

**Minutes of the
Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) Meeting**

**3 November 2009 (Tuesday) 3:00 p.m.
Room 118, East Wing, Central Government Offices**

Present

Professor Chan Yuk-shee (Chairman)
Mr Bunny Chan Chung-bun
Miss Maggie Chan Mei-kit
Dr Dorothy Chan Yuen Tak-fai
Mr Quentin Fong King-sang
Mr Herman Hui Chung-shing
Dr Benjamin Lai Sau-shun
Dr Lam Ching-choi
Ms Lam Shuk-yee
Mr Christopher Law Kin-chung
Dr Leung Wing-tai
Mr Vincent Lo Wing-sang
Mr Timothy Ma Kam-wah
Mrs Teresa Tsien Wong Bik-kwan
Mr Tung Chi-fat
Dr Jimmy Wong Chi-ho
Mr Benedict Wong Chung-mat
Mr Silva Yeung Tak-wah
Ms Lisa Yip Sau-wah
Miss Vicky Cheung (Secretary)

In Attendance

Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)

Mr Paul Tang Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (PSLW)

Miss Eliza Lee Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1
(DS(W)1)

Ms Irene Young Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2
(DS(W)2)

Ms Karyn Chan Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare)1 (PAS(W)1)

- Mrs Alison Lau Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2 (PAS(W)2)
- Ms Betty Ho Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)3 (PAS(W)3)
- Mr Stephen Sui Commissioner for Rehabilitation (C for R)

Social Welfare Department (SWD)

Mr Patrick Nip Director of Social Welfare (DSW)

Absent with apologies

Dr Miranda Chung Chan Lai-foon

Mrs Agnes Mak Tang Pik-yee

Discussion Item: Briefing on the welfare initiatives in the 2009-10 Policy Address and Policy Agenda (SWAC Paper No. 05/2009)

Members were briefed on the welfare-related initiatives in the 2009-10 Policy Address and Policy Agenda.

2. Members asked the following questions / offered the following comments:

- (a) Carers including family members of the frail elders, persons with chronic illnesses and the mentally disabled, had been facing pressure in shouldering the care-taking responsibilities. The Government should provide more resources for the non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to run training programmes and counselling services in support of the carers;
- (b) How did the Government handle and respond to local sentiments in relation to the setting up of the Integrated Community Centre for Mental Wellness (ICCMW) in Tin Shui Wai and whether similar ICCMW would be set up in each district;
- (c) The Government to explore the feasibility of introducing accessible taxi services in addition to the existing Rehab Bus

services to meet the increasing demand for transportation services by the persons with disabilities (PWDs);

- (d) The Government to put in place measures to address social problems such as youth unemployment and internet addiction as a result of globalisation and advancement in communication technologies;
- (e) The anti-drug abuse campaign should put more emphasis on enhancing the moral and family education of young people. The society should attach importance to promoting family core values among the students and strengthening collaboration among schools, parents and local community;
- (f) The manpower shortage problem in the care sector, especially that of nurses, care workers and therapists, should be addressed;
- (g) Agreed with the direction of promoting “ageing in place”. The Government should come up with measures to meet the long term care needs of the elderly;
- (h) Whether the Government would consider relaxing the conversion of industrial buildings to other uses, for instance converting these buildings for welfare uses;
- (i) Whether the visiting pharmacist services could be extended to subvented residential care homes for persons with intellectual disability;
- (j) The most effective way to tackle social problems was to implement more preventive measures to educate the public and identify needy families at an early stage;
- (k) The Government could make reference to the experience of the United States in applying advanced technology in the provision of pharmacist services to persons suffering from dementia;
- (l) Whether the additional 80 subsidised day care places for the elderly would be provided in existing or newly-established day care centres and whether these places would include places for demented elders; and
- (m) Many social problems were deeply rooted in the society and to tackle them, it required collaboration among different parties

including the Government and the NGOs.

3. The Government gave the following responses:
- (a) The “District-based Scheme on Carer Training” would be further extended to cover the Neighbourhood Elderly Centres aiming to promote basic elderly care skills through training programs at district levels. The outreaching support services, counselling, training and temporary / short-term care services for the elderly and their carers would also be enhanced;
 - (b) 80 more subsidised day care places for the elderly would be provided in both existing and new elderly centres in 2009-10;
 - (c) Effective communication with local communities about the benefits of the ICCMW was useful in reducing resistance. While the Government would endeavour to expand the ICCMWs across the territory as announced in the Policy Address, it would not be easy to identify suitable premises to set up an ICCMW in each district;
 - (d) The Hong Kong Society for Rehabilitation had been providing self-financing accessible hire car services for the PWDs. The introduction of accessible taxi services would involve complicated transport policy and operational issues, and some time would be required to study its feasibility;
 - (e) As mentioned in the 2009-10 Policy Address, the Family Council would find policy options to alleviate various social problems including juvenile drug abuse, prostitutions, etc. at the family level;
 - (f) SWD had been closely working with the Hospital Authority to train more nurses to meet the increasing service demand. Measures such as providing additional training and raising the academic qualifications of health workers had already been put in place;
 - (g) The IT Portal would be a more effective medium as it could provide an interactive platform for communications among the elders;

- (h) The Elderly Commission had commissioned the University of Hong Kong to study the long-term planning for subsidised residential care services for the elderly. Findings of the study would be announced in late 2009; and
- (i) The Government adopted an integrated approach to take care of demented elders based on the study of the trial scheme. Resources from the Lotteries Fund were also secured to upgrade the facilities and equipment of subvented residential care homes and day care centres.

Discussion Item: Progress update of the Task Group on Welfare Planning (SWAC Paper No. 06/2009)

- 4. Members were briefed on the progress of the Task Group on Welfare Planning and the draft consultation paper prepared by the Task Group.
- 5. Members offered the following comments:
 - (a) A community-based approach and family-based approach should be adopted in the development of social welfare. As each district had its own characteristics, services should thus be developed and provided according to the needs and features of individual districts;
 - (b) The long-term welfare planning should provide a blueprint for future development rather than following the previous “Five Year Plan” mechanism;
 - (c) The consultation paper might include more factual information on welfare spending. For instance, substantial resources were spent on social security, which might become a long-term financial burden for our future generation;
 - (d) the Government should consider how to further develop / motivate social enterprise;
 - (e) The future social welfare development should be human-based and people-oriented. To enhance the tripartite partnership of the Government, the business sector and NGOs in helping the disadvantaged, users’ views and comments should form an integral part of the welfare;

- (f) A family-based approach should be adopted in formulating the blueprint of our welfare planning mechanism, as family was the basic unit of our society;
- (g) The impact of the increasing cross-boundary activities on the delivery of social welfare services should be taken into account;
- (h) Resources could be devoted to provide cost-effective integrated services for the elderly at some remote locations;
- (i) Our welfare system should help nurture individuals to become responsible persons contributing to the society; and
- (j) The guiding principles and strategies set out in the consultation paper should be kept short and brief to allow room for further discussion and deliberation by the sector.

6. The Task Group would revise the draft consultation paper taking into account Members' comments. The revised paper would be submitted to SWAC for further consideration and endorsement in due course before launching the consultation exercise.

Labour and Welfare Bureau
February 2010