

**The Fifth Meeting of the Home Affairs Sub-committee on
the Community Care Fund
8 September 2011**

Summary of Discussion

The Home Affairs Sub-committee on the Community Care Fund (CCF) held its fifth meeting on 8 September 2011. A summary of discussion is as follows:

1. Members noted the progress on the provision of financial assistance to ethnic minorities (EMs) and new arrivals (NAs) from the Mainland for taking language-related international public examinations. The Home Affairs Department (HAD) had officially commissioned the New Home Association (the Association) to implement the programme in August.
2. Members noted the progress on the programme of providing a one-off allowance to NAs from low-income families, including:
 - (1) The Programme would accept applications from 3 October 2011 till 30 June 2012. The CCF Secretariat had set up a hotline for the Programme.
 - (2) Applicants might download the application forms in advance from the CCF website from 30 September. Alternatively, they might obtain the application forms from the Public Enquiry Service Centres of HAD, District Social Welfare Offices of the Social Welfare Department and Job Centres of the Labour Department after the formal commencement of the application period (i.e. starting from 3 October).
 - (3) Upon receipt of the application forms, the Secretariat would send an acknowledgement of receipt to respective applicants. Each application would be vetted by the Secretariat and some of the cases would be selected for a comprehensive (income) vetting.
 - (4) For applicants who choose to collect the allowance through direct payment into bank account, the payment would be deposited to the

designated bank account provided by the applicant on his/her application form. The Secretariat would notify the eligible applicants in writing as soon as their applications had been approved and money had been deposited into their designated bank accounts. For those who opt for payment by order cheques, they would be required to collect the cheques in person at the Secretariat during the specified period.

- (5) The Secretariat aimed to commence disbursement of allowance from November.
3. Members discussed the proposal of providing language courses to EMs and NAs from the Mainland as follows:
 - (1) The programme should keep running until earmarked funding had been fully used. Nevertheless, HAD would continue to monitor the operation of the programme.
 - (2) It was proposed that a subsidy should be provided to eligible EMs or NAs from the Mainland who have enrolled for part-time language training courses run by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB). The aim was to encourage target groups to enrol in such courses for enhancing their employability and facilitating their integration into the local community.
 - (3) Members exchanged views on the proposed allowance amount, income limit and means test mechanism of the programme. Members requested that HAD, after consultation with ERB on the arrangements of the programme, should further draw up the implementation details of the programme and submit them to the Executive Committee for consideration.
4. Members had preliminary discussion on assistance programmes that could be considered for implementation in the next stage, including:
 - (1) Transport allowance for frail elderly to allow them to travel across districts more often to visit their friends and family members.

- (2) Handouts to the needy (such as “lucky bags”) to spread the message of “community care”.
- (3) Assistance for youth development to develop their confidence and improve communication skills for enhancing employability.
- (4) One-off “Adaptation Allowance” for NAs who had arrived in Hong Kong for less than one year.