

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)449/19-20

(These minutes have been
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS

Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 11 November 2019, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Hon KWONG Chun-yu (Chairman)
Hon SHIU Ka-chun (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
Hon CHU Hoi-dick
Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP

Members absent : Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai

Public Officers attending : Item IV
Mr Caspar TSUI, JP
Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms Alice WONG
Principal Executive Officer (Working Family
Allowance Office)
Working Family and Student Financial Assistance
Agency

Items IV & V

Ms Michelle LAM
Assistant Director (Social Security)
Social Welfare Department

Mr Andrew KWAN
Senior Statistician (Social Welfare)
Social Welfare Department

Item V

Dr LAW Chi-kwong, GBS, JP
Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr Johann WONG, JP
Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 2
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Mr Donald NG, JP
Head, Working Family and Student Financial
Assistance Agency

**Clerk in
attendance** : Ms Wendy JAN
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

**Staff in
attendance** : Ms Catherina YU
Senior Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Alison HUI
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

Action

I. Confirmation of minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2019

[LC Paper No. CB(2)55/19-20]

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2019 were confirmed.

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

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)58/19-20(01), CB(2)112/19-20(01) and CB(2)174/19-20(01)]

2. Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last meeting:

- (a) letter dated 22 October 2019 from Dr Fernando CHEUNG requesting the Panel to discuss protection of children's rights through legislation and his proposed amendments to the Protection of Children and Juveniles Ordinance (Cap. 213) and the Juvenile Offenders Ordinance (Cap. 226);
- (b) the Administration's letter on the extension of Old Age Living Allowance to the Guangdong Scheme and the Fujian Scheme; and
- (c) the Administration's letter on the second and third report on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)145/19-20(01) to (02)]

3. Members agreed to discuss at the next meeting scheduled for 9 December 2019 the following items:

- (a) Briefing on the proposed Member's bill to amend the Protection of Children and Juveniles Ordinance (Cap. 213) and the Juvenile Offenders Ordinance (Cap. 226); and
- (b) Providing crisis support for sexual violence victims.

IV. Providing one-off extra allowance to recipients of social security payments, Working Family Allowance and Work Incentive Transport Subsidy

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)145/19-20(03) to (04)]

4. The Chairman drew members' attention to Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure regarding personal pecuniary interest to be disclosed. He reminded members to declare interests in the matter under discussion, if any.

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("USLW") briefed members on the Administration's arrangements of providing one-off extra allowance for recipients of social security payments, Working Family Allowance ("WFA") and Individual-based Work Incentive Transport Subsidy.

Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

6. Mr Michael TIEN said that in the light of the changes in life-styles and social habits over the past two decades, the Administration should conduct a study on the basic needs of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") households in order to find out whether the current levels of CSSA payments were adequate to meet the needs of CSSA recipients.

7. USLW responded that having regard to the changes in the expenditure patterns of CSSA households, the Census and Statistics Department ("C&SD") conducted a household expenditure survey ("HES") every five years to collect up-to-date information on the expenditure patterns of CSSA households. Senior Statistician (Social Welfare) supplemented that C&SD had launched the 2019-2020 HES in mid-September 2019 and the results of the HES would be released to the public in mid-2021. At Mr Michael TIEN's request, USLW undertook to provide a comparison of the results of the 1989-1990 HES with those of the 2014-2015 HES conducted by C&SD.

Admin

8. The Chairman, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung and Dr Fernando CHEUNG took the view that the provision of one-off extra allowance could not address the financial difficulties faced by many CSSA households. Mr LEUNG considered that the Administration should increase the CSSA standard rates ("standard rates"). Dr CHEUNG opined that the existing levels of CSSA payments were inadequate in meeting the basic needs of CSSA recipients, and many CSSA households had to use the CSSA payments to pay for rental expenses as the actual rent paid by them had

exceeded the maximum rent allowance ("MRA") payable to them. He strongly urged the Administration to conduct a study on the basic living expenses of households under the CSSA Scheme, and draw up a timetable for conducting the study.

