

Fifth-term Commission on Poverty convenes third meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, chaired the third meeting of the fifth-term Commission on Poverty this afternoon (September 21).

At the meeting, members were briefed by government representatives on the progress of various targeted poverty alleviation projects. Over the past year, the first round of the Strive and Rise Programme has been steadfastly supporting junior secondary school students from underprivileged families, especially those living in subdivided units, to broaden their horizons and strive for upward mobility. Upon completion of training sessions on life planning, capacity building and financial planning, mentees have received a start-up sum of \$5,000 to implement their personal development plans under their mentors' guidance. With the staunch support of many enterprises and organisations, the mentees have been given ample opportunities to participate in a wide variety of group activities for continuous self-enhancement. Upon successful completion of the Programme, they will receive a scholarship of \$5,000 to put into practice their financial planning skills acquired and join the alumni club established by the Government. The Government will review the effectiveness of the first round and enhance the Programme, with a view to launching the second round later this year.

The Government is progressively rolling out the School-based After School Care Service Pilot Scheme, funded by the Community Care Fund (CCF), starting this month to support families in need, particularly single-parent families. It has identified certain districts with a relatively large number of target students. They are Kowloon City, Yau Tsim Mong, Sham Shui Po, Kwun Tong, Kwai Tsing and Tsuen Wan. About 50 primary schools in total are expected to join in, benefitting around 3 000 students. Under the Pilot Scheme, schools and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) are responsible for providing venues and after-school care services on campus respectively. Primary school students in need can stay after school to receive care and learning support in a safe and familiar environment, so that parents who used to be tied up with caring for their children in after-school hours can choose to work and improve their families' livelihood.

Furthermore, the Government is making preparations at full steam for the Pilot Programme on Community Living Room, funded by the CCF, to provide targeted support for subdivided unit households, particularly those with children. The first project is located at Fuk Wa Street in Sham Shui Po and expected to be launched later this year for a three-year period. The Pilot Programme will adopt tripartite collaboration among the Government, the business sector and the community. The Government will take the lead overall, while the business sector will offer venues free of charge or at a nominal rent and NGOs will be responsible for the operation. Subdivided unit households will be provided with additional living space, so as to establish their social network as well as enhancing their living standard and sense of

belonging to the community. Their hardship arising from awaiting public rental housing and living in an undesirable environment can thus be alleviated.

At the meeting, members took note of the progress and financial position of the various assistance programmes under the CCF. They approved funding of about \$1,257.8 million under the CCF to optimise and extend the implementation of the Elderly Dental Assistance Programme.