

**Family Council**  
**Minutes of 35<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 10 January 2018**

Date: 10 January 2018 (Wednesday)  
Time: 3:00 - 5:20 p.m.  
Venue: Conference Room 2, G/F, Central Government Offices,  
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

Attendance

Chairman

Prof. SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel

Non-official Members

Ms CHAN Suk-mei, May

Ms CHEUNG Lai-chu

Mrs CHU YEUNG Pak-yu, Patricia, Convenor, Sub-committee on  
Family Support

Prof. LAM Tai-hing, Deputy Convenor, Sub-committee on Family  
Support

Mr LEE Luen-fai, Convenor, Sub-committee on the Promotion of  
Family Core Values and Family Education

Mr LEE Tsz-king, Dominic

Prof. LEUNG Seung-ming, Alvin

Dr TSUI Luen-on, Gordon

Miss WONG Siu-ling, Gabriella

Ms YIP Yun-wan, Amarantha

Official Members

Mrs Betty FUNG, Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs (*attending on  
behalf of Secretary for Home Affairs*)

Ms CHANG King-yiu, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare  
(*attending on behalf of Secretary for Labour and Welfare*)

Mr WOO Chun-sing, Deputy Secretary for Education (4) (*attending on  
behalf of Secretary for Education*)

Dr Florence FONG, Senior Researcher (5) (*attending on behalf of  
Head/Central Policy Unit*)

Secretary

Ms Karyn CHAN, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs  
(Civic Affairs) 2

In attendance

Mr Patrick LI, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)

Miss Iris MA, Chief Executive Officer (Family Council)

(For agenda item 3)

Mr LAM Ka-tai, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) (DD(S)),  
Social Welfare Department (SWD)

(For agenda item 4)

Miss Leonia TAI, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1

Mr Kenneth CHENG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and  
Welfare (Welfare) 1 (PAS(W)1), LWB

Absent with apologies

Mr LAU Ming-wai, Chairman of the Commission on Youth

Dr LAM Ching-choi, Chairman of the Elderly Commission

Mrs LAU KUN Lai-kuen, Stella, Chairperson of the Women's  
Commission

Ms CHENG Chi-man, Sonia

Miss TANG Pui-yee, Phoebe, Deputy Convenor, Sub-committee on the

## Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education

Mrs WONG NG Kit-wah, Cecilia

Mr WOO Kin-man, Clement

Ms YIP Lai-wa, Emily

### **Welcome Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed all to the 35<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Family Council (the Council), in particular, Ms CHANG King-yiu, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare, who attended the Council meeting for the first time.

### **Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 34<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Family Council**

2. Apart from a typo regarding the date of the Asian Family Summit (the Summit) in paragraph 23 which should read as “19” to 22 August 2018 instead of “18” as spotted by Mrs Patricia CHU, Convenor of the Sub-committee on Family Support (Support Sub-committee), the minutes of the 34<sup>th</sup> meeting were confirmed with no other amendments.

### **Item 2 – Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting**

3. The Chairman noted that the Council Secretariat had circulated a progress report to Members for information, and invited Chief Executive Officer (Family Council) (CEO(FC)) to brief Members on the progress. CEO(FC) reported that 2017/18 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme (Award Scheme) was launched on 4 December 2017. Preparatory work was in the pipeline and the new Announcement of Public Interests (API) would be broadcast starting next week in tandem with the commencement of enrolment period. With the endorsement of the Sub-committee on Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education (Promotion Sub-committee), the Council Secretariat was working on the procurement arrangement for holding the presentation ceremony of the Award Scheme in a theme park with entry tickets for an evening chartered event of family fun day distributed to the awardees’ employees and their family members as

prizes. Upon completion of the adjudication of the Award Scheme, the Council Secretariat would also take follow up action in respect of a suggestion of the United Nations' representative of compiling a handy reference on the exemplary family-friendly employment practices identified.

4. CEO(FC) reported that as at 31 December 2017, the draft Family Impact Assessment (FIA) checklist had been applied to 117 papers and the Consulting Team was conducting the post-implementation review including interviewing the users and collecting feedback through questionnaire. The Study was expected to be completed in February 2018. Mrs Chu supplemented that the Chairman would deliver a keynote speech on the subject of Hong Kong's experience of conducting FIA during the Summit in August 2018.

5. For the "Happy Moments of Family" Snapshot Competition", CEO(FC) reported that by the closing date of 30 September 2017, a total of 3 020 entries were received. The Council's facebook had attracted over 5 400 likes and the average number of "reaction", "comments", and "sharing" per post was about 200 as at 20 December 2017. Public voting for 108 shortlisted entries was held between 30 October and 19 November 2017 and a total of 3 205 votes were received. The prize presentation ceremony was held on 3 December 2017 with around 200 participants.

