

**Family Council**  
**Confirmed Notes of 2<sup>nd</sup> Meeting**

**Date: 28 March 2008 (Friday)**

**Time: 3:00 pm**

**Venue: Conference Room (Room 1220), West Wing, Central Government's Office, Central**

**Attendance**

**Official Members**

Mr Henry TANG, Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) (Chairman)

Mr TSANG Tak-sing, Secretary for Home Affairs (SHA)

Mr Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung, Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW)

Prof LAU Siu-kai, Head/Central Policy Unit (H/CPU)

Mr Raymond WONG, Permanent Secretary for Education (attended on behalf of Secretary for Education)

**Non-official Members**

Ms CHAU Chuen-heung

Ms KAO Ching-chi, Sophia

Mrs KWAN HO Shiu-fong, Cecilia

Ms LAI Fung-yee, Angelina

Mr Joseph LEE

Dr LEE Wai-yung

Dr the Hon LEONG Che-hung, Edward

Mr Lincoln LEUNG

Mrs Justina LEUNG NGAI Mou-yin

Dr PANG King-chee

Prof Daniel SHEK

Ms TAO Chee-ying, Theresa

Dr WONG Chung-kwong

Mr WONG Ying-wai, Wilfred

**Absence with apologies**

Mr CHOW Yung, Robert

Prof WONG Po-choi

Secretary

Miss Christine CHOW, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (CA)2

In attendance

Mr Donald TONG, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)

Mrs Betty IP, Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

Ms Vivian SUM, Administrative Assistant to CS

Mr Darryl CHAN, Press Secretary to CS

Ms Elaine MAK, Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (2)1

Miss Meimei CHAN, Executive Officer (GP)2

*Item 4 only:*

Mr David LEUNG, Deputy Director of Home Affairs (2) (DDHA(2))

Ms Irene YOUNG, Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 1, Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB)

Mrs Anna MAK, Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare), Social Welfare Department (SWD)

*Item 5 only:*

Mr D. C. CHEUNG, Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare)4, LWB

Miss Hinny LAM, Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare)2, LWB

**Welcoming remarks**

The Chairman welcomed all to the 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting of the Family Council (the Council).

**Item 1 – Confirmation of minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Family Council**

2. The minutes of the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the Council were confirmed without amendments.

## **Item 2 – Matters Arising and Item 3 – Identification of Core Family Values**

3. Members noted the survey findings on family and marriage concepts & community support network, and the cross-national comparison of family policy commissioned by the CPU on a confidential basis; and the overseas experience in supporting the family provided by the Ex-Steering Committee on Study of Family Commission.

4. Members also noted the family core values suggested by the Secretariat, and made the following comments in subsequent discussions of the two agenda items –

- (a) Members noted the pro-natalist measures adopted by some developed countries but the effect of such measures on the fertility rate was uncertain. In the case of Hong Kong, it would be difficult to draw direct correlation between the economic condition and people's inclination to get married and give birth to children. Other factors such as the living environment and work-life balance could have more influence on people's desire for getting married and having children.
- (b) Family values, especially the traditional values such as filial piety had not changed much over the years amongst the Hong Kong community. Families remained the core units of the community.
- (c) In view of new developments such as the increasing share by women in the job market; higher divorce rates; more single parents; more singletons who were not interested in forming families or child-bearing; and the increasing pressure and tension caused by broken relationships and family conflicts on individuals, particularly on women, children (the "hidden youths") and the care-takers of families, consideration should be given to strengthening the "social capital" (社會資本) and support for families by the extended families and the neighborhood (社區承托家庭).
- (d) Marriage and child-bearing were very much individuals' choice, and it was not appropriate for the Government to adopt extreme policies to change the social development process. Nonetheless, examination of scope for major policies such as housing policies to foster a pro-family environment and reinforce core family values

could be done. Consideration could also be given to promoting the interest of children (兒童為本), “grand-parenting” and “inter-generational care” (跨代照顧) in refining the policies where necessary.

5. Some Members noted that Singapore was the only Asian country covered in the cross-national study on families and hoped that the study could cover more Asian countries e.g. China as the findings were likely to be more relevant to Hong Kong. In response, H/CPU agreed to consider commissioning further studies to cover other Asian countries including the Mainland.

