

Business sector encouraged to participate in social enterprise projects

The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, has called on the business sector to actively participate in social enterprise projects and fulfil corporate social responsibility to jointly foster a new caring culture.

Speaking today (November 22) at a dinner hosted by the New Territories General Chamber of Commerce, Mr Tsang said that the Chief Executive had stated in his Policy Address that in this new era, Hong Kong had to nurture more social entrepreneurs to achieve social goals with entrepreneurial thinking and commercial strategies.

"The principal vision of social enterprises is to promote the concept of helping people to be self-reliant," he said.

He explained that a social enterprise must be run as a self-financing business. However, different from other business enterprises, its ultimate objective was to promote the well-being of the community. Its profit should be principally reinvested in the business itself or in the community but not for maximising the benefit of its shareholders.

As regards "corporate social responsibility", Mr Tsang said that it generally referred to a corporate taking up civic and social responsibility consciously.

"Although there are differences between social enterprises and corporate social responsibility, the promotion of these two concepts would achieve synergy effect and fully demonstrate the importance of enterprises in fostering a caring culture."

Mr Tsang said that to achieve sustained development of social enterprises, it was of vital importance to create an enabling market environment for their development. Apart from the provision of seed money in a number of specified areas (such as Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme launched by the Home Affairs Department) to support social enterprises during their initial operations, the Government would strive to promote the understanding of social enterprises among the public. The Home Affairs Bureau will step up efforts in publicity, including the preparation of a booklet to introduce successful social enterprises both in Hong Kong and overseas to the community.

The Government will also organise a summit on social enterprises on December 20 to promote understanding of social enterprises and provide a platform for the Government, the business sector and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to explore the way forward for the further development of social enterprises in Hong Kong, and to formulate an action plan.

"The successful development of social enterprises hinges on the tri-partite partnership of the Government, the business sector and NGOs, in particular the creativity of our entrepreneurs. We encourage local entrepreneurs to participate in the development of social enterprises. Recently, we have successfully liaised with several major organisations which have expressed interest in starting up social enterprise projects," Mr Tsang said.

He said he looked forward to collaborating with the business sector on the development of social enterprises in the near future to jointly foster a new caring culture and build a better Hong Kong.

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