THE HONG KONG COUNCIL OF SOCIAL SERVICE

**Response to SWAC's 2nd Stage Consultation Exercise on
 Long Term Social Welfare Planning in Hong Kong**

In response to the second-stage consultation, the Council has organized a series of sharing sessions among the Sector, a meeting with the SWAC members and user forums to collect views of the Sector and key stakeholders in May and June, 2010 on the consultation paper. Summaries of the discussions could be found in the Council's website: http://www.hkcss.org.hk/ltwp. An initial submission was made to the Welfare Panel of the Legislative Council upon their invitation of views. The following paper is based on the wide consultation with the Sector and on the previous submissions to the Government on Long Term Social Welfare Planning.

POSITIONING, MISSION & VALUES OF SOCIAL WELFARE

1. *Defining the Scope and Mission of Social Welfare*
    The consultation paper emphasized that our existing social welfare system covers a "wide range of preventive, developmental and remedial services for the general public. Subsidized welfare services in Hong Kong are available to all who need, rather than confined to the socially and/or financially disadvantaged." (para 2.1) We agree that the present scope of social welfare should be retained and strengthened, and the Government should commit additional resources to the preventive and developmental services.

    The mission of social welfare should be elaborated to give direction for future policy and programme formulation. It should encompass :
    - Enhancing individual, family and community capacities, to develop their potentials to fully participate and contribute to the society – **SOCIAL INVESTMENT IN HUMAN AND SOCIAL CAPITAL**
    - Providing basic care and protection or safety-net in term of cash assistance and access to services for those in need – **SOCIAL PROTECTION**
    - Facilitating active participation and social partnerships in jointly building a caring, inclusive, cohesive and just society – **SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT**

2. *The Core Values of Social Welfare are Pillars of our Social Welfare System*
    We agree to the core values of social welfare identified in the consultation paper. In addition, we would like to affirm that
    - protection of human dignity and rights; and
    - the advancement of social justice and equity
    should be included as the basic value premise of our social welfare system.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SOCIAL WELFARE PLANNING

The six guiding principles as proposed by SWAC for social welfare planning are important considerations, among which the principles of "Shared Responsibility" and "User Participation" need extended discussion, which will be elaborated below. In addition, the distinct roles and partnership between the Government and non-government organizations should be articulated and included as the guiding principles in welfare planning.

3. *Shared Responsibility in Financing Social Welfare*
   - It is necessary to differentiate the shared responsibility to achieve satisfactory service outcome, which is undisputable and would not be discussed here, and the shared responsibility in the financing or paying for welfare service provision, which needs to be carefully considered.
   - It is important to set the baseline parameter that the Government should be providing for the protection and basic services to those who are in need, but are unable to pay. Protection, statutory and remedial services are core government responsibilities and should be fully financed through the government budget.
   - Community resources could be mobilized to supplement government's effort and support developmental, preventive, public education programmes.
   - The consideration for Fee-for-Service based on the principle of users' "ability to pay" could be explored to give choice and ensure provision of welfare services for users of varying means. Social insurance systems should be explored to share the high costs and risks of long term care.

4. *User Empowerment and Participation*
   - It is important to promote and support self help and mutual help users organizations, as an essential platform of users empowerment and engagement in service planning and needs identification.
   - There should be stipulations in requiring service operators and social welfare district offices to engage users at the service delivery level.
   - Users participation at the policy and service development level could be through various channels, including engagement of individuals, regular dialogue with users groups and systematic collection of users' views on the needs and service provisions.

5. *The Role of Government in Social Welfare Planning*
   - Setting the strategic directions and providing the overall framework to guide operational change and development.
   - Providing leadership for policy formulation
   - Facilitating development of partnerships across sectors
   - Aligning cross bureaux social welfare related policies and initiatives
   - Promoting equal opportunities for people to develop their potentials to their full, and enforcing all relevant anti-discrimination ordinances.
   - Prioritize where trade-offs are required between conflicting goals.

- Providing funding and resources to ensure the accurate implementation of the social welfare plan.
- Supporting vulnerable individuals with basic protection (safety nets), by encouraging and accommodating the contributions of civil society through families, communities and business.

