

Minutes of the  
Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) Meeting  
held on 22 September 2004

**Present**

Mr Wilfred Wong Ying-wai (Chairman)

Ms Vivien Chan

Mr Darwin Chen

Mrs Cheung Ang Siew-mei

Dr Stephen Chow Chun-kay

Dr Miranda Chung Chan Lai-foon

Ms Christine Fang Meng-sang

Mr Wilfred Lee Chi-wah

Dr Leung Cho-bun

Mr Aaron Wan Chi-keung

Mr Stephen Yau How-boa

Mr Silva Yeung Tak-wah

Miss Jessie Yu Sau-chu

Ms Wendy Cheung (Secretary)

**In Attendance**

## **Health, Welfare and Food Bureau (HWFB)**

Dr E K Yeoh	Secretary for Health, Welfare & Food
Ms Linda Lai	Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare & Food (Welfare)
Ms Salina Yan	Deputy Secretary for Health, Welfare & Food (Elderly Services)
Miss Diane Wong	Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare & Food (Welfare)
Miss M L Wong	Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare & Food (Elderly Services) 2
Mrs Grace Ng	Project Manager Officer, Community Investment and Inclusion Fund

## **Social Welfare Department (SWD)**

Mr Paul Tang	Director of Social Welfare
Mrs Agnes Allcock	Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Administration)
Mrs Y Y Tang	Chief Social Welfare Officer (Strategic Planning)

## **Absent with Apologies**

Mr Keith Lam Hon-keung  
Prof Diana Mak Ping-see  
Ms Marina Wong Yu-pok  
Mr Poon Huen-wai

(1) Strategic Framework on Social Welfare : Progress and Workplan (SWAC Paper No. 11/04)

Members noted that following discussions on the strategic framework on social welfare at the last Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) meeting on 7 September 2004 and consultation with the other key welfare-related advisory committees, a draft paper incorporating Members' advice was used as the basis for discussion at a workshop on 20 September 2004 which was attended by representatives from the Government, the Third Sector and the private sector. This paper sought Members' views on some possible proposed strategies and actions for different welfare service areas in the next few years in the light of the strategic framework.

2. Given the complexity of the issues and limited time available, Members considered that they should study the paper in details after the meeting and give their own comments to the Bureau for consideration. Nevertheless, Members made the following general comments:

- (a) A general consensus should be reached among SWAC Members first before the proposed workplan should be released for external consultation. After the Bureau distilled the comments received after the meeting, SWAC Members should have a half-day retreat to study the proposed framework in detail before putting the workplan for external consultation;
- (b) The Administration should consider how, when and whom to consult in the consultation process which was as important as the substance of the workplan itself;
- (c) The involvement of the welfare sector in the preparation of the discussion paper on strategic framework and translating it into policy workplan was important as most of existing welfare services were delivered by NGOs who had frontline knowledge of the services being delivered;
- (d) After SWAC had reached a general consensus view, the draft workplan could be released for consultation with various sectors, including the NGOs and business community. The final workplan or action plan should only be released after thorough deliberations by all concerned parties, including the frontline workers, the management and board members of NGOs, and service recipients;
- (e) To enhance capacity building, the policy-making mechanism of the Government as a whole should not be overlooked because social policies cut across various bureaux/departments. More collaboration and interfacing within the Government was required for the effective policy

implementation; and

- (f) The Government should engage research institutes to conduct more specific social issue studies which would in turn strengthen the policy making process.

3. The Government made the following responses to Members' views:

- (a) It was agreed that capacity building and joint-up efforts of the Government as a whole was necessary for successful implementation of the strategic framework but such was a bigger issue which could not be handled by the HWFB alone at the moment;
- (b) As regards the engagement of research institutes, he considered that it required more time for HWFB to build up its own policy research abilities first before it became ready to commission tertiary institutes for social issue researches;
- (c) After collecting Members' comments, the HWFB and SWD would revert with a revised workplan for further consultation with the welfare sector and SWAC on a more structured basis. The setting up of expert working groups was a possible arrangement in studying the specific areas of interest;
- (d) It was fully appreciated that more thorough discussions and consultations were necessary in translating it into a finalized policy workplan. While it was generally agreed that the sooner the framework was taken forward the better, the Administration had no fixed deadline. Moreover, the actual steps to be taken to implement the framework might also be subject to change in the light of any latest developments.

**Health, Welfare and Food Bureau**

December 2004