

46th Meeting of the Elderly Commission

Press Summary

The Elderly Commission (EC) held its 46th meeting today (18 May 2006). Major items on the agenda were as follows: -

(1) Promotion of active ageing

- Members discussed and endorsed a series of programmes to promote active ageing. This included an Announcement of Public Interest to promote a positive image of ageing, a seminar to encourage enterprises to organize pre-retirement activities for their about-to retire employees, a Silver Hair Market Fair later in the year to promote the development of elderly consumer market in Hong Kong. The series of programmes aimed at bringing out the message that with concerted efforts the elderly can lead a fruitful life and achieve inter-generational solidarity.

(2) Social Capital Development and Inter-generational Initiatives - Progress Report by the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund

- Since its operation in 2002, the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund (CIIF) has completed 8 batches of applications and has supported 102 projects to date. Among these projects about one quarter of them are led by or involved the participation of elders.
- Project Management Officer of the CIIF briefed members on the results of a joint University Evaluation Consortium Study. The CIIF Evaluation Consortium, formed by 7 research teams with 16 academics from 5 local universities, has completed their studies in March 2006.
- Results of the Evaluation Consortium are encouraging. Apart from affirming the overall effectiveness of the CIIF's social capital development strategies, the Evaluation Consortium also confirmed that the CIIF has increased elders' participation, sense of belongings and inter-generational solidarity and has developed elders' positive image effectively.
- Members noted the results of the Evaluation Consortium.

(3) Training for Formal and Informal Carers of the Elderly

- Members took stock of the existing training opportunities available to formal and informal carers of the elderly. The former includes primarily health workers and care workers. The latter includes family members, relatives, neighbours

and friends of the elders, domestic helpers and/or volunteers. Existing training opportunities include:

(A) Training for health workers

- The Health Worker Training Courses accredited by the Director of Social Welfare and run by more than 10 training institutes. An individual wishing to be registered as a health worker must have completed one of these courses. Starting from 1 April 2006, the minimum educational requirement for enrollees of the Health Worker Training Courses has been raised from F.3 to F.5. The length of the courses has been raised to 200 hours.
- The Vocational Training Council (VTC) has been running a series of training courses for health workers under the Skills Upgrading Scheme (SUS).
- Through referrals from the Licensing Office of the Residential Care Homes for the Elderly (LORCHE) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD), the Visiting Health Teams of the Department of Health (DH) provides on-site training to residential care homes for the elderly.

(B) Training for care workers

- SWD provides the following two types of training for care workers:
 - (a) 14-day Multi-skilled Training Course for Care Staff Working with the Elders for those who have no basic training; and
 - (b) 9-day Advanced Course for Care Staff Working with the Elders for those with relevant experience and training in basic skills.
- SWD also provides training on selected topics to care workers and home helpers, including refresher courses for care workers, care for demented elders, prevention of elderly abuse, and infectious diseases.
- The Employees Retraining Board provides 12-day training courses for care workers.
- VTC has been running a series of training courses for care workers under SUS.

(C) Training for informal carers

- The Visiting Health Teams, elderly service units, the geriatric/ psycho-geriatric teams of the Hospital Authority, training institutes, professional bodies and the private sector have been working in collaboration to provide training and education to informal carers.

- Members were of the view that the Government and various training institutes have been providing a wide range of training to meet the diversified needs of carers. In view of the increasing role of informal carers in taking care of elders ageing in the community, Members consider it useful for the Administration to further develop training opportunities for informal carers, and raise their awareness on the need for training.

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