

Government, businesses and community collaborate to promote social enterprise (with photos)

\*\*\*\*\*

The Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee of the Enhancing Self-Reliance Through District Partnership Programme, Prof Stephen Cheung, visited "Leisure Outlet", a social enterprise operated by the Aberdeen Kai-Fong Welfare Association this afternoon (October 9). They both acknowledged the tripartite collaboration among the Government, business sector and the community achieved by social enterprises.

Located at South Horizons Shopping Centre in Aberdeen, "Leisure Outlet" mainly engages in the recycling and selling of second-hand household leisure products including CDs and DVDs, books, magazines and toys. The business sector, schools and local organisations in the district have been supporting the social enterprise through the provision of concessionary rentals and donation of books and toys etc.

The social enterprise provides employment opportunities and related on-the-job training to low-skilled job seekers without academic qualifications in Southern District to promote the spirit of self-reliance. Through the collection and sale of second-hand household leisure products, the social enterprise also promotes the concept of recycling and reusing domestic products so as to achieve the social objective of promoting environmental protection.

The "Leisure Outlet" was set up with funding support from the Partnership Programme operated by the Home Affairs Department. It aims to provide seed money to social enterprise projects to create job and training opportunities for the socially disadvantaged in order to help them to be self-reliant. Since the programme was launched in 2006, it has examined three phases of applications and has approved funding for about 70 projects, involving grants totalling \$67 million. It is estimated that 1,300 job opportunities will be created.

"A number of social enterprises supported by the Partnership Programme have acquired experience in developing businesses in the commercial environment, creating employment opportunities for the socially disadvantaged to encourage self-reliance so as to achieve the social objective of promoting a caring culture in society," said Mr Tsang.

"Social enterprises are capable of providing quality services and products in the open market. I am pleased to see that some social enterprises have already demonstrated their ability to achieve this. I am also confident that working in this direction, social enterprises will be able to foster sustainable development," said Professor Cheung.

Ends/Thursday, October 9, 2008

