

立法會

Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(4)1284/15-16

(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/ED

Panel on Education

Minutes of meeting held on Monday, 13 June 2016, at 4:30 pm in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, SBS, JP(Chairman)
Hon IP Kin-yuen (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, JP
Hon Starry LEE Wai-king, JP
Hon CHAN Hak-kan, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon NG Leung-sing, SBS, JP
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
Hon Charles Peter MOK, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon Kenneth CHAN Ka-lok
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun, BBS, MH, JP

Members absent : Dr Hon Priscilla LEUNG Mei-fun, SBS, JP
Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, GBS, JP
Hon Dennis KWOK

Members attending : Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC

Public Officers attending : Agenda item III

Mr Kevin YEUNG, JP
Under Secretary for Education

Mr Brian LO, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)

Agenda item IV

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP
Secretary for Education

Mr Brian LO, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)

Attendance by invitation : Agenda item III

The Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education

Professor Peter YUEN Pok-man
Chairman

Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic
and Vocational Qualifications

Ms Dorte KRISTOFFERSEN
Executive Director

Quality Assurance Council

Dr Richard ARMOUR
Member

Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education

Professor LEE Chack-fan
Member

Clerk in attendance : Miss Polly YEUNG
Chief Council Secretary (4)4

Staff in attendance : Mr KWONG Kam-fai
Senior Council Secretary (4)4

Miss Mandy NG
Council Secretary (4)4

Ms Sandy HAU
Legislative Assistant (4)4

Action

I. Information paper(s) issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(4)972/15-16(01) -- Submission dated 13 April 2016 from Hong Kong Unison Limited concerning the free kindergarten policy regarding ethnic minority children

LC Paper No. CB(4)972/15-16(02) -- Administration's written response dated 10 May 2016 to the submission dated 13 April 2016 from Hong Kong Unison Limited concerning the free kindergarten policy regarding ethnic minority children

LC Paper No. CB(4)973/15-16(01) -- Letter dated 12 January 2016 from Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung concerning the issues related to Integrated Education

Action

- LC Paper No. CB(4)973/15-16(02) -- Administration's written response dated 10 May 2016 to the letter dated 12 January 2016 from Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung concerning the issues related to Integrated Education
- LC Paper No. CB(4)1011/15-16(01) -- Joint letter dated 4 May 2016 from Hon CHAN Chi-chuen, Hon Albert CHAN and Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung concerning the issues related to schools participating in the 2016 Territory-wide System Assessment Tryout Study (Primary 3)
- LC Paper No. CB(4)1011/15-16(02) -- Administration's written response dated 18 May 2016 to the joint letter dated 4 May 2016 from Hon CHAN Chi-chuen, Hon Albert CHAN and Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung concerning the issues related to schools participating in the 2016 Territory-wide System Assessment Tryout Study (Primary 3)
- LC Paper No. CB(4)1012/15-16(01) -- Letter dated 4 May 2016 from Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yee, concerning the issues related to Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination 2016

Action

LC Paper No. CB(4)1012/15-16(02) -- Administration's written response dated 19 May 2016 to the letter dated 4 May 2016 from Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-yea concerning the issues related to Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination 2016

LC Paper No. CB(4)1089/15-16(01) -- Letter dated 21 May 2016 from Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan concerning the issues related to the collapse of rooftop of a building at the City University of Hong Kong and roof greening of school premises

LC Paper No. CB(4)1089/15-16(02) -- Administration's written response dated 6 June 2016 to the letter dated 21 May 2016 from Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan concerning the issues related to the collapse of rooftop of a building at the City University of Hong Kong and roof greening of school premises)

Members noted the above papers issued since the last meeting.

II. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(Appendix I to LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16 -- List of outstanding items for discussion

Appendix II to LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16 -- List of follow-up actions)

Action

2. The Chairman informed members that the next regular meeting, which would be the last meeting of this session, would be held on Saturday, 2 July 2016 at 9:30 am. The Administration had proposed to discuss the item of "Latest development on 'Using Putonghua as the Medium of Instruction for Teaching the Chinese Language Subject' in primary and secondary schools in Hong Kong" at the next regular meeting. He would include the following two additional items on the agenda –

- (a) review on the salary structure of kindergarten teachers; and
- (b) the overall development of education in Hong Kong.

