

Task Force for the Study on Tenancy Control of Subdivided Units

4th Meeting Summary

1. The fourth meeting of the Task Force for the Study on Tenancy Control of Subdivided Units (the Task Force) was held on 4 September 2020.
2. As reported by the administrative consultant, the Task Force engaged 37 concern groups via 14 online meetings held in August and had a better understanding about their areas of concerns on tenancy control of subdivided units (SDU).
3. The representative of the Buildings Department briefed members about the department's procedures in handling unauthorized works commonly found in SDU under the Buildings Ordinance, including inspections, issuance of removal orders, prosecution, enforcement of closure orders, and liaising with relevant departments to provide assistance to the affected households. The representative also shared about the challenges when conducting the department's law enforcement operations.
4. The representatives from the Water Supplies Department briefed members on the investigation procedures in handling complaints about overcharging of water rates. Due to the limits of the statutory power and the ability to investigate and search evidence, the department encountered certain difficulties in prosecution. The representatives indicated that they would consider amending the ordinance, with a view to increasing the chances of successful prosecution and achieving the resultant deterrent effect.
5. The representatives of The Hongkong Electric Company Limited briefed members about the details and effectiveness of the three subsidized programmes for SDU tenants under its "Smart Power Care Fund", namely "SDU Rewiring Subsidy Programme", "SDU Electricity Charges Relief Programme" and "Energy-efficient Appliances Subsidy Programme". The representatives further explained that SDU households would be provided with individual tariff meters free of

charge under the "SDU Rewiring Subsidy Programme". However, they were facing many difficulties in taking forward the programme, for example, the rewiring work involved public areas, the worries of owners' corporations and the landlords' willingness to disclose their identities or not, etc. Therefore, the number of participants under the programme was less than expected.

6. The administrative consultant reported the progress of the three thematic researches. The Task Force had separately appointed three independent institutions to conduct researches of SDU related issues, including Policy 21 on fact finding and social aspects; Professor CHONG Tai Leung, Department of Economics of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, on economic aspects; and the team from the Faculty of Law of the University of Hong Kong (led by Professor Malcolm Merry, Mr. Alwin Chan, and Professor Adrian But) on legal aspects. All the three studies have been launched as scheduled. The sampling method and questionnaire content for the SDU survey submitted by Policy 21 were broadly agreed by the Working Group on Living Conditions (WGLC) after detailed discussion, with a wider coverage of SDU in this study, including rooftop structures, "capsule-like" apartments, bedspace apartments and cubicle apartments. The current epidemic situation might affect the programme of the survey and the WGLC would closely monitor the progress.
7. The Secretariat reported the progress of public forum preparation works and some special arrangements as a result of the current epidemic situation. The Secretariat also informed members about the impending visit to some non-ethnic Chinese SDU households in Sham Shui Po district and the arrangement of the next visit to SDU households living in industrial buildings.