

立法會
Legislative Council

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Finance Committee of the Legislative Council

Minutes of the 20th meeting
held at the Legislative Council Chamber
on Friday, 17 June 2011, at 3:30 pm

Members present:

Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Ir Dr Hon Raymond HO Chung-tai, SBS, S.B.St.J., JP
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Dr Hon David LI Kwok-po, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Fred LI Wah-ming, SBS, JP
Dr Hon Margaret NG
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon WONG Yung-kan, SBS, JP
Hon LAU Kong-wah, JP
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBM, GBS, JP
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, GBS, JP
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, SBS, JP
Hon LI Fung-ying, SBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP

Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Dr Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon Jeffrey LAM Kin-fung, SBS, JP
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Hok-ming, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, BBS, JP
Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon CHIM Pui-chung
Hon KAM Nai-wai, MH
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, BBS, JP
Hon Paul CHAN Mo-po, MH, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, JP
Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yea, GBS, JP
Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou
Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun
Dr Hon Samson TAM Wai-ho, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon Tanya CHAN
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon WONG Yuk-man

Members absent:

Prof Hon Patrick LAU Sau-ching, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong, GBS
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Vincent FANG Kang, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan

Public officers attending:

Ms Julia LEUNG Fung-ye, JP	Acting Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Mr Stanley YING, JP	Permanent Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)
Ms Alice LAU, JP	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury)1
Ms Elsie YUEN	Principal Executive Officer (General), Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (The Treasury Branch)
Mr Stephen MAK, JP	Government Chief Information Officer
Mr Victor LAM	Deputy Government Chief Information Officer (Consulting and Operations)
Mr Alfred NG	Assistant Government Chief Information Officer (IT Operations)
Mr Roy TANG Yun-kwong, JP	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1
Mrs Cecilia YUEN	Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Rehabilitation and Medical Social Services)
Dr CHEUNG Wai-lun, JP	Director (Cluster Services), Hospital Authority
Mr Christopher WONG, JP	Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Commerce and Industry)
Ms Wendy CHEUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Commerce and Industry)
Miss Sharon LAU	Assistant Director of the Hong Kong Observatory
Mr Kenneth CHEN, JP	Under Secretary for Education
Ms Amy WONG	Principal Assistant Secretary for Education (Higher Education)

Clerk in attendance:

Mrs Constance LI	Assistant Secretary General 1
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Staff in attendance:

Ms Annette LAM	Chief Council Secretary (1)7
Mr Daniel SIN	Senior Council Secretary (1)7
Mr Frankie WOO	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)3
Ms Christy YAU	Legislative Assistant (1)8

Item No. 1 - FCR(2011-12) 24

CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND

HEAD 710 – COMPUTERISATION

Office of the Government Chief Information Officer

Subhead A068XV Provision of WiFi wireless Internet facilities at Government premises

The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval of an increase in commitment for the provision of WiFi wireless Internet facilities at Government premises \$68 million to \$285.6 million for the implementation of a next generation Government Wi-Fi programme.

2. The Chairman said that the proposal had been discussed by the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting on 11 April 2011. Mr WONG Yuk-man, Chairman of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting, reported that Panel members supported the funding proposal in principle.

3. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the funding proposal.

Item No. 2 - FCR(2011-12)25

HEAD 170 – SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT

Subhead 700 General non-recurrent

Item 530 Trust Fund for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

4. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval to increase the approved commitment for the Trust Fund for Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome by \$50 million to \$250 million.

5. The Chairman said that the proposal had been discussed by the Panel on Welfare Services on 9 May 2011. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che, Chairman of the Panel on Welfare Services, reported that Panel members supported the

Action

funding proposal. Some Panel members had expressed concerns about the long-term arrangement for the Trust Fund, the proposed amount of injection into the Trust Fund, and the long-term support for the recipients of the Trust Fund.

6. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the funding proposal.

Item No. 3 - FCR(2011-12)26

**CAPITAL WORKS RESERVE FUND
HEAD 708 – CAPITAL SUBVENTIONS AND MAJOR
SYSTEMS AND EQUIPMENT**

Hong Kong Observatory

**New Subhead "Replacement of the Storm Detecting Weather Radar at
Tate's Cairn"**

7. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval of a new commitment of \$36 million for the replacement of a storm detecting weather radar at Tate's Cairn.

