

Family Council
Minutes of 45th Meeting held on 24 September 2020

Date: 24 September 2020 (Thursday)
Time: 10:00 a.m. – 12:20 p.m.
Venue: Conference Room 4, G/F., Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

Attendance

Chairman

Prof. SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel

Ex-officio Members

Ms CHAN Yuen-han, Chairperson of the Women's Commission

Non-official Members

Ms CHAN Suk-mei, May

Ms CHEUNG Lai-chu

Ms CHEUNG Wang-yim, Lavender, Deputy Convenor, Sub-committee
on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education

Mr FONG Yick-jin, Eugene

Dr LAM Chi-yan

Prof. Albert LEE

Prof. LEUNG Seung-ming, Alvin, Convenor, Sub-committee on Family
Support

Ms PUN Siu-fung, Cindy

Dr WONG Fung-yee, Margaret, Deputy Convenor, Sub-committee on
Family Support

Mrs WONG NG Kit-wah, Cecilia

Mr WOO Kin-man, Clement

Official Members

Mrs Cherry TSE, Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs

(attending on behalf of Secretary for Home Affairs)

Mr David LEUNG, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1

(attending on behalf of Secretary for Labour and Welfare)

Mr CHENG Ming-keung, Principal Assistant Secretary (School
Administration_Special Support)

(attending on behalf of Secretary for Education)

Ms Mandy FUNG, Acting Assistant Head (3)

(attending on behalf of Head/Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office)

Secretary

Ms Carmen KONG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic
Affairs)2

In attendance

Ms Adia LAM, Chief Executive Officer (Family Council)

(For agenda item 3)

Ms Michelle LAM, Assistant Director (Social Security), Social Welfare
Department (SWD)

Ms Dora LEE, Chief Social Work Officer (Domestic Violence), SWD

(For agenda item 4)

Group 1

Dr LEUNG Pak-yin, Convenor of the Territory-wide Physical Fitness
Survey for the Community Advisory Committee

Mr Paul CHENG, Principal Assistant Secretary (Recreation and Sports)1,
Home Affairs Bureau (HAB)

Ms Winnie YEUNG, Assistant Secretary (Recreation and Sports)3, HAB

Mr Leo WONG, Senior Leisure Manager (Special Duties)², Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD)

Group 2

Dr Rita HO, Head, Non-Communicable Disease Branch, Department of Health (DH)

Dr Patrick CHONG, Senior Medical and Health Officer (Disease Prevention)², DH

Group 3

Ms Yonny CHAN, Chief Curriculum Officer (Physical Education), Education Bureau (EDB)

Mr CHAU Chi-kong, Senior Curriculum Development Officer (Physical Education), EDB

Absent with apologies

Dr LAM Ching-choi, Chairman of the Elderly Commission

Mr LAU Ming-wai, Vice-Chairperson of the Youth Development Commission

Ms CHENG Chi-man, Sonia

Mr LEE Tsz-king, Dominic

Ms YIP Lai-wa, Emily, Convenor, Sub-committee on Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education

Ms YIP Yun-wan, Amarantha

Welcome Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to the 45th meeting of the Family Council (the Council), in particular Ms Mandy FUNG, Acting Assistant

Head (3) of the Policy Innovation and Co-ordination Office who attended the Council meeting for the first time.

Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 44th meeting of the Family Council

2. The minutes of the 44th meeting were confirmed without amendment.

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) informed the meeting that as at 31 August 2020, the Council's Facebook had attracted over 20 678 likes and the average number of "Reaction", "Comments" and "Sharing" per post was about 276. Besides, the Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to Support Family-related Initiatives was launched on 29 June 2020 and opened for application up to 28 August 2020. Fifteen applications were received and assessment of the applications was in progress.

4. In respect of the application of the Family Impact Assessment (FIA) checklist, CEO(FC) reported that the FIA checklist had been applied in respect of 558 papers as at 31 August 2020. Moreover, the consolidation exercise of the findings of Family Surveys conducted since 2011 was in progress and the final report was expected to be available by end December 2020.

5. For the "Further Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong" (the Divorce Study), CEO(FC) reported that the research team had submitted the draft Final Report in August 2020. To facilitate discussion

by the Working Group (WG), the Council Secretariat was consulting relevant bureaux/departments (B/Ds) about the accuracy of the factual information contained in the draft report. Upon the WG's deliberation on the draft report, the research team would brief the Council on the findings and recommendations of the Divorce Study.

