

Commission on Poverty (CoP)

Summary Update of Work

(as at November 2005)

PURPOSE

CoP Paper 24/2005 provides an overview of the progress made by the Commission on Poverty and the Administration in strengthening efforts in poverty alleviation and prevention during February to August 2005, and sets out the next steps of work.

2. To facilitate Members and the public to follow the work of the Commission, this paper provides a summary update on the work of CoP.

DETAILS

3. Annex A to this paper highlights the major areas of work of the CoP.

4. Pursuant to the discussion on 12 September 2005 on how to encourage social enterprise (SE) development in Hong Kong (ref. CoP Paper 22/2005), a number of follow-up actions have been undertaken, for example -

Public education: A seminar and a visit on SE have been arranged on 1 November, and more sharing sessions/conference are being arranged. Separately, pursuant to the approach of a media company, a possible series on SE is being discussed.

Business support and training: A dialogue was held with the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Committee to explore, among other things, interface issues.

Possible models to enhance training for social entrepreneurs are also being explored.

Policy environment: We are liaising with relevant bureaux/departments on how to facilitate SE development at the policy level, including a more facilitative government procurement regime.

5. Annex B sets out the key follow-up actions on SE development in more details.

ADVICE SOUGHT

6. Members are invited to note the content of the summary update of work, and to offer any comments Members may have.

Commission Secretariat
November 2005

Commission on Poverty
Highlights of Major Areas of Work (*as at November 2005*)

<i>(I) Understanding poverty</i>
➤ CoP agreed that (a) poverty is a multi-dimensional concept; (b) poverty prevention is important; and (c) poverty prevention and alleviation require joint community effort.
➤ A set of poverty indicators is being developed to reflect the poverty situation in Hong Kong, and would be available by end 2005. <i>[CoP will discuss the revised indicators at the meeting on 25 November 2005].</i>
➤ CoP agreed that social advancement through generations would be a useful longitudinal gauge of the effectiveness of poverty alleviation and prevention. A study on earnings mobility in Hong Kong is being planned and the preliminary results are expected to be available in mid-2006.
<i>(II) District-based approach in alleviating and preventing poverty</i>
➤ Following CoP's visits, the three priority districts have established dedicated fora and formulated action plans in tackling local challenges. The Secretariat would maintain close liaison with the districts with a view to provide assistance where necessary in implementing the district action plans. Situation reports will be made to CoP in early 2006.
➤ The Administration is committed to reinforcing the district-based approach in preventing and alleviating poverty by providing districts with additional resources and support where justified. <i>[CoP will discuss ways to reinforce the district-based approach at the meeting on 25 November 2005].</i>
➤ Meeting with NGO representatives held on 3 October 2005 on difficulties faced by NGOs in conducting poverty alleviation work at district level.
<i>(III) Intergenerational poverty</i>
➤ Task Force on Children and Youth established to take forward the work on prevention of inter-generational poverty. The Task Force would (a) build on existing Government policies, strategies and measures which reduce the risk of intergenerational poverty; (b) examine the interface of the screening mechanisms and intervention measures during the life cycle of a child; and (c) mobilize community resources in building social capital among the younger generation and consider launching pilot projects.
➤ Building up social capital in the education sector and among the younger generation: Mentorship Fun Project officially launched in October 2005.
➤ "Adopt-a-school" Project: using schools as a platform for cross-sector partnership in poverty alleviation and prevention.
➤ School-opening: An additional \$10 million has been allocated to EMB to facilitate the opening up of some schools for community use in areas deficient in community facilities.
➤ Further promotion to the NGO sector at the district-level of the bulk loan scheme

operated by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department.
➤ Pilot project “My STEP” : tailor-made motivation programmes, post-programme support and active job placement targeting at unemployed youths on CSSA who could not be motivated back to employment after participating in existing employment programmes.
➤ Study on the profile of hardcore unemployed youths on CSSA : to study their profile with a view to analyzing the reasons for protracted stay on CSSA.
➤ Tackling hardcore unemployed youths: to explore with relevant departments on how to tackle hardcore unemployed youths, including exploring the possibility of data sharing to keep track of youths that remain unemployed although they have participated in various employment-related programmes, with a view to enabling further analysis of the causes for non-motivation and exploration of more targeted intervention.
<i>(IV) “From Welfare to Self-Reliance”</i>
➤ Members agreed to review the effectiveness of existing policies and measures in helping the unemployed, including training, delivery of employment assistance at the district level, creation of community-based employment opportunities etc.
➤ The Commission would consider how to facilitate the further development of social enterprises in Hong Kong (see separate action plan at Annex B).
➤ A study on the existing employment assistance and services for the able-bodied is being conducted involving relevant government departments, NGOs and the unemployed at the district level. Results would be reported in early 2006.
<i>(V) Communication and publicity</i>
➤ Publicizing successful cases of self-reliance and mutual help.
➤ Press interviews on district activities and on CoP’s work have been conducted.
➤ Compiling progress reports to help the public understand the work of the Commission.

Annex B

Social Enterprise (SE) Development in Hong Kong – Action Plan

(as at November 2005)

Possible areas for further work	Follow-up actions
(I) Establish the value and gain public acceptance	
To conduct research on SE development in Hong Kong.	➤ Central Policy Unit has commissioned a research on SE development in Hong Kong. An interim report is expected in early 2006.
To collaborate with the Advisory Committee on Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities in promoting SE in Hong Kong.	➤ Brainstorming session held with members of the Advisory Committee on Enhancing Employment of People with Disabilities and CoP members on 20 October 2005.
To organize forums to further the understanding on SE, and to involve the business sector and the wider community in considering the potential of using SE to assist the able-bodied unemployed.	➤ Introductory lunchtime seminar on 1 November 2005. ➤ Other sharing sessions to be held (e.g. with the private/professional sector, public bodies and government departments, NGOs). ➤ SE Conference being planned in early 2006. ➤ Publicity programme on SE being planned.
(II) Create an enabling environment	
To promote the concept of SE among those responsible for public procurement at both the central and district level.	➤ Sharing sessions to be organized among those responsible for public procurement and SE with experience in the area.
To consider administrative barriers which hinder the development of SE at the district level and in specific sectors.	➤ Potentials of SE development at district level and in specific sectors being explored.
To consider the potentials for SE to help the able-bodied unemployed.	➤ To gauge views from NGOs with experience, to promote acceptance and consider policy implications.
(III) Business facilitation and support	
To consider funding source in support of start-ups of SE for disadvantaged groups other than the disabled.	➤ Parameters for funding support and implications to existing Seed Money Project funding being considered.
To empower and motivate social entrepreneurs, including training, facilitating business-mentoring network and sharing of international best practices, etc.	➤ To explore how to nurture, and strengthen training of, social entrepreneurs in Hong Kong. ➤ To consider how to build up resource center/networks for SE in Hong Kong. ➤ Brainstorming session held with members of the Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) Committee and CoP members on 24 November 2005.