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政府總部
民政事務局
香港灣仔
軒尼詩道一百三十號
修頓中心
二十一樓

GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT
HOME AFFAIRS BUREAU
31ST FLOOR, SOUTHORN CENTRE,
130 HENNESSY ROAD,
WAN CHAI,
HONG KONG.

Tel. : 2835 1368
Fax : 2591 6002

23 November 2009

Clerk to Panel
Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong
(Attn: Miss Betty Ma) 2185 7845

Dear Miss Ma,

Panel on Welfare Services
Motion passed on 28 September 2009

In response to the motion passed by the Panel on 28 September 2009, the Administration would like to reiterate that both SHA and DO(Is) have repeatedly responded through press statements as well as at a LegCo case conference meeting on 18 September. SHA and DO(Is) have stressed that they have never expressed any opinion on the staff deployment of the YWCA and that staff deployment was an internal matter for the YWCA. SHA and DO(Is) had no intention to interfere and had not made any interference to the staff deployment or the professionalism of social workers. The inferences about exertion of pressure made were totally unfounded and inaccurate. As the facts are clear and the allegations are unfounded, the Government considers that there is no need to set up a commission of inquiry to investigate into the allegations. The Chief Secretary for Administration has made known this position in his reply to the Hon Albert Chan's question on 21 October 2009.

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Regarding the issue on the transfer of the responsibilities for the policy and funding of the Neighbourhood Level Community Development Projects (NLCDPs) from Home Affairs Bureau to the Labour and Welfare Bureau, we would like to clarify that Home Affairs Bureau is responsible for the policy on NLCDPs while Social Welfare Department is responsible for managing the resource provisions and performance of NLCDPs. The aim of NLCDPs is to promote a sense of belonging in the community through encouraging people to identify their social needs and mobilising community resources to solve their problems. Like other community development services, NLCDPs should ultimately strengthen community capacity and facilitate social integration, which contributes to a caring, just and harmonious society. That is why while NLCDPs is placed under Programme (6) – Community Development in the Controlling Officer's Report of SWD, it is specified that the programme contributes to the policy area of district and community relations under the purview of Home Affairs Bureau. In view of the objective and nature of NLCDPs explained above, the Administration considers that there is no need to transfer such responsibilities to the Labour and Welfare Bureau.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms Grace Lui)
for Secretary for Home Affairs

cc SLW 2523 1973