6. A consolidated list of questions raised by the Council members on agenda item 3 of the last Council meeting and the responses of relevant B/Ds had been prepared and forwarded to all Council Members for reference. The Chairman thanked the relevant B/Ds and requested the Council Secretariat to follow up on any further questions or views raised by the Members on the issue.

Item 3 – Briefing on Support Services Provided by Social Welfare Department for Divorced Families

7. The Chairman invited Ms Michelle LAM, Assistant Director (Social Security), and Ms Dora LEE, Chief Social Welfare Officer (Domestic Violence), from SWD to brief Members on the existing support services provided by SWD for divorced families. The salient points of the presentation were summarised as follows –

- (a) SWD had been providing a wide range of support services to divorced families. For instance, following the completion of the two-year Pilot Project on Children Contact Service in September 2019, five Specialised Co-parenting Support Centres were set up in October 2019 across the territories to provide one-stop child-focused co-parenting support services for the separated/divorcing/divorced parents and/or their children. Handbooks providing guidelines on co-parenting and helping children understand the issue of divorce were also available. SWD would continue to promote the concepts of parental responsibility and co-parenting through various means;

- (b) 65 Integrated Family Service Centres, operated by SWD or subvented non-governmental organisations (NGOs), provided a spectrum of services to address the multifarious needs of individuals and families of specific localities. Besides, the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme provided a safety net for those who could not support themselves. Under emergency situations, the Short-term Food Assistance Service Projects could help families which had difficulties in coping with their food expenditure;
 - (c) the Family and Child Protective Services Units assisted families with the problems of child abuse and spouse/cohabitant battering to restore normal functioning and safeguard the interest of the children affected by custody/guardianship disputes and as referred by the Courts; and
 - (d) under the administration of SWD, there were six Clinical Psychological Units which provided various types of psychological services to the general public, including the parents and their children. In addition, the Family Crisis Support Centre and the Victim Support Programme for Victims of Family Violence, which were operated by NGOs, provided support to families and victims of domestic violence, including hotline services and temporary retreat.
8. Members' views and questions were summarised as follows –
- (a) a Member expressed appreciation to the efforts made by SWD in providing different support services to divorced families. Yet, the number of divorced families was on an upward trend and more should be done, such as enhancing the front-line services to divorced families;

- (b) a Member said that the Government should be more attentive to the difficulties faced by staff who were providing front-line services to divorced families;
- (c) a Member suggested that SWD's current resources of providing psychological services should be better deployed to take care of the mental health needs of members of divorced families. If necessary, referral should be made to the Hospital Authority for necessary follow up;
- (d) a Member opined that the Government should be more proactive in promoting the existing marital support and counselling services to the public, in particular young couples. SWD should make early intervention in respect of divorced families with children so as to prevent and minimise the adverse impact on children due to their parents' separation; and
- (e) a Member stated that family and marital education were very important and should be strengthened, especially in the area of parental responsibility for parents.

9. Ms Michelle Lam thanked Members for their comments and responded that front-line staff of SWD, especially District Social Welfare Officers, had been making efforts to enhance the district networks so as to identify needy cases for early intervention, although such efforts would target at all families and individuals in need, and not exclusive to divorced cases. In response to Members' questions on how SWD could help a CSSA recipient who failed to receive full maintenance payment on time, Ms Lam clarified that SWD would not deduct the maintenance in arrears from the CSSA entitlement if the CSSA recipient as the maintenance payee has approached the Legal Aids Department (LAD) directly to apply for legal aid to seek enforcement of maintenance orders, or if she/he indicated to SWD the intention to recover the maintenance in arrears by signing an undertaking, following which SWD would refer the case to LAD. In this

context, SWD would stop the deduction of maintenance payment from the CSSA entitlement and/or return the deducted amount generally within four working days.

10. The Chairman thanked Ms Michelle Lam and Ms Dora Lee for the presentation and response to Members' views. He agreed that the CSSA Scheme had been providing a safety net to the disadvantaged groups in the society. However, the name of the Scheme itself might have a labelling effect that prohibited those needy people from applying for assistance under the Scheme. He suggested that better categorisation of the assistances being given under the CSSA Scheme should be considered with a view to making the Scheme more targeted in helping people with specific needs. Mr David LEUNG clarified that the CSSA Scheme was to provide a safety net for all Hong Kong residents who could not support themselves financially and needed financial assistance to meet their basic needs. Therefore, it was against the CSSA Scheme to distinguish any particular recipient group and design for them exclusive or special financial assistance as compared with general CSSA recipients. LWB would continue to monitor the effectiveness of CSSA.

