Residential Care Homes (Persons with Disabilities) Bill into the Legislative Council (LegCo) in the 2008-2009 session. The Administration considered it time critical to seek the Panel's views on the proposed licensing scheme for residential care homes for people with disabilities. After discussion, members agreed to discuss the salary adjustment arrangements for staff in NGOs on LSG

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at the next regular meeting in January 2009 and deputations would be invited to give views on the matter. Members also agreed that the discussion on the District-based Scheme on Carer Training would be deferred to a future meeting.

Items for discussion at future meetings

8. Referring to the letter from The Against Elderly Abuse of Hong Kong tabled at the meeting, Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that the Panel might consider discussing the implementation of the Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly at a future meeting. Pointing out that the implementation issues of the Scheme had been dealt with in the case conference held on 21 November 2008, the Chairman said that the Panel would consider and follow up the policy issues of the scheme having regard to views and suggestions, if any, made by members at the case conference.

9. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that the former Subcommittee on Strategy and Measures to Tackle Family Violence had made a number of recommendations for the Administration's consideration in the last term. The Panel should consider following up the implementation of the recommendations. The Chairman said that members might wish to raise the issue under agenda item IV below.

**IV. Proposed amendment to the Domestic Violence Ordinance**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)341/08-09(03) to (04) and CB(2)409/08-09(01)]

10. Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW) advised that during scrutiny of the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2007 (the 2007 Bill), members of the Bills Committee on the 2007 Bill strongly urged the Administration to revisit its position of not covering cohabitation between persons of the same sex under the Domestic Violence Ordinance (Cap. 189) (DVO). He said that the Administration had very carefully re-examined the matter taking into account Members' views. The Administration noted that, in the context of domestic violence, incidents could quickly escalate into life-threatening situations or even fatality. Since lives might be at stake, the Administration accepted the need to extend the protection under DVO to victims of domestic violence in same sex cohabitation relationship. Given that the proposed amendments to DVO to include same sex cohabitation in its coverage fell outside the scope of the 2007 Bill, in moving the resumption of Second Reading debate on the Bill, SLW undertook to further amend DVO in the 2008-2009 session to this effect.

11. SLW emphasised that the proposed extension of the scope of DVO to include cohabitation between persons of the same sex was only introduced in response to the distinct and unique context of domestic violence, and this exceptional treatment was applicable only to the policy area of combating

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domestic violence. SLW stressed that it remained the Administration's clear policy not to recognise same sex relationship. Any change to this policy stance should not be introduced unless a consensus or a majority view was reached by the society.

12. Mr WONG Sing-chi objected to expanding the scope of DVO to include same sex cohabitants, although he raised no disagreement to protect persons in same sex cohabitant relationship from domestic violence. Mr WONG added that a large number of parents and teachers' associations, and religious bodies had expressed objection to the proposed amendments. They were concerned that the proposed amendments would not only undermine the core values of family and marriage, but also move a step forward to recognise same sex marriage and relationship. To his knowledge, some 7 000 members of the public had signified their objections to cover cohabitation of persons in same sex relationship under DVO.

13. SLW said that the Administration fully understood the concerns of different sectors of the community. He explained that the proposed amendments were prepared in response to the request of the Bills Committee on the 2007 Bill. SLW pointed out that in Hong Kong, a marriage contracted under the Marriage Ordinance (Cap. 181) was, in law, the voluntary union for life of one man and one woman to the exclusion of all others. He stressed that the Administration's current proposal merely sought, under the specific policy area of combating domestic violence, to protect persons in same sex cohabitation relationship from being molested by their partners, and should not be regarded as equivalent to giving legal recognition to same sex relationships or providing legal entitlements to persons in such relationship.

14. Mr WONG Sing-chi enquired whether the Administration had conducted public consultation on the proposal to expand the scope of DVO to cover same sex cohabitants. SLW and DSLW(W)1 responded that during scrutiny of the 2007 Bill, extensive consultation had been conducted by the Bills Committee. DSLW(W)1 added that depositions giving views to the Bills Committee strongly urged for extending the protection under DVO to persons in same sex cohabitation relationship, and members of the Bills Committee expressed support for the request.

15. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan recapitulated that the Bills Committee on the 2007 Bill had conducted extensive public consultation. There was a strong view that DVO should be amended to include cohabitation between persons in the same sex in its coverage. The proposal merely sought to protect persons of same sex from being molested by their partners. Against this background, he welcomed the proposed amendments to DVO and considered that the relevant legislative proposal should be introduced as soon as possible. Expressing similar views, Mr Ronny TONG said that the Bills Committee supported the resumption of the

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Second Reading debate on the 2007 Bill on the understanding that the Administration would further amend DVO in the 2008-2009 session to include in the coverage of DVO to cohabitation between persons of the same sex.

16. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that notwithstanding the enactment of the 2007 Bill, the Panel should follow up the outstanding issues deliberated by the Bills Committee on the 2007 Bill, such as the suggestion of setting up a specialised domestic violence court to handle both civil and criminal cases relating to domestic violence and expanding the scope of the "injunction order" under DVO to give the protected person the exclusive right to stay in the family home. Mr LEE asked whether the Administration planned to give effect to these suggestions. He suggested that a special meeting should be held to discuss with the Administration these suggestions.

17. Mr WONG Kwok-hing referred members to a submission from the Hong Kong Association for the Survivors of Women Abuse (Kwan Fook) tabled at the meeting and asked whether the Administration would give thoughts to the suggestions of setting up a domestic violence court, renaming "injunction order" as "occupation order" and providing better support for domestic violence victims involved in court proceedings.

18. SLW advised that the Administration had relayed the proposal of setting up a specialised domestic violence court to the Judiciary for consideration. DSLW(W)1 added that while the Judiciary was considering the suggestion, the Administration had introduced a number of administrative measures to enhance protection for victims of domestic violence. For instance, the Prosecutions Division of the Department of Justice had put in place measures for fast-tracking handling of criminal cases relating to domestic violence and used Chinese in hearings of court cases where possible. The Police had also introduced a series of measures to improve the procedures for handling and investigating domestic violence cases.

19. SLW further advised that prior to the commencement of the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Ordinance 2008, a total of 13 injunction orders were granted under DVO between January and July 2008, of which seven were attached with an authorisation of arrest. After the commencement of the Amendment Ordinance on 1 August 2008, 12 injunction orders had been granted under DVO between August and October 2008. Of these, nine orders were attached with an authorisation of arrest. As shown from the figures, the Administration considered that the Amendment Ordinance achieved the purpose of enhancing protection for victims of domestic violence.

20. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung enquired about the Administration's plan and timetable for setting up a support team to provide better support to domestic violence victims.

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Admin 21. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family and Child Welfare) said that the Administration would further explore this idea in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. The Chairman requested the Administration to keep the Panel abreast of development.

22. Ms LI Fung-ying asked, instead of adopting a piecemeal approach in amending DVO, whether the Administration would conduct a comprehensive review of DVO having regard to the views and concerns raised by members and deputations in the course of deliberating the 2007 Bill. Ms LI said that the Administration, on the one hand, stated that its policy position did not recognise same sex marriage, civil partnership or any same sex relationship, it proposed on the other hand to cover same sex cohabitation under DVO. While she understood the background for proposing the amendments, this had given rise to wide public concern about a policy change. Ms LI took the view that the Administration should state clearly its policy position on family and marriage in the light of the controversy of and wide public concern about the subject.

23. Responding to Mr Frederick FUNG, the legal adviser to the Panel advised that the terms "marriage" and "family" were two different concepts. The definition of "marriage" was laid down in the Marriage Ordinance. He would provide further information, if any, on the meaning of the terms "marriage" and "family" in the existing legislation.

24. Mr Frederick FUNG was concerned that in the absence of a definition of "family" in the legislation, the proposal to expand the coverage of DVO to include same sex cohabitants, if enacted, would give rise to the question of the legal entitlements of persons in same sex relationship. In his view, the proposed amendments should, under no circumstances, introduce any change to the concept of marriage.

25. Mr Paul CHAN strongly opposed the proposed amendments to DVO. Having regard to the traditional values of family and the fact that marriage referred to two sexes relationship, he considered that protection to same sex cohabitants should not be provided in the context of DVO. He was concerned that the introduction of an amendment bill would be regarded as moving a step forward to recognise same sex relationship. Instead of adopting the current approach to extend the scope of DVO, the proposal should be effected by way of a separate ordinance. In view of wide public concern about the proposed amendments to DVO, Mr CHAN strongly urged the Administration to gauge public views on the proposed amendments.

