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Aid increase for welfare

By JIMMY LEUNG

GOVERNMENT funding to improve social welfare services would be significantly increased in 1990-91, the Social Welfare Advisory Committee (SWAC) chairman, Mrs Rosanna Tam Wong Yick-ming, said yesterday.

Resource allocation for major development projects would jump from \$5 million in the current year to \$17.44 million in 1990-91, an increase of nearly 2½ times.

"Another \$8.28 million would be used for more than 10 minor improvement items," she said.

Major development projects cover staffing improvements for social security field units, the upgrading of day nursery services, staffing improvements for family services centres, extension of standard cost subvention to a combined children and youth centre, a residential home for children over six-years-old and an increase in financial aid for social centres for the elderly.

Mrs Tam said the Social Welfare Department (SWD) should aim to improve its present subvention for social centres for the elderly from 70 per cent to 100 per cent in

the next two years. Mrs Tam said funding for minor improvement items would come from resource allocation, departmental and subvention savings.

She said they intended to increase membership fees of some services such as children and youth centres, community centres, social centres for the elderly and social and recreation centres for the elderly from \$5 to \$10 from October 1, 1990.

The increase, the first in 10 years, would enable the SWD to save about \$500,000 a year, Mrs Tam said.

In addition, she said SWAC members yesterday exchanged their views on the proposed Social Welfare White Paper for the 1990s which would be published by the Government in the second half of 1990.

"We had a very good exchange of views on how the White Paper should go about and details will be announced by the SWD later," Mrs Tam said.

On the inter-departmental working group report on housing for the elderly, Mrs Tam said SWAC would discuss its recommendations at the next meeting.