

(Translation)

Restricted

Elderly Commission
Minutes of the 57th Meeting

Room 2005, 20/F, Murray Building, Garden Road, Central
3:00 p.m., 6 March 2009 (Friday)

Present:

Chairman

Dr the Honourable LEONG Che-hung, GBS, JP

Members

Prof CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred, BBS, JP

Mr CHAN Iu-seng, Star, BBS, JP

Dr LAM Ching-choi, BBS, JP

Prof Jean WOO

Mr CHAN Chi-yuk, Kenneth

Rev LAU Wai-ling, Dorothy, BBS, JP

Mr MA Chan-hang, Leo

Dr YAM Yin-chun, Loretta, BBS

Dr WONG Yee-him, John

Mr TANG Kwok-wai, Paul, JP

Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mr Stephen FISHER, JP

Director of Social Welfare

Mr LUK Kar-kin, Bruno

Representative of Secretary for Food and Health

Dr CHAN Wai-man, JP

Representative of Director of Health

Mr LIU King-leung

Representative of Secretary for Transport and Housing/Director of Housing

In Attendance:

Dr Ernest CHUI	Associate Professor, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong	}	Agenda Item 2
Dr LAW Chi-kin, Stephen	Research Assistant Professor, Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies, The Chinese University of Hong Kong		
Ms Silvia NG	Project Manager, Department of Social Work and Social Administration, The University of Hong Kong		
Mrs LAI FUNG Po-kun, Barbara	District Social Welfare Officer (Kowloon City /Yau Tsim Mong)	}	Agenda Item 4
Ms WONG Yuek-kuen	Social Service Director, Ladder Mission		
Mr SO Chor-kun	Participant of the Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project		
Ms POON Kwai-ying	Volunteer of the Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project	}	Agenda Item 5
Mr WONG Chi-kwong, Tony	Chief Systems Manager, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer		
Ms WONG On-ki, Angel	Systems Manager, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer		
Ms YIP Man-kuen, Carol, JP	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare		
Ms HO Siu-ping, Betty	Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare		
Mrs Kathy NG	Assistant Director Social Welfare Department		
Mr NGAN Man-por	Chief Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department		
Miss Sheila KONG	Chief Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department		
Mr LAM Ding-fung	Chief Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department		
Ms YAN Yuen-mei, May	Chief Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department		
Ms TANG Lai-fan	Senior Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department		
Miss CHAN Sau-ming	Senior Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department		

Ms LEUNG Mei-wah	Senior Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department
Miss CHEUNG Yun-ping, Mary	Senior Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department
Ms KWAN Yuen-yuk, Rosemary	Senior Social Work Officer Social Welfare Department
Dr NG Ping-sum	Senior Medical and Health Officer Department of Health
Mr YIP Hoi-ying, Kirk	Assistant Secretary for Food and Health
Miss CHAN Nga-sze, Joyce	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss LEE Wing-tung, Jessica	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss LAM Chin-kiu, Crystal	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Mr Henry LAI	Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Miss MOK Tik-shan, Elizabeth	Chief Executive Officer Labour and Welfare Bureau
Ms LI Wing-hang, Amanda	Executive Officer Labour and Welfare Bureau

Absent with Apologies:

Mr CHAN Han-pan
 Prof CHIU Fung-kum, Helen
 Chief Executive of Hospital Authority

Secretary

Mr CHEUNG Doi-ching Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare

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Dr LEONG Che-hung, the Chairman, welcomed Members to the meeting.

Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the 56th Meeting

2. The minutes of the last meeting were endorsed without amendments.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

Paragraph 23 of the Minutes of the 56th Meeting

3-8. The item was reported under separate confidential cover.

Agenda Item 3: The 2009-10 Budget – Briefing

9. Ms Carol YIP, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare, first relayed the Financial Secretary's appreciation to the Chairman and Members for their valuable advice on the Budget. She then briefed Members on the specific measures related to elderly services and social security as set out in the 2009-10 Budget with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

10. The Chairman responded that he was glad to learn that the Budget had put forth some innovative services for the elderly, apart from the proposal to allocate additional resources on elderly services. Besides, he was also glad to see that apart from the Government's participation in the implementation of these new initiatives, cooperation and joint efforts among various sectors in the community were also promoted. For instance, the Elder Academy Development Foundation was set up with government funding and contributions from the business sector, etc. He considered that this was in line with the direction of development all along promoted by the EC.

11. In addition, the Chairman was glad to note that the Elder Academy Scheme was inviting a new round of applications. He considered that the recognition of service learning as advocated by the Scheme to be generally in line with the objective of "Other Learning Experiences" under the New Senior School Curriculum by the Education Bureau was conducive to the expansion of the Scheme.

12. As to the initiatives related to elderly services in the Budget, Members had the following questions/views:

- (a) Regarding the provision of an additional recurrent funding of \$38 million to provide 500 subsidised residential care places through the Enhanced Bought Place Scheme (EBPS), a Member said that some elders were actually staying in private residential care places by means of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance or Higher Disability Allowance. He therefore opined that the number of EBPS places should be increased to help reduce the waiting time for subsidised residential care places.
- (b) A Member asked whether the additional subsidised residential care places referred to those in nursing homes, care-and-attention (C&A) homes or infirmaries, and the respective increase in the number of places in these homes.
- (c) Regarding the provision of an additional recurrent funding of about \$37 million to strengthen the support for infirm and demented elders, a Member asked about the original amount of recurrent funding in this respect and the number of elders who could benefit from the increased funding.

