

Family Council
Minutes of 31st Meeting held on 8 December 2016

Date: 8 December 2016 (Thursday)

Time: 2:30 - 4:50 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

Non-official Members

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

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

Ms LAW Suk-kwan, Lilian

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

Prof. LEUNG Seung-ming, Alvin

Dr LI Sau-hung, Eddy

Ms LOO Shirley Marie Therese, Convenor, Sub-committee on the
Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education

Miss TANG Pui-yee, Phoebe

Dr TSUI Luen-on, Gordon

Ms WONG Pik-kiu, Peggy

Miss WONG Siu-ling, Gabriella

Ms YAU Oi-yuen, Irene

Ms YIP Lai-wa, Emily

Mr YIU Tze-leung, Ivan

Official Members

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

Miss Leonia TAI, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Welfare)1 (*attended on behalf of Secretary for Labour and Welfare*)

Ms Louise SO, Principal Education Officer (School Administration), Education Bureau (*attended on behalf of Secretary for Education*)

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

Secretary

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

In attendance

Miss Iris MA, Chief Executive Officer (Family Council)

(For agenda item 3)

Mr Henry TONG, Member of the Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides

Mr Brian LEE, Chief Officer (Special Duty) 2, Education Bureau

(For agenda item 4)

Ms Amy CHEUNG, Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial, Planning Department

Ms Margaret CHAN, Senior Town Planner /Strategic Planning 5, Planning Department

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

Welcome Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to the 31st meeting of the Family Council (the Council).

Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 30th meeting of the Family Council

2. The minutes of the 30th meeting were confirmed without 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. Members of the Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education (the Promotion Sub-committee) viewed the rough cut of the first promotional video¹ of the pre-marital family education package (the Package). The Package would be launched on 19 February 2017 to tie in with the large-scale publicity event co-organised with the Radio Television Hong Kong. The prize presentation ceremony of the

¹ A total of nine episodes in three series presenting stories about three different pairs of couples-to-be: young couples living with parents, cohabitants considering marriage and having children, and middle class divorcees considering re-marriage will be produced.

“2015/16 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme” was successfully held on 25 October 2016 and the event was widely reported by the media. Several studies would be completed soon. The research team for the Study on “Parenting Practices in Hong Kong” presented its findings and initial recommendations to the Promotion Sub-committee on 15 November 2016. The revised final report on the Study on “Family Mediation Services in Hong Kong” was received and a copy of executive summary was tabled for Members’ reference. The draft final report of Family Survey 2015 was circulated to Members for comments on 2 December 2016. As regards the Pilot Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to Support Family-related Initiatives (the Pilot Scheme), four projects selected under the 2016/17 Scheme were launched in November 2016 for completion in April 2018. The Chairman thanked four Members, namely Ms Shirley LOO, Dr Gordon TSUI, Miss Gabriella WONG and Miss Phoebe TANG, for serving as mentors for the approved projects. For the Study on Family Impact Assessment, the Steering Committee discussed the draft checklist tool in detail and agreed to continue to adopt a common sense understanding of the concept of family. Training sessions for users would be arranged in January 2017.

4. As Members had no further comments, the progress report was endorsed.

Item 3 – Final Report of the Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides (Paper FC 26/2016)

5. The Chairman invited Mr Henry TONG, Member of the

Committee on Prevention of Student Suicides (the Committee), and Mr Brian LEE, Chief Officer (Special Duty) 2 of Education Bureau (EDB), to brief Members on the observations and recommendations of the Committee. The salient points of the presentation were summarised as follows –

(a) background

In response to the spate of student suicides in the 2015/16 school year, EDB set up the Committee on 30 March 2016 to examine the possible causes of recent student suicides in Hong Kong, advise on the areas of existing services related to suicide prevention that could be strengthened, and possible measures to prevent student suicides. The Committee comprised members from different sectors of the community including public health experts, psychiatrists, psychologists, social workers, teachers, school principals, parents, youth and government officials. Five working groups were set up to examine the issue from the perspectives of mental health, schools, families, media and youth/post-secondary institutions in depth. The Committee collected views from different stakeholders including the Commission on Youth and the Promotion Sub-Committee of the Family Council.

(b) observations

Having examined 71 suicide cases of local primary, secondary and post-secondary students in the past three academic years, the Committee concluded in the final report that multiple factors

interacted and contributed to students' suicidal behavior. These factors included mental health issues, psychological concern, family or peer relationship problems, school adjustment problems and academic pressure. The findings were comparable to the results of international studies. The Committee also noted the correlation between the occurrence of student suicide cases and extensive report by media. While the international study found that most completed suicide cases had one or more mental disorders, only a small number of local student suicide cases had been diagnosed with mental illness. Therefore, it is believed that some local cases with mental health issues might not have been identified. Nevertheless, all students exhibited symptoms before committing suicide.

