

First meeting of the Family Council convened today

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Henry Tang, chaired the first meeting of the newly established Family Council this afternoon (December 14).

"Today's meeting was useful and constructive. It marked a major step to implement the Chief Executive's pledge in his recent Policy Address to set up an integrated, holistic and high-level Family Council. Members of the council come from different backgrounds but we all share the common goal of establishing a family-based support network and forging closer and harmonious relationships among family members to effectively deal with a wide spectrum of complicated social problems," Mr Tang said.

At today's meeting members exchanged views on their expectations of the work of the Family Council and specific issues to be addressed in the months ahead. These issues include identification of core family values; ways to create a pro-family environment including work environment, and ways to enhance the effectiveness and co-ordination of family education. In view of the broad range of issues related to the family, members agreed that priorities should be drawn up.

Members also agreed that the Family Council should seek to rationalise the work of the Elderly Commission, the Women's Commission and the Commission on Youth under the council by March 2009. During the transition period, the council will explore ways to achieve more collaboration between the council and the three commissions.

"I look forward to working closely with members when reviewing and formulating policies and programmes relating to the family, as well as promoting the family as a core social value," said Mr Tang.

The Family Council will meet on a quarterly basis.

The Government announced the appointment of the chairman and members of the Family Council on December 3 this year. The Family Council comprises five Government officials and 16 non-official members who represent different parts of the community including the social welfare, professional, commercial and industrial, and academic sectors. The terms of reference of the Family Council are –

(a) To advocate for cherishing the family as a main driver of social harmony; and to promote a family-based support network to forge closer and harmonious relationships amongst family members.

(b) To advise the Government on the formulation of policies and strategies for supporting and strengthening the family and on development of related programmes/activities; and to monitor their implementation.

(c) To advise the Government on the integration of family policies and related programmes across different bureaux and departments for individual age and gender sectors to ensure effective coordination.

(d) To plan/implement programmes and activities for particular age and/or gender sectors; and rationalise the work of the Elderly Commission, the Women's Commission and the Commission on Youth.

(e) To initiate research to promote better understanding of matters related to the family as necessary.

Ends/Friday, December 14, 2007