Members noted and raised no objection.

3. The Chairman recalled that at its meeting held on 11 April 2016, the Panel had unanimously passed a motion under the agenda item of "Staff establishment and salary structure in primary schools". He said that noting the written responses provided by the Administration, some members considered that the Administration's responses had not addressed the issues raised in the motion. The Deputy Chairman suggested the Panel to follow up the matter at the next meeting. The Chairman said that while he would consider the suggestion, he would invite the Under Secretary for Education ("US(Ed)"), who was in attendance, to reflect members' views to the Secretary for Education.

III. Issues related to the policy on self-financing post-secondary programmes

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16(01) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16(02) -- Updated background brief entitled "Issues related to the governance and regulation of the self-financing post-secondary education sector" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat)

4. Members noted the updated background brief prepared by the Secretariat [LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16(02)] and a submission from Joint Quality Review Committee [LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16(07)].

Action

The Chairman said that the discussion under this item would cover issues such as governance of self-financing post-secondary institutions, quality assurance and level of tuition fees of the study programmes, and the development of the self-financing post-secondary sector in Hong Kong.

Briefing by the Administration

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, US(Ed) briefed members on the latest development of the self-financing post-secondary education sector and the Government's policy on the sector, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16(01)].

Oral presentation by related bodies

6. A total of four related bodies presented their views, as set out in the **Appendix**.

Discussion

7. Before commencing the discussion, the Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure which provided that a Member shall not move any motion or amendment relating to a matter in which he had a pecuniary interest, whether direct or indirect, or speak on any such matter, except where he disclosed the nature of that interest. He reminded members to declare interests, if any, in the matter under discussion.

Student intake of self-financing post-secondary institutions

8. Mr TAM Yiu-chung expressed concern about insufficient student enrolment by self-financing post-secondary institutions due to the decline in number of secondary school graduates. He sought further information on the number of secondary school leavers in the next few years.

9. US(Ed) said that the number of secondary school leavers was expected to drop from about 57 000 in 2016 to about 42 000 by 2022. It was estimated that the number of students meeting the minimum general entrance requirements for local undergraduate programmes would drop from about 22 000 to 17 000 during the same period.

10. The Deputy Chairman said that as the self-financing post-secondary sector played an important role in the higher education system of Hong Kong, the Administration should provide appropriate assistance to the sector to cope with the impact of the decline in student population. Mr WONG Yuk-man said that despite their operating difficulties, some self-financing institutions

Action

had been providing quality post-secondary education to young people. He concurred that the Administration should explore ways to sustain the development of the sector, such as by enhancing the quality of self-financing post-secondary programmes and promoting the recognition of qualifications awarded by self-financing post-secondary institutions.

11. Regarding the concern of the self-financing post-secondary sector about the restriction on admission of non-local students, the Chairman sought further explanation on the existing policy on admission of non-local students by self-financing post-secondary institutions, and enquired whether it was different from that applicable to University Grants Committee("UGC")-funded institutions.

12. US(Ed) advised that UGC-funded institutions could admit non-local students to their subsidized sub-degree and undergraduate programmes through over-enrolment outside the approved UGC-funded student number targets, capped at a level equivalent to 20% of the approved UGC-funded student number targets for these programmes. Regarding the self-financing post-secondary sector, the institutions could admit students from the Mainland, Taiwan and Macao up to a level equivalent to 10% of their student enrolments. The admission of students from other overseas places was not subject to any ceiling.

13. Professor Peter YUEN, Chairman of the Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education ("FSTE"), said that some institutions, in particular those with a smaller operating scale, would wish to admit more students from the Mainland, Taiwan and Macao to help improve student enrolment. He added that it would be useful if the ceiling could be raised from 10% to about 20%.

14. In this regard, the Deputy Secretary for Education(1) ("DS(Ed)1") highlighted that the percentage of non-local students admitted varied among institutions. However, the average percentage of students from the Mainland, Taiwan and Macao was way below the 10% ceiling.