26. SLW said that the Administration fully appreciated different views on the proposed amendments. He reiterated that the proposed amendments to include in the coverage of DVO cohabitants between persons of the same sex were

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prepared in the light of the undertaking made by the Administration during the Resumption of Second Reading debate on the 2007 Bill. While it remained the Administration's policy position not to recognise same sex marriage, the Administration accepted the need to extend the protection under DVO to victims of domestic violence who were in same sex cohabitation relationship as lives might be at stake in the context of domestic violence. The extension of the scope of DVO in such a direction was only introduced in response to the distinct and unique context of domestic violence. SLW said that the Administration had spelt out clearly and would continue to emphasise its policy position of not recognising same sex marriage, civil partnership or any same sex relationship in all submissions to LegCo concerning the proposed amendments. The Administration would continue to solicit views on the proposed amendments. DSLW(W)1 added that there was no statutory definition of "family" in DVO.

27. Dr Priscilla LEUNG cast doubt as to whether the community at large was in support of extending the scope of DVO to include same sex cohabitation relationship. To her knowledge, a large number of parents and secondary school principals raised objection to the proposed amendments. While raising no objection to protecting persons in same sex relationship from domestic violence, she expressed reservation about the approach in taking forward the proposal. In her view, the Administration should consider introducing the legislative proposal under a separate ordinance. As regards the suggestion of replacing the "injunction order" as "property order", she considered that it would involve complex technical issues and might lead to objection from property owners. Dr LEUNG added that as a family law specialist, she had not been consulted on the proposal. She raised concern whether the public consultation conducted by the Administration on the proposed amendments was sufficient.

28. SLW advised that as he had explained earlier, extending the protection under DVO to persons in same sex cohabitation relationship merely sought to protect such persons from being molested by their partners. The Administration accepted the proposal after taking into account the unanimous request of the Bills Committee of the 2007 Bill and a careful re-examination of the subject. Given that the proposed amendments to DVO fell outside the scope of the 2007 Bill, he made an undertaking in moving the resumption of the Second Reading debate on the 2007 Bill that the Administration would further amend DVO in the 2008-2009 session to extend its scope to cover cohabitation between persons of the same sex. SLW said that the Administration prepared the current legislative proposal to honour the undertaking.

29. DSLW(W)1 supplemented that DVO was enacted in 1986 to enable a party to a marriage, or a man and woman in cohabitation, to apply to the court for an injunction order against molestation by the other party to that relationship. DSLW(W)1 said that the 2007 Bill aimed to extend the coverage of DVO to enhance protection for victims of domestic violence, including former spouses

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and cohabitants and people in non-spousal familial relationships. She said that during scrutiny of the Bill, members of the Bills Committee took the view that providing protection to victims of domestic violence should be applied to all persons in cohabitation relationships regardless of their gender and sexual orientation.

30. Mr Ronny TONG said that the Bills Committee on the 2007 Bill fully deliberated different views on the scope of DVO. Members of the Bills Committee took the view that same sex cohabitants should not be excluded from the protection of DVO merely viewing from the human rights perspective. The proposed amendments, if enacted, would by no means be regarded as equivalent to giving legal recognition of same sex relationships. Mr TONG further said that the Bills Committee had indicated its support for the Resumption of Second Reading debate on the 2007 Bill in the light of the Administration's undertaking that an amendment bill would be introduced to provide protection to persons in same sex relationships from domestic violence. He could not accept the opposing views against the current legislative proposal.

31. Mr WONG Sing-chi said that the mainstream view of the society was that any same sex relationship should not be recognised. He said that the current proposed amendments to extend the coverage of DVO to same sex cohabitants was not included in the 2007 Bill and no public consultation had been conducted by the former Bills Committee in this regard. Expressing similar views, Dr Priscilla LEUNG considered that the amendments proposed to DVO should be acceptable to the majority of the society. Mr WONG and Dr LEUNG urged the Administration to conduct extensive public consultation on the proposed amendments to DVO and critically examine the implications on the society. In the light of wide public concern about the proposed amendments to DVO, Mr WONG Kwok-hing suggested that a special meeting of the Panel should be held to receive deputations' views.

32. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that the purpose of DVO was to provide protection to victims of domestic violence, and the proposal to extend the scope of DVO to include same sex cohabitants merely sought to protect such persons from being molested by their partners. Mr LEE considered that the proposed amendments should be introduced without further delay. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung appreciated that the proposed amendments were introduced in response to the views expressed by members of the Bills Committee on the 2007 Bill.

33. Mr Paul CHAN wondered whether expanding the scope of DVO would be the only means to protect same sex cohabitants from being molested by their partners. He considered that cohabitation between persons of same sex relationship could not be regarded as persons in familial relationship, and thereby should not be included in the coverage of DVO. He reiterated that he would not

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object to the legislative proposal if it was effected by way of a separate ordinance.

34. SLW said that persons in same sex cohabitation relationship could seek protection under the law of tort or inherent jurisdiction of the court. The proposed amendments to DVO would enhance protection to same sex cohabitants by enabling them to apply to the court for an injunction order against molestation by their partners. SLW reiterated that the proposed amendments were introduced in response to the views expressed by members during the deliberations of the Bills Committee on the 2007 Bill and the undertaking made by the Administration during the resumption of the Second Reading debate on the Bill.

35. In the light of some members' grave concern about the proposed amendments to DVO, the Chairman suggested that a special meeting of the Panel should be held on 10 January 2009 from 9 am to 12 noon to further discuss the subject and receive deputations. Members agreed.

**V. Replacement of the Computerised Social Security System**  
[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)341/08-09(05) and (06)]

36. Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration) (DDSW(A)) briefed members on the funding proposal to replace the existing Computerised Social Security System (CSSS) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD). She said that while the existing CSSS had adopted proven technology at the time of implementation, a number of design features and capabilities were no longer adequate, particularly with the advancement in information technology. The existing system would reach the end of its serviceable lifespan of 10 years by March 2011. DDSW(A) further said that the benefits in the administration of social security schemes to be brought about by the new CSSS were detailed in the Administration's paper. DDSW(A) added that the Administration planned to submit the proposal to the Finance Committee for funding approval in January 2009.

37. The Chairman noted that the cost of the proposed CSSS was calculated on the basis of the 2007-2008 price level and tendering for the implementation of the new CSSS would be conducted in July 2009. Given the persistent drop in the prices of computer hardware as a result of technological advancement, the Chairman asked whether the Administration had taken this into account in estimating the cost for the new CSSS.

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38. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che suggested that to ensure the cost effectiveness of the implementation of the new CSSS, it should be specified in the tenders that the final cost of the new CSSS should be determined on the basis of the prevailing market prices at the time of delivery.

39. Assistant Government Chief Information Officer responded that the acquisition of computer hardware and system software would be charged in accordance with the prices stipulated in the procurement tenders.

40. DDSW(A) supplemented that the estimated implementation cost of the new CSSS was based on the advice of the consultants. The prevailing market prices would be reflected at the time of awarding the contract.

41. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che enquired whether the new CSSS would support information sharing and exchange within SWD to facilitate integrated case management.

42. DDSW(A) said that under the new CSSS, case information would be integrated and shared by social security staff. Access rights would be assigned to staff of different levels to ensure security of the computer system. Separately, SWD was developing a Client Information System which would allow caseworkers to have access to selected information in CSSS to facilitate provision of welfare services to clients.

43. The Chairman concluded that members expressed general support for the Administration's funding proposal to replace the existing CSSS of SWD.

**VI. Proposal to appoint subcommittee(s) under the Panel**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)341/08-09(07), CB(2)409/08-09(02) to (05) and CB(2)423/08-09(01)]

44. The Chairman said that as agreed at the meeting on 10 November 2008, members would discuss at this meeting the proposals to appoint subcommittees under the Panel. He said that Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Mr Frederick FUNG and Mr WONG Kwok-kin had put forward their respective proposals for the Panel's consideration. This apart, a deputation had written in suggesting the Panel to appoint a subcommittee to study the strategy and measures to combat family violence (LC Paper No. CB(2)409/08-09(05)).

45. At the Chairman's invitation, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che briefed members on his proposal to appoint two subcommittees on the livelihood protection of elders and the review of the LSG subvention system, as detailed in his letter dated 27 November 2008 (LC Paper No. CB(2)341/08-09(07)).

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46. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung proposed to set up a subcommittee on the review of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme. The proposed areas of study were set out in his letter dated 3 December 2008 (LC Paper No. CB(2)409/08-09(02)).