9. USLW responded that on top of the standard rates, special grants and supplements were provided for eligible CSSA recipients to meet their special needs. The Financial Secretary ("FS") announced in August 2019 a package of measures to counter the challenging external and local economic environment. In addition to these measures, the Administration had completed a review of the "pro-employment" measures and looked into all supplements and special grants under the CSSA Scheme. The Administration would enhance the "pro-employment" and other related measures under the CSSA Scheme with a view to strengthening the support for CSSA recipients.

Provision of one-off extra allowance

10. The Chairman suggested that in addition to the provision of one-off extra allowance as announced by FS in August 2019, the Administration should consider providing another round of such allowance in the 2019-2020 financial year. USLW responded that in the light of the impact of recent social incidents on local economy, the Administration had launched one-off relief measures for the second time in the 2019-2020 financial year to assist the needy groups. Various government bureaux and departments would adopt a multi-pronged approach to assist the needy groups having regard to members' views and suggestions.

11. The Deputy Chairman was concerned that as the eligible age for elderly CSSA had been raised from 60 to 65, the amount of one-off extra allowance payable to CSSA recipients aged between 60 and 64 would be \$1,060 less than that payable to elderly CSSA recipients. USLW noted the Deputy Chairman's comments, and advised that CSSA recipients aged between 60 and 64 were provided with an Employment Support Supplement of \$1,060 a month under the CSSA Scheme, which was set at the difference between the monthly CSSA standard rates applicable to singleton able-bodied elderly and singleton able-bodied adult recipients.

12. In response to Mr LUK Chung-hung's enquiry about the basis for calculating the amount of one-off extra allowance for WFA recipients, Principal Executive Officer (Working Family Allowance Office) ("PEO(WFAO)") said that the extra allowance was equal to the average monthly amount of approved months payable to the recipients in their most recently submitted and eventually approved WFA applications. The

amount of allowance varied from case to case depending on the composition, income and working hours of the households of the applicants.

Enhancing the Working Family Allowance Scheme and the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme

13. Given that those who were facing the problems of underemployment or unstable employment were unable to benefit from the WFA Scheme, the Deputy Chairman opined that the Administration should accord priority to relieving their burden. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Mr LUK Chung-hung and Mr Wilson OR were of the view that many workers, especially casual workers, were unable to meet the minimum working hour requirements under the WFA Scheme because of recent economic downturn. They urged the Administration to relax the working hour requirements and increase the payment rates of WFA in order to benefit more needy families. Mr LUK further said that in order to be eligible for the Higher Allowance under the WFA Scheme, applicants for WFA had to work at least 192 hours a month (i.e. around 48 hours a week). Taking the view that standard working hours should be promoted, he called on the Administration to lower the working hour threshold for the Higher Allowance of WFA to 40 hours or 44 hours a week.

14. USLW responded that around 90% of WFA applicants met the working hour requirement for the Higher Allowance. He added that the Administration had introduced the WFA Scheme on 1 April 2018 to implement an array of enhancement measures, which included, among other things, relaxing the eligibility criteria and increasing all payment rates of the Scheme. The WFA Scheme had since included an additional tier of working hour requirements to cater for various compositions and situations of working households. In particular, the Medium Allowance was introduced on top of the then Low-income Working Family Allowance Scheme to further encourage employment. As announced in the Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address, the Administration would further enhance the WFA Scheme by increasing all payment rates of WFA. It would continue to exchange views with the public on the WFA Scheme. PEO(WFAO) supplemented that all household members were allowed to aggregate their working hours for WFA applications starting from 1 April 2018.

15. Mr Wilson OR considered that the Administration should simplify the application procedures for WFA, assist ethnic minorities ("EMs") in applying for WFA and enhance the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy ("WITS") Scheme. Expressing concern that the amount of WITS had not

been adjusted since 2011, Mr POON Siu-ping called on the Administration to set a timetable for reviewing the payment rates of WITS. USLW responded that the application procedures for WFA and WITS had been streamlined to allow online applications. Non-governmental organizations which provided dedicated support for EMs had assisted them in applying for WFA. The Administration would keep in view the number of WFA applications received and further enhance the application procedures if necessary.