(c) *recommendations*

To prevent student suicides, the Committee made various student-centred recommendations in the final report covering services at three different levels: universal prevention strategies targeting all students; selective prevention strategies targeting vulnerable students; and indicated prevention strategies targeting students with suicidal risk. Some of the recommendations were highlighted below –

- to enhance cross-sector collaboration in promoting student's mental health in schools in an integrated manner, such as strengthening the interface among medical, education and social service sectors to ensure students in need could receive timely mental health services;

- to enhance support to students in their change of learning environment and change of level of studies, and encourage post-secondary institutions to schedule a period of time for rest and relief during an academic term;
- to provide gatekeeper training for parents to develop their sensitivity to students' signs of mental health issues and cyber bullying, as well as for people around students, including teachers, peers and university personnel to enhance early identification of and intervention for at-risk students;
- to provide schools with additional resources in respect of strengthening mental health and well-being education in schools, and to arrange more sharing on effective practices in fostering positive communication between secondary school students and their parents;
- the Committee on Home-School Co-operation to promote the "Happy Kids Charter";
- to consider promoting a month as the family month, pooling the Government and non-governmental organisations' efforts in promulgating meaningful themes such as positive communication within families;
- to enhance the roles of traditional and social media; and
- the Education Bureau to consider reviewing relevant domains

in the education system, duly support and address the developmental and diverse needs of students and young people, and to launch more publicity about alternative pathways and Qualifications Framework to help parents and students learn more about the latest situation in life planning.

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

- (a) members considered it important for the media, in particular the non-traditional ones, to abide by the guidelines in reporting student suicides. Elaborative reporting should be avoided;
- (b) a member suggested providing resources on tackling cyber bullying through social media;
- (c) on intervention, a member considered that studies should be conducted to identify the effective means targeting the students at risk. Another member added that it was necessary to strengthen support to the social service sector and the students' family members and peers so that they could be better equipped to provide appropriate intervention;
- (d) noting that, among the suicide cases of primary and secondary students, only 18% had been diagnosed as having mental health problems, a member pointed out that their peers and families might not be able to notice any symptoms

of mental problems. Another member suggested that consideration could be given to promoting a caring attitude in school so that the peers could also help identifying students at risk;

- (e) a member suggested that the primary school student support programme “Understanding Adolescent Project” should be further promoted and extended to secondary schools. Another considered that stress management element was inadequate in the existing curriculum of secondary school and should be strengthened;
- (f) a member considered it a good idea to allow a period of time for rest and relief during an academic term. Apart from students, teachers and parents also needed the breaks;
- (g) a member supported the measure of promoting alternative pathways and suggested that there should be recognition for students’ good performance in non-academic aspects like arts, sports as well as conduct;
- (h) members welcomed the “Happy Kids Charter” and considered it equally important to promote happy and healthy family life;
- (i) to avoid stigmatising effect, a member suggested promoting healthy or happy life instead of mental health; and

- (j) members expected that the recommendations could be materialised through the concerted efforts of various parties concerned and be implemented in a focused manner.

7. In response to Members' views, Ms Louise SO, Principal Education Officer (School Administration) of EDB informed the meeting that there was another project aiming at improving the secondary school students' resilience called "Enhanced Smart Teen Project". She assured the meeting that all relevant divisions and sections in EDB would actively follow up the recommendations. For example, they were then preparing for a survey on the relationship between parents and schools.

8. The Chairman thanked Messrs Tong and Lee for their presentation and the response of Ms So. While appreciating that the Committee had made many recommendations, the Government might need to prioritise the recommendations and consider the strategy. Families at risk and student mental health were not new issues. Following the recommendations of the previous Review Panel of the Pilot Project on Child Fatality Review, there were several initiatives in the aspect of students' psychosocial health education such as P.A.T.H.S. The crux was how to strategise the initiatives to achieve the desired outcome and an ecological model should be considered. As he observed, there was an increasing number of secondary students with emotional issues but, lagging behind the international trend, social emotional learning was not featured in our existing syllabus. He also considered it necessary to strengthen family life education in teacher training and mental health education in social worker training. He suggested that the Government might consider adopting the public

health approach in tackling student suicide problem.

Item 4 – Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030 (Paper FC 27/2016)

9. The Chairman invited Ms Amy CHEUNG, Assistant Director of Planning/Territorial, and Ms Margaret CHAN, Senior Town Planner