

Commission on Poverty (CoP)
Meeting held on 28 June 2005
Gist of Discussion

The Commission on Poverty held its fourth meeting on 28 June 2005.

Item (1) Work Progress of the CoP

2. The Meeting noted developments on several fronts in taking forward the district-based approach to poverty alleviation. These included the development of a set of district indicators which would be ready by end-2005. CPU had also undertaken to conduct a study on good practices in implementing the district-based approach. Members also noted that the Commission's visits had helped galvanize district dialogues on ways to prevent and alleviate poverty. Members were pleased to note the successful Roundtable discussion held in Kwun Tong on 25 June 2005 in respect of which the District Office was now coordinating follow up. The Meeting also took note of the progress made in other initiatives, including the proposed mentorship scheme involving all eight University Grant Committee institutes, the Vocational Training Council and the secondary and primary school sectors which would be formally launched in October.

Item (2) "From Welfare-to-Self Reliance" (CoP Paper 18/2005, CoP Paper 20/2002 and CoP Paper 21/2005)

3. Members noted the growing welfare caseload and expenses over the last decade in respect of the able-bodied and other recipients, the rise in the median duration of stay on CSSA, the progressively ageing population and labour force as well as the different projections ten years down the road based on different sets of assumptions.

4. The Meeting agreed that, in respect of the able-bodied, welfare to self-reliance should be the direction for future work since meaningful employment was essential to sustainable poverty alleviation. Towards

this and having noted the training, employment and other assistance programmes now in place and the experience overseas, the Meeting agreed to conduct a holistic review of the existing employment assistance and services for the able-bodied taking into account the interface among relevant policies and the perspectives of delivery agencies and target beneficiaries. The aim was to ensure that services and support were delivered in an integrated and effective manner. Members also agreed that assistance and training should take into account the development trends in specific industries so that the unemployed could be meaningfully engaged in jobs for which they had been trained.

5. The Meeting also reaffirmed the importance of a district-based approach which could facilitate the identification of community-based employment opportunities by capitalizing on neighbourhood networks.

6. The desired outcome of the review should be an effective support framework providing balanced push and pull measures to encourage and facilitate able-bodied welfare recipients to be self-reliant. As a first step, the Commission Secretariat and relevant bureaux and departments were asked to carry out more fact-finding work to enable further deliberation on the effectiveness of the existing employment assistance and support services.

Commission Secretariat
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