13. The responses of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and Social Welfare Department (SWD) were as follows:

continue to keep in view the elders' demand, consider the new initiatives proposed

- (b) Mrs Kathy NG, Assistant Director (Elderly) of the SWD, said that the two newly-built contract homes would provide care services ranging from C&A to nursing care. Of the 150 additional subsidised places, about 70% were nursing home places and 30% were C&A places. Apart from the 150 subsidised places, a total of 200 self-financing places would be provided in the two contract homes.
- (c) Mrs NG said that of the additional recurrent expenditure of \$37 million, \$20 million would be used as supplement for enhancing care services for infirm elders, and \$17 million as supplement for demented elders. The number of elders benefited from both supplements was estimated to be 6 000 in total. She undertook to provide detailed figures after the meeting.

[Post-meeting note: In 2009-10, 1 255 and 3 962 elders benefited from the “Infirmity Care Supplement” and “Dementia Supplement” respectively.]

14. Mr LUK Kar-kin, Principal Assistant Secretary for Food and Health, then briefed Members on the health-related initiatives in the 2009-10 Budget with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation. The Chairman responded that this Budget had met the Chief Executive's expectation by starting the process to increase the total spending on medical and health services from 15% last year to 17% of the overall recurrent government expenditure by 2012. He thanked the Government and the bureaux and departments concerned for their efforts to actively promote elderly services, provide additional resources and bring in new ideas.

Agenda Item 4: Pilot Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project (PNAAP) – Prevention of Elderly Suicide

(Information Paper No. EC/I/03-09)

15. Mr D C CHEUNG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare, briefed Members on Information Paper No. EC/I/03-09. He said that as it was anticipated that the number of elderly suicide cases would be on the rise because of the economic downturn, measures should be taken to prevent elderly suicide at an early stage. Research data showed that the common causes of elderly suicide were chronic pain or depression. As such, the Bureau proposed to promote the prevention of elderly suicide through the “PNAAP – Prevention of Elderly Suicide”. Under this project, medical social workers would refer elderly discharges, depending on their conditions and service needs, to the “Community Mental Health Intervention Project” (CoMHIP), “Personal Emergency Link Service” or “district projects” organised by social welfare organisations respectively for follow up to provide timely and appropriate support to the elders concerned and ensure early identification and support of elders in need. The Working Group on Active Ageing had indicated support for this project and agreed to provide funding for launching 33 “district projects”. Besides, the Bureau had allocated resources to implement 11 new district projects under the “PNAAP-Caring for Elders” so as to further enhance the work for preventing elder abuse in the community. Together with the “district projects” already launched, there would be a total of 75 “district projects” across the territory under the Neighbourhood Active Ageing Project (NAAP) starting from April this year.

16. The Chairman added that medical social workers mainly provided services for elderly discharges in need of support. As regards elders with suicidal tendency in the community, early identification and support through various “district projects” would be relied upon to reduce their suicidal risks. In response to the Chairman’s enquiry on the use

of the additional \$5 million allocated for the NAAP under the Budget, Ms YIP explained that the provision was made specifically for launching the “PNAAP - Prevention of Elderly Suicide”. However, the Bureau would continue to seek additional resources if necessary.

17. The Chairman invited Mrs Barbara LAI, District Social Welfare Officer (Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong) to share her experience in taking forward the NAAP in the districts and real cases she had come across. Mrs LAI said that a number of service partners (such as religious bodies) had emerged in recent years and become a new driving force within Kowloon City and Yau Tsim Mong. A series of pilot projects launched by the EC also fostered cooperation and trust among the providers of mainstream services and these partners, thereby opening up a new mode of mutual cooperation. Besides, the said districts also engaged locals (including ethnic minority groups) and the business sector in the pilot projects. In summary, these pilot projects facilitated the transformation of the planning and coordination of services within the districts from centre-based care to a “locality-based” care. This produced a positive effect on the coordination between providers of mainstream services and new service partners, and helped achieve division of labour and avoid duplication of resources. She then invited Ms WONG Yeuk-kuen, Social Service Director of Ladder Mission, Mr SO Chor-kun and Ms POON Kwai-ying, an elder participant and a volunteer of the NAAP respectively, to share their experience.

18. Ms WONG said that the Ladder Mission opened a neighbourhood centre in Yau Ma Tei in April last year. Through the approach of “outreach intervention and network support”, the centre mobilised neighbourhood ambassadors to conduct home visits or outreach activities in the district to reach out local residents, and then provided them with support through various bodies and organisations in the district, as well as professional advice and training in collaboration with the providers of mainstream services. The centre also proactively trained local volunteers to become “community neighbours”. Mr SO and Ms POON were an elder

and a volunteer respectively whom the Ladder Mission contacted through the NAAP. Mr SO was an elder who used to be home-ridden, whereas Ms POON had suffered from emotional disorders due to marital problems. Both said that they had become more cheerful after participating in the centre's activities and experienced the pleasure of giving and receiving through the volunteer service.