6. CEO(FC) then updated Members of the progress of the Family Survey 2017. The research team had completed the questionnaire survey in December 2017 and would present its preliminary findings to the Support Sub-committee at its next meeting scheduled for February 2018. For the "Further Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong" (Divorce Study), the Council Secretariat had met with various stakeholders to collect their views on the study and consult relevant bureaux and departments (B/Ds) in the past few months. Following discussion at the meeting of the Support Sub-committee on 16 November 2017, the consultancy brief was updated and circulated to Council Members for information. On 18 December 2017, the Council Secretariat issued invitations to relevant tertiary institutions for quotations with closing date on 5 February 2018. The consultancy study was expected to be commissioned in March 2018 and the Council Chairman would chair a working group to monitor its progress.

**Item 3 – Chief Executive’s 2017 Policy Address Family-Related Policy Initiatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (Paper FC 20/2017)**

7. The Chairman invited Mr LAM Ka-tai, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to brief Members on the family-related initiatives as announced by the Chief Executive (CE) in her 2017 Policy Address. Due to time constraint, Mr Lam’s presentation covered mainly the following two aspects –

Poverty Alleviation

- (a) improvement measures to the Low-income Working Family Allowance Scheme, to be renamed as Working Family Allowance Scheme, would be implemented to benefit more working households, and the Community Care Fund had relaunched the assistance programme to provide subsidy for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) households living in rented private housing and paying rents exceeding the maximum rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme;

Care for the Elderly

- (b) to strengthen community care and support services as outlined in the Elderly Services Programme Plan (ESPP), two pilot schemes, one for elderly persons discharged from hospitals after treatment and the other for those with mild impairment would be launched. In addition, an 18-month Pilot Scheme on Training for Foreign Domestic Helpers on Elderly Care would be implemented, and an additional 1 000 vouchers would be provided under the Second Phase of the Pilot Scheme on Community Care Service Voucher for the Elderly. Additional resources would be allocated to enhance support for carers and increase the salaries of personal care workers and home helpers;
- (c) to strengthen care and support for elderly persons with dementia at the community level, the Dementia Community Support Scheme would be regularised, and additional resources would be provided for day care centres/units for the elderly and home care teams to enhance their manpower;

- (d) a \$1 billion fund would be set up to subsidise elderly and rehabilitation service units to try out and procure/rent technology products that could help improve the quality of life of service users; and
- (e) a new Licensing and Regulation Branch had been set up in SWD to regulate residential care homes and centres, and various improvement measures would be implemented to enhance their service quality such as launching two five-year schemes to provide full subsidies for private residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) to join accreditation schemes and for staff of RCHEs to enroll in Qualifications Framework-based training courses respectively.

8. Deliberations of the meeting after the presentation were summarised as follows –

- (a) a member enquired about the mechanism to ensure that foreign domestic helpers could apply what they learned at training courses;
- (b) a member reflected that for successful implementation of the pilot schemes, the non-governmental organisations engaged should be given more flexibility to hire experienced officers. Regarding the initiative of enhancing co-parenting support for divorced/separated parents and their children, she considered the services currently provided by the Integrated Family Service Centres not targeting co-parenting support and suggested that specialised services for divorced families should be considered;
- (c) a member also shared the view on the need to strengthen services for divorced families and suggested SWD to evaluate the service need with reference to the increasing re-marriage rate;
- (d) a member, while appreciating the strengthening of residential child care services, considered that an efficient and effective exit system that allowed the children to return

to their families earlier was more important. She indicated that the quality of services should also be enhanced; and

- (e) a member commented that “ageing tsunami” was not an appropriate description given its negative connotation and stigmatisation effect on the elderly. The ESPP should not only focus on helping the elderly but to instil a positive attitude towards this demographic change. Elderly persons were actually important resources to be explored and utilised.

9. The Chairman considered that overall speaking, the initiatives this year focused more on elderly services rather than family services and support services at school. Noting that the prevailing ratio of school-based social workers to secondary school was roughly 1.2 : 1, he saw the need to strengthen the services so as to facilitate intervention at an early stage. Several members shared the view and considered that intervention at junior forms of secondary school should be more effective. It was suggested that SWD should join hands with the Education Bureau for a review in this regard. To support ageing in place, the Chairman suggested promoting offspring education covering general knowledge on elderly health and early identification of dementia cases to better engage and equip the young generation in taking care of their elderly family members. There should also be education and publicity programmes to prepare the middle-agers for migration to elderly life covering personal health management, wealth management as well as communication with younger generations, etc.

