

Commission on Poverty (CoP)
Meeting held on 23 January 2006
Gist of Discussion

The Commission on Poverty held its seventh meeting on 23 January 2006.

Item (1) Policies in Assisting Low-income Employees (CoP Paper 1/2006)

2. Members examined the existing Government policies in assisting the working poor, including public housing, various highly subsidized public services as well as our salaries tax system. The following were the key areas for further actions -

(a) Improving understanding on the low-income employees/families

The Meeting considered that current data was inadequate in reflecting the poverty situation of low-income employees and their families as the expenditure pattern and living standard of the low-income groups were affected by the public services and welfare support they received. The Government Economist would conduct an analysis to take into account the impact of Government's transfers and benefits on the disposable income of different income groups. Members also agreed that in terms of providing basic support, the focus should be on the needs of low-income families, instead of individuals.

(b) More proactive pro-employment policies

The Meeting agreed that besides ensuring the provision of basic support, the CoP should put more emphasis on measures and incentives to encourage the working poor/unemployed to upgrade themselves, work and achieve self-reliance. In this regard, CoP would look into the provision of disregarded earnings (DE) under the CCSA Scheme. They also agreed that the CoP should examine current training and re-training service at a future meeting in order to enhance accessibility of such opportunities to the working poor.

They also noted that the District Study on Employment Assistance being conducted by the CoP would be useful in exploring how to improve the existing employment assistance to the working poor from the user's perspective.

(c) Improving accessibility to services and assistance

Members considered it important for relevant bureaux/departments to consider how to improve accessibility and information dissemination of their existing assistance to the working poor.

Item (2) Commission on Poverty – Progress Report (CoP Paper 2/2006)

3. The Meeting noted that good progress had been made in the main areas of work, viz (a) improving understanding on poverty; (b) examining existing policies and improving policy interface; and (c) promoting building of social capital and partnerships. Members were updated on the next focus of the Task Force on Children and Youth was to consider how to strengthen parent education and support to parents with high risk and high needs. They also took note of the discussion of the Task Force on District-based Approach on the future funding criteria and the central pooling arrangement of the PVRM proceeds to be used to strengthen the district-based approach.

Item (3) Proposed Social Entrepreneur Training Initiative – (CoP Paper 3/2006)

4. Discussion on the item was deferred.

Commission Secretariat
January 2006