6.   *The Role of NGOs and the Partnership between NGOs and the Government*
- NGOs in welfare sector provide more than ninety percent of the welfare services for the public in Hong Kong.
- NGOs have greater flexibility and potential to develop innovative solutions to meet the changing social needs.
- NGOs play a critical role in fostering tripartite partnership to mobilize community resources and business engagement in support of welfare services.
- NGOs, notwithstanding that they receive government subvention or not, should have close collaboration with the Government in the identification of social needs and the planning of service delivery. This will be elaborated in the proposal of a collaborative social welfare planning mechanism below.
- The Government should put forth a **framework of partnership** which includes the commitment to collaboration, resource allocation and involvement in policy development with NGOs. The experience in United Kingdom in the formulation of the "Compact" agreements, could shed lights on how to define the parameters of responsibilities and rights in the relationship between the Government and the third sector, that work together for the benefit of the communities and citizens.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS FOR PLANNING AND PROVISION OF SOCIAL WELFARE

It is of paramount importance that a welfare planning mechanism has to be in place before the consideration of strategic directions for planning. In addition to the six strategic direction proposed by SWAC, which we support, we are raising four more strategic considerations in the planning and provision of welfare services.

7.   *Putting the Social Welfare Planning Mechanism in Place*
- As an important complementary system to the introduction of the new Lump Sum Grant funding mode in 2001, the Government has pledged to put in place an integrated and forward-looking planning framework "to provide a discipline and a mechanism for structured decision-making on how welfare services can be best engineered to meet the changing needs of the community and on how resources can be used in the most cost-effective manner." (Preamble para5 -6 in Lump Sum Grant Manual 2nd Ed).
- The proposed improved welfare service planning framework will comprise long term **Strategic Directions**, **Medium Term Plan** for individual programmes areas and service development and delivery of **Annual Plans** by SWD and NGOs. SWAC should

urge the Government to put the planning mechanism in place and uphold this framework for steering the welfare planning.

Besides the centralized planning framework stated in Lump Sum Grant Manual, the social welfare planning should include the **Locality, District or Community-based planning.** District Welfare Planning is important as it makes welfare services more relevant to district variations and thus more responsive to community needs. The concern is how to align District Planning with the overall mapping and monitoring of service needs and provision, how to determine the deployment of resources to ensure adequate and forward looking welfare service provision and planning.

■ The proposed process and mechanism of planning for Social Welfare are summarized in Annex I

8.   *Human Resource and Premises Development Planning*
   ■   Human Resource Planning - All core social welfare services required qualified personnel, such as nurses, social workers, paramedical colleagues and supportive care staff, to provide quality services. The manpower projection of similar personnel across different bureaux and departments should be aligned and coordinated. Systematic induction and in-service training should be in place to ensure and advance the quality of service.

   ■   Premises Development Planning - Many planned social welfare services cannot operate because of lacking of premises provision, especially residential service. Under the present year to year resource allocation exercise and reactive policy making, it is difficult to plan ahead in earmarking premises for welfare provision. Concerted efforts across bureaux and departments and enhanced collaboration with NGOs in identifying and securing premises for welfare provision are crucial. New service unit should be provided with spare capacity to meet the growing needs projected in at least ten years. Community complex should be built with the aim of providing premises for integrated provision of services within and across programme areas.

9.   *The Role of Non-Subvented NGOs*
   While it is much encouraged to see that the Consultation Paper has clearly pointed out the important role played by social enterprises in serving the community, beyond doubt the Government should give equal recognition to the contribution of non-subvented NGOs and same commitment to support them as they do represent a substantial number of social service organizations in society which are providing a significant component of welfare services in Hong Kong. The Government should be proactive to facilitate better environment and support for the development of non-subvented NGOs at both policy level and operational level.

At policy level, the government should recognize the non-subvented NGOs as partners and address their importance and contribution to society.

- The non-subvented NGOs should be well engaged in the welfare planning and coordination mechanism and processes, at both central and district levels.

