

**The First Meeting of the Welfare Sub-committee on
the Community Care Fund
27 January 2011**

Summary of Discussion

The Welfare Sub-committee on the Community Care Fund (CCF) held its first meeting on 27 January 2011. A summary of 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 onto 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 the 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 on the CCF having regard to the recommendations of the Executive Committee on the priorities of assistance programmes proposed by the Sub-committees.
4. Members noted that operating expenses of the CCF, including dedicated staffing and other direct administrative costs incurred by the Secretariat and other bureaux and departments arising from taking forward the CCF initiatives, would be recovered from the CCF. The target of the CCF is to limit the average administrative expenses within 5% of its total disbursements on a long-term basis. The CCF would implement programmes through the existing service network where possible to

minimise administrative costs. Where assistance by non-governmental organisations was required to implement individual programmes, the administrative expenses incurred should be incorporated into and should not exceed 5% of the overall programme costs.

5. Members noted that one of the objectives of the CCF was to take forward measures on a pilot basis for identification purpose. The CCF might introduce programmes that had not yet been included in government's regular service programmes on a pilot basis to enable the Government to consider whether such programmes could be incorporated into its regular service after evaluating their effectiveness and the size of the beneficiary groups, etc.
6. Members noted that the CCF did not intend to replace, but rather it supplements, the social assistance provided to the needy groups under the current policies.
7. Members noted that the assistance programmes of the 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 and programmes possibly because there was insufficient data to prove their effectiveness or the small size of the beneficiary, thus were not accorded with priority for resources allocation. If these measures were not in "direct" conflict with government's policies, Members could raise them to the sub-committees for consideration. If the sub-committees had any doubts on whether the proposed programmes were in direct conflict with government's policies, the proposals would be submitted to the Executive Committee for a decision on whether they should be further deliberated or followed up. In addition, Members should avoid considering measures which were related to ongoing judicial proceedings.
8. Members noted that at the initial stage of operation of the CCF, the Steering Committee would focus on drawing up specific programmes for beneficiary groups with a view to launching them as soon as possible to benefit more people, and would not process individual applications seeking assistance from the CCF. Individual programmes which fell outside the approved programme areas 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-committees might consider introducing new programmes to accommodate those needs on a systemic basis.

9. Members noted that there were currently quite a number of other funds providing the needy with emergency assistance. Duplication of CCF programmes with these services should be avoided as far as practicable. Having regard to the public image of the CCF and the needs and feelings of individuals seeking assistance, the CCF should consider establishing an efficient referral system for speedy referral of applications to relevant departments/funds for follow-up actions. The Secretariat would collect and compile information on other government charity funds and prepare a list with brief introduction for uploading onto the CCF website for Members' reference.
10. On funding priorities, Members agreed that the strategy of implementing programmes which were easy to administer and thus leading to early results should be adopted with a view to launching the programmes as early as possible within the second quarter of 2011. The CCF may also consider commissioning academic or research institutions to help assess the service gaps in the regular assistance and service programmes for reference by the sub-committee.
11. Members noted that some proposed programmes might involve issues under the portfolios of other sub-committees, but they might still express their views for submission to the Executive Committee for co-ordination and recommendation on the responsible sub-committees for collaboration of follow-up actions for cross-sectoral initiatives.
12. Members noted that the CCF should avoid subsidising specific programmes under other charity funds or injecting into other funds. Otherwise, donors would have a wrong perception that they might just donate to the CCF and hence affected the fund-raising work of other funds. The CCF and other funds should complement each other. For instance, when the CCF had provided assistance to certain programmes, resources from other funds for those programmes might be released and reallocated to other programmes to benefit more people.

13. Members proposed and discussed the following:

- (1) Support for the disabled and their families, for example, caring for the mental health of the disabled and their families, and providing domiciliary health care and subsidies for people suffering from total paralysis or hemiplegia and people with severe disabilities who were not Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) recipients (including allowance for home adaptation and employment of caretakers or home helpers for disabled persons living in private housing);
- (2) Support for pre-school disabled children of low-income families (e.g. daily needs, treatment and rehabilitation services);
- (3) Assistance for disabled persons and disabled students with special needs, for example, subsidies for better technical aids (such as hearing aids) and related maintenance fees to enable them to have a normal social life;
- (4) Assistance for the elderly for special services, such as dental care service, support for elderly people who were not CSSA recipients and subsidies for elderly people living in private elderly homes;
- (5) Enhanced assistance for food banks and care for people with extra dietary requirements (e.g. the chronically ill);
- (6) Financial support for low-income families (including new arrivals and ethnic minorities who were not CSSA recipients, persons living in Hong Kong for less than seven years, children whose parents were both non-Hong Kong residents and who needed support, etc.), and care for the housing needs of low-income people (e.g. providing rent and removal allowance for those on the waiting list for public rental housing, etc.); and
- (7) Assistance for non-CSSA recipients with financial difficulties, for example, assistance for families who lost their breadwinners in accidents, people in need of counselling services due to mental stress or emotional disorders (including the middle-class), the

ex-mentally ill, single-parent families in need of child care services, and bankrupts who had to pay the fees of the Official Receiver's Office, etc.

14. Given the limited resources of the CCF, Members agreed that concrete proposals on the scope of assistance, financial implications and implementation arrangements should be worked out on the following items with the support from the relevant policy bureaux and departments:
 - (1) Support for pre-school disabled children from low-income families;
 - (2) Enhanced assistance for food banks;
 - (3) Support for the disabled and their families;
 - (4) Assistance for low-income families; and
 - (5) Enhanced support for the elders.
15. The next meeting would be held in February or March.