
Chapter 3

Investing for a Caring Society

Preamble

The financial tsunami struck hard at all sectors of our community. In response, the Chief Executive put forward the strategy of “stabilising the financial system, supporting enterprises and preserving employment” to reduce unemployment and introduced a series of short-term measures to alleviate the difficulties faced by our people. In the long term, the Government will continue to enhance the competitiveness of the grassroots through education and retraining. We will also safeguard the well-being of workers at the grassroots level and seek to forestall the phenomenon of excessively low wage through a statutory minimum wage. As regards the disadvantaged, they need support from the Government. In particular, as Hong Kong is moving towards an ageing society, we have to provide better support to the elderly in need. To facilitate persons with disabilities to integrate into society, we need to strengthen services and support for them and their carers. We are also determined to tackle the youth drug abuse problem, which has become increasingly serious. To fulfil our responsibility to our future generations, we will join hands with all sectors of society in combating the drug problem.

New Initiatives

We will:

- Carry out a one-year Internet education campaign to teach Internet users, especially young students, how to use the Internet appropriately and safely. This programme can also create about 500 temporary jobs.
- Consolidate views received in the public consultation exercise on the Review of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance and arrange for further public discussions on possible legislative proposals.
- Formulate the way forward on the recommendations of the Law Reform Commission on stalking and make preparations for undertaking public consultation on the issue.
- Launch in partnership with the Family Council a territory-wide “Happy Family Campaign” to further promote family core values, and to appeal to the public to build **HKSAR** families (i.e. **H**appy, **K**ind, **S**upportive, **A**ppreciative and **R**esponsible families) with a view to encouraging the community to attach importance to the family, and to foster a culture of loving families.

- Through the Family Council, co-ordinate and liaise with other relevant stakeholders in setting up a “Happy Family Info Hub”, which is a multi-sectoral, inter-disciplinary and interactive support network and platform for exchange of information. A professional team comprising doctors, clinical psychologists, social workers, teachers and parents will be engaged to facilitate the operation of an “Interactive Family E-platform and E-resource centre” to promote family core values, and to introduce family education as well as support services for the family, with a view to better addressing the multifarious needs of families.
- Further enhance anti-drug efforts by –
 - (a) stepping up the territory-wide campaign against youth drug abuse to enhance community awareness and mobilise support from different sectors to tackle the problem;
 - (b) organising youth anti-drug abuse community programmes in the 18 districts to cultivate positive values amongst youngsters to steer them away from drugs;
 - (c) introducing a trial scheme on drug testing in Tai Po secondary schools in school year 2009-10;
 - (d) examining the feasibility of developing hair drug testing service in Hong Kong;
 - (e) inviting proposals for possible new and effective models of treatment and rehabilitation services; and
 - (f) stepping up law enforcement, notably against cross-boundary drug abuse and trafficking.

- Launch a Victim Support Programme to enhance support services for victims of domestic violence, in particular those undergoing the judicial process.
- Provide additional places for day, pre-school and residential rehabilitation services for persons with disabilities.
- Strengthen physiotherapy service and health care support for ageing users of subvented residential care homes for persons with intellectual disability.
- Introduce a bill into the Legislative Council and formulate suitable complementary measures to implement a licensing scheme on the residential care homes for persons with disabilities so as to ensure their service quality.
- Introduce a pilot Bought Place Scheme for residential care homes for persons with disabilities to help the market develop more service options for persons with disabilities.
- Expand the integrated community centres for mental wellness across the territory and strengthen medical social services for persons with mental health problems.
- Examine, in line with our policy of supporting “ageing in the community as the core, institutional care as back-up”, how to provide tailor-made home care services for the elderly through a more flexible and diverse mode of service delivery, and through which to encourage social enterprises and the private market to develop related services, with a view to strengthening the support to elders who age at home.

- Provide additional subsidised day care places for frail elders.
- Enhance the pace of increasing the provision of additional subsidised nursing home (NH) and care-and-attention (C&A) places through a novel multi-pronged approach, including increasing the ratio of NH places in existing subsidised contract residential care homes for the elderly (RCHes), purchasing vacant places from self-financing NHs and C&A homes, utilising subsidised elderly homes with no long-term care element to provide more places with continuum of care; and, in parallel, continue to increase the provision of subsidised places through development of new subsidised contract RCHes to meet the growing demand from elders.
- Launch a pilot scheme to provide RCHes with visiting pharmacist services to strengthen their capability in drug management and enhance their quality of care.
- Extend the coverage of the District-based Scheme on Carer Training to Neighborhood Elderly Centres so as to further strengthen the support to carers of elders.
- Co-ordinate the setting up of a dedicated portal for the elderly to provide one-stop information service on elderly services and the silver hair market. We hope that through this portal and various computer courses offered by the elder academies, the elderly will enhance their computer knowledge and ability to use digital services, thereby expanding their circles of life through the Internet.

