

26th Meeting of the Elderly Commission
Summary for Press Briefing

1. The Elderly Commission (EC) held its 26th meeting today (29 November 2001) with the following three items on the agenda:

(1) **Presentation on ‘Elderly Care Residential Typologies: Comparative Case Studies between Hong Kong & International facilities and industry trends’**

- The EC received a presentation on a research project entitled ‘Elderly Care Residential Typologies: Comparative Case Studies between Hong Kong & International facilities and industry trends’ commissioned by a research team led by an academic from the School of Design of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University.
- The research project illustrates and compares the range of residential choices available to older persons under different modes of provision in Hong Kong, Japan, Australia and the USA. It is useful to make reference to the experience of other countries and to take account of local social and cultural circumstances in the provision of quality housing for older persons.
- There is an expanding housing market for older persons in the face of a growing ageing population with diversifying needs. The research considered that more choice would be needed to cater for different income groups, care levels and personal preferences. The EC also noted that it is important –
 - (a) to adapt cultural issues in design to new elder generation lifestyle needs;
 - (b) to pursue universal design for ‘ageing in place’;
 - (c) to encourage diversification and expansion in the provision of quality housing for older persons through policy initiatives; and
 - (d) to encourage greater private sector participation to meet growing demand.

(2) **2002 Symposium cum Exhibition on Challenges and Opportunities of an Ageing Population**

- The EC has been concerned with developing longer-term strategies to meet the needs of an ageing population in Hong Kong. According to the 2001 Hong Kong Population Census, in twenty years’ time, 15.7% of our population, i.e. one in every six persons, would be aged 65 or over. With good health, a longer life expectancy and an improved financial situation, the older population will bring about unprecedented challenges and opportunities for individuals, the community and government.
- To follow up from discussions at the EC workshop held on 17 November, the EC considers that there would be the need to reinvent ageing and to rethink policy, in

view of an ageing population. There would be a need to advocate a change in the existing public and social institutions in order to embrace an ageing society.

- Against the above background, EC plans to organize a large-scale symposium cum exhibition in June next year to arouse the awareness of the community to focus on reinventing the concept of ageing and rethinking the challenges and opportunities of an ageing population.
- The objectives of the proposed symposium cum exhibition are to:
 - (a) promote the understanding and awareness of the concept of ageing;
 - (b) examine the challenges and opportunities presented by an ageing population in Hong Kong to individuals, community, and public and social institutions, with reference to overseas experience;
 - (c) promote the awareness and readiness of our social institutions to embrace the ageing society and to enlist the experience and energy of older persons for the benefit of both the society and themselves; and
 - (d) present the efforts and achievements made by the community in care for the elderly in past years.
- The symposium would target at policy makers, professionals, academics, business organizations, the media and service providers from various sectors of the community. An associated two-month roving exhibition (say, from June to July 2002 at various venues such as shopping malls and public housing estates) would target at older people and the general public.

(3) **Birthday Greetings to Centenarians in Hong Kong**

- To promote the positive image of ageing and as a sign of respect to centenarians, the EC Chairman and the Secretary for Health and Welfare (SHW) would issue birthday greetings to Hong Kong residents who were 100 years of age or over. For Hong Kong residents who were already 100 years old or over, they would also be sent the birthday greetings.
- According to the 2001 Hong Kong Population Census, the estimated number of Hong Kong residents aged 100 or over was 697, a 57% increase over the 445 in the 1996 By Census. The number of residents in Hong Kong reaching 100 years old was estimated to be about 300 each year.
- Members of the public, elder service units, district organizations, etc. would be invited to put forward nominations of eligible persons for the birthday greetings.

2. The EC also noted that under a Community Partnership Scheme for the promotion of healthy ageing, 42 applications (out of the total 234 applications received) from non-government organizations in the welfare sectors, district bodies, tertiary institutions, etc. involving a total funding of about \$6 million were approved in the first round of funding allocation under the Scheme. A presentation ceremony

would be held on 11 December 2001 to formally announce the application results. In support of the Healthy Ageing Campaign, a Healthy Ageing Resource Centre has been set up at (www.healthyageing.gov.hk) to serve as a portal to relevant web sites promoting healthy ageing.

3. We shall continue with our efforts to encourage participation of different sectors in the promotion of healthy ageing through the three-year Community Partnership Scheme. The EC Chairman would also brief District Council Chairmen in December 2001 on the promotion of healthy ageing and explore ways to enhance our promotion efforts at the district level.

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