

Commission on Poverty (CoP)
Meeting held on 27 September 2006
Gist of Discussion

The Commission on Poverty held its tenth meeting on 27 September 2006.

Item (1) Training, Retraining and Continuing Education (CoP Paper 15/2006, 16/2006, 17/2006)

2. Members were briefed on the Government's efforts in promoting training, retraining and continuing education, especially measures to help the low-skilled, low-education and middle-aged unemployed. The following points were discussed and agreed-

- in terms of resources, there was in fact no lack of funding for retraining and employment support. Pending the outcome of the appeal relating to the levies on foreign domestic helpers, the Government should further strengthen retraining and continued learning efforts along the lines proposed by Members;
- in terms of agency support, there should be better organisation and integration among the Employees Retraining Board (ERB), the Labour Department (LD) and the Social Welfare Department (SWD), in order to assist low-skilled, low-education and middle-aged unemployed more effectively;
- Members supported the efforts of the ERB in developing new and untapped market for the difficult-to-employ, including adopting an integrated model in promoting the local domestic helpers market, and encouraged continued efforts in this direction; and
- Members supported efforts to promote continued learning for women. The Commission Secretariat was tasked to follow up with the Home Affairs Bureau on strengthening employment assistance for the ethnic minorities.

Item (2) District Study on Employment Assistance - Summary of the Government's Response to Recommendations (CoP Paper 18/2006)

3. The Meeting took note of the Government's response to the

recommendations made in the Study. Members agreed that bureaux and departments should implement the short-term measures as soon as possible, and take into account the longer-term recommendations, including better agency support in delivering retraining and employment assistance.

Item (3) Commission on Poverty - Progress Report (CoP Paper 19/2006)

4. Members were updated on the discussion of the Ad Hoc Group of the Elderly in Poverty at its meeting on 19 September and noted that the Ad Hoc Group would focus on the four key needs of the elderly in poverty, viz. health, financial assistance, daily living and social network. In the short-term, the Ad Hoc Group would explore the following improvement measures-

- Improve the medical fee waiver mechanism in order to facilitate the elderly poor not on CSSA to access to medical services, and strengthen preventive health measures.
- Explore raising the current CSSA assets limit for the elderly poor.
- Strengthen support for the “hidden elderly” through enhancing the role of the Support Teams for the Elderly (STEs) in the 41 District Elderly Community Centres.
- Collaborate with the Elderly Commission on initiatives to reinforce the social support and network of the elderly in the community.

5. As a next step, the Commission Secretariat will follow up with the Health, Welfare and Food Bureau and the Social Welfare Department on the above short-term improvement measures.

Commission Secretariat
September 2006