

Family Council
Notes of 3rd Meeting

Date: 26 June 2008 (Friday)

Time: 3 p.m.

Venue: Conference Room (Room 1220), CGO, West Wing

Attendance

Official Members

Mr TSANG Tak-sing, Secretary for Home Affairs (Chairman for this meeting on behalf of the Chief Secretary for Administration)

Prof LAU Siu-kai, Head/Central Policy Unit

Mr Paul TANG, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (on behalf of SLW)

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

Non-official Members

1. Ms CHAU Chuen-heung
2. Mr CHOW Yung, Robert
3. Ms KAO Ching-chi, Sophia
4. Mrs KWAN HO Shiu-fong, Cecilia
5. Ms LAI Fung-yee, Angelina
6. Mr Joseph LEE
7. Dr LEE Wai-yung
8. Dr the Hon LEONG Che-hung, Edward
9. Mrs Justina LEUNG NGAI Mou-yin
10. Dr PANG King-chee
11. Ms TAO Chee-ying, Theresa
12. Prof WONG Po-choi
13. Mr WONG Ying-wai, Wilfred
14. Mr LEONG Kwok-kuen, Lincoln
15. Prof SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel

Absence with apologies

Mr Henry TANG, Chief Secretary for Administration
Dr WONG Chung-kwong

Secretary

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

In attendance

Mr Donald TONG, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)
Ms Grace LUI, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)(Designate)
Ms Betty IP, Deputy Secretary for Education (4)
Ms Elaine MAK, Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (2)1
Ms Meimei CHAN, Executive Officer(2)

By invitation for Item 3 only:

Mr NG Kwok-keung, Byron, Assistant Commissioner for Labour
Mr LEE Wing-keung, Senior Labour Officer

By invitation for Item4 only:

Mr David WONG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Security
Dr. CHAN Wai Man, Assistance Director of Health (Family and Elderly
Health Services)
Mr WONG Shun, Chief Social Work Officer (Family and Child Welfare)

Welcoming remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to the 3rd meeting of the Family Council. He explained that as the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) had a meeting at the Legislative Council (LegCo), he would chair this meeting on behalf of CS.

Item 1 – Confirmation of minutes of the 1st meeting of the Family Council

2. The minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Council were confirmed without amendments.

Item 2 – Matters Arising

(a) Family Impact Assessment

3. The Chairman informed Members that the Secretariat was consulting relevant Government Bureaux and Departments on ways to foster family perspectives amongst policy makers and would prepare a paper for discussion by the Family Council in the coming months.

(b) Information paper on “Publicity Campaign for the Promotion of Family Core Values” (Paper FC 13/2008)

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary, Family Council briefly introduced the paper which set out a draft framework on the publicity campaign to promote the family core values identified by the Council. She informed Members that the Secretariat had invited relevant Bureaux and Departments to comment on the proposal and sounded out RTHK on the possibility of co-organizing some of the publicity activities.

5. Members shared the view that the Family Council should focus more on mapping out an overall strategy of cultivating and spreading the message of the importance of families and the family core values across the community. Members considered that instead of a traditional campaign which could be more effectively taken up by the non-government organizations (“NGOs”) and community organizations, we should “think out of the box” and come up with a PR package that could generate a “wow” effect amongst the community. Assistance from NGOs and community organizations could be solicited to disseminate the family core values and the messages of the importance of families to target groups such as families with problems or special needs. Members opined that while the Family Council should take a leading role in the campaign, we should engage a PR expert to take up the overall planning, liaison and coordination role. To illustrate, the expert should come up with an appealing slogan / tag (e.g. “Building a Family Friendly

Community”). The expert would also need to take the initiative to approach the media and film industry to invite ideas and participation in the production of PR programmes (e.g. TV programmes / film series on the family’s themes), and give advice on the best ways to build on existing initiatives, if any, to promote the family core values and the love and care for families. Adequate funding should be provided to back up and sustain the campaign, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the campaign as necessary.

6. The Chairman concluded that the publicity campaign should serve to cultivate a pro-family culture and the target audience of the campaign should be the community at large. The campaign should engage as many stakeholders as possible including the Government departments, schools, NGOs, relevant advisory boards and committees (e.g. The Commission on Youth, the Elderly Commission and the Women’s Commission) and the media, which could help to implement measures to promulgate such messages through their own connections and efforts in a sustainable manner. Together with the stakeholders as a team, the Secretariat should come up with a well coordinated publicity campaign led by the Family Council and aim to roll it out in the fourth quarter of 2008.

