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Legislative Council

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From : Clerk to the Legislative Council

To : All Members of the Legislative Council

Council meeting of 23 January 2013

**Amendments to motion on
“Optimizing the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance
for the unemployed”**

Further to LC Paper No. CB(3) 290/12-13 issued on 10 January 2013, eight Members (Hon Frankie YICK, Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG, Hon TAM Yiu-chung, Hon TANG Ka-piu, Hon CHAN Chi-chuen, Hon Ronny TONG, Hon Albert HO and Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung) have respectively given notices of their intention to move separate amendments to Hon James TIEN’s motion on “Optimizing the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance for the unemployed” scheduled for the Council meeting of 23 January 2013. As directed by the President, the respective amendments will be printed in the terms in which they were handed in on the Agenda of the Council.

2. The President will order a joint debate on the above motion and amendments. To assist Members in debating the motion and amendments, I set out below the procedure to be followed during the debate:

- (a) the President calls upon Hon James TIEN to speak and move his motion;
- (b) the President proposes the question on Hon James TIEN’s motion;
- (c) the President calls upon the eight Members who intend to move amendments to speak in the following order, but no amendment is to be moved at this stage:

- (i) Hon Frankie YICK;
 - (ii) Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG;
 - (iii) Hon TAM Yiu-chung;
 - (iv) Hon TANG Ka-piu;
 - (v) Hon CHAN Chi-chuen;
 - (vi) Hon Ronny TONG;
 - (vii) Hon Albert HO; and
 - (viii) Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung;
- (d) the President calls upon the designated public officer(s) to speak;
 - (e) the President invites other Members to speak;
 - (f) the President gives leave to Hon James TIEN to speak for the second time on the amendments;
 - (g) the President calls upon the designated public officer(s) to speak again;
 - (h) in accordance with Rule 34(5) of the Rules of Procedure, the President has decided that he will call upon the eight Members to move their respective amendments in the order set out in paragraph (c) above. The President invites Hon Frankie YICK to move his amendment to the motion, and forthwith proposes and puts to vote the question on Hon Frankie YICK's amendment;
 - (i) after Hon Frankie YICK's amendment has been voted upon, the President deals with the other seven amendments; and
 - (j) after all amendments have been dealt with, the President calls upon Hon James TIEN to reply. Thereafter, the President puts to vote the question on Hon James TIEN's motion, or his motion as amended, as the case may be.

3. For Members' ease of reference, the terms of the original motion and of the motion, if amended, are set out in the **Appendix**.

(Odelia LEUNG)
for Clerk to the Legislative Council

Encl.

(Translation)

**Motion debate on
“Optimizing the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance
for the unemployed”
to be held at the Council meeting of 23 January 2013**

1. Hon James TIEN’s original motion

That this Council urges the Government to expeditiously adopt effective measures to motivate those with the ability to work to be self-reliant and eradicate abuse of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance for the unemployed, so as to focus resources on helping people with genuine needs.

2. Motion as amended by Hon Frankie YICK

That, *as the proportion of unemployed people receiving Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (‘CSSA’) for a long period of time has continued to rise*, this Council urges the Government to expeditiously adopt effective measures to motivate those with the ability to work to be self-reliant and eradicate abuse of ~~the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance~~ CSSA for the unemployed, so as to focus resources on helping people with genuine needs, *including:*

- (1) *to actively consider setting up a two-year time limit for receiving CSSA for the unemployed by those able-bodied persons, upon the expiry of which any application for continued receipt must be examined by an independent case review committee and approved on a case-to-case basis;*
- (2) *to optimize the existing Extension of the Integrated Employment Assistance Scheme under the Support for Self-reliance Scheme, and require those able-bodied recipients who have not re-joined the workplace to engage in the community work arranged by the Social Welfare Department (‘SWD’) on a full-time basis for five days per week and eight hours per day, and let them earn an income at the rate of the minimum wage, participate in job-seeking and employment training, maintain a healthy mindset towards working, and at the same time make the best use of their abilities to contribute to the society; and*

(3) *to step up monitoring by SWD to ensure that there are no abuses of CSSA by those able-bodied recipients of CSSA for the unemployed,*

and besides exempting those elderly people, single-parent families and people with disabilities in receipt of CSSA for the unemployed from the aforesaid proposed measures, the authorities should also use the additional social resources reaped from reforming the relevant system to strengthen the support for the disadvantaged groups with genuine needs, including the aforesaid people.

Note: Hon Frankie YICK's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type* or with deletion line.

3. Motion as amended by Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG

That, *as there is no legislation prohibiting age discrimination in Hong Kong, making it extremely difficult for middle-aged and elderly people with low education attainment to find jobs, with some of them having to apply for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ('CSSA'),* this Council urges the Government to expeditiously adopt effective measures ~~to motivate,~~ *including reviving labour-intensive industries, human services, agriculture and other industries for the development of economic diversification; increasing training opportunities, establishing career ladders for different trades, creating more employment opportunities, and promoting a family-friendly working environment; and optimizing the system of CSSA for the unemployed by relaxing the disregarded earnings mechanism to encourage employment and motivate* those with the ability to work to be self-reliant ~~and,~~ *and taking measures to* eradicate abuse of ~~the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance~~ CSSA for the unemployed, so as to focus resources on helping people with genuine needs.

Note: Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type* or with deletion line.