8. The Chairman said that the proposal had been discussed by the Panel on Economic Development on 23 May 2011. Mr Jeffrey LAM, Chairman of the Panel on Economic Development, reported that Panel members supported the funding proposal. Panel members had asked whether, after the new radar had come into operation, the use of one storm detecting weather radar would be sufficient in generating the requisite meteorological information for providing weather forecasts, especially during autumn and winter months when the weather was normally fine, thereby lengthening the life span of the radars.

9. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the funding proposal.

Item No. 4 - FCR(2011-12)27

**Head 156 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT :
EDUCATION BUREAU**

Subhead 700 General non-recurrent

New Item "Injection into the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund"

10. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval of a new commitment of \$250 million for injection into the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund to provide scholarships to students pursuing full-time publicly-funded sub-degree programmes from the 2011/12 academic year onwards. The Chairman said that the proposal had been discussed by the Panel on Education on 9 May 2011.

Membership and Composition of HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund Steering Committee

11. Referring to the supplementary information note on the membership of the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund Steering Committee (Steering Committee) tabled at the meeting, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung criticised that while there were representatives from the business sectors, parents and students were not represented on the Steering Committee. Mr LEUNG asked whether the principle of "Six-board rule" and "Six-year rule" (6-6 Rules) had been complied with in the appointment of members to the Steering Committee. He further commented that Mr CHUNG Shui-ming held many public offices, but he was only referred to as the Director-General of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (DAB) in the membership list.

12. The Chairman advised that she had requested the Administration to provide, as a standard practice, the background of non-official members including their professions and the sectors they represented in respect of the advisory boards and committees set up to advise and monitor the operation of schemes and funds involving public money. The Administration was also requested to advise whether the 6-6 Rules as well as the policy on gender mainstreaming had been observed when appointing non-official members to boards and committees.

13. Under Secretary for Education ((US(Ed)) said that the Steering Committee comprised three members from the education sector and three members from other sectors. Appointments were made in accordance with the principles of appointment to advisory and statutory bodies promulgated by the Home Affairs Bureau, and these members were appointed in their personal

capacity having regard to their expertise, background and experience in holding public offices. US(Ed) added that at the time of appointment, Mr CHUNG Shui-ming had not served in more than six boards and committees for more than six years, and that Mr CHUNG was appointed on the basis of his professional expertise in the accounting sector. Mr IP Kwok-him clarified that Mr CHUNG Shui-ming was from the accounting sector and had previously served as the Director-General of DAB. He hoped that Members and the public would not have prejudice against DAB members being appointed to government boards and committees.

14. Mr Abraham SHEK declared that Mr CHUNG Shui-ming was one of his friends. He remarked that as the appointment to government boards and committees was made in the personal capacity of the members, there was no point in highlighting the political affiliation of individual members.

15. Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee expressed support for the funding proposal. Noting that the Steering Committee was to advise the trustee on the overall strategy and policy pertaining to the administration of the Fund including the scope and parameters of the scholarship scheme, and also on the award of scholarship, she opined that the Administration should consider appointing more young persons to the Steering Committee. US(Ed) took note of the view and advised that the Administration would ensure a suitable balance in the composition of the committee.

Retaining talented non-local students in Hong Kong

16. Ms Audrey EU said that Members belonging to the Civic Party supported the funding proposal. She opined that it was important to attract outstanding non-local students to study and work in Hong Kong, and enquired about the measures taken to retain outstanding non-local students to stay in Hong Kong after graduation. She also asked about the practice in overseas countries.

17. US(Ed) said that the Fund was primarily to award both local and non-local students for their outstanding performance and to attract talented non-local students to study in Hong Kong. It was considered not appropriate to attach any condition to require scholarship recipients to stay and work in Hong Kong after graduation. He added that since 2008, non-local fresh graduates, upon application, might be granted 12 months' stay without any condition, while applications from non-local graduates for visa/entry permit to stay (or return to) and work in Hong Kong would be favourably considered if they found a job with remuneration set at market level. US(Ed) further said that reference had been made to the scholarship schemes provided by the

Singaporean and Australian governments to non-local students, which also granted extended stay for scholarship recipients in some cases.

