

(Translation)

Motion on
“Caring about the education, employment, housing, home acquisition
and business start-up problems faced by young people”
moved by Hon CHAN Hak-kan
at the Council meeting of 28 November 2012

Motion as amended by Hon CHAN Yuen-han, Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN
and Hon IP Kin-yuen

That, given that young people are the future pillars of society, but in the face of globalization and the rapid development of neighbouring regions, Hong Kong young people not only face many challenges during their growth, but also lack upward mobility opportunities, and their aspirations are particularly salient in respect of education, employment, housing, home acquisition and business start-up; however, the Government currently does not formulate any comprehensive support measures mainly targeted at young people to assist them in concentrating on education, establishing career, and resolving the problems of housing and business start-up, thus causing problems such as mismatch of manpower resources, high youth unemployment rate and accumulation of social grievances, which are not conducive to the long-term development of Hong Kong society; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to care about young people's needs; the specific measures should include:

Education -

- (a) to increase the places for publicly-funded bachelor's degree programmes and various types of diploma programmes, and enhance the qualification recognition of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination, sub-degrees and the Yi Jin Diploma in Hong Kong, the Mainland and the international community, so as to widen young people's pathways of further studies;
- (b) to comprehensively review the assistance as well as loans and repayment arrangements under the various existing student finance schemes, abolish the risk rate, set an interest rate ceiling for the Non-means Tested Loan Scheme at 2.5%, and replace the means-tested loans with interest-free loans;
- (c) to comprehensively review the Continuing Education Fund Scheme, raise the cap on the amount of subsidy receivable by each applicant to \$40,000, extend the period of four years within which applicants must submit all claims as required by the scheme to 10 years, and abolish

the restriction on applicants to make a maximum of four reimbursement claims, etc., so as to encourage young people to pursue continuous education;

Employment -

- (d) to review the employment training support services for young people, enhance the existing Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme, and raise the level of the relevant subsidies to \$3,000, so as to attract the participation of more employers to provide more employment and training opportunities suitable for young people in the market;
- (e) to set up more 'Youth Employment Start' ('Y.E.S.') resource centres throughout Hong Kong, strengthen the training targeted at young people, enhance their employment skills, and provide one-stop employment counselling;
- (f) to promote the commencement of 'career planning' at the stage of secondary education, so as to enable secondary students to make better planning for their future career development;
- (g) to conduct a study on enacting legislation to require an annual three-day paid training leave for all working persons in Hong Kong, including offering tax concessions to such employers, so as to facilitate working young people to pursue studies and acquire professional qualifications by examination;
- (h) to co-operate with public and private organizations and enterprises to encourage the employment of young people with less working experience and share with them the relevant salary payments, so as to increase young people's chances of securing employment;

Housing and home acquisition -

- (i) to build more public rental housing ('PRH') flats, and review the existing eligibility criteria for applying for PRH, so as to formulate a more reasonable and fairer method for waiting for and allocation of PRH for young people;
- (j) to construct at least 5 000 Home Ownership Scheme flats each year, re-launch the Sandwich Class Housing Scheme, and ensure the annual provision of 20 000 private residential flats, so as to build an integrated housing ladder for people;

- (k) on the premise of having an adequate supply of private housing, to conduct a study on re-launching the Home Starter Loan Scheme focusing on young people with relatively stable financial income;

Business start-up -

- (l) as it is noticed that quite a number of industrial building revitalization projects have been transformed into real estate and hotel projects, forcing many art workers stationed in such buildings to leave, the authorities must, while balancing housing and tourism needs, also have regard to preserving room for young people's work in cultural and creative industries by, for example, requiring property owners, when applying for industrial building revitalization, to reserve 20% of their premises as lower-rent areas for renting to young people who strive for development in the fields of creativity, culture and arts, etc.;
- (m) to set up creative industry parks in various districts for the provision of studios with stable rents and long-term tenancy agreements to young people who aspire to a career in creativity, culture and arts;
- (n) to set up a handicraft apprenticeship training scheme, and having regard to the local cultural features of various districts, to reserve land or certain buildings under conservation and relax the land use restrictions on vacant sites, so as to train young people for engaging in work on creativity or with traditional characteristics, such as arts fairs, music performances, dragon boat training and fireworks production, etc.;
- (o) to establish a start-up fund for young people, so as to provide loans to young people who have business start-up plans but lack the capital;
- (p) to increase the budget for arts, and raise the annual estimates for Hong Kong Arts Development Council, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department and major performing arts groups for creating additional placements, so as to provide young art workers with more placement opportunities; and
- (q) to offer 'business start-up training programmes' for the provision of the necessary business start-up knowledge, so as to assist young people in devising and implementing their business start-up plans, and to set up a dedicated fund under the Film Development Fund to provide subsidies to young directors;

Education -

- (r) to enhance the regulation of the Continuing Education Fund programmes eligible for subsidies;
- (s) to increase the places for top-up degree programmes for sub-degree programmes;

Employment -

- (t) to implement the relevant recommendations for improvement on the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme and training for young people in Chapter 10 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 59;

Housing and home acquisition -

- (u) to provide a certain quantity of 'flats with limited floor areas';
- (v) to raise the requirements of the ad valorem stamp duty for the consideration of a transaction, so as to reduce the financial burden on young people who are first-time home buyers;

Social participation -

- (w) to convene youth summits annually for conducting comprehensive discussions on the education, employment, housing and other problems faced by young people;
- (x) to set indicators for the ratio of youth participation in statutory and advisory bodies, so as to enable young people to participate more in the process of formulating policies in various respects; and
- (y) to comprehensively review the functions and composition of the Commission on Youth, so as to enable the Commission to better promote policies pertaining to young people in various respects;

Education -

- (z) to increase publicly-funded sub-degree programme places;
- (aa) to review the impact of subsidized tertiary institutions admitting mainland students on local students' opportunities of enrollment to programmes of bachelor degrees, master degrees and doctoral degrees;

- (ab) to provide resources to schools for offering non-academic students quality practical courses or skills training programmes with articulation channels as another pathway under the new academic structure;
- (ac) to comprehensively review the policy on university hostel places, expand campus boundaries for constructing additional campus buildings and hostels, so as to cope with the needs of university students; and
- (ad) to increase the subsidies for evening schools to encourage young people to pursue lifelong learning.