Financial position of self-financing post-secondary institutions

15. The Deputy Chairman recalled that as stated in the 2015 Policy Address, some community colleges of UGC-funded institutions had accumulated large surpluses and the Government would ask the institutions to review their financial position and consider ways to use their surpluses to benefit their students. However, according to the information provided by the Education Bureau ("EDB") in response to a question raised by him at a Council meeting in May 2016, some self-financing post-secondary institutions had reported

Action

deficits instead of surplus. The Deputy Chairman was concerned whether there had been a deterioration in the financial position of self-financing post-secondary institutions over the past year or so.

16. US(Ed) advised that there had been variations in the financial position of individual institutions. The Administration had provided the up-to-date information in its reply to the Deputy Chairman's question at the Council meeting in May 2016. He further said that according to the institutions, the surpluses would be reserved for designated purposes such as improving facilities.

17. Members noted from FSTE that repayment of loans had constituted a heavy burden on the institutions and that the Administration should take measures to relieve their financial pressure. Mr TAM Yiu-chung sought information on the prevailing arrangements for repayment of loans by self-financing post-secondary institutions. The Deputy Chairman and Mr WONG Yuk-man said that currently, some institutions had to reserve a large amount of money for repaying loans to the Government. If the repayment arrangements were more relaxed or flexible, the institutions would be in a position to make available more resources for educational development.

18. DS(Ed)1 said that the Start-up Loan Scheme provided interest-free loans to institutions in support of their development of college premises and enhancement of facilities. If an institution had proven financial difficulties in loan repayment under the Start-up Loan Scheme, it might apply for an extension of loan repayment period from no more than 10 years to no more than 20 years. A low interest rate would apply for the outstanding loan if repayment was not fully made within the 10-year interest-free period. So far, the Administration had not received any feedback from individual institutions that they had difficulties in repaying loans within 20 years.

Regulation and governance of self-financing post-secondary institutions

19. Dr Helena WONG said that according to media reports, the Centennial College had incurred a huge deficit due to poor student enrolment and would cease operation very shortly. The institution had been taken over by HKU School of Professional and Continuing Education ("HKU SPACE") recently. Arising from this incident, Dr WONG expressed concern about the prevailing regulation of the self-financing post-secondary sector.

20. US(Ed) clarified that the Centennial College had handed over the management of its operation, including the responsibilities for student recruitment and financial affairs, to HKU SPACE. Since self-financing

Action

post-secondary institutions were non-profit-making organizations, US(Ed) said that if they encountered difficulty in operation, they would likely discuss the matter with the Administration rather than taking the exit option immediately. Individual institutions might also consider consolidating some of the programmes to be offered as a result of the decline in student population.

21. Mr TAM Yiu-chung and Dr Helena WONG enquired about ways to safeguard the interest of students in case the programmes they had enrolled were terminated or the institution concerned ceased operation. In response, US(Ed) and DS(Ed)¹ advised that in such circumstances, the Administration would remind the institution concerned to make arrangements for students to complete their current study programmes if possible and not to enrol new students to the programmes pending cessation. The Administration might also provide relevant information to students who would need to continue their study in other institutions.

22. Dr Fernando CHEUNG declared that he was a lecturer of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University. Dr CHEUNG considered that the provisions under the Post Secondary Colleges Ordinance ("PSCO") (Cap.320) were outdated. He urged for early amendment of PSCO so as to strengthen the regulation of the sector as well as enhance the governance and transparency of self-financing post-secondary institutions registered under PSCO. Dr CHEUNG also remarked that the self-financing post-secondary sector had become commercially-oriented, with little attention being paid to the quality of the study programmes.

23. US(Ed) did not subscribe to Dr Fernando CHEUNG's comments about the self-financing post-secondary sector. He recalled that some members and deputations had acknowledged the contribution of self-financing post-secondary institutions to Hong Kong's higher education system. Meanwhile, a number of measures had been implemented in recent years to enhance the governance and transparency of self-financing post-secondary institutions, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16(01)].

24. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that he had received complaints from the teaching staff of some self-financing post-secondary institutions about unsatisfactory arrangements of teaching duties and low salary. He considered it necessary for the Administration to strengthen regulation on self-financing post-secondary institutions. In response, US(Ed) said that the institutions enjoyed autonomy in matters related to the employment and deployment of teaching staff. He considered that individual institutions had always strived to

Action

pursue their mission and objectives in providing quality post-secondary education.