Scholarship amounts

18. The Chairman noted that the trustee and the educational institutions concerned would have some flexibility in adjusting the scholarship amounts. She asked how the scholarship amounts were set and whether there were maximum limits. US(Ed) explained that on the advice of the Steering Committee, the trustee had the flexibility to adjust the scholarship amounts and prescribe a limit normally on an annual basis having regard to changes in tuition fees and living costs. The institutions would have the flexibility to decide the amount of scholarship of individual awardees subject to such a limit and taking into consideration specific circumstances such as availability of other scholarships. The scholarship limit for students of publicly-funded sub-degree programmes was \$30,000 each in the 2011/12 academic year, while local and non-local students of full-time publicly-funded degree or above level programmes were eligible for scholarships of \$40,000 and \$80,000 per year respectively. At the Chairman's request, US(Ed) agreed to provide detailed information on the limit of scholarship per academic year, the number of scholarships awarded and the scholarship amount of individual awardees to Legislative Council (LegCo) Members for information.

19. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the funding proposal.

Item No. 5 - FCR(2011-12)28

HEAD 156 – GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT : EDUCATION BUREAU

Subhead 700 General Non-recurrent

New item "Pilot Mainland Experience Scheme for Post-secondary Students"

20. The Chairman advised that the item sought the Committee's approval of a new commitment of \$100 million for launching a pilot Mainland Experience Scheme for Post-secondary Students (the Scheme). The proposal had been discussed by the Panel on Education on 9 May 2011, and the Administration had at her request provided supplementary information on the interface of the Scheme with other similar schemes and programmes.

21. Mr CHEUNG Man-kong said that at the meeting of the Panel on Education, members had voted against the Administration submitting the funding proposal to FC. Panel members had also asked whether the scope of the Scheme would cover overseas learning programmes in addition to those in the Mainland. Mr CHEUNG opined that if the objective of the Scheme was to enhance students' understanding of the Mainland, the Scheme should be confined to local students only. He said that as non-local students in Hong Kong comprised mainly Mainland students who were already very familiar with the Mainland situation, there would not be of much benefit for them to attend the Mainland programmes.

22. US(Ed) responded that as set out in the 2011-2012 Budget, the objective of the Scheme was to enable participating students to learn about the prevailing social, economic and cultural landscapes of the Mainland and to enhance their long-term career opportunities in the region. Given that the Scheme was a pilot programme and that only less than 10% of the post-secondary students had so far participated in Mainland exchange programme, it was considered that the scope of the Scheme should be limited to programmes in the Mainland having regard to the available resources. US(Ed) agreed with members that overseas exchange programmes in other countries would also be beneficial to students. The Government would continue to encourage institutions to use other funding sources from the University Grants Committee (UGC) and Education Bureau (EDB) to facilitate students' participation in overseas programmes. For example, the UGC had recently extended its matching scheme for internationalization, an initiative implemented some six years ago, by providing a further one-off \$50 million to the eight UGC-funded institutions to enhance exchange opportunity for students. Self-financing educational institutions could also make use of the funds available from the Matching Grant Scheme to support students' participation in overseas programmes. As for the target participants under the Scheme, US(Ed) said that while both local and non-local students were eligible, institutions were encouraged to give priority to students with little or no Mainland experience and offer the places to the suitable students. In fact, only a few Mainland students (less than 1% of the participating students) had joined such Mainland experience programmes in the past.

23. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed doubt about the objective of the Scheme. He queried that if the Scheme was for educational purpose, the institutions should be given a free hand in deciding the places where the short-term programmes were to be held based on the learning needs of students of different disciplines. He was strongly against restricting the Scheme to only Mainland programmes which made it just another national education programme. He urged the Administration to withdraw the funding proposal

and increase the resources of the existing schemes so that post-secondary students could participate in programmes of their own choice pertaining to their studies. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung shared a similar view and said that it was unacceptable to limit the Scheme to programmes in the Mainland only. Mr WONG Yuk-man also queried the objective of the Scheme, and suggested providing separate subsidy schemes for overseas programmes as well.

24. US(Ed) reiterated that the five-year pilot Scheme with a commitment of \$100 million aimed to enhance students' exposure to and understanding of the latest development in the Mainland. As about 10 to 20% of post-secondary graduates were employed in jobs that required frequent travel to or stationing in the Mainland, the Scheme which provided short-term exchange programmes, internships and voluntary service in Mainland would help facilitate the long-term career development of post-secondary students, especially those who wish to explore their opportunities in Mainland.

