

Press release

LCQ14: "Scheme \$6,000"

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Following is a question by the Hon Wong Yuk-man and a written reply by the Acting Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Ms Julia Leung, in the Legislative Council today (March 20):

Question:

It is learnt that some people who have settled in Hong Kong are ineligible to register for "Scheme \$6,000" so as to receive \$6,000 as they have not attained the Hong Kong permanent resident status, and they are also ineligible to apply for an allowance of \$6,000 under the "Allowance for New Arrivals Programme of the Community Care Fund" as they have lived in Hong Kong for seven years. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) whether it has compiled statistics on the number of the aforesaid group of residents in Hong Kong at present; if it has, of the number of such residents; if not, the reasons for that;
- (b) whether it has made any special arrangement to enable the aforesaid group of residents to receive \$6,000; and
- (c) whether the Government has, in setting the eligibility criteria for the aforesaid scheme, considered if such criteria will give rise to a situation being unfair to or discriminating against a certain group of residents, and avoided such a situation?

Reply:

President,

(a) Registration for "Scheme \$6,000" (the Scheme) started on August 28, 2011 and ended on December 31, 2012. Around 6.12 million people had successfully registered, and about 35,000 cases were rejected due to the ineligibility of the registrants under the Scheme. We have no statistics on the number of people who had lived in Hong Kong for seven years but did not meet the eligibility criteria of the Scheme on March 31, 2012.

The Government launched the Scheme after obtaining the approval of the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council on July 8, 2011. To receive payment under the Scheme, registrants were required to fulfil the age and Hong Kong Permanent Identity Card (HKPIC) criteria, and duly register before the registration closed. The relevant criteria are as follows:

(1) As at March 31, 2012, the registrant was aged 18 or above and met the following HKPIC criterion:

(i) holding a valid HKPIC, i.e. a smart HKPIC issued on or after June 23, 2003; or

(ii) holding a Certificate of Exemption issued by the Commissioner of Registration under the Registration of Persons Regulations; or

(2) As at March 31, 2012, the registrant was aged 18 or above and:

(i) was eligible for attaining the Hong Kong permanent resident status; and

(ii) had submitted application for "Verification of Eligibility for Permanent Identity Card" (VEPIC) to the Immigration Department; and

(iii) upon verification of the VEPIC application referred to in item (2)(ii) above by the Immigration Department, had submitted application for HKPIC and had the HKPIC application approved on or before December 31, 2012.

(b) Under the Scheme, registrants who are not satisfied with the result of their registration may apply for a review, and those who are not satisfied with the result of the review may lodge an appeal. The Government has no plan to make special arrangement for those who do not meet the eligibility criteria of the Scheme due to various reasons.

(c) The objective of "Scheme \$6,000" is to give out \$6,000 each to persons who were aged 18 or above and a holder of a valid HKPIC as at the eligibility date of March 31, 2012. Holders of non-HKPIC include different categories of people such as new arrivals, domestic helpers who come to work in Hong Kong, imported workers, and other people who have not ordinarily resided in Hong Kong for a continuous period of at least seven years. To include all or some of these non-HKPIC holders into the Scheme would not be in line with its purpose.

The Community Care Fund introduced a programme in October 2011 to provide allowance for new arrivals. It seeks to provide a one-off allowance of \$6,000 for new arrivals from low-income families to facilitate their adaptation to and integration into the community, as well as better prepare them for permanent settlement in Hong Kong.

Given the different purposes, target beneficiaries and eligibility criteria of the two regimes, there is no unfair treatment for or discrimination against certain groups of people.

Ends