Financial support for students

25. The Chairman said that as he was aware, students pursuing publicly-funded undergraduate programmes and sub-degree programmes were subsidized up to some \$200,000 and \$100,000 per student per annum respectively. However, the cost for self-financing post-secondary programmes had to be borne by the students through much higher tuition fees charged by the institutions. The Chairman was concerned about the heavy financial burden on students. Besides, self-financing post-secondary institutions might lack the resources to offer programmes and facilities comparable to those of publicly-funded institutions.

26. US(Ed) advised that it would not be appropriate to make a direct comparison between publicly-funded and self-financing institutions in terms of their operating scales and types of programmes offered, as the publicly-funded and self-financing sectors had different roles and missions in Hong Kong's higher education system. DS(Ed)¹ supplemented that publicly-funded institutions were engaged in both teaching and research activities while self-financing institutions focused more on teaching.

27. Professor Peter YUEN concurred that the tuition fees for self-financing post-secondary programmes should be maintained at an affordable level. Hence, the sector would appreciate some form of government subsidy to help relieve the financial burden on students. In this connection, FSTE had proposed a voucher system under which a voucher of \$25,000 and \$20,000 per person per annum would be provided to students pursuing self-financing undergraduate and sub-degree programmes respectively.

28. Mr WONG Yuk-man and the Deputy Chairman saw merits in FSTE's proposal and urged the Administration to give it serious consideration. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung enquired about the estimated expenditure if the proposed voucher system was implemented.

29. US(Ed) stressed that it was the Government's policy to support the parallel development of publicly-funded and self-financing post-secondary sectors. It would be a major policy shift and financial commitment by the Government if a voucher system was introduced for the self-financing post-secondary sector. He further said that students pursuing self-financing post-secondary programmes with financial difficulty could apply for financial assistance under various schemes administered by the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency.

Action

Collection of enrolment deposits and the first instalment of tuition fee by institutions

30. Mr WONG Kwok-hing recalled that at a Council meeting held last year, he had raised a question on the collection and refund arrangements for enrolment deposits and tuition fees by self-financing post-secondary institutions. He enquired on the latest arrangements to avoid students having to forfeit large amount of tuition fees due to different admission timelines among institutions. Mr WONG also recalled that he had referred some cases to the Administration and enquired about the follow-up actions, if any, taken by the Administration. Dr Fernando CHEUNG also considered that arrangements should be put in place to avoid students having to forfeit large sums of fees.

31. US(Ed) confirmed that EDB had followed up the matter with the relevant institutions. Most institutions allowed applicants who were subsequently admitted to subsidized programmes through the Joint University Programmes Admission System ("JUPAS") to apply for refund of enrolment deposits.

32. DS(Ed)1 advised that the Administration had liaised with the self-financing post-secondary education sector for the purpose of improving the application and admission arrangements. Institutions had adopted common application and admission arrangements, such as benchmarking enrolment deposits at not more than \$5,000. In so far as current candidates of the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination were concerned, most institutions had agreed to align the deadline for collecting the first instalment of tuition fee for locally-accredited post-secondary programmes not covered by JUPAS, i.e. no earlier than one day after the announcement of JUPAS Main Round results. The Administration noted that in many cases, there was a genuine need for institutions to collect enrolment deposits in order to ascertain the number of students. After confirming the student intake, the institutions would be able to make the appropriate planning and arrangements for their study programmes.

Summing up

33. In conclusion, the Chairman thanked the representatives from related bodies for attending the meeting and sharing their views.

Action

IV. Proposed Injection into the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund to support the "Belt and Road" scholarship scheme

(LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration)

Briefing by the Administration

34. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the Administration's proposal to inject HK\$1 billion into the HKSAR Government Scholarship Fund ("GSF") to increase the number of offers for the "Belt and Road" Scholarship Scheme ("the Scheme") under the existing Targeted Scholarship Scheme of GSF, as set out in the Administration's paper [LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16(03)]. SED highlighted that in response to public views, the Administration had modified the Scheme to also provide scholarships for Hong Kong students to pursue undergraduate study in the B&R region ("the outbound scholarships") in addition to scholarships for outstanding students from the B&R region to pursue undergraduate study in Hong Kong ("the inbound scholarships"). Subject to members' views, the Administration would seek funding approval from the Finance Committee ("FC") for the proposed injection.