19. The Chairman concluded that the entire NAAP was obviously instrumental in changing elders' outlook on life. He was also glad to note that there were ample resources yet to be tapped in the districts. While hoping that district workers could sustain their efforts to expand services in their districts, he appealed to the SWD to support the district projects by providing additional resources. He thanked Mrs LAI, Ms WONG, Mr SO and Ms POON for attending the meeting and also the Department of Health (DH) and Hospital Authority for their assistance in training volunteers and following up on case respectively.

Agenda Item 5: Dedicated Portal for the Elderly

(Information Paper No. EC/I/04-09)

20. The Chairman invited Mr Tony WONG, Chief Systems Manager of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), to brief Members on the content of Information Paper No. EC/I/04-09.

21. Mr WONG said that the OGCIO set up a Task Force on Digital Inclusion in mid last year to study the respective need for information technology of different disadvantaged groups, so that the development of information technology could help them better integrate into society. The elderly was one of the concerned groups. He pointed out that elderly information and services currently available on the Internet were classified by organisations, making it inconvenient for elders to search for information. As such, the purpose of setting up a dedicated portal for the elderly as proposed in the Budget was to consolidate various

kinds of elderly information available on the Internet and classify them according to the daily needs of the elderly, with a view to enhancing efficiency in searching for information so as to provide an incentive for elders to access the information on the Internet. The portal could also enable elders to expand their circles of life through the social networking service of the Internet. For instance, they could use the Internet as a platform to make contact with overseas relatives and friends or share episodes of their daily life. Besides, the portal could serve as a platform for the business sector to develop the silver hair market.

22. The Chairman commented that the portal should be apolitical with a neutral website name, e.g. www.hongkongelderly.com. Apart from facilitating communication among elders, the portal could also promote the development of the silver market and provide the necessary information to carers or service providers. He thanked the Government for its support, and also the Hong Kong Housing Society (HKHS) and the Cyber Senior Network Development Association Ltd. (CyberSenior) for their assistance in setting up the portal. Mr D C CHEUNG added that in view of the well-developed hardware of the HKHS's website for the elderly and the extensive member network of the CyberSenior, with the coordination of the Chairman both parties had agreed to join forces to set up the proposed portal. The Government would provide seed money to subsidise the launching of the portal and its system development.

23. Mr WONG said that information integration for the portal would be conducted during the first six to nine months of the project. Innovative and tailor-made services for the elderly would be developed in Phase II, and promotion would be launched to promote the private/commercial participation in Phase III.

24. The EC endorsed the setting up of this portal jointly by the HKHS and CyberSenior and the proposed use of a neutral website name. The following views were raised:

- (a) A Member suggested to promote computer courses on the use of the portal in the community. The Chairman agreed and suggested that such computer courses could be included as part of the basic courses of elder academies.
- (b) A Member fully recognised that the portal could help the elderly, particularly those with physical disabilities, to keep in touch with the outside world. The portal could also be a platform for matching of elders with volunteer work, provision of information on RCHEs and keeping personal academic records of elders who participated in elder academies.
- (c) Dr CHAN Wai-man, Assistant Director for Health, hoped that health information could be disseminated through the portal. She suggested that the characteristics of elderly users should be catered for in designing the webpage, including colour scheme and the reduced use of “Flash”.
- (d) A Member reminded that attention should be given to balancing the time that the elderly spent on the Internet, so as to prevent them from becoming long-hour Internet users who would then be home-ridden.

25. Mr CHEUNG responded that the OGCIO welcomed government departments such as the SWD, DH and the Housing Department to consolidate their information related to the elderly and upload it onto the portal.

26. The Chairman and Mr CHEUNG thanked Mr WONG particularly for assisting and participating in setting up the portal.

Agenda Item 6: Any Other Business

Hong Kong Youth Technological Innovation Competition

27. The Chairman said that the award presentation ceremony of the Hong Kong Youth Technological Innovation Competition would be held next week. All entries to the competition were related to the living of the elderly. Mr D C CHEUNG added that the organiser of the competition had participated in events organised by the EC previously, such as the Silver Hair Market Fair. This year, one of the EC Members sponsored HK\$10,000 for the winners and suggested that sponsorship for the awards be made in the name of the EC. Members were invited to support the suggestion as the organiser was non-profit making and the objective of the competition was to enhance the quality of the living of the elderly.

28. Members raised no objection to the suggestion.

Date of Next Meeting

29. The next EC meeting was tentatively scheduled for July 2009.

30. The Chairman informed Members that Mr D C CHEUNG would be posted out next month. On behalf of the EC, he thanked Mr CHEUNG for his contributions to the EC in the past three years. Prof. Alfred CHAN, Vice-chairman of the EC, also thanked Mr CHEUNG for his work in the Working Group on Active Ageing.

Time of Adjournment

31. The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

3 July 2009