47. Mr Frederick FUNG elaborated on the need for setting up a subcommittee on alleviating the disparity between the rich and the poor (LC Paper No. CB(2)409/08-09(03)). He said that as the proposed scope of work of the subcommittee would fall outside the Panel's purview, members might wish to consider setting up a joint subcommittee under the relevant Panels or a subcommittee under the House Committee (HC). In his opinion, it would be more appropriate for the subcommittee to be formed under HC.

48. Mr WONG Kwok-kin suggested that two subcommittees should be set up under the Panel to study the livelihood of and services for the elderly as well as the review of the CSSA Scheme, as set out in his letter dated 4 December 2008 (LC Paper No. CB(2)423/08-09(01)).

49. The Chairman drew members' attention to House Rule 26(c) which stipulated that a subcommittee should complete its work within 12 months of its commencement and report to HC or the relevant Panel(s). He took the view that any subcommittees formed under the Panel should study specific issues and complete their work within a specified time frame. The Chairman invited members' views on the various proposals to form subcommittees under the Panel.

50. Mr Ronny TONG said that he did not object to the proposals to appoint subcommittees under the Panel. However, he expressed concern whether individual members and the Secretariat could cope with the tremendous workload if too many subcommittees were formed under the Panel at the same time. Mr TAM Yiu-chung, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan and Mr WONG Sing-chi expressed similar views. Mr TAM added that members might consider extending the duration of regular meetings or convening special meetings to discuss issues of public concern if necessary.

51. Mr Ronny TONG supported Mr Frederick FUNG's proposal to set up a subcommittee on poverty alleviation in the first instance. He suggested that the scope of work of the subcommittee should be expanded to incorporate issues relating to assistance for the needy, i.e. review of the CSSA Scheme and elderly services.

52. Given the ageing population and the imminent need to introduce a universal retirement protection scheme, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed support for setting up a subcommittee on elderly services. He also considered that issues relating to the CSSA Scheme could be subsumed under the subcommittee

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on poverty alleviation. Mr WONG Sing-chi and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed general support for Mr LEE's proposal.

53. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che said that he did not object to holding in abeyance the proposal to form a subcommittee on the LSG subvention system. The Panel might consider holding special meetings to discuss the matter and receive deputations whenever necessary. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that to his understanding, the review findings of the LSG Independent Review Committee would be available by mid-December 2008. The Panel should discuss with the Administration the review findings once available. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che expressed a similar view.

54. The Chairman said that in the last term, in-depth discussion had been held by various subcommittees formed under the Panel on issues of concern raised by members. The subcommittees had put forth a number of recommendations for the Administration's consideration. As such, members might wish to consider focusing the discussion on outstanding issues of these subcommittees and following up with specific recommendations. The Chairman suggested that one subcommittee should be operating under the Panel at any one time. If members agreed to appoint two subcommittees, a subcommittee would commence operation only after the other had completed its work.

55. After discussion, members agreed that one subcommittee should be appointed by the Panel in the first place. Members further agreed to appoint a subcommittee under the Panel to study issues relating to poverty alleviation including the review of the CSSA Scheme and assistance for needy elders. At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Frederick FUNG would liaise with those members who had put forward relevant proposals to appoint subcommittees under the Panel and work out the proposed terms of reference and work plan of the subcommittee. The Chairman said that the Panel would consider the proposed terms of reference and work plan of the subcommittee on poverty alleviation at the next meeting.

56. Mr Frederick FUNG added that unless members suggested otherwise, he would not pursue with the proposal to seek the agreement of HC to appoint a subcommittee on poverty alleviation under HC.

## **VII. Any other business**

57. Referring to the letter from a deputation mentioned in paragraph 8 above, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that as the deputation had criticized the conduct of business by the Panel, the Panel should provide a response to the deputation if the allegation was unfounded.

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58. While raising no objection to Mr LEUNG's proposal, Mr WONG Sing-chi was concerned that it would not be feasible for the Panel to provide a response to each and every deputation irrespective of their comments and views.

59. The Chairman said that the letter from the deputation addressed to Mr WONG Kwok-hing, and not the Panel. As discussed earlier, the Panel would consider discussing the policy issues of the Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly having regard to the views and suggestions made by members at the case conference. At Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's request, the Chairman instructed that the Clerk to provide a response to the deputation concerned.

60. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:40 pm.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
9 January 2009