4. Motion as amended by Hon TAM Yiu-chung

That, *in order to encourage Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ('CSSA') recipients to re-enter society for employment,* this Council urges the Government to expeditiously adopt effective measures, *including raising the maximum exemption amount of 'disregarded earnings' under the Support for Self-reliance Scheme, enhancing employment training and employment counselling services, and encouraging employers to employ CSSA recipients, etc., so as* to motivate those with the ability to work to be self-reliant ~~and~~

eradicate, *avoid the occurrence of* abuse of the ~~Comprehensive Social Security Assistance CSSA~~ for the unemployed, ~~so as to~~ *and* focus resources on helping people with genuine needs.

Note: Hon TAM Yiu-chung's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type* or with deletion line.

5. Motion as amended by Hon TANG Ka-piu

That, *in view of Hong Kong's imbalanced economic structure, which overly tilts towards service industries leading to few choices of local employment and narrow career prospects, making it difficult for working-age people to play to their strengths and even more difficult in particular for middle-aged people over the age of 50 to find jobs, coupled with exorbitant transport fares, inadequate community child care service, and the serious situation of over-time work without compensation, which make it difficult for some unemployed people to find jobs in order to leave the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ('CSSA') net,* this Council urges the Government to ~~expeditiously adopt effective measures to motivate those with the ability to work to be self-reliant and eradicate abuse of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance~~ *optimize the system of CSSA* for the unemployed, ~~so as to focus resources on helping people with genuine needs so that in addition to financial assistance, unemployed persons can also access comprehensive employment planning, including employment counselling and trial placement, etc., and in case they are unable to find jobs for a long time, they may be given subsidies to participate in skills upgrading programmes recognized by the Qualifications Framework; besides, the Government should also legislate to set standard working hours, and provide long-duration after-school care service and child care service for parents receiving CSSA to facilitate them to work and leave the CSSA net; in the long run, the Government should improve the economic structure and create more employment opportunities, so as to let CSSA recipients secure suitable jobs, play to their strengths and realize their aspirations.~~

Note: Hon TANG Ka-piu's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type* or with deletion line.

6. Motion as amended by Hon CHAN Chi-chuen

That, *as the situation of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ('CSSA') recipients being adversely labelled has become increasingly serious in recent years,* this Council urges the Government to ~~expeditiously adopt effective measures to motivate~~ *assist* those with the ability to work ~~to be self-reliant and~~

~~eradicate abuse of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance~~ *in being self-reliant, and review the system of CSSA* for the unemployed, so as to ~~focus resources on helping people with genuine needs~~ *help needy people to resolve their employment difficulties.*

Note: Hon CHAN Chi-chuen's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type* or with deletion line.

7. Motion as amended by Hon Ronny TONG

That *the unfair distribution of wealth has widened the rich-poor gap and caused split among people of different social strata; on the other hand, the Government's poverty alleviation measures have all along been ineffective and unable to assist low-skilled workers in finding jobs to meet their family financial needs, while the labelling and stigmatization of receipts of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ('CSSA') have deepened the gulf in society; in this connection,* this Council urges the Government to expeditiously adopt effective measures to ~~motivate~~ *promote employment opportunities for the grassroots, enabling* those with the ability to work to be self-reliant and ~~eradicate abuse of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance for the unemployed, so as to~~ *and thereby not only eliminating the chances of abusing CSSA for the unemployed but also helping to* focus resources on helping people with genuine needs; *the relevant measures should include:*

- (1) *to introduce a low-income subsidy scheme, which helps to resolve the problem of working poverty in the short run and serves as a measure to eradicate poverty in the long run;*
- (2) *to enhance care and support services for grass-roots families, such as child care, so as to release the labour force of housewives;*
- (3) *to develop community economy, so that grass-roots and low-skilled people can easily work and find jobs in communities; and*
- (4) *to strengthen the job-matching services offered by the Social Welfare Department to recipients of CSSA for the unemployed, and ensure that the relevant services can focus on recipients' personal strengths, skills and work experience.*

Note: Hon Ronny TONG's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type* or with deletion line.

8. Motion as amended by Hon Albert HO

That this Council urges the Government to *review and optimize the policy on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ('CSSA') to avoid recipients of CSSA for the unemployed being adversely labelled, and to* expeditiously adopt effective measures to *encourage recipients of CSSA for the unemployed to re-join the workplace and* motivate those with the ability to work to be self-reliant and ~~eradicate abuse of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance for the unemployed, so as to focus resources on helping people with genuine needs;~~ *the effective measures should include:*

- (1) *to study the implementation of negative income tax for providing income subsidies to low-income people, so as to encourage unemployed people to join the society for employment; and*
- (2) *to introduce a 'workfare' programme for long-time CSSA recipients with the ability to work to engage in no-pay work arranged by the Government, so as to enhance their self-confidence and skills, build up work habits and increase employment opportunities.*

Note: Hon Albert HO's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type* or with deletion line.

9. Motion as amended by Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung

That this Council urges the Government to expeditiously adopt effective measures to motivate those with the ability to work to be self-reliant and eradicate abuse of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance for the unemployed, ~~so as to focus resources on helping people with genuine needs,~~ *and set up additional open bazaars and hawker permitted areas in each district and re-issue hawker licences to increase employment opportunities for grassroots and promote the development of community economy.*

Note: Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung's amendment is marked in *bold and italic type* or with deletion line.