Statistics on applications for Working Family Allowance

16. Mr POON Siu-ping sought an update on the number of applications received for WFA and the number of beneficiaries of the WFA Scheme. He also enquired about the number of WFA applications which were still being processed by the Administration. USLW responded that the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency ("WFSFAA") had received around 147 800 applications and around 67 000 of them were new applications. WFSFAA had approved around 130 000 applications, benefiting around 190 000 persons. Noting that it was estimated that only 57 000 households would benefit from the one-off extra payment of WFA, Mr POON sought the basis for the estimation. PEO(WFAO) responded that the estimation was based on the number of households having had their WFA applications approved, which was amounted to around 57 000 households.

Disbursement of one-off extra allowance

17. Mr POON Siu-ping and Mr Wilson OR called on the Administration to disburse the one-off extra allowance as soon as possible after obtaining funding approval from the Finance Committee ("FC"). Mr OR enquired when the Administration would submit the relevant funding proposal to FC for approval. USLW responded that the Administration would strive to submit the funding proposal to FC as early as practicable. He added that the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") and WFSFAA would make necessary adjustments to their computer systems and disburse the one-off extra payments a month after obtaining FC's funding approval at the earliest. The payments would be made through the existing allowance payment methods (i.e. normally through auto-pay arrangement to the designated bank accounts of the recipients). Recipients were not required to make separate applications for the one-off extra allowance.

Conclusion

18. The Chairman concluded that members present supported in principle the submission of the relevant funding proposal to FC for consideration.

V. Review of pro-employment measures and other improvement measures under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme, as well as the annual adjustment of social security payment rates

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)145/19-20(05) to (06)]

19. At the invitation of the Chairman, Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("SLW") briefed members on:

- (a) the proposals put forth in the 2019 Policy Address to enhance "pro-employment" measures under the CSSA Scheme and other related measures;
- (b) the latest position of the Social Security Assistance Index of Prices and the estimated corresponding adjustment to standard payment rates under the CSSA Scheme and rates of allowances under the Social Security Allowance Scheme starting from 1 February 2020 according to the established mechanism; and
- (c) the latest position of the rent index for private housing ("rent index") in the Consumer Price Index and the estimated corresponding adjustment to MRA under the CSSA Scheme starting from 1 February 2020 according to the established mechanism.

Review of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme

20. Referring to paragraph 3 of the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)145/19-20(05)) regarding the guiding principles adopted by the Administration in contemplating adjustments to the CSSA Scheme ("the guiding principles") since the last comprehensive review of the Scheme in 1999, the Deputy Chairman opined that the guiding principles had undermined the policy objective of social welfare services as set out in the 1991 White Paper on Social Welfare entitled "Social Welfare into the 1990s and Beyond" ("1991 White Paper"), which was to assist people who were in need of financial and in-kind assistance in meeting their basic and

special needs. He also remarked that the review of the CSSA Scheme in 1999 was not comprehensive as it only focused on CSSA payment rates and employment measures for able-bodied CSSA recipients.

21. The Deputy Chairman considered that the Administration should review the guiding principles and their applicability in the current review of the CSSA Scheme. He further asked how the Administration defined "the truly needy" as stated in the guiding principles. SLW responded that "the truly needy" referred to people who were unable to support themselves financially in the context of the CSSA system.

22. Noting from the message posted by SLW in his blog dated 10 November 2019 that provision of public rental housing ("PRH") was a more effective poverty alleviation measure than CSSA, the Chairman was worried that the Administration would not allocate additional resources to help CSSA recipients.

23. Dr Fernando CHEUNG referred to the Administration's recommendation to extend 11 types of special grants to eligible non-elderly able-bodied CSSA recipients and remarked that the Administration was merely resuming the provision of some special grants which should not have been removed from the CSSA Scheme in 1999. Opining that the current review of the CSSA Scheme was not premised on scientific analysis, he expressed concern that the proposed enhancements to the CSSA Scheme were unable to address the problems faced by many CSSA recipients. He urged the Administration to strengthen its support for the needy.

