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**Minutes of the Nineteenth Meeting of
the Joint Committee on Information Technology (JCIT)
for the Social Welfare Sector held on 5 January 2010**

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| Present | : | Mr Nip Tak-kuen, Patrick | (Chairperson) |
| | | Mr Fung Pak-yan | |
| | | Mr Fung Man-chung | |
| | | Mr Lam Wai-kiu, Victor | |
| | | Mrs Leung Tsang Po-wan, Paula | |
| | | Prof Meng Mei-ling, Helen | |
| | | Dr Law Chi-kwong | |
| | | Ir Li Wai-lim, William | |
| | | Mr Man Hung-yee, Joseph | |
| | | Dr Edith Mok | |
| | | Dr Ting Wai-fong | |
| | | Mr Kwong Chong-ki | (Secretary) |

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| Absent with apologies | : | Mr Ma Chiu-tong, Nigel |
| | | Ms Patty Wong |

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| In attendance | : | Miss Ann Hon | |
| | | Ms Lily Ng | |
| | | Ms Lorensa Mak | |
| | | Mr Timothy Cheng | |
| | | Mr Leung Pui-kei | |
| | | Ms April Lai | (for agenda item 4 only) |
| | | Mr Yau Kwok-keung | (for agenda item 4 only) |
| | | Mr Hugo Chiu | (for agenda item 4 only) |
| | | Mr Steve Lam | (for agenda item 5 only) |
| | | Ms Esther Lee | (for agenda item 5 only) |

**Opening Remarks**

The Chairperson extended welcome to all Members, in particular Prof Helen Meng who attended the meeting for the first time.

**Confirmation of Minutes of the Last Meeting**

2.      The minutes of the 18th Meeting were confirmed without amendment.

**Matters Arising from the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

Paragraph 3: The Information Technology (IT)-related Business Improvement Project (BIP)

3.      The Secretary reported that since the last meeting, two applications from two Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) were received.  They included an application from the Fu Hong Society (FHS) for the re-development of its Bulk Purchase System (BPS) and an application containing two proposals from the Hong Kong Society for the Protection of Children (HKSPC) to implement the Financial Management (FM) System and the Human Resources Management (HRM) System. The two applications would be discussed under Agenda Items 4 and 5.

4.      The Secretary briefed Members that with the endorsement of the Lump Sum Grant Steering Committee (LSGSC) at its meeting held on 29 October 2009, the $1 billion Social Welfare Development Fund (SWDF) was set up. The BIP Scheme ceased operation with effect from 2 November 2009 and was subsumed under the SWDF to facilitate administrative efficiency.  Nevertheless, the operation of the approved projects under the BIP Scheme and the vetting on the BIP applications received by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) on or before 1 November 2009 would not be affected.  Meanwhile, SWD was finalizing the implementation details of the SWDF and would conduct a briefing session for the NGOs on the new SWDF on 13 January 2010.

5.      The Secretary summarized that a total of 29 IT-related BIPs applications, including the 3 batches of the Core Applications Development Project (CAP) on HRM and FM under the coordination of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS), had been vetted and approved since 2001.  The total approved allocation was about $67.6 million.

6.      The Chairperson added that the Lump Sum Grant Independent Review Committee recommended the setting-up of the SWDF to support training and professional development, initiatives of management capacity enhancement and studies for service delivery enhancement.  While the BIP Scheme would be subsumed under the SWDF, it would continue to enhance NGOs' management capacity.

Paragraph 16: Replacement of Personal Computers (PCs) for NGOs in the Social Welfare Sector

7.     The Secretary reported that the Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee (LFAC) had approved a Lotteries Fund grant of $52,767,000 for the NGOs in the Social Welfare Sector to replace 5 863 sets of PCs as recommended by Members in the 18th JCIT Meeting. The replacement exercise had been conducting smoothly so far.

Paragraph 27: Implementation of the Third Batch of the CAP on HRM and FM for NGOs

8.     The Secretary reported that the HKCSS was still processing the related documents to meet the concerned reimbursement requirements. The CAP would be closed after the conclusion of the reimbursement issues.

**Agenda Item 3 – Proposed Review of the Information Technology Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector (Paper JC 1/10)**

9.     The Chairperson invited Mr Fung Man-chung to present the Paper.

10.     Mr Fung Man-chung highlighted that the IT Strategy was drawn up in March 2001 and was reviewed in 2004. Upon review, it was concluded that the IT Strategy in 2001 remained a pertinent guide for continuous IT development in the Sector. However, the disparity on the degree of using IT in NGO's business process and the levels of IT development among NGOs deserved SWD's attention when considering the IT Strategy for the Sector. Mr. Fung further pointed out that Members of the LSGSC during the meeting held on 29 October 2009 also raised the need for a review of the IT strategy having regard to the IT advancement in the society. Given the various concerns in the Sector, it was proposed that a review on the IT Strategy for the Social Welfare Sector would start in 2011-12 after consolidating the outcome and experiences from the implementation of SWD's Client Information System (CIS), which was targeted to be rolled out in mid June 2010 with the completion of nursing period in mid December 2010.

