

Commission on Poverty (CoP)
Meeting held on 12 September 2005
Gist of Discussion

The Commission on Poverty held its fifth meeting on 12 September 2005.

Item (1) “From Welfare to Self-Reliance” – Social Enterprise Development (CoP Paper 22/2005)

2. The Meeting was briefed on social enterprise development in the rehabilitation field by representatives of the Social Welfare Department and MentalCare Connect Co Ltd, a subsidiary of the Mental Health Association of Hong Kong. The Meeting noted the successful experience in the rehabilitation field in developing social enterprise to provide training and work opportunities to the disabled in a real-work environment.

3. After discussion, Members reached a strong consensus on the spirit and direction in further developing social enterprises to help the unemployed, mindful of the need to minimise displacement of SMEs. The Meeting also considered both hardware and software support from the Government for social enterprise start-ups while without blunting the enterprising spirits. Members also emphasized the importance of the participation of private sector and academia in the initiatives. Members also noted that subject to Legislative Council's endorsement of the bill implementing the Personalised Vehicle Registration Marks (PVRM) Scheme, the Administration would use part of the net proceeds of the PVRM Scheme to fund pilot projects of social enterprises aiming to help the able-bodied unemployed to rejoin the job market.

4. As the next step, the CoP Secretariat would take the following actions-

- (i) To conduct studies on social enterprise development in Hong Kong, drawing reference from relevant experience overseas;
- (ii) To establish the value and gain public acceptance in

supporting social enterprises to help the unemployed, such as jointly organising forums/sharing sessions with Central Policy Unit;

- (iii) To draw up proposals to foster the training of social entrepreneurs and create a business-mentoring network;
- (iv) To identify administrative or legal barriers which may hinder the development of social enterprises at the district level and in specific sectors; and
- (v) To continue to explore possible sectors where social enterprise development may be encouraged.

Item (2) “From Welfare to Self-Reliance” – District Pilot “My STEP” – Special Training and Enhancement Project (CoP Paper 23/2005)

5. Members discussed the proposed pilot project, "My STEP" - Special Training and Enhancement Programme. They agreed with the importance to have more focused intervention to help youths receiving CSSA to become self-reliant, and noted that the proposed pilot was an attempt to strengthen the motivation elements in assistance for youths who have been on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) for a long period and could not be motivated by existing employment programmes. It was agreed that the proposal would be further considered by the Task Force on Children and Youth.

Item (3) CoP Progress Report (February – August 2005) (CoP Paper 24/2005)

6. The Meeting noted the Progress Report of the CoP, which provided an overview of the progress of work made during the last few months by the CoP, as well as policies and initiatives of relevant bureaux and departments in the aforesaid period.

Commission Secretariat

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