24. SLW responded that the Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2017 revealed that the CSSA had become less effective in poverty alleviation, partly owing to the decline in the number of households receiving CSSA, and partly owing to the relatively higher increase in poverty line thresholds than the upward adjustment in CSSA payment rates. In consideration of providing stronger work incentives and support for able-bodied CSSA recipients, the Administration had conducted a review of the CSSA Scheme and proposed to enhance MRA, supplements, special grants and disregarded earnings ("DE") arrangement under the CSSA Scheme.

25. The Deputy Chairman and Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that a report outlining the basis of the review of the CSSA Scheme and the justifications for the proposed enhancements to the Scheme should be made available to the public. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether the Administration would prepare the report and upload it onto the SWD's

website.

26. SLW responded that the results of many of the Administration's studies/reviews were documented in the form of policy papers and would be submitted to the Executive Council ("ExCo") for approval if policy changes were involved. In the case of the current review of the CSSA Scheme, SWD had set up an inter-departmental working group ("Working Group") to review the "pro-employment" and other related measures under the CSSA Scheme. The Working Group submitted a paper outlining its conclusions to ExCo for approval. The Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)145/19-20(05)) had already set out all major considerations and recommendations of the Working Group and no report on the review of the CSSA Scheme would be prepared separately. The Deputy Chairman said that in the absence of the report, members of the public would not be able to understand the rationale behind the Working Group's conclusions. He expressed regret that a report on the review of the CSSA Scheme would not be prepared.

Rent allowance

27. Mr Michael TIEN opined that the Administration should impose rent control if it was proven that there was a relationship between the provision of rent allowance by the Government and the rent level of private residential units. In this connection, he enquired which bureau would conduct a study in this regard. SLW responded that as announced in the Chief Executive's 2019 Policy Address, the Administration would study provision of subsidy for low-income households not living in PRH and not receiving CSSA on a regular basis with a view to completing the study towards the end of 2020. The study would not cover the correlation between rent allowance and rent level of private flats.

28. Mr Michael TIEN further said that the Panel on Housing had passed a motion moved by him at its meeting on 8 November 2019 urging SLW and Secretary for Transport and Housing ("STH") to jointly conduct a study to examine the relationship between the provision of cash allowance on a regular basis and changes in rent level. In the motion passed, the Administration was also urged to study the feasibility of implementing rent control. He enquired whether SLW would conduct the relevant study jointly with STH.

29. SLW responded that rent allowance, rent level and supply of private flats would be affected by the behaviour of landlords and tenants. According to many economic studies, there was a relationship between rent allowance and the rent level of private flats. In response to

Mr Michael TIEN's enquiry about whether an experimental study on the relationship between rent allowance and rent level of private flats would be conducted, SLW said that unlike some countries where the rental markets varied from city to city, there was only one rental market in Hong Kong. As such, it would be difficult to conduct the aforesaid experimental study in Hong Kong.

30. Mr Wilson OR enquired about the rationale for increasing MRA on a one-off basis. He took the view that the one-off MRA adjustment exercise should be extended so as to examine its implications. He further suggested that the Administration should implement rental support measures for CSSA recipients in tandem with rent control, which should start with subdivided units.

31. SLW responded that as the mode of accommodation of grassroots households had progressively changed from bedspace apartments to cubicle apartments, and then to sub-divided flats in the past two decades, the cumulative increase in MRA based on rent index movements alone could not fully reflect the increase in rental expenses faced by these households. The Administration had therefore recommended a one-off increase in MRA in addition to the annual adjustment of MRA. While the subject of rent control was out of the Labour and Welfare Bureau's purview, it would keep in view the rental trends of CSSA households living in private rental housing.

32. Dr Fernando CHEUNG opined that the Administration had not taken into account the housing needs of CSSA recipients and the rental market situation in setting the proposed MRA. He enquired how the one-off increase in MRA would help reduce the number of CSSA recipients paying a rent higher than MRA.