11.     The Chairperson supplemented that, after considering the views of Members of the LSGSC, NGOs were allowed to use the SWDF to develop and

enhance their corporate websites for meeting their operational needs, which was a fine adjustment of the existing IT Strategy.

12.      Dr Law Chi-kwong opined that there was a need to shift our focus on IT from a support-worthiness and vetting-oriented approach to the formulation of a comprehensive IT Strategy outlining the direction of IT development for the Social Welfare Sector and developing an environment to facilitate NGOs to make use of IT for the improvement to their service delivery and operational processes.   He also considered that more operational details should be included in the proposed review.

13.      Mr Joseph Man shared that it was time to review our IT Strategy which had been drawn up since 2001.   He considered that on top of improving the IT infrastructure, there was a need to put more attention to the system upgrade and software applications, which could improve the service development and delivery.

14.      Dr Edith Mok commented that the proposed review should also aim at benefitting the disadvantaged groups through the wider use of the IT applications.  She cited that the dial-a-ride system of the rehabilitation bus might benefit from a business system upgrade so as to improve the service matching through the enhancement of the concerned call management system. While Miss Ann Hon clarified that the rehabilitation bus was under the purview of the Transport Department, Dr Law Chi-kwong was of the view that enhancement to the said system might not be the prime concern since it was a demand and supply issue rather than an IT issue.  However, he considered that the wider and targeted use of IT applications by the Sector could induce profound impact on the service delivery as well as the service recipients in the elderly service.

15.      Prof Helen Meng echoed the observation of Dr Law Chi-kwong on the IT Strategy.  She pointed out that it would save resources if NGOs could share certain common core IT architecture.  She further suggested that the concerned NGOs should work closely with the contractor from the beginning stage so that the proposed IT architecture would gear to their specific needs.

16.      Mr Victor Lam shared that the IT Strategy should, apart from generating business benefits within SWD, also improve the services of NGOs in the Social Welfare Sector in different dimensions.  In the long run, he considered that e-welfare might be one of the directions.

17.     In response to the observations made by <u>Dr Law Chi-kwong</u> on the failure to implement a number of the innovative IT applications in the Sector, <u>Ir William Li</u> shared that the Hong Kong market was relatively small and the profit was comparatively limited.  As such, it failed to attract investment in the development of innovative IT applications and thus, the opportunity for the use of the innovative IT applications in the Sector was less than optimistic.

18.      <u>Mr Joseph Man</u> viewed that one of the goals of the proposed review was to promote the use of IT to serve the service recipients.  However, small and medium-sized NGOs might have reservation on the investment of resources in the IT projects.  <u>Prof Helen Meng</u> shared that the proposed review should provide an environment for different professions to jointly promote the use of IT in the Social Welfare Sector.

19.     While the IT Strategy had been implemented for about ten years, <u>Dr Ting Wai-fong</u> considered that a lot of the service data were already made available and it was time for NGOs to share and use the data to monitor the trend so as to facilitate the welfare policy formulation and service planning through the use of a commonly-developed information system.  Supported by <u>Mr Joseph Man</u>, <u>Dr Law Chi-kwong</u> added that it needed a cultural change in the Sector to make the best use of the data to facilitate more data mining work with the existing IT application tools to enrich and enhance their service planning and provision.

20.     <u>Miss Ann Hon</u> opined that NGOs had a lot of innovative ideas and many of them had been put into practice.   Apart from the BIPs and the newly set-up SWDF, she highlighted that the Partnership Fund for the Disadvantaged provided another venue to facilitate the implementation of innovative projects.  However, she observed that some NGOs were still a bit slow in the use of IT and the proposed review should therefore aim at speeding up their paces in the adoption of IT.

21.     <u>The Chairperson</u> thanked Members for their thought-provoking deliberations on the Paper which would be very useful to identify the key areas of concern and form the basis of the direction of the proposed review and implementation process.   While the ultimate goals of the review were to benefit the Sector and the service recipients, he shared that the wider use of IT in NGOs had to depend on a number of factors including but not limited to the availability of resources, the size of the NGOs as well as the staff readiness.   Although SWD was currently heavily engaged in the implementation of the CIS, <u>the Chairperson</u> reiterated that SWD would continue to communicate with Members

and the Sector to prepare for the proposed review and would report progress in the next meeting.

(Mr Fung Pak-yan left the Meeting at this juncture)

**Agenda Item 4 – Business Improvement Projects**

22.	At the meeting, Members deliberated on two BIP applications and offered their advice for the further processing of the funding request to LFAC for consideration.

**Any Other Business**

23.	There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm. The next meeting would be held with a date to be fixed.

Social Welfare Department
January 2010