

**The First Meeting of the Home Affairs Sub-committee on
the Community Care Fund
19 January 2011**

Summary of Discussion

The Home Affairs Sub-committee on the Community Care Fund (CCF) held its first meeting on 19 January 2011. A summary of the discussion is as follows.

1. Members noted the requirements of the two-tier system of declaration of interests for Members (including co-opted Members) of the Sub-committees, i.e. Members would be required to register their personal interests on appointment to the Sub-committees, and annually thereafter, by filling in a declaration form, and to declare any direct personal or pecuniary interest related to matters under deliberation at meetings. The registers of Members' interests would be uploaded to the CCF website and kept by the Secretariat for public inspection.
2. Members noted the operational arrangements of the Sub-committees, including the basic operational principles for matters regarding programme budgets, funding priorities, indicators for evaluation of effectiveness, and mechanism for processing individual applications seeking assistance and handling of cross-sectoral issues, etc.
3. Members noted that the indicative amount available for allocation by each of the four Sub-committees would be \$100 million in 2011-12. The allocation of the remaining \$100 million would be determined by the Steering Committee having regard to the recommendations of the Executive Committee on the priorities of assistance programmes proposed by the Sub-committees.
4. Members noted the respective work of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and Home Affairs Department (HAD) on youth development and the provision of financial assistance and services to help the underprivileged to integrate into the community.
5. Members noted that the Sub-committee should draw up the assistance programmes having regard to the policy responsibilities of HAB and the

departments under its purview, including areas such as assistance for the underprivileged (including ethnic minorities and the new arrivals), youth development, family policy, building management and social enterprise, etc. If the proposed programmes were under the portfolios of other Sub-committees, they may be submitted to the Executive Committee for recommendation on the responsible Sub-committees and co-ordination of follow-up action.

6. Members noted that the assistance programmes of CCF should not be in direct conflict with government's established policies. Some of the measures had not been included in current government's regular service programmes possibly because of insufficient data to prove their effectiveness, or because they were not accorded priority for resource allocation due to the small size of the beneficiary groups. Nevertheless, these measures, though not implemented under current policies, were not in "direct" conflict with government's policies and could be considered by Members. If Members had any doubts on whether the proposed programmes were in direct conflict with government's policies, the proposals may be submitted to the Executive Committee for a decision on whether further deliberation or follow-up actions should be taken.
7. Members noted that the Steering Committee would focus on launching the assistance programmes as soon as possible at the initial stage of operation of the CCF to benefit more people. Therefore, it would aim at drawing up specific programmes for target beneficiary groups at this stage. Individual applications seeking assistance from the CCF which fell outside the approved programmes by the Steering Committee would be referred to the relevant departments/agencies for any assistance that might be provided under the existing system. Depending on the number of similar applications, the Sub-committee would consider introducing new programmes to accommodate those needs on a systemic basis.
8. Members noted that there were currently quite a number of other funds providing the needy with emergency assistance. Duplication of the CCF programmes with these services should be avoided as far as practicable. In consideration of the public image of CCF and the needs and sentiments of individuals seeking assistance, the CCF should consider further establishing more efficient referral mechanism for speedy referral of

applications to relevant departments/funds for follow-up action. The Secretariat would collect information on other government charity funds and compile a list with brief introduction for members' reference and uploading to the CCF website.

9. Members noted that while the CCF would refer individual cases to other funds, no direct funding injection should be made into these funds, as this may give rise to donors' wrong perception that donation to the CCF alone would suffice, hence affecting the fund-raising results of other funds. The CCF should complement other funds. After the CCF introduced an assistance programme for a specific target group, resources from other funds currently deployed for the purpose could be released for reallocation to other beneficiary groups and programmes.

10. Members made the following proposals for discussion:

- (1) Assistance for ethnic minorities

- Language courses for ethnic minority adults;
- Financial assistance on translation services for ethnic minorities to enable them to better utilise existing welfare services and other resources;
- Financial assistance for ethnic minority or new arrival youths to participate in exchange programmes.

- (2) Assistance for new arrival families

- Assistance for women who have resided in Hong Kong for less than seven years and they had to take care of children or elderly family members in Hong Kong;
- Support for children whose parents were non-Hong Kong residents;
- Programmes for new arrival adults, women and "overage children" to integrate into the community.

(3) Poverty Alleviation and Employment

- District-based poverty alleviation measures (such as employment opportunities for jobless women by engaging them in household cleaning, meal delivery and out-patient escort services for elderly living alone within the district);
- Study allowance for women (such as those who could not afford to pay the course fees prior to reimbursement from the Continuing Education Fund);
- Transport allowance for the disabled, the elderly, the infirm and people aged between 60 and 65 who were not eligible for elderly allowance and lived in rural or remote areas;
- Support for buildings in old districts resided by mostly elderly people to form owners' corporations;
- Assistance for development of youths to enhance their confidence, communication skills and employability;
- Supplies for the needy (for example in the form of "lucky bags");
- Assistance for people rendered unemployed as a result of the implementation of minimum wage;
- Assistance for the needy (such as organising group buying) to enable low-income families to cope with inflation by helping them to purchase food and daily necessities at lower prices;
- Rent allowance for people living in private buildings in old districts.

11. Members agreed that assistance programmes of the CCF should be people-oriented and channelled through district networks to enhance direct assistance for the underprivileged. Members suggested that focus group meetings be held and that the chairmen and members of relevant District

Councils be invited, so that Members could have a better understanding of the needs and work in individual districts, with a view to enabling the sub-committee to draw up the target groups and assistance programmes in a more effective manner.

12. The next meeting would be held in February or early March. HAB and HAD would consider the proposals raised by Members and draw up concrete proposals and funding priorities for further deliberation by the Sub-committee.