35. The Chairman noted that quite a number of members would like to ask questions on this agenda item. To allow sufficient time for discussion, he would extend the meeting for 15 minutes beyond the appointed end-time. He also informed members that he had received the wording of three motions under this agenda item proposed to be moved by Dr Helena WONG, the Deputy Chairman and Mr Gary FAN respectively. As the ensuing discussion would be relevant to these motions, he would not arrange a separate debate on these motions and would deal with them after members' deliberation. Members noted and raised no objection. The wording of the three motions were tabled and subsequently issued to members vide LC Paper Nos. CB(4)1121/15-16(01)-(03).

Discussion

Objectives of and justification for the "Belt and Road" Scholarship Scheme

36. Dr Kenneth CHAN opposed the Administration's proposal. He criticized that the Scheme had been introduced to tie in with the latest policy of the Mainland and to increase the chance of re-election of the incumbent Chief Executive ("CE"). He considered that instead of subsidizing foreign students to study in local universities, the Administration should

Action

deploy the proposed funding to provide more subsidized undergraduates places for local students who met the minimum university entrance requirements. He did not subscribe to the Administration's views that the Scheme would help enhance the competitiveness and internationalization of the local higher education sector.

37. Mr WONG Yuk-man objected to the Scheme and said that CE had introduced the Scheme to please the Central Government so as to increase his chance for re-election. He was gravely concerned that it was not the right timing to launch the Scheme as some of the B&R countries had not yet established economic and trade relations with the Mainland. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung also said that the B&R Initiative was a political ploy, rather than an educational initiative. He could not see any tangible benefits that could be brought to Hong Kong by the Scheme.

38. Mr Gary FAN said that CE had introduced the Scheme to please the Central Government. He considered that it was not justifiable to set up a HK\$1 billion-fund for implementing the Scheme. Instead, the proposed funding should be deployed to improve other public services. Mr Alan LEONG expressed his objection and shared the concerns of some other members that the Scheme had been introduced out of political consideration.

39. Dr Helena WONG said that Members of the Democratic Party objected to the Scheme. She urged the Administration to deploy resources on pressing issues, such as free kindergarten education, articulation pathways of sub-degree graduates, inadequate subsidized undergraduate places, reprovisioning of matchbox-style sub-standard school premises and integrated education, all of which warranted immediate support and attention. Miss CHAN Yuen-han also urged the Administration to accord priority to tackling pressing livelihood issues, such as the rising unemployment rate.

40. The Deputy Chairman and Mr CHAN Chi-chuen expressed serious doubt about the attractiveness of the Scheme to local students as very few of them would be interested in studying in the B&R countries. The Deputy Chairman queried whether there was any urgent need to introduce the Scheme, given that many education-related issues were yet to be addressed. Mr CHAN stated that Members of the People Power opposed the Scheme. He concurred that the B&R countries were not popular destinations for higher education, and said that the Government should ascertain local students' preferred places of study before launching the Scheme. He further said that even CE himself would unlikely send his children to the B&R countries for university education.

Action

41. Dr Fernando CHEUNG considered that due to language and other barriers, local students might not be interested in the outbound scholarships under the Scheme. He was also concerned about the academic standing of universities in the B&R countries as their international rankings were not high. Regarding the inbound students, he cautioned that there might not be sufficient university hostel places for them. In his view, the Scheme had been introduced for political purpose and should not be financed by public money. The Administration should accord priority to providing sufficient subsidized undergraduate places for local students.

42. SED explained that the proposed injection of HK\$1 billion into GSF was an endowment fund for the Scheme and had been included in the 2016-2017 Estimates. The funding requirements for the inbound and outbound scholarships under the Scheme would be met from the investment income of the endowment fund. The implementation of the Scheme would in no way affect or reduce the existing resources allocated for education. SED further said that the Scheme was actually under the existing Targeted Scholarship Scheme under GSF, which was conceived as early as 2013 to strengthen education ties between Hong Kong and certain targeted regions and was not based on political consideration.

43. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung said that as local employers and academic institutions were not familiar with the higher education system in the B&R countries, the qualifications awarded by universities in the region might not be widely recognized. He was aware that many local students aspired to further their study in Europe and the United States ("US") rather than the B&R countries. He therefore doubted whether the Scheme had been proposed for the benefit of local students or for pleasing the Central Government.

44. Ms Cyd HO was concerned about the employment prospect of graduates from the B&R universities, and enquired whether their qualifications would be recognized by the Government in civil service appointments. She opined that the B&R Initiative was an economic development strategy and should not be packaged as an educational initiative to be implemented by EDB.

45. SED advised that the provision of outbound scholarships under the Scheme would provide young people with the choice to study in emerging economies, in addition to popular destinations such as Europe and US. Regarding concerns about employment prospect, SED indicated that the Scheme was supported by the chambers of commerce in both Indonesia and Hong Kong, which would offer internships to the scholarship recipients.

Action

46. The Chairman agreed in principle that the B&R Initiative would offer opportunities to Hong Kong. However, he doubted whether the implementation of the Scheme could bring benefits to local students. Regarding the outbound scholarships, he said that the existing information provided by the Administration could not assist local students to make an informed decision to further their study in the B&R region. He also observed that the higher education system in many of the B&R countries, such as the study programmes, the admission requirements and the recognition of qualifications, were relatively unknown. He considered it necessary for the Administration to collect and make available more information on higher education in the B&R economies before launching the Scheme.

47. SED advised that to ensure the quality of the degree programmes undertaken by the awardees of the Scheme, the education authorities of the collaborating B&R countries would be invited to recommend a number of quality universities in their economies for prescribing as mandatory university choices under the outbound scholarships.

48. Mr NG Leung-sing and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan expressed support for the Scheme. Mr NG considered that the Scheme could help internationalize the local higher education sector, as well as nurture more local students with international perspectives. In the long run, it could enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness and provide more development opportunities for young people. Dr CHIANG concurred that the Scheme was a visionary initiative. She said that some members were biased against the B&R countries and had overlooked the impressive developments in countries such as Singapore, Poland, Estonia and Israel.

49. Ms Starry LEE said that Members of the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong ("DAB") supported the Scheme and its intended objectives in principle, as it could promote Hong Kong as a regional education hub and enhance its competitiveness. Mr TAM Yiu-chung considered that the Scheme was a worthy initiative which would benefit local students.

50. Mr Andrew LEUNG considered that the implementation of the Scheme was conducive to strengthening ties and education exchange between Hong Kong and the B&R economies. To ease concerns about the proposed funding injection, he urged the Administration to further explain to the community the benefits of the Scheme.

51. Apart from providing full-course scholarships for local students to pursue undergraduate study in the B&R countries, some members including

Action

Mr Andrew LEUNG, Ms Starry LEE, Mr NG Leung-sing and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan enquired whether the Administration would consider providing subsidies for courses and exchange programmes of shorter durations under the Scheme. To encourage and support local students to participate in exchange programmes in the B&R region, SED advised that the Administration would introduce the Scheme for Subsidy on Exchange to B&R Region for Post-secondary Students starting from July 2016 in parallel to the Scheme.

Financial and resources implications

52. Ms Starry LEE said that members of DAB would support the Scheme provided that it would not affect local students' opportunities for subsidized higher education. In view of the concerns raised by members, Ms LEE enquired whether the Administration would consider deploying internal resources to finance the Scheme in the initial stage. Mr TAM Yiu-chung also asked whether the Administration could explore other sources of funding, such as private donations or making use of the existing balance of funds under GSF.

53. In response, SED advised that in the 2014-2015 academic year, the total value of scholarships offered under various scholarship and award schemes of GSF and the Self-financing Post-secondary Education Fund amounted to about HK\$170 million benefitting around 8 000 awardees. In order to maintain the sustainability of the existing schemes under GSF, it was necessary for the Government to inject separate funding into GSF for launching the Scheme.