- Embark on the work of the committee set up for the Elder Academy Development Foundation to develop with dedicated efforts the long-term curriculum and learning structure of elder academies, and to promote activities for inter-generational integration.
- Set up a pioneer one-stop employment and training centre in Tin Shui Wai to streamline, integrate and enhance the existing employment and training/retraining services of the Labour Department, Social Welfare Department and Employees Retraining Board.
- Set up a recruitment centre for the retail industry to provide more tailor-made employment support, including targeted job-matching service and on-the-spot interview opportunities; to bridge, more effectively and expeditiously, the recruitment and employment needs of the industry that is marked by high turnover and constant demand for workers.
- Expand the employer network of the Labour Department so as to enrich its job vacancy database, and pilot the targeted sharing of the database with non-government organisations (NGOs) and other stakeholders to facilitate their operation of placement service.
- Enhance the user-friendliness and efficiency of Labour Department's employment services through greater use of messaging technology such as Short Message Service (SMS) for disseminating information on job vacancies and recruitment activities to job seekers.
- Complete the review of the Transport Support Scheme and decide on the way forward.

- Introduce a bill into the Legislative Council to remove the requirement for an employer's agreement to the making of an order for reinstatement or re-engagement of an employee who has been dismissed unreasonably and unlawfully, and to require the employer to pay a further sum to the employee for failing to comply with such an order.
- Review the Code of Practice for Safe Use of Tower Cranes, taking into account the guidelines issued by the Construction Industry Council, to enhance the safety in the use of tower cranes on construction sites.
- Invite NGOs for enhanced partnering functions with Estate Management Advisory Committees to promote community building and neighbourliness in public rental housing estates.

On-going Initiatives

We are:

- Co-ordinating cross-bureaux efforts in taking forward and completing HKSAR's post-quake reconstruction support work in Sichuan. Following Legislative Council's approval to inject \$9 billion into the Trust Fund in Support of Reconstruction in the Sichuan Earthquake Stricken Areas (the Trust Fund), the HKSAR Government has in three stages undertaken 152 reconstruction support projects in Sichuan. These projects cover education, medical and rehabilitation, social welfare, highway infrastructure and reconstruction of the Wolong Nature Reserve. The Trust Fund has also provided funding to Hong Kong NGOs to undertake reconstruction support projects in Sichuan.
- Continuing our work on the promotion of human rights.
- Continuing our work on facilitating ethnic minorities to integrate into the community, including sponsoring NGOs to operate support service centres for ethnic minorities and taking forward administrative guidelines for relevant public authorities to promote racial equality and ensure equal access to public services in key areas concerned.
- Preparing legislative proposals to strengthen consumer protection with a view to consulting the public by end-2009 or early 2010; and stepping up publicity and education efforts.

- Continuing with the implementation of the District Cyber Centres pilot scheme, to extend the support service to more affiliated centres with a view to enabling children from low income families and other needy local residents in more districts to gain access to the rich pool of information and knowledge in the cyber space.
- Working closely with the Ping Wo Fund Advisory Committee on the use of the Ping Wo Fund to finance public education to prevent gambling-related problems, to provide counselling and support services to pathological gamblers, and to conduct research on studies on gambling-related issues.
- Together with stakeholders, encouraging further development of social enterprises to foster a caring society. We are also reinforcing the district-based approach in alleviating poverty through implementing the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme and other district co-ordination work.
- Working closely with the Family Council to promote family core values and family education, to study and address problems from a family perspective, and to create a pro-family environment and foster work-life balance.
- Continuing the legislative amendment exercise to enhance the enforcement of Labour Tribunal awards with a view to strengthening the protection of employees' rights and benefits.
- Continuing the legislative exercise for the Minimum Wage Bill and undertaking preparatory work for its implementation.