33. SLW responded that the proposed MRA was based on the 10% trimmed mean of the rent paid by CSSA recipients living in private housing as at February 2019, i.e. the average of rent payment with the lowest and highest 10% excluded. It was estimated that with the one-off increase in MRA, the percentage of CSSA recipients living in private housing with rent exceeding MRA would drop from around 60% to around 40%.

34. SLW further said that according to past experience, the number of CSSA recipients paying an actual rent higher than MRA would decrease for a short duration after raising the MRA but would go up again after the adjustment. As an upward adjustment of MRA might drive recipients' aspirations to improve their accommodation and rent more expensive units,

it might give rise to an increase in the number of CSSA recipients whose actual rent paid was higher than MRA. MRA should therefore be set at a reasonable level rather than at a level which could cover the rent paid by most of the CSSA recipients living in private housing.

35. The Deputy Chairman said that non-elderly able-bodied CSSA recipients who were paying an actual rent higher than MRA could not afford to move to places with lower rent as domestic removal grant was not provided for them. In his view, such an arrangement had deviated from the policy objective set out in the 1991 White Paper. He enquired about the measures adopted by the Administration to reduce the burden of CSSA recipients paying an actual rent higher than MRA.

36. SLW responded that the CSSA Scheme provided financial assistance to the needy to meet their basic needs. Domestic removal grant would be extended to single-parent households. He further said that the Community Care Fund relaunched the programme named "Subsidy for CSSA Recipients Living in Rented Private Housing" in November 2017 for two years to provide a one-off payment to CSSA households living in private housing and paying a rent exceeding MRA. The programme would be extended to April 2020. The Administration would keep in view the development after the implementation of the proposed improvement measures to the CSSA Scheme.

Long-term Supplement

37. The Deputy Chairman said that able-bodied children and adults on CSSA were no longer eligible for Long-term Supplement ("LTS") after the review of the CSSA Scheme in 1999. He sought the reasons why the provision of LTS for these CSSA recipients was not recommended under the current review of the CSSA Scheme. SLW responded that the objective of the current review of the CSSA Scheme was to encourage employment, and the implementation of "pro-employment" measures, e.g. DE arrangement, should be effective in assisting CSSA recipients in improving their living standard.

Dental grant

38. Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr Wilson OR suggested that dental clinics participated in Health Teeth Collaboration, which was launched by the Department of Health to provide dental services for adult CSSA recipients with intellectual disability, should be included in the list of dental clinics designated by SWD. Dr CHEUNG further said that CSSA recipients were required to obtain an estimate of cost from SWD's

designated dental clinics before applying for dental grant. He suggested that the Administration should consider settling the costs of treatment with the designated dental clinics direct and allow CSSA recipients to receive immediate treatment at these clinics without the need to obtain an estimate of cost. SLW responded that the Administration would consider members' suggestions and explore whether there was room for streamlining the application procedures for dental grant.

Medical and rehabilitation-related grants

39. Mr Wilson OR expressed concern that some medical and rehabilitation-related grants, which were provided for able-bodied CSSA recipients before 1999, were not included in the current review of the CSSA Scheme. He called on the Administration to consider providing grant for non-elderly CSSA recipients to cover their medical or rehabilitation expenses. SLW responded that public health care services were provided for CSSA recipients free of charge and eligible CSSA recipients were waived from payment of expenses of certain medical consumables provided by the Hospital Authority.

40. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that there were cases where SWD had rejected applications for medical and rehabilitation-related grant to cover the full costs of purchasing wheelchairs with special features which were recommended by occupational therapists. Applications for grant to cover the repair costs of wheelchairs which were not purchased with the medical and rehabilitation-related grant were also rejected by SWD. He enquired whether the Administration had examined the mechanism for processing applications for medical and rehabilitation-related grants under the current review of the CSSA Scheme.

41. SLW responded that the mechanism of vetting applications for medical and rehabilitation-related grants was not covered under the review. The Administration would look into the above cases and improve the mechanism, if necessary, to ensure that frontline staff and applicants had a clear understanding of the criteria for vetting applications for medical and rehabilitation-related grants.