10. Mr Lam thanked Members for their comments and responded that there would be practical sessions in the training course for foreign domestic helpers and evaluation by their employer families to track the effectiveness of the training. Ms CHANG King-yiu, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare, supplemented that the employers’ consent to release the foreign domestic helpers for classes would be sought and family members were also encouraged to attend the course with their helpers.

11. Regarding the salary issues for workers engaged in pilot schemes, Mr Lam explained that the personal emoluments provision for pilot projects would take into account the need for more experienced workers to be involved in the projects in order to better gauge the effectiveness of the projects. For support services for divorced parents

and their children, SWD had produced an information booklet on divorce education two years ago. That said, SWD would make reference to the experience of the pilot project on co-parenting services currently undertaken by the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society in mapping the way forward. The suggestion of addressing the need of split and step families was noted. He also briefed Members that the ESPP did cover promotion of active ageing and there were some programmes including episodes produced by the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) to promote the young generation's understanding and communication with parents.

12. The Chairman thanked Mr Lam for his presentation.

**Item 4 – Establishment of a Commission on Children (Paper FC 21/2017)**

13. After briefing Members on the Council's previous discussion on the subject of children's rights, the Chairman invited Miss Leonia TAI, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1, and Mr Kenneth CHENG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare) 1 of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) to brief the Council on the preparatory work of establishing a Commission on Children (CoC).

14. The salient points of Miss Tai's presentation were summarised below –

- (a) a Preparatory Committee chaired by the CE with the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) as the Vice-chairperson was established in September 2017 to take forth the plan as announced in the 2017 Policy Address to set up a CoC in mid-2018;
- (b) the public engagement period ran from 13 November 2017 to 31 January 2018, and the main issues for consultation covered the expected role, functions, composition, structure as well as priority work of the CoC;
- (c) the proposed primary target group of the CoC was children under the age of 14, and its proposed terms of reference covered various aspects including enhancing integration and rationalisation of children-related policies and initiatives



under different B/Ds and with advisory bodies, reviewing children-related services, promoting children's rights, etc. ;

- (d) the proposed framework of the CoC's initial work plan focused on the physical, emotional, cognitive and social needs of children, and might cover three categories of issues that were more specific to children of different age groups, straddling different stages of growth of children, or specific to particular groups of children arising from their family backgrounds, biological characteristics or other individual circumstances; and
  - (e) the CoC would channel efforts and collaboration across sectors to ensure support for children from their families, schools, the community, the Government and identification with culture.
15. Members in general supported the setting up of the CoC and their deliberations after the presentation were summarised as follows –
- (a) a member expressed concerns over the composition of the CoC which might have impact on its future stance on some controversial issues;
  - (b) a member considered that the establishment of the CoC would help fill the gap in which children's views were not adequately attended to;
  - (c) a member expected that the CoC would not be merely an advisory body to collect opinions but to achieve outcomes in respect of children protection, service provision and participation;
  - (d) a member noted that the proposed work plan of the CoC covered a wide spectrum of issues straddling across different B/Ds and advisory bodies that required effective collaboration amongst all parties. He also observed that the issues proposed were mainly pertaining to children growth or problem prevention. He suggested the CoC to accord priority to the subject of positive child development and consider collecting statistical information on children development for longitudinal studies;

- (e) another member shared the view concerning the wide spectrum of issues under the CoC and considered it important to rationalise the division of labour amongst different B/Ds so that issues previously in the grey area could be properly attended to. She also considered that the existing engagement exercise covered too many issues that the children might lose the focus on children, and suggested that the views collected could be analysed by perspective of children of different age groups;
- (f) a member reflected that the school management needed more detailed background information to facilitate their consideration in sending students to the public engagement activities. She also commented that the age line set for the CoC might have to be reviewed in the light of the school age of target group of children;
- (g) another member considered it acceptable even if the age line set for the CoC overlapped with the coverage of Commission on Youth (CoY). He also found the proposed work plan of the CoC covered too many issues without a focus or priority;
- (h) a member added that the focus of work on children at different stages was different. He also observed that there was no mentioning of family in the pamphlet on establishment of the CoC. He considered that, and supported by several members, family was where every child grew up and hence there should be appropriate interface between the CoC and the Council. They might also have some shared missions such as the establishment of a family and children development fund. Besides, he expressed reservations over the dominating role of the CoC as implied by the wordings of “引導各界攜手合作支援兒童” in its proposed framework and the vague meaning of “identification with culture”;
- (i) a member noted that the proposed terms of reference of the CoC included promotion of children’s right as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Child. She considered that the subject should be viewed in the

context of family, community and state, and that a balanced approach should be adopted. Another member shared the view and added that care should be exercised to avoid over-emphasising the rights but ignoring the equal importance of responsibilities; and

- (j) a member supported that the CoC's work should cover management of funding schemes and that more resources should be allocated to children development programmes.