(Action: CPU)

6. The Chairman invited Members’ views on the core family values as recommended by the Secretariat. Members exchanged the following views-

- (a) Members shared the view that in the light of increasing diversity and variation of family forms apart from the traditional nuclear families, care should be taken in devising core family values which could gain maximum support from the community in general.
- (b) Members expressed different views on the categorization and wording of the core values. Alternative suggestions such as “respect and communication”, “cohesion and harmony”, “roles and responsibilities” and “competence and adaptabilities” were discussed. Suggestions to promote resilience of individuals to handle emotional conflicts and critical transitions in life were also raised.
- (c) Noting that the three sets of core values suggested in the paper might be too generic, there were views that the proposed grouping of values were largely consistent with the traditional Chinese culture; were backed up by findings of scientific research in developmental psychology; and should be largely well-received by the community.
- (d) In general, Members reckoned that different people might have slightly different perceptions on the optimal grouping of such values. By and large, Members tended to agree that to solicit

the widest possible support from members of the Hong Kong community, the core values should be packaged in a manner as concise, simple, broad and all-encompassing as possible. Concerns were raised by some Members over going into specifics such as the “Roles” of family members, as this might invite community debates rather than building consensus and acceptance of the family core values.

- (e) Members saw merits in going through a process of public engagement to enable Hong Kong people to identify with the commonly shared family values. Schools were one of the effective channels to promote such values.

7. The Chairman concluded that different people might have different views on the composition of family core values. By and large, however, the core values suggested in the paper were able to capture the essence of the more commonly perceived concepts about family values and were well-balanced for promotion and publicity purposes. The three sets of core values, namely “**love and care**”, “**respect and responsibility**” and “**communication and harmony**” sought to depict the more important attributes contributing to a happy family and could fit in well with different family forms without imposing specific expectations or behavioral patterns on individual family members. As such, they would alleviate resistance at first sight, and provide a good starting point for further public engagement.

8. The Chairman noted that the Secretariat would work out a paper on the introduction of a Family Impact Assessment for discussion in the coming months. Noting that there might be a linkage between the family core values with the identification of impact on families caused by various policies and practices, the Chairman asked the Secretariat to work out a publicity plan on the campaign to promote family core values in consultation with the relevant bureaux/departments.

(Action: Secretariat)

#### **Item 4 –Services for families with new arrivals**

9. At the invitation of the Chairman, DDHA2 made a power-point presentation to brief Members on services provided by bureaux and departments for families with new arrivals. , including the guiding principles of “timely and effective services”, “integration into the community” and “effective use of public resources”.

10. Members noted that many problems faced by families with new arrivals arose from lack of full understanding of the social and economic situation in Hong Kong before they made the decision to come to live here. This, coupled with factors such as different expectations and wide age gaps between the HK resident husband and a migrant wife from the Mainland, and conflicts between the in-laws, aggravated the problems faced by these families. The meeting also noted that under the current policy of the Mainland, the new-arrivals could not return to their places of origin in the Mainland even if they could not adapt to living Hong Kong. Members hoped that more pre-migration counseling could be done, and that relevant bureaux and departments could adopt a more integrated and one-stop approach in providing assistance to such families.

11. In response to Members' comments, DDHA(2) said that currently a non-government organization was running a pilot programme to provide pre-migration counseling in the Mainland for the prospective arrivals. This could help new-arrivals to better understand the situation in Hong Kong and prepare them for living here. The Home Affairs Department (HAD) would review the effectiveness of the programme in due course. As regards the policy of the Mainland authorities on entry and exit control, HAD would relay Members' views to the Immigration Department which had contacts with the Mainland authorities on immigration issues.

(Action: HAD)

12. Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare), SWD added that the Integrated Family Services Centres (IFSCs) provided one-stop services to meet the needs of individuals and families in the community, including new arrivals. Amongst other services, counseling services were available in IFSCs to help new arrivals tackle marital and other family problems.

