

Third-term Commission on Poverty convenes second meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the second meeting of the third-term Commission on Poverty (CoP) this afternoon (October 18).

At the meeting, Mr Cheung and relevant government officials briefed members on the various initiatives on improving people's livelihood announced in the 2018 Policy Address. These initiatives include further relaxing the age limit of the target beneficiaries of the Community Care Fund (CCF) Elderly Dental Assistance Programme; enhancing the means test of the Samaritan Fund and CCF assistance programmes; increasing education resources to secondary and primary schools as well as kindergartens; enhancing further labour protection for non-skilled workers engaged by government service contractors; strengthening support for the disadvantaged including ethnic minorities, children with special educational needs and persons with disability; and continuing to promote the Working Family Allowance Scheme. Members noted the Government's determination and commitment to improving people's livelihood and provided views on the new initiatives.

Mr Cheung stressed that the current-term Government attaches great importance to tackling social poverty and will continue to step up its efforts in alleviating poverty and helping the disadvantaged with a view to building a caring, harmonious and inclusive society.

The CoP also noted the implementation progress of various assistance programmes and the financial position of the CCF. In addition, the CoP agreed to extend the Special Care Subsidy for the Severely Disabled Programme for a maximum of 24 months to provide eligible persons with severe disabilities a subsidy to purchase care goods and services or for other purposes related to nursing care. The revised total provision for the Programme is \$452.79 million and more than 2 700 persons are expected to benefit from the Programme.

During the meeting, the Social Welfare Department briefed members on the progress of implementing after-school learning and support programmes for grass-roots children under the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged (the Fund) as well as the review on the service impacts of dedicated portions under the Fund. Members recognised that the Fund could effectively promote tripartite partnership among the welfare sector, the business community and the Government to help the disadvantaged. Members also expressed views on the assistance programmes and way forward of the Fund.

In addition, as a follow-up to the discussion of the last meeting, the Office of the Government Economist and the Census and Statistics Department briefed members on the enhancement proposals of the poverty line analytical framework. Members gave views on the proposals.