16. The Chairman concluded the discussion by commenting that while there was still room for improvement, Hong Kong indeed had been performing well in various children work including service provision and child protection, and improvement in the aspect of child participation was also noted. He shared the views of Members that the issue of children rights needed to be carefully considered. Western experience was a reference but it also had strengths and weaknesses. As children grew up in the context of family and culture, their developmental and psychological needs might not necessarily be the same as those in western countries. Indiscriminate adoption of the western experience of advocacy of children rights might generate problems like giving rise to a self-centered "me" generation. A balance with the rights of parents and state might need to be worked out. As regards the age line for the CoC, the Chairman added that consideration should be given to align it with the prevailing age lines for education and social services. The existing suggested threshold of 14 was a bit arbitrary as compared with overseas experience, local age line for schooling as well as the coverage of the CoY. How the CoY would follow up and collaborate with the CoC on subjects discussed at the latter but covered the former was an issue to be examined.

17. Miss Tai thanked Members for their comments and made the following response –

- (a) the Preparatory Committee would take into account the views collected during the public engagement period to work out proposals on the composition, role and functions of the CoC as well as the priority issues to be addressed for CE's consideration;
- (b) the need to rationalise the division of labour and collaboration amongst different B/Ds was fully appreciated and this was also why the CoC would be chaired by CS;

- (c) concerns over the issue of children rights were noted and more educational work on this aspect would be considered; and
- (d) the CoC would establish collaboration with the Council and the CoY (and the future Youth Development Commission upon re-organisation), and the proposed age line of target group was set as a proposal for the public engagement exercise.

18. The Chairman thanked Miss Tai for her presentation and hoped that the deliberation would assist the Government in planning for the establishment of the CoC.

**Item 5 – Progress of Work of the Sub-committees under the Family Council (Paper FC 22/2017)**

19. The Chairman invited the Convenors of the Promotion Sub-committee and the Support Sub-committee to report work progress.

20. Mr LEE Luen-fai reported that the Promotion Sub-committee had agreed to continue to collaborate with RTHK in launching a publicity plan that comprised radio programmes as well as summer workshops in 2018. A newly designed webpage for the Council's Happy Family Hub as well as facebook page would also be launched in 2018. To sustain the encouraging feedback to the Council's facebook page in recent months, more family activities would be sourced as gifts for facebook quiz. A new education package with eight to ten episodes on the core family value of "Communication and Harmony" would also be produced in 2018. For the 2017-18 Award Scheme that the Council Secretariat had reported on earlier, a newly produced API was shown at the meeting.

(Action : Promotion Sub-committee)

21. Mrs Chu briefed Members on the progress of two approved projects under the 2016/17 Pilot Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to Support Family-related Initiatives. For the Divorce Study, she informed the meeting that the Sub-committee had endorsed to refine the

study scope to include some more places in the literature study, and to cover analysis on issues like the phenomenon of nominal maintenance of \$1, critical factors that encouraged timely and responsible compliance of maintenance orders, etc. She added that the Consulting Team would be required to engage divorced families of different demographic and socio-economic background in its qualitative survey with a view to providing useful information for drawing up recommendations. To closely monitor the study, a Working Group to be chaired by the Council Chairmen would be set up. Mrs Chu also reported to the meeting the progress of the organisation work of Summit and extended invitation to all Members. Members who would like to join the Summit could register with the Council Secretariat for waiver of enrolment fees.

(Action : Support Sub-committee)

#### **Item 6 – Any Other Business**

22. Members had a discussion on whether the Council should make any public statement on a recent child abuse tragedy. After deliberation and having regard to the established practice, the meeting recorded the Council's regret over the incident but did not consider it necessary to make any separate public announcement. In response to a member's enquiry, Ms Karyn CHAN, the Council Secretary, explained that the Council had previously endorsed a set of core family values which would be circulated to Members again for information. Consideration might also be given to enhancing the communication amongst members in response to family-related incidents or ad-hoc enquiries.

23. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:20 p.m.. The next meeting would be held on 13 March 2018 (Tuesday) at 2:30 p.m.

**Family Council Secretariat  
March 2018**