13. The meeting noted and endorsed the current approach and the future directions of the departments concerned in the provision of services for new arrivals. These include enhancing referral support for new arrivals, targeting districts with more pressing service needs, and providing more one-stop services for families of new arrivals. In response to Members' request, H/CPU said that CPU was actively considering conducting a longitudinal study on new arrivals from the Mainland to explore their social, political, and economic integration in general and their family life, among

others (e.g. identity, mobility, social networks, education, work) more specifically.

(Action: CPU)

**Item 5 – Reports from the Women’s Commission (WoC), the Elderly Commission, the Commission on Youth (CoY) and the Committee on Home-School Co-operation**

14. Members noted the progress reports from the Women’s Commission (WoC), the Elderly Commission, the Commission on Youth (CoY) and the Committee on Home-School Co-operation.

**Item 6 –Any Other Business**

15. The Chairman informed Members that the Family Council Secretary had attended the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services in February 2008 upon its invitation to discuss the establishment of the Family Council.

16. Members noted the major issues discussed at the Panel meeting as set out in draft notes of meeting, including the Panel’s invitation for the Family Council Chairman and Members to brief it on the progress of work of the Council in the coming months. The Council Secretary would liaise with the Panel Secretariat and consult the Council where necessary.

17. Members agreed that to keep the public informed of the progress of work of the Family Council, the papers and confirmed notes of meetings would be uploaded to the Internet as requested by the Panel – except for papers and materials which were provided to Members on a confidential basis and the records of discussions on these papers and other subjects as deemed confidential by the Council.

(Post-meeting note: Papers and notes of the 1<sup>st</sup> Council meeting were uploaded onto the Family Council webpage of the Home Affairs Bureau on 7 April 2008.)

18. At the invitation of the Chairman, SLW briefed Members on the new flexible childcare service initiatives and informed Members that new neighbourhood-based day foster care services and other types of child care services would be put in place for parents in need.

19. The Chairman suggested that the following issues be discussed at the next meeting of the Family Council in June 2008 –

- (a) Family Friendly Employment Practice and Better Work-Life Balance : LWB was invited to co-ordinate and contribute a discussion paper in light of community concern over the family-life balance of Hong Kong people in face of increasingly competitive work environment. Reference to experience from the 5-day week scheme of the Civil Service Bureau and WoC's research in promoting work-life balance could be drawn in the paper.
- (b) Family Education and Parental Education : The Council Secretariat would coordinate a paper in consultation with relevant Bureaux and departments including LWB, EDB, FHB, HAB, SWD and DH. In this regard, the Chairman noted that Professor Daniel Shek had offered a paper on drug abuse of youths and family education to the Secretariat. The paper would be circulated to Members for discussion under this item at the next meeting. (Post-meeting note : The Security Bureau (SB) had prepared a paper for discussion at the Legislative Council on measures to tackle youth drug abuse. Views from SB would be sought on possibilities of collaborating with the Family Council and relevant bureaux/departments to identify areas for joint efforts of enhanced family education to prevent youth drug abuse.)
- (c) Introduction of Family Impact Assessment in policy formulation : The Council Secretariat would invite comments from bureaux and departments on the feasibility of the matter, before firming up the timing for inviting discussion by the Council.

(Action: Secretariat and  
relevant bureaux/departments)

20. The Council Secretary informed Members that the Alliance for Children's Commission (爭取成立兒童事務委員會聯盟) had requested to meet with the Council Chairman and Members on the proposed establishment of Children's Commission. In view of foreseeable requests from other organizations to meet and exchange views with the Council in other areas related to the work of the Council, the Secretariat would collate such requests and consult Members as necessary.



21. The Secretariat would arrange circulation to Members the survey on challenges faced by families by the Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region; the paper on Chinese adolescents and their parents' views on a happy family by Prof Daniel Shek; and the importance of caregiver-child interactions for the survival and healthy development of young children by World Health Organization.

(Action: Secretariat)

**Date of next meeting**

22. The next meeting of the Council would be held on 26 June 2008 at 3 p.m. at the same venue.

23. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5 p.m.

**Family Council Secretariat  
April 2008**