

Commission on Poverty (CoP)
Task Force on District-based Approach
Meeting held on 15 March 2006
Gist of Discussion

The CoP Task Force on District-based Approach held its second meeting on 15 March 2006.

Item (1) Matters Arising

Item (1a) Draft Report on District Study on Employment Assistance – CoP TFDA Paper 2/2006

2. Members were briefed on the findings and observations of the draft Report, including the service gaps identified and the 18 recommendations. Members generally shared the observations and the broad directions for improvement, and agreed on the key objectives and directions as follows-

- (a) to implement a **“people-oriented”** approach instead of a programme-/service-oriented approach in designing employment services;
- (b) to give more **targeted assistance to the “difficult-to-employ”** who had greater needs for assistance, and to avoid them being “funneled out” from the existing employment programmes; and
- (c) to **strengthen interfaces** at both the central and the district level, as well as the interface between employment services and skills upgrading currently administered by different Government agencies so that the resources available could be better used to deliver more effective employment assistance, and to encourage post-employment support and life-long learning to avoid the employed becoming unemployed again.

3. Members also took note of the five directions for change recommended in the Report, viz. service interfacing, work-oriented, district network, social responsibility and work encouragement. They generally agreed improving service interfaces and strengthening district networks were the most important.

4. The Meeting noted that most of the recommendations required inter-departmental coordination and tasked the Commission Secretariat to coordinate with the relevant bureaux/departments as well as agencies at the district level on their response to the recommendations therein within six months' time, setting out possible deliverables under different timeframe. The draft Report would also be submitted to the CoP for endorsement.

Item (1b) Progress on Additional Funding for Districts on Sustainable Poverty Alleviation Initiatives – CoP TFDA Paper 3/2006

5. Members were updated by the Home Affairs Department on the latest developments in relation to the preparation and establishment of a new fund for districts on sustainable poverty alleviation initiatives. Members also noted that a vetting committee would be set up to supervise the project implementation and to play a more supporting role to offer advice to the project operators. They considered that there should be overlapping membership between the Task Force and the vetting committee to ensure continuity.

Item (2) Presentation on the Poverty Alleviation Work at the Three Pilot Districts

6. District Officers (DO) from the three pilot districts, namely Kwun Tong, Sham Shui Po and Yuen Long updated Members on the poverty alleviation work in their districts and on the way forward. Members appreciated the continued efforts of the three districts and commented on the following areas-

- (i) *Platform for better coordination* - Members viewed that it was necessary to have an appropriate platform to coordinate and facilitate cross-sectoral and interdepartmental efforts and resources at the district level.
- (ii) *Sustainable implementation and promotion of good practice* - Members had consensus that districts should identify and develop a model of good practice so as to help continue the implementation and improvement of poverty alleviation measures. An appropriate mechanism should also be put in place to assess the effectiveness of their programmes.

7. The Meeting agreed to conduct a more in-depth study on the district-based approach to facilitate the Task Force's deliberation on how to strengthen the process to help the disadvantaged at the district level, including the facilitative and support structure needed.

Commission Secretariat

March 2006