7. The Chairman invited the Secretariat to approach interested Members to give ideas and thoughts on how best to take forward the PR campaign, and to form a small group to oversee the work as necessary. The Secretariat was invited to report progress of the campaign at the next meeting.

(Action: Secretariat)

Item 3 – Family-friendly Employment Practice and Better Work-life Balance (Paper FC 14/2008)

8. Members shared the view that a “cultural” change was needed to change people’s attitude to work and family, and to convince employers that happy employees with less worries for family matters would increase productivity and eventually benefit the companies. People ought to be

convicted to “Work-life Balance” in order to bring into fruition the family–friendly employment practices (“FFEPs”).

9. Members discussed the various means to foster the cultural change, including legislative means (e.g. introduction of statutory working hours, parental leave, paternity leave, etc.), financial incentives (e.g. tax incentives to employers) and administrative means (e.g. introduction of family-friendly measures and support on voluntary basis by employers). Members noted the efforts by the Labour Department (“LD”) and the Women’s Commission in the promotion of FFEPs over the years.

10. Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare said that the Administration echoed the view of some Members that legislation would not be the best means to promote FFEPs as different employers and employees had different needs. Assistant Commissioner for Labour (AC for L) informed the meeting that promotion of FFEPs was one of the major tasks of the LD. LD had been promoting FFEPs to human resources managers and employers through its network of 18 Human Resources Managers Clubs and 9 industry-based tripartite committees to encourage them to adopt FFEPs such as job sharing and paternity leave, in order to cultivate a more family-friendly workplace and retain talents. Apart from targeting the large corporations, LD also promoted FFEPs to small and medium size enterprises (SMEs). LD would produce a series of newspaper supplements in July 2008 with real-life examples to showcase exemplary employment practices, including FFEPs. In response to Members’ comments, AC for L added that a survey on the provision of paternity leave amongst local corporations was underway.

11. The Chairman concluded that as a first step, we should aim at fostering a cultural change through more education, administrative measures and award schemes to recognize the efforts of caring employers by relevant bodies, including the LD and the Women’s Commission. He welcomed views from Members on further recommendations in these aspects.

Item 4 –Family Life Education (FC 15/2008)

12. Members shared the view that continuous life education and courses to equip people with better skills and knowledge to cope with changes at different stages of life was crucial to better preparing them to come up to critical transformations in their roles (e.g. marriage, parenthood, etc.). Relevant Bureaux and Departments should, by way of administrative measures, facilitate and encourage more such courses.

13. In respect of the content of the family life education, some Members opined that there would be merits in encouraging couples to participate in pre-marriage and post-divorce courses, and that the elements of interpersonal and conflict resolution skills should be strengthened and incorporated into such courses.

14. In response to Members' suggestions on using schools as the platform for parent education, Deputy Secretary for Education said that schools and Parent-teacher Associations were already provided with grants to organize activities to promote home-school cooperation and to enhance parent-child relationship. As participation of parents was on voluntary basis, schools might not be able to reach the "hidden" families which were in need of such services. It was quite beyond schools' capacity and capability to reach out to these "hidden" families. Members noted and opined that more efforts should be provided by relevant Bureaux and Departments in reaching out to the needy families.

(Action: EDB, LWB)

15. Members shared the view that in dealing with youth problems such as youth drug abuse, parents and the family had a significant role to play. Principal Assistant Secretary for Security said that the Government had allocated additional funding of \$53 million in 2008-09 for implementing short and medium-term measures mapped out by the Task Force on Youth Drug Abuse led by the Secretary for Justice. As the family was considered the first line of defence in combatting youth drug abuse, one of the most effective ways to protect children from drugs

was to strengthen family support policies like promoting more parental care with good communication with children. Members agreed that family life education in general was important in this respect and there was also room to explore with the Security Bureau (SB) to support or collaborate in specific family education programmes for the anti-drug cause.

(Action: Family Council Secretariat, SB)

Item 5 –Any Other Business

16. There being no other businesses, the meeting ended at 5 p.m.

Item 6 – Date of Next Meeting

17. The Chairman said that the next meeting would be held on 23 September 2008 (Tuesday) at 3 p.m. at the same venue.

Family Council Secretariat
June 2008