- Continuing the legislative amendment exercise of the Occupational Deafness (Compensation) Ordinance to enhance the statutory compensation for persons with occupational deafness.
- Collecting statistical data on employees not engaged under a continuous contract to facilitate the review on the definition of continuous employment under the Employment Ordinance, and continuing to consult relevant stakeholders.
- Continuing to promote family-friendly employment practices with a view to encouraging wider adoption of such practices in the workplace.
- Continuing enforcement action against wage offences.
- Continuing with intelligence-based and proactive strategy in combating illegal employment.
- Continuing to promote the occupational safety and health performance of renovation and maintenance works through publicity and promotion to heighten safety awareness of people engaged in such works and stepping up enforcement to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.
- Implementing short-term food assistance services throughout the whole territory to support the needy.
- Co-ordinating efforts across the Government in poverty alleviation through the Task Force on Poverty and monitoring progress in implementing the recommendations made by the then Commission on Poverty with a view to improving the livelihood of the disadvantaged groups and people in need.

- Monitoring the implementation of the first batch of Child Development Fund (CDF) pioneer projects and overseeing the consultancy study on the evaluation of these pioneer projects. Taking into account the evaluation results and practical experience in implementing the first batch of pioneer projects, we will consider the timing for rolling out the second batch of CDF projects as well as the longer-term model for promoting the personal development of children from a disadvantaged background with a view to reducing inter-generational poverty.
- Continuing to encourage and help able-bodied Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) recipients to become self-reliant. In addition to the Integrated Employment Assistance Scheme, a new phase of the Special Training and Enhancement Programme (My STEP) and New Dawn Project will commence to strengthen support to CSSA youths, single parents and child carers so as to build up their capacity for self-help and facilitate their integration into the community.
- Providing support to the Women's Commission in promoting the interests and well-being of women through the provision of an enabling environment, empowerment of women, including the Capacity Building Mileage Programme, and public education.
- Continuing to apply the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist or the concept in different policy areas progressively, and working with the Women's Commission to further promote gender mainstreaming.
- Continuing with the study on long-term social welfare planning.

- Continuing to implement and further develop the batterer intervention programme; and continuing to implement the anti-violence programme for abusers as provided under the Domestic Violence Ordinance.
- Continuing to prevent and tackle domestic violence through public education and enhanced training for related professionals.
- Continuing to implement the pilot project on Child Fatality Review.
- Following through the scrutiny of the Domestic Violence (Amendment) Bill 2009 by the Legislative Council to extend the civil protection provided under the Ordinance to same-sex cohabitants.
- Enhancing transport services for persons with disabilities through improvements to rebus service, and examining ways of further improving accessibility of transport services.
- Promoting, in collaboration with the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee, the rehabilitation sector and the community at large, the spirit and core values enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.
- Upgrading subvented residential care places to provide long-term care for frail elders to meet the growing care needs of elders.
- Continuing with outreaching efforts of elderly centres to singleton and hidden elders to help them develop social life, and strengthening the referral, counselling and support services to elders in need.

- Providing integrated support services to both elderly hospital discharges who have difficulty taking care of themselves and their carers through the Integrated Discharge Support Trial Programme for Elderly Patients.
- Helping needy elders who live in dilapidated homes improve their home conditions through the Home Environment Improvement Scheme for the Elderly.
- Training additional Enrolled Nurses for the welfare sector.
- Completing the review on the permissible limit of absence from Hong Kong under the Old Age Allowance scheme, and decide on the way forward.
- Continuing to promote flexible child care services to meet the varying needs of families.
- Implementing in phases a series of measures to enhance our training and retraining services, in accordance with the recommendations made in the strategic review on the future directions of the Employees Retraining Board.
- Encouraging schools to collaborate with NGOs in providing school-based after-school learning and support services for needy students.
- Maintaining supply of public rental housing (PRH) for needy applicants with an average waiting time of around three years.
- Conducting the first PRH rent review in 2010 under the new rent adjustment mechanism.

- Implementing a set of enhanced public housing arrangements to promote mutual family support and care for the elderly.
- Continuing to facilitate the implementation of an elderly housing project by the Hong Kong Housing Society on Tanner Road, North Point.
- Installing as far as practicable lifts/escalators connecting common areas in hillside public housing estates and lifts in low-rise public housing blocks without lifts to facilitate access of residents.
- Finalising the study on the assessment system on the provision of hillside escalator links and elevator systems with a view to establishing the assessment system by the end of 2009.
- Implementing a series of measures to tackle the youth drug abuse problem, following long-term, holistic and sustainable policies recommended by the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse led by the Secretary for Justice.
- Mapping out how mediation can be more effectively and extensively applied in both commercial disputes and at the community level, with the assistance of a Working Group on Mediation chaired by the Secretary for Justice.