Unemployment situation of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients

42. Mr POON Siu-ping said that it was estimated that the recent economic downturn would bring about a higher unemployment rate. In this connection, he asked whether the Administration had estimated the increase in the number of unemployed CSSA recipients. SLW responded

that the average unemployment rate rose to 2.9% in the three-month period of May to July 2019 from 2.8% in the prior three-month period, and there was a slight increase in the number of unemployed CSSA recipients in September 2019. In his view, it was very likely that the number of unemployed CSSA recipients would increase with a higher unemployment rate.

43. Mr POON Siu-ping expressed concern that there might not be sufficient fund to meet the additional expenses arising from an increase in the number of unemployed CSSA recipients. SLW responded that as the number of overall CSSA cases had decreased in the first half of the 2019-2020 financial year, the Administration should have sufficient fund to cater for the situation.

"Pro-employment" measures

44. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that although many workers were unable to meet the working hour requirements under the WFA Scheme due to recent economic downturn, the Administration had failed to take this into account when considering improvements to the Scheme. He called on the Administration to relax the working hour requirements under the WFA Scheme.

45. SLW responded that the working hour thresholds for the Basic Allowance and the Higher Allowance under the WFA Scheme were 144 hours per month (around 35 hours per week) and 192 hours per month (around 45 hours per week) respectively. The Administration did not consider such thresholds stringent as many employees in Hong Kong had worked for 45 hours per week or more.

Admin

46. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry, SLW undertook to provide the following information:

- (a) the number of persons aged 60 or above who had sought employment through the Employment Programme for the Elderly and Middle-aged ("EPEM") and the types of employment available for them under EPEM;
- (b) the number of job seekers who had secured employment under EPEM; and
- (c) information on the training courses provided under the Love Upgrading Special Scheme.

(*Post-meeting note:* The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)357/19-20(01) on 6 December 2019.)

Assistance for trainees of sheltered workshops

47. Dr Fernando CHEUNG said that as trainees of sheltered workshops ("SWs") only received an allowance of \$26.5 a day, their income was insufficient to meet their basic needs. He called on the Administration to provide assistance for them. SLW responded that the review of the Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan had covered the development of SWs and the Administration would brief members on the subject matter upon completion of the review.

Motions

48. The Deputy Chairman moved the following two motions:

Motion 1

"鑒於政府自 1996 年後未有再進行'基本需要開支預算調查'，未有重訂綜合社會保障援助("綜援")標準金額的基準，致令綜援標準金仍未能與時並進。

本會促請政府立即就綜援水平作全面檢討，以科學方法計算綜援標準金的水平。"

(Translation)

"Given that the Government has neither conducted any further expenditure survey by adopting the Basic Needs approach since 1996, nor has it formulated afresh the basis for determining the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") standard rates, the CSSA standard rates are still unable to keep up with the times.

This Panel urges the Government to expeditiously conduct a comprehensive review on the CSSA level and calculate the CSSA standard rates in a scientific way."

49. The Chairman put the motion to vote. All members present voted for the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

Motion 2

"鑒於政府仍然恪守 1999 年綜合社會保障援助("綜援")偏頗檢討的'指導原則'，標籤綜援人士為'懶人'及'非真正需要'，導致 1999 年大幅削減綜援，至今仍然未有完全修補漏洞。本會促請政府就是次綜援檢討制訂報告書並將報告書公開，以便公眾清楚了解綜援政策的宗旨，以及增加各項津貼所訂立的基礎。"

(Translation)

"The Government has all along been adhering to the guiding principles under which the review of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") is conducted in a biased manner, labelling CSSA recipients as "layabouts" and "those having no genuine needs". As a result, there was a substantial reduction in the CSSA payments in 1999, and such loopholes have not been fully plugged so far. This Panel urges the Government to prepare and make public a report on the current review of CSSA, so as to enable the public to have a clear understanding of the objective of the CSSA policy and the basis on increasing various grants."

50. The Chairman put the motion to vote. All members present voted for the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

51. The Chairman consulted members on the submission of the relevant funding proposals to FC for consideration and concluded that all members present supported in principle the relevant submission.

VI. Any other business

52. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:36 pm.