11. The Chairman said that SWD might consider briefing the Council on the relevant CSSA mechanism at a future Council meeting. In response, Ms Michelle Lam advised that SWD had prepared and uploaded onto its website an information note in June 2020 which set out how the CSSA Scheme would help fill the gap arising from default on maintenance payments, as CSSA was designed to bring the recipients' income up to a prescribed level to meet their basic needs.

Item 4 – Physical Fitness and Health Services Conducted by Government Bureaux/Departments (Paper FC/4/2020)

12. To facilitate discussion of this agenda item, the Chairman invited the following officers to brief Members on the related information under their respective purviews –

- (a) Dr LEUNG Pak-yin, Convenor of the Territory-wide Physical Fitness Survey for the Community Advisory Committee: background, objectives and way forward of the Territory-wide Physical Fitness Survey for the Community of which the collected data on the public's physical fitness would facilitate formulation of long-term goals and policies for promotion of sports in the community;
- (b) Dr Rita HO, Head of Non-communicable Disease Branch, and Dr Patrick CHONG, Senior Medical and Health Officer (Disease Prevention)² of the DH: results on level of physical activities of the last rounds of the Health Behaviour Survey and the Population Health Survey, as well as the launch of the “Healthy Hong Kong 2025 – Move for Health” publicity campaign was introduced. Dr Rita Ho indicated that DH would welcome the idea of exploring area for collaboration with the Family Council in promoting physical activities; and
- (c) Ms Yonny CHAN, Chief Curriculum Development Officer (Physical Education) of the EDB: overview of the Survey Study on Students' Physical Fitness which was conducted every five years to collect data on physical fitness of secondary and primary school students.

13. The Chairman thanked the representatives of the relevant B/Ds for their presentations. Members' views and comments were summarised as follows –

- (a) to improve both the physical and mental health of the general public during the COVID-19 pandemic, a Member suggested

that more open space/areas should be allocated for doing physical activities like jogging by the public. The Government should take this into account during the course of town planning/development;

- (b) a Member was of the view that schools should consider how to enable their students to do more physical activities during the “new normal” as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Government’s physical fitness surveys could be suitably revised to assess the impact of the COVID-19 on people’s health, in particular youngsters;
- (c) as people were spending more time at home during the pandemic, a Member reckoned that promotion of the positive impact of doing household chores could be done;
- (d) a Member commented that when announcing the results of the physical fitness surveys, the Government should consider providing appropriate health advice together with the survey results so that the public would be more receptive to follow those health advice;
- (e) a Member remarked that apart from conducting territory-wide surveys, it was of equal importance for the Government to include more suitable public facilities in places like the public housing estates to facilitate and encourage the public to do more exercises; and
- (f) a Member considered that it was important for children at the age of three to six to establish a good habit of doing more exercises, and young people under the age of 15 should be included as one of the target groups of the surveys. Besides, the role of school nurses was crucial in helping students with health issues due to lack of physical activities.

14. Mrs Cherry TSE pointed out that due considerations should be given to synchronise and synergise the existing physical fitness related surveys conducted by HAB/LCSD, DH and EDB, in the next cycle so as to facilitate better sharing of the findings and analysis of the surveys.

15. The Chairman thanked Members' comments and invited the representatives of the B/Ds to take note of Members' comments for necessary action. The Chairman suggested that Members could forward any further views or questions to the Council Secretariat after the meeting, if any, for follow up action.

(Action: Council Secretariat)

Item 5 – Progress of Work of the Sub-committees under the Family Council (Paper FC 5/2020)

16. The Chairman invited Ms Lavender CHEUNG, the Deputy Convenor of the Sub-committee on Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education (Promotion Sub-committee) to report on work progress. Ms Cheung reported that due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Promotion Sub-committee meeting which was originally scheduled for 6 August 2020 was called off. Discussion papers were circulated to invite Members' comments on the management of the Council's Facebook page and the production of the second storybook and theme song of "The But's Family".

(Action: Promotion Sub-committee)

17. The Chairman invited Prof. Alvin LEUNG, the Convenor of the Sub-committee on Family Support (Support Sub-committee) to report on work progress. Prof. Leung reported that the Support Sub-committee meeting which was originally scheduled for 29 July 2020 was called off due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the discussion paper on the

consolidation exercise of findings of Family Surveys conducted since 2011 had been circulated to the Sub-committee Members for comments.

(Action: Support Sub-committee)

Item 6 – Any Other Business

18. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m. The next meeting would be held in December 2020.

**Family Council Secretariat
November 2020**