

Family Summit 2014 draws on collective wisdom and formulates shared vision (with photos)

The following is issued on behalf of the Family Council:

The Acting Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, officiated and gave a keynote speech entitled "Reflection on Policy, Development and Practices for Families in Hong Kong" at the Family Summit 2014 today (May 15).

To celebrate the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family, the Family Council, the Social Welfare Department, the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region have jointly launched a series of territory-wide publicity events. The Family Summit 2014 is one of the highlight events and aims to raise public awareness of family-related issues, enhance intergenerational solidarity and promote the balance between work and family.

Speaking at the Summit, Mrs Lam said, "Our policy idea is to advocate cherishing the family and promote family core values as a main driver for social harmony. The current-term Government is dedicated to building a caring society. It places its priority on dealing with the poverty issue as well as proactively promotes intergenerational solidarity and the balance between work and family. These coincide with the themes of the 20th anniversary of the International Year of the Family set by the United Nations."

Mrs Lam pointed out that the Government is committed to solving the problem of poverty and strengthening its support to low-income families with children. The Government is fully preparing to introduce the new Low-income Working Family Allowance. It has also launched a number of assistance programmes and other measures to help the poor. This reflects the Government's commitment and determination in helping poor

families.

Moreover, she said that the Government will continue its efforts in promoting family-friendly employment practices to help employees strike a balance between the responsibilities of their roles at work and in their families. Introducing family-friendly employment measures can bring about a win-win situation for both employers and employees. She also said that the Government attaches great importance to the welfare of the elderly. It proactively promotes respect and care for the elderly, cultivates a sense of worthiness among them and enhances intergenerational harmony.

The Chairman of the Family Council, Professor Daniel Shek, briefed participants on the findings of the 2013 Family Survey during the plenary session. The Family Council has been conducting the family survey to collect data on the situation of families in Hong Kong every two years since 2011. The results have shown that although most of the respondents considered that their families functioned very well, quite a number of them found the stress of raising their children overwhelming and nearly half of them found it difficult to balance family and work. The results are useful in tracking the various aspects of local family life, such as family values, work-life balance, parenthood, family function and satisfaction on family life.

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, Mr Chua Hoi-wai, and the Chairperson of the Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region, Mrs Patricia Chu, along with other experts, scholars and representatives of the social welfare sector, are also among those expressing their views on a wide range of topics at the Summit. The agenda focuses on ways to tackle the causes of poverty, to support parents, to empower families and enhance community care, to encourage better work-life balance in families, and more. The Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Social and Family Development of the Government of

Singapore, Mr Chan Heng Kee, also attended to share experience in building a family-friendly society in Singapore.

This Summit provides a platform for the exchange of knowledge and sharing of experience among different stakeholders and allows an interdisciplinary and in-depth examination of family issues, which can help map out concrete strategies for action. This will assist in the formulation of social policies and bring about service development to meet the needs of families so as to build together a caring and inclusive society.

Details of the Family Summit 2014 are available at its website: www.familysummit2014.hk/en_index.php.

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