25. Ms Audrey EU said that Members belonging to the Civic Party objected to restricting the Scheme to Mainland programmes and would not support the proposal. She added that while she did not object to funding learning programmes in the Mainland, there should not be restriction on the places of learning. As the Scheme was on a dollar-for-dollar matching basis and the institutions had to raise funds on their own, the institutions should have the freedom to organize learning programmes in places relevant to the needs of students. She also queried that the objective of the Scheme was to encourage post-secondary students in Hong Kong to explore employment opportunities in the Mainland. Referring to the supplementary information note tabled at the meeting, she noted that a "Community Participation Scheme for Organizing Study Tours to the Mainland" had already been set up for youths aged between 12 and 29 to enhance their awareness and understanding of home country, and strengthen the participants' sense of national identity. She opined that the programme was very similar to the proposed Scheme and there was no need to duplicate the programmes.

26. US(Ed) explained that although the "Community Participation Scheme for Organizing Study Tours to the Mainland" covered post-secondary students, the actual number of post-secondary students benefited from the programme was very limited. While post-secondary institutions were eligible to apply for funding under the Community Participation Scheme, only about 10% of the supported projects in 2010-2011 were organized by post-secondary institutions, benefiting only 830 post-secondary students. The "Youth National Education Funding Scheme" and the "Internship Programme for University Graduates" had ended whereas the subsidy scheme for "Passing on the Torch National Education Programme Series" only subsidized primary and

secondary students. He highlighted that the Scheme was intended to complement the existing schemes and provide more focused support to post-secondary students. All local institutions offering locally-accredited post-secondary programmes at sub-degree and degree levels would be eligible to participate in the Scheme. It was estimated that over 30 000 students would benefit from the five-year pilot Scheme, enabling about one out of every six post-secondary students to receive subsidy under the Scheme.

27. Ms Cyd HO referred to the experience of a Form 5 graduate who had taken part in a student exchange programme to Brazil for one year. She opined that the Scheme should be extended to cover overseas programmes in other countries with a view to broadening the international horizons of post-secondary students. She also questioned if the purpose of the Scheme was to facilitate participating students to develop a career in the Mainland, the Administration should cooperate with the business sectors through other schemes such as the Internship Programme for University Graduates introduced in 2009.

28. US(Ed) responded that the Scheme was not intended to encourage local students to work in the Mainland. However, in view of the proximity of Hong Kong and the Mainland as well as the rapid economic growth across the border, there was an increasing trend of post-secondary graduates turning to the Mainland for employment opportunities. As such, it was considered appropriate and of practical need for post-secondary students to gain first hand Mainland experience for their future development.

29. Dr Priscilla LEUNG declared that she was an university staff member and expressed support for the funding proposal. She said that there were other funds to assist students to participate in overseas programmes, for example the University Academic Exchange Fund (China) of the City University of Hong Kong supported academic exchange visits to the Mainland and Taiwan. She said that there was no conflict between the Scheme under consideration and other learning programme schemes, and called on the Administration to consider setting up schemes for subsidizing other overseas programmes. On the target participants of the Scheme, she opined that it would constitute a discriminatory act to exclude Mainland students. Citing her experience of a recent exchange programme to the Mainland, she pointed out that Mainland students could also benefit from the visits and briefings on the various government units in the Mainland. She cautioned against describing exchange programmes in the Mainland as "brain wash" and appealed to members to support the Scheme. She hoped the Scheme could be organised on a regular basis so that more students could benefit from the learning experience.

30. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that Members of DAB were supportive of the proposal. Given the close connection between Hong Kong and the Mainland, and the employment opportunities in the Mainland, post-secondary students should be given the opportunity to broaden their horizons, and deepen their knowledge about the development in the Mainland. He said that Mainland students should not be denied the opportunity to participate in such programmes.

31. Mrs Sophie LEUNG and Mr Jeffrey LAM said that Members belonging to Economic Synergy supported the funding proposal. Mrs LEUNG said that in view of the rapid economic development in the Mainland, post-secondary students should be encouraged to participate in Mainland programmes with a view to enhancing their long-term career opportunity in the region and broadening their horizons. These programmes would also provide good experiential learning for the Mainland students. To optimize the benefits for the participating students, programmes should be well-structured and relevant to their studies. Briefings and experience sharing sessions should be arranged to help participants consolidate their learning experience. Mrs LEUNG suggested that undergraduate students should have the opportunity to study abroad for one academic year under the 3-3-4 structure, and that consideration should be given to setting up a designated fund sponsoring students to study abroad. US(Ed) responded that the institutions would be required to provide project proposals under the Scheme, setting out the programme objective and details.

