

CS visits Caritas Community Centre – Tsuen Wan to meet grassroots families (with photos/video)

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, visited Caritas Community Centre – Tsuen Wan today (July 26) to meet parents and students from grassroots families living in subdivided units and tap their views about the Government's work to alleviate poverty in a targeted manner, including how to help, through a pilot scheme, disadvantaged junior secondary school students to achieve upward social mobility.

Mr Chan, accompanied by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, first received a briefing on the operation of Caritas Community Centre – Tsuen Wan by Caritas – Hong Kong's Assistant Chief Executive, Reverend Dominique Mukonda Kananga, Director of Social Work Services Division, Mr Frederick Lai, and other colleagues. The centre, supported by government subsidies, provides services such as supporting the development of grassroots groups (including subdivided unit households), improving their living conditions and running after-school care services. Mr Chan said he was pleased to learn that the centre is running different facilities such as a library, a self-study room, a kitchen, an activity room and a community hall for use by parents and students from grassroots families in poor living conditions (including subdivided units) to expand their living space.

Afterwards, Mr Chan chatted to parents and students from several grassroots families living in subdivided units to understand their living conditions as well as their views on how the current-term Government can support the development of students from grassroots families, such as providing more places for learning, language classes and extra-curricular activities. He also introduced to them the thinking of the scheme being formulated by the inter-bureau/department task force under his charge to help disadvantaged junior secondary school students (especially those living in subdivided units) to actively strive for upward social mobility when they grow up. He said he was pleased to learn about the participants' positive feedback on the scheme.

Mr Chan said, "The visit today has enabled us to better understand the front-line work of the social welfare sector in supporting grassroots groups and fostering their physical and mental development, as well as the thoughts of parents and students from grassroots families on how the current-term Government should press ahead with alleviating poverty in a targeted manner. The Government will continue to devise and enhance policies and measures to address poverty taking account of the circumstances and needs of various disadvantaged groups, particularly to support the young generation from grassroots families to work hard and be positive and self-reliant.

"In regard to disadvantaged junior secondary school students, especially those living in subdivided units, the task force being led by me is

formulating at full steam a scheme to encompass three elements, namely mentorship, a personal development plan and financial support, to help the students broaden their horizons, reinforce their self-confidence, develop a positive outlook on life and set goals for their future. The first stage of the scheme will cater for 2 000 students and last a year. We will press ahead with collaboration between the Government, the business sector and the community, forging discussion with various stakeholders including business organisations, schools and social welfare organisations to draw on collective wisdom, with a view to announcing the scheme details within August. Recruitment of mentors and students will follow."

