Notes of Meeting with
Tenants in Financial Hardship Rights League
held in Sau Mau Ping (South) Estate Community Centre
on Tuesday, 26 August 1997 at 4:45 p.m.

PRESENT:

MOC Members

Mr CHAN Kam-man (Chairman)
Mr HUI Yung-chung

Housing Department Representatives

Ms Joyce TAM (Senior Administrative Officer/Policy) (Acting)
Miss Kathy NG (Assistant Committees’ Secretary/3)

Representatives of Tenants in Financial Hardship Rights League

Ms LEE Yuet-wah Ms CHAN Siu-chun
Ms LEE Man-hung Ms TSUI Nin-mui
Ms YEUNG Lai-chun Ms WONG Yuk-lan
Ms HO Yuk-chun Ms HUI So-ling
Ms LEE Bik-yung Mr LIU Sze-fan
Ms MA Miu-yee Mr NG Wai-tung
The Chairman welcomed representatives of the Tenants in Financial Hardship Rights League (the League) to the meeting. The representatives of the League handed a submission (Annex) to the Chairman.

**Views and Suggestions of the League**

2. The League had the following views and suggestions:

   (1) According to information at hand, in the years 1995 to 1997, the tenants receiving rent assistance accounted for less than 3% of the number of eligible households estimated by HD. The League considered that the relatively low rate of rent assistance application was attributable to the following:

      (a) For a family of 4 or above, the Rent Assistance Scheme (RAS) income limit (i.e. 50% of the Waiting List Income Limit (WLIL)) was lower than that of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme (CSSAS). Even if the RAS income limit was increased to 60% of the WLIL, it was still lower than that of CSSAS for a family of 6 or above.

      (b) Many tenants were still unaware of the eligibility criteria and application procedures owing to insufficient publicity.

      (c) At present, tenants who still needed assistance after having received rent assistance for 2 years were required to move to cheaper flats. This would affect the tenants in many aspects, including their community network and their children’s education.

   (2) The existing calculation method for RAS assessment was rather complicated. The application of non-family-size-based rent-income ratio (RIR) as the basis of assessment was not fair to those families of a larger size. Uniform application of the WLIL calculation method would be more equitable.
Action

(3) The League suggested that:

(a) the RAS income limit be increased from the original 50% to 70% of the WLIL.

(b) the RIR criterion be abolished.

(c) the requirement to transfer to another flat after having received rent assistance for 2 years be abolished.

(d) staff of the Estate Office take the initiative to brief tenants on the RAS.

Response of MOC Members and Housing Department Representatives

3. Members and Housing Department representatives responded that:

(1) Under the existing RAS, households with the following income and RIR would be eligible:

(a) income below 50% of the WLIL;

(b) RIR exceeding 25%; or

(c) income between 50% and 60% of the WLIL and RIR exceeding 15%.

Tenants who met any one of the abovementioned three criteria would be eligible for rent reduction. Criterion (c) was meant to supplement the other two so that more tenants could benefit from the scheme.

(2) The Housing Authority was only a provider of public housing and the RAS was intended to assist PRH tenants with temporary financial hardship by means of rent reduction. Households with long-standing difficulties might consider applying for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance. When households
were required to move to cheaper flats after two years’ rent reduction, they would be transferred to a flat in the same district. This requirement and the eligibility criteria were subject to review regularly. The Authority would not review the Scheme until the report on RAS under the Long Term Housing Strategy Review was completed.

(3) The Department had been publicizing RAS through various means and channels. Leaflets on the Scheme would also be attached when notices of rent revision were issued to tenants. If tenants had any enquiries, they could contact staff of the Estate Office.

4. The Chairman concluded that views of the League would be reflected to the MOC.

5. The meeting ended at 5:30 p.m.