32. Sharing his experience in organizing visits and short-term programmes for students in the Mainland, Mr Jeffrey LAM said that feedback from the participating students had been very positive. Participants generally found the exposure to the management and operation of Mainland enterprises beneficial to their career development and strengthen their confidence in pursuing careers in the Mainland. They suggested that more Mainland exchange programmes should be organized in view of the rapid development in the Mainland.

33. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung criticized that first-degree places provided by UGC-funded institutions could cater for only 18% of the relevant age group in Hong Kong, and this was far behind other advanced economies. He was sceptical about the benefits of the Scheme since only a small amount of \$3,000 or 50% of the cost per capita of the programme concerned (whichever was lower) would be provided for each participating student.

34. Ms Miriam LAU said that Members belonging to the Liberal Party were supportive of the proposal. She considered it appropriate to provide

opportunities for students, through short-term exchange programmes, internship and voluntary service, to gain a better understanding of the latest development in the National 12th Five-Year Plan and to tap on the employment and business opportunities of the Mainland's fast growing economy. Ms LAU urged the Administration to consider expanding the scope of Scheme and increasing the funding allocation if the Scheme was proved to be effective and popular. Subject to availability of funds, separate schemes should also be set up to provide learning experience in overseas countries in addition to those held in the Mainland. US(Ed) agreed with Ms LAU that more opportunities should be provided to Hong Kong students to keep abreast of the developments in the Mainland. He added that President Obama of the United States had announced the initiative for 100 000 US students to study in the Mainland over the coming four years.

35. Mr Albert CHAN said that while Members belonging to People Power agreed that more overseas learning experience programmes should be organised to enhance the exposure of post-secondary students, they did not support the proposed Scheme. He opined that if the objective of the Scheme was to enhance students' understanding of their home country, it would be politically incorrect not to include Taiwan and Macau in the programme. He expressed dissatisfaction that certain LegCo Members were denied the right to enter the Mainland. US(Ed) responded that the purpose of the Scheme was to subsidize post-secondary students to participate in short-term internship or learning programmes in the Mainland, in order to enhance their understanding of the development of the home country.

36. Mr Andrew LEUNG declared that he was the Chairman of Vocational Training Council (VTC), and expressed support for the Scheme. Mr LEUNG said that every year, VTC had organized for its students a number of exchange/internship programmes in the Mainland which were well-received. Since 2004, the Federation of Hong Kong Industries and VTC had co-organized a job placement programme 「神州青雲路」 for students to gain working experience in various sectors in the Mainland. Given the positive feedback and the benefits to the students, it was worthwhile to continue subsidizing post-secondary students' participation in such programmes, and VTC would make its best effort to raise matching funds.

37. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung did not agree to confining the Scheme to programmes in the Mainland. He asked if the students and institutions had been consulted on whether the Scheme should also include programmes in other places. US(Ed) responded that the post-secondary institutions had been consulted and they welcomed the proposal. As an initiative set out in the 2011-2012 Budget, the Scheme had received positive response from different

quarters of the community. In response to the Chairman's enquiry about educational institutions' feedback on the scope of the Scheme, US(Ed) said that no requests for widening the scope of the Scheme had been received from institutions.

38. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that Members belonging to the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions considered the pilot Scheme worthy of support. To enable the Scheme to run on a regular basis and to enhance its effectiveness, reviews should be conducted on the Scheme for further improvement. He suggested that the organizing institutions and participating students should be invited to evaluate the usefulness and relevancy of the programmes to justify continued funding for the Scheme. Mr Jeffrey LAM shared a similar view and enquired about the Administration's evaluation plan.

39. US(Ed) replied that the Scheme would be open for post-secondary institutions' application once a year during the five-year period of the pilot Scheme, tentatively from 1 July 2011 to 30 June 2016. Institutions could use the matched funds for operating programmes for a period of up to eight years, i.e. up to 30 June 2019. EDB would closely monitor the implementation of the Scheme taking into account the feedback from the institutions and students for further improvement. The Administration would review the effectiveness of the Scheme to decide on the way forward. Detailed information would be provided to substantiate funding application in future.

40. The Chairman put the item to vote. The Committee approved the funding proposal.

41. The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 pm.