- Policy support to non-subvented NGOs should be strengthened and their access to resources should be enhanced.

At operation level, it is recommended that better communication and close partnership between the Government and non-subvented NGOs should be built up and strengthened.

- In the allocation of new services, the non-subvented NGOs should be provided the opportunity to participate in the contracting process.

- The Government should also take the initiative to provide support to the non-subvented NGOs in the search for welfare premises to accommodate their welfare provision, in providing welfare rent and rates discounts, and in enhancing their equal access to Government/public funds and grants.

- Support on capacity building should be extended to the non-subvented NGOs, which are facing the same need, if not greater, as their subvented partners, for enhancing their capacity in serving the community efficiently and effectively.

10. *Development, Promotion and Support of Self financing Services*
    - The successful experience and contribution of self financing services have not been mentioned in the consultation paper. Self financing services initiated by NGOs, both subvented or non-subvented, have been effectively in mobilizing community resources and support to meet social needs not fulfilled by the Government and subsidized services. They should be encouraged and facilitated in the overall planning and provision of welfare need and development.
    - The Government should consider granting welfare rent and rates discounts to NGOs to encourage the development of non-subsidized services, to expand the choice of services for users that may be able to pay part of the cost.
    - Suitable premises should also be provided to allow NGOs to expand self financing services to cover needs or types of target service recipients not clearly identified before.

11. *Review of the Approach in Integration of Core Service Deliveries*
    - Integration of services was the main service delivery model in the past two decades. Integration of children and youth service began 15 years ago and followed with integrated family service centre. The latest is the integrated community mental wellness centres. There is also the formation of integrated community centre like that of the Tung Chung model to serve a collective of target groups under one entity.
    - The integrated service model was put in place to provide users with a more

convenient and easy access to services and enable more flexible and cost-effective use of available resources. The challenges to the integration approach on service delivery should be addressed. In-depth examination of this approach should be conducted.

- In the sector, there are debates over integrated service versus specialized service. There is a need for greater specialization in professional service in handling complex social problems and distinctive client groups such as victims of family violence, mental health cases, new arrivals, single parents, etc.

12. *Implementation of Research based Planning, Evaluation and Assessment*
The Sector strongly supports research based planning and assessment. The Government should pioneer a platform that can encourage the accumulation of wisdom / good practices, development of evidence based approaches in reviewing welfare services / programmes, and facilitating sharing and exchange of data and information among bureaux, departments and the Sector. We believe that research based planning and assessment of needs and impact can be achieved with:

- Establish Practice based Research Fund – Designated fund should make available to the Sector to research out new model of practices and identify effective deliverables. The cost cannot be absorbed by restricted subvention of services of NGOs.

- Increase accessibility to available data – Different bureaux and departments have developed many valuable data sets that can provide better understanding and analysis of many social problems and phenomenon but they are not share with the Sector . A platform is needed to develop to bridge up these precious information and allow the best usage of the data of the Sector

- Built-in review and evaluation system – in daily practices can help the Sector to have better understanding of the effect and impact of their provision and make improvement to their services and programme that best response to the need of their service users and the society.

Our social policy planning process requires a systematic and accurate assessment so that it can effectively respond to the changing needs of the society. The environment scan made by SWAC can only provide a sketchy impression on the critical incidents we are facing. However, a comprehensive need assessment with the proposed protocol set below can provide sufficient and up-to-date statistics, which are vital for finding the causes of the problems and throwing light to service development. A protocol of need assessment (Annex II) should also be put in place in different level of social welfare planning.

DEVELOPING MEDIUM TERM TARGET SPECIFIC SERVICE PLANS IN RESPONSE TO THE PRESSING SOCIAL CHALLENGES

13. The consultation paper has highlighted major challenges that Hong Kong society is facing. It is important that the Long Term Welfare Plan should identity the key social

welfare issues that should be addressed in the coming decade since the disadvantaged target groups adversely affected by the issues such as families at risk, dependent and fragile elderly and young addicts etc.. The public would expect the Government to make medium term targeted planning to address these pressing problems to identify the needs and the welfare policy response in terms of the planning for service provision and mobilization of community support.

