

**Minutes of the  
Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) Meeting  
held on 20 December 2007 at 9:30 a.m.  
in Room 2005, Murray Building, Garden Road, Central**

**Present**

Mr Wilfred Wong Ying-wai	(Chairman)
Miss Maggie Chan Mei-kit	
Mr Herman Hui Chung-shing	
Mr Kwan Chuk-fai	
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 Agnes Mak Tang Pik-yee	
Dr Jimmy Wong Chi-ho	
Prof Tang Kwong-leung	
Mrs Teresa Tsien Wong Bik-kwan	
Mr Tung Chi-fat	
Mr Silva Yeung Tak-wah	
Ms Lisa Yip Sau-wah	
Ms Wendy 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(Welfare)1)
Ms Carol Yip	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)2 (DS(Welfare)2)

Ms Irene Young	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 (PAS(Welfare)1)
Miss Helen Tang	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Poverty) (PAS(Poverty))
Miss Cherry Wong	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Poverty)
Miss Vicky Cheung	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1C (Des.)

**Social Welfare Department (SWD)**

Mr Stephen Fisher	Director of Social Welfare (DSW)
Mr Fung Pak-yan	Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)

**Absent with apologies**

Mr Bunny Chan Chung-bun  
Dr Stephen Chow Chun-kay  
Dr Miranda Chung Chan Lai-foon  
Mr Quentin Fong King-sang

**Item 1: Child Development Fund (SWAC Paper No. 8/2007)**

Members noted the Administration's proposal to set up a \$300 million CDF for promoting the longer-term personal development of children from a disadvantaged background. The Fund would have three major components including personal development plans, mentorship programme and targeted savings. The Fund aimed at encouraging children to develop an asset-building habit and to better plan for their own future.

2. Members made the following comments:

- (a) the amount of \$12,600 received by each child upon completion of the programme might not be sufficient for him/her to carry out his/her personal development plan;
- (b) there was concern about the mentor-mentee ratio, and whether sufficient coaching and guidance would be provided to the mentors and the mentees;
- (c) whether the child would be able to withdraw his/her saving for contingencies even if he/she could not finish the programme;
- (d) the programme should be extended to all the children rather than restricted to the disadvantaged group so as to eliminate the labeling effect on the latter;
- (e) there was concern about whether there would be any follow-up on the child after completing the two-year programme;
- (f) a more flexible arrangement, such as the deferral of payment, could be adopted if the family could not afford the \$200 monthly saving commitment;
- (g) the Government could seek donations from individual donors instead of the companies and provide financial incentives to the companies and/or individual donors to encourage their participation;
- (h) the programme should emphasize on “family” but not the individual person, and it should also stress the responsibility of parents and the family;
- (i) there were already many financial assistance schemes that aimed at helping the disadvantaged students, such as the school fee remission scheme. The CDF might discourage the disadvantaged families to become self-reliant and as a result not helping them to alleviate poverty;
- (j) there were already many mentorship programmes launched by

schools, social workers and NGOs at present, and the CDF would duplicate resources with these mentorship programmes;

- (k) the Government could consider integrating similar mentorship programmes run by the NGOs to allow them to better use their manpower and resources; and
- (l) there was concern about the inter-generational poverty in Hong Kong, and whether the setting up of the CDF could address the issue. Evaluation study on the effectiveness of the programme should be conducted.

3. The Government made the following responses:

- (a) apart from the financial incentive, the Administration would also provide funding to the NGOs to organize activities and training mainly to the children. As such, the actual Government funding for each child would be much more than the amount of the financial incentive;
- (b) the savings component would just be an incentive for the participants to better plan for their own future including financial planning. It would not be a primary objective of the programme to help participants accumulate savings;
- (c) the arrangement of matching the mentor and the child could be very flexible. Instead of having a one-to-one arrangement, some mentors might prefer to have several mentees at the same time so as to facilitate interaction and sharing among these children;
- (d) the amount saved by the children would be their assets, and they would be allowed to withdraw the savings for other purposes. However, for those who could not complete the savings programme, they might not be able to receive the matching from the private sector or the financial incentive from the Administration;

- (e) the pilot programme would focus on the disadvantaged children first to be in line with the recommendation of the then Commission on Poverty. Yet, if they could not fulfill the \$200 monthly savings commitment, NGOs would be allowed to seek other sources of funding to assist these families;
- (f) the objectives of the programme were to help the children to cultivate a positive attitude and to encourage them to develop an asset-building habit through formulation and implementation of their personal development plans, so that ultimately the children and their family would be less reliant on the Government;
- (g) the CDF would not be the same as existing Government-funded programmes as they all had different objectives. Besides, it was not appropriate to integrate other similar mentorship programmes with CDF as these programmes were neither started nor funded by the Government;
- (h) both the subvented and non-subvented NGOs would be invited to submit proposals, and those which had a good track record of organizing programmes for children and youth would have an advantage. Financial support would be provided to the NGOs to cover the administrative costs, and flexibility would also be given for recruiting the mentors so as to fit the individual needs of the children;
- (i) it would be difficult to assess the effectiveness of the programme at the moment, but that the Administration would conduct an evaluation study of the programme based on the first batch of CDF pioneer projects;
- (j) in order to monitor the performance of the NGOs, the Government would set out a list of indicators to measure their performance; and
- (k) retirees could be a major source of mentors.

4. Members generally supported the programme, as it could help the children to adopt a positive attitude in life. The programme could also help to promote tripartite social partnership among the Government, the business community and the welfare sector in helping the disadvantaged. In order to allow the Committee to obtain first-hand information, Members agreed to become mentors for the CDF.

**Item 2: Long-term Development Planning for Social Welfare (SWAC Paper No. 07/2008)**

5. In relation to Government's commitment in the 2007-08 Policy Agenda to studying the long-term development planning for social welfare through SWAC, the Government briefed Members on the historical development of government's welfare planning mechanisms and the Administration's initial views on the way forward for the study.

6. Members made the following comments:

- (a) a long-term welfare planning should be carried out at a strategic level, and that the Five-Year Plan model no longer fit the existing socio-economic landscape of Hong Kong;
- (b) various stakeholders, including the Government, the business sector, NGOs and even individuals, could all play a role in welfare planning, and SWAC should keep an open mind and follow a more interactive process in engaging the stakeholders;
- (c) the 2004 Strategic Framework for Social Welfare could be used as the basis of the welfare planning exercise, and the concepts of social investment and tripartite partnerships could be reinforced;
- (d) "family" should be highlighted as the core social value supporting the welfare system;
- (e) SWAC could make reference to the planning mechanisms for specific welfare programmes which was formulated through

cross-sector and interdepartmental collaboration;

- (f) a forward-looking welfare planning mechanism should also take into consideration factors like globalization, population change and the development trend of our society; and
- (g) the Government might wish to look into the provision of professional training in the welfare sector in the context of welfare planning.

7. The Government made the following responses:

- (a) the long-term welfare planning should be strategic and macro in nature, and should not aim at examining each and every service in detail;
- (b) comments and inputs could be sought from other Government departments and Committees if required; and
- (c) since the Advisory Committee on Social Work Training was separately considering the question of professional training, it might not be necessary for SWAC to focus on the issue in the long-term welfare planning.

8. Members generally agreed to the approach proposed by the Administration. The Secretariat would draw up a plan and timetable for conducting the consultation exercise in due course.

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
February 2008