54. Mr Gary FAN was concerned whether inbound students under the Scheme would compete with local students for limited subsidized undergraduate places. In reply, SED explained that the proposed injection was one-off and would not affect or reduce the Government's expenditure on existing education-related initiatives. Students from the B&R region would be admitted through over-enrolment outside the approved UGC-funded student number. Hence, they would not affect the chance of admission of local students to UGC-funded undergraduate programmes.

55. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen recalled that according to the Administration, it would give priority to livelihood-related and non-controversial proposals when submitting proposals to FC. He was concerned whether the Administration would submit the funding proposal for the Scheme to FC for urgent approval within the current session at the expense of other important items. If this was the case, Mr CHAN said that he would stage filibustering at the forthcoming FC meetings. Miss CHAN Yuen-han also sought

Action

clarification on whether the Administration would rearrange the order of items so that the funding request for the Scheme would be considered ahead of civil service pay adjustment.

56. Mr Alan LEONG said that he did not see any urgent need to submit the funding proposal to FC within the remaining session of the current term. Mr WONG Yuk-man said that many members, including himself, would oppose the funding proposal if it was submitted to FC. He stated that he would resort to filibustering to block the proposal. Mr Gary FAN urged the Administration not to put forward the funding proposal to FC amidst strong objection from members.

57. Ms Starry LEE said that in view of the controversial nature of the Scheme and the heavy agenda of FC before the Council stood prorogued in July 2016, the Administration should not displace other scheduled items. Alternatively, it might consider placing the funding proposal for the Scheme as the last item on the agenda of FC. In response to members' concerns, SED advised that the Administration had no intention to advance consideration of the Scheme at FC ahead of other scheduled items.

58. Mr Michael TIEN said that he would support the funding proposal if the Administration would confirm that the quota for scholarships offered to inbound foreign students would match that for outbound local students. He also urged the Administration to collaborate with more renowned universities in the B&R countries, such as Singapore, Malaysia and members states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. In reply, SED recapitulated that the Scheme would be implemented as a government-to-government collaborative initiative and introduced to individual B&R economies in phases. The Administration would first consider expanding the Scheme to B&R economies with which Hong Kong had collaboration in the field of education or signed memoranda of understanding on education co-operation. This was also to ensure the quality of the degree programmes to be undertaken by the outbound scholarship recipients of the Scheme in those B&R economies.

Motions

59. At about 6:45 pm, the Chairman asked members to indicate by a show of hands whether they would agree to further extend the meeting to deal with the motions. As four members raised objection, the Chairman directed that the motions proposed to be moved by Dr Helena WONG, the Deputy Chairman and Mr Gary FAN respectively would be carried forward to the next meeting to be held on 2 July 2016. Some members enquired whether the

Action

Administration would put the funding proposal on hold pending the Panel's decision on the motions. The Chairman advised that it would be for the Administration to decide whether to submit its funding proposal for the Scheme to FC.

(Post-meeting note: On 27 June 2016, the Administration informed members in writing that as there were still many items related to people's livelihood to be processed by FC, the Administration decided to submit the funding proposal for the Scheme to the next term of the Panel and FC for their deliberation. The Administration's letter was circulated to members vide LC paper CB(4)1188/15-16(01) on 28 June 2016. In the light of the Administration's decision, the Chairman had instructed that he would not deal with the three motions at the meeting on 2 July 2016.)

V. Any other business

60. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:49 pm.

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
15 August 2016

Panel on Education
Meeting on Monday, 13 June 2016, at 4:30 pm

Agenda item III: Issues related to the policy on self-financing post-secondary programmes

Summary of views and concerns expressed by related bodies

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
1.	The Federation for Self-financing Tertiary Education	Presentation of views as detailed in the submission [LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16(04)]
2.	Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications	Presentation of views as detailed in the submission [LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16(05)]
3.	Quality Assurance Council	Presentation of views as detailed in the submission [LC Paper No. CB(4)1090/15-16(06)]
4.	Committee on Self-financing Post-secondary Education	Presentation of views as detailed in the submission [LC Paper No. CB(4)1101/15-16(01)]

Council Business Division 4
Legislative Council Secretariat
15 August 2016