The Council, together with six academic institutes and the Hong Kong Social Workers Association in the organization of the 2010 Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development, had identified nine key **Local Social Development Agenda** with a corresponding set of **Priority Actions** . The full text is available on the Agenda's website: http://jointforum.hkcss.org.hk/index_en.htm.

The Government should make reference to these key social development concerns to formulate the welfare response in terms of policies and service programmes needed.

The key local social development agenda are:

- poverty and social security,
- ageing population,
- mental health,
- family functioning, disintegration and domestic violence,
- disability,
- sustainable community development, and
- holistic development of the younger generation.

RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE CONSULTATION PROCESS

14. It is proposed that SWAC upon receiving the feedback and comments on the long-term planning for Social Welfare should conclude their recommendations on the vision, mission and value, guiding principles, strategic direction, and to include the planning mechanism and key social issues, to be addressed by welfare services in the next 10 years.

15. In addition to developing a framework for Long Term Welfare Planning, there is an urgent need for the Government to work with the sector to develop medium term, 3-5 year target specific service programme plans to address emerging social problems and increasing service needs of various disadvantaged groups, like the ageing population.

16. Cross bureau seminars and cross-sector forums should also be organized to discuss aspects of planning, welfare policies and service provision that involve alignment and collaboration with other policy bureaus like the Home Affair Bureau in district planning, the Health and Food Bureaus and Education Bureau in helping disadvantaged groups.

Proposed Planning Protocol of Social Welfare Policy — Annex I

	Policy Formulation Level (Strategic level, not dealing with planning of individual services)	Programme Planning Level	Welfare Agenda Setting	District Planning
Review period	About ten years planning horizon	Three to five years interim planning horizon	Annual	Biennial / Annual
Deliverables	Long Term Strategic Framework	Programme Plans (Family & Child Care, Elderly, Children and Youth, Community Development, Rehabilitation and Social Security)	Welfare priorities for the next year	District Strategic Plan
Content	● Missions, Vision and Value Statements ● Strategies for overall service planning, development and delivery in meeting social needs ● Overall resource policies (funding, human resource, premises development) ● Policy objectives of key programme areas (Family & Child Care, Elderly, Children and Youth, Community Development, and Social Security)	● Policy objective (re. White Paper) ● Service need profiles for the respective programme area. ● Strategies for service planning, development and delivery in achieving policy objectives ● Funding and Service Agreement Prototypes ● Development plan in the coming 3-5 years for services that are premises based ● Development targets in the coming 3-5 years for non-premises based. ● Resource planning (human resource, premises, etc.)	● Social indicators ● Service need profile ● Strategic plan to meet service need ● New initiatives	● Social indicators ● Service need profile ● Service provision profile ● Strategic plan to meet service need ● New initiatives ● Coordination and collaboration plans
Responsible body	Labour and Welfare Bureau	Labour and Welfare Bureau and Social Welfare Department	Social Welfare Department	Social Welfare Department
Planning group	Key participants ● SWD ● HKCSS ● NGOs Other participants ● Related government bureaux ● Related commissions and councils ● Academics ● Service user representatives ● Public representatives ● Related professional bodies ● Other related funding bodies	Key Participants ● SWD ● HKCSS ● NGOs Other participants ● Related government departments ● Related commissions or councils ● Academics ● Service user representatives ● Public representatives ● Related professional bodies	Key Participants ● HKCSS and its services committees ● NGOs ● Users self-help groups	Key Participants ● NGOs in the district Other participants ● Related government departmental district branch officials ● User groups ● District representative
Planning Process	1. Form policy planning group 2. Pre-meeting laying out: (4 months before first planning group meeting) ● Schedule ● Define scope of policy paper ● Review data collection requirements ● Review consultation protocol 3. Need Assessment (Data collection and conduct consultation, 3 months) 4. Consolidate views and data collected (1 month) 5. Conduct planning group meetings to draft Consultation Paper (4 months) 6. Issue and conduct consultation on Consultation Paper (2 months) 7. Conduct planning group meetings to draft final Paper (2 months) 8. Policy endorsement	1. Form programme planning group 2. Pre-meeting laying out: (est. 3 months before first planning group meeting) ● Schedule ● Scope of programme plan ● Review data collection requirements ● Review consultation protocol 3. Need Assessment (Data consolidation and conduct consultation, 2 months) 4. Consolidate views and data collected (0.5 month) 5. Conduct planning group meetings to draft/revise Programme Plan (3 months) 6. Consultation on Draft/revised Programme Plan (2 month) 7. Finalize and issue Programme Plan (0.5 month)	1. SWD / HKCSS identify new services needs and priorities 2. Conduct sharing forum and focus group sessions to discuss proposals for new initiatives 3. HKCSS consolidates views and submits proposals to SWD and LWB	1. Form district planning group 2. Need Assessment (conduct district consultation, collect district data, 1 month) 3. Conduct district planning group meetings to develop district strategic plan (1 month)

The nature of need assessment:

- The process of policy planning is multidimensional, dynamic and recursive. Need assessment provides the major inputs to this process at different points of time and different stages.

- Needs can be felt, expressed, normative or comparative.
    - ➤ Felt needs are be detected through dialectic processes, such as political discussion and research studies exploring into the differences between what is required and what is available to individuals, families and communities.
    - ➤ Expressed needs are normally articulated in public forum, mass medium and political processes. Organized expression is articulated through community and social actions by pressure groups, self-help groups, community and political organizations.
    - ➤ Normative needs are defined through either academic or political processes.
    - ➤ Comparative needs arise from the comparison of the levels of resource or service provision available to different social groups or service users, e.g. redefining minimum standards of living for the poor, comparing the level of service provisions or support provided to elderly living in the community and those living in institutions, etc.

- Need identification.
    - ➤ Takes place during the day to day operation of social service delivery and research activities.
    - ➤ Arises from social studies on social phenomenon that draws academic and public interests.

- Need articulation
    - ➤ Academics
    - ➤ Community and political groups
    - ➤ Self-help and pressure groups participated in this process.

- Need assessment can be qualitative or quantitative. When it comes to the stage of programme planning and drawing up of individual FSA, need assessment has to be quantitative.

- Strategic considerations
    - ➤ The policy planning processes should be opened enough where different sources of information can be entered without barrier.
    - ➤ The policy planning and service delivery system should be as opened as possible to allow new information from existing or new sources of information can come in at any time and at any point within the system.
    - ➤ Mechanisms are in place to ensure that that timely need information is channeled into the policy planning processes.
    - ➤ Established administrative and research procedures are meant primarily for revision of existing policies and services.
    - ➤ Periodical review with widespread publicity to solicit views from various parties

ensures that some of the information sources are not overlooked.

	Policy	Programme Plan	District planning	Funding and service agreement
Secondary Data 　　　Census data and population projection	✓	✓	✓	
Survey Methodology 　　　Regular -general household survey 　　　Specific - purposefully designed	✓	✓	✓	
Service utilization data				
● Service utilization rate	✓	✓	✓	✓
● Social indicators related to service demands	✓	✓	✓	
● Case inflow-outflow analysis[1]		✓	✓	✓
Programme and Service Evaluation	✓	✓		✓
Public opinion				
● Public consultation process	✓	✓		
● Public representative	✓	✓		
● District level discussion forums			✓	
● District representative			✓	
● Professional Groups	✓	✓	✓	
Direct service contact				
● Input from Service users and their families	✓	✓	✓	✓
● Service Providers	✓	✓	✓	✓

■　The planning protocol for each level should spell out:

　　➢　The mechanism of data collection

　　➢　The type of information to be collected (e.g. census data, special topics in General Household survey, research findings in the past one period, service statistics and evaluation, etc.)

　　➢　The type of analysis to be performed before the planning process of that level process, and prototype agenda for the discussion process.

　　➢　The consultation protocol for each level of planning

---

[1] Analysis takes into account in each period new demand (number of new eligible applicants), supply of service, number of users at beginning and at end of period, number of exists, vacant capacity/length of waiting list/short fall. Such analysis is projected for the coming five years.