

Commission on Poverty (CoP)
Meeting held on 8 January 2007
Gist of Discussion

The Commission on Poverty held its twelfth meeting on 8 January 2007.

Item (2) “From Welfare to Self-reliance” – Transport Support Scheme (CoP Paper 1/2007)

2. Members were briefed on the Administration’s initial plan to consolidate the existing efforts to provide transport support, and to focus on encouraging the unemployed to find work and to stay on the job, including assistance during three key stages, namely (1) enhancement of employability (pre-employment training); (2) job search; and (3) transition to work. Members also discussed the Administration’s proposal to provide a Job Search Allowance and a Transition-to-Work Allowance to the needy unemployed living in Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, North and Islands districts.

3. Members in general supported the new initiatives to expand the existing schemes to help address the challenge of the relative lack of job opportunities in remote areas and to facilitate people’s transition from unemployment to work. Members have also expressed a number of comments, including the need to extend the length of the allowance to during the first three to six months of a new job in order to help the needy unemployed stay on the job. Members suggested that the Scheme should have more flexibility, including covering people already in employment but wish to change jobs.

4. The Meeting also discussed the policy issues related to providing transport subsidies to low-income earners e.g. whether the scheme would effectively become a new form of income supplement for low-income employees, the parity issues for low-income employees living in other districts, and the adverse impact of the subsidies on wages. Members agreed to further discuss these issues at the next meeting.

Item (3) Enhancing Support to Elders in Need (CoP Paper 3/2007)

5. Members noted that the Government had invested a substantial

amount of additional resources in recent years to enhance support to the elderly. They were supportive of the Government's proposal to provide additional resources to strengthen the efforts to reach out and assist the singleton and hidden elderly through District Elderly Community Centres and Neighbourhood Elderly Centres.

6. Members also put forward other proposals on enhancing support to address the various needs of the elderly poor who were not on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA). Members' proposals would also be discussed at the next CoP meeting.

Item (3) "From Welfare to Self-reliance" – Disregarded Earnings (CoP Paper 2/2007)

7. Members were briefed on the recommendations on the review of the provision of disregarded earnings (DE) under the CSSA Scheme conducted by the Social and Welfare Advisory Committee. While noting the impact of DE as a work incentive might not be substantial, the Commission supported the improvements so as to encourage the unemployed CSSA recipients to work instead of staying on welfare.

Item (4) "From Welfare to Self-reliance" – Development of Social Enterprises – An Update (CoP Paper 4/2007)

Item (5) "Strengthening Support to Children and Families – An Update (CoP Paper 5/2007)

8. Item (4) and item (5) will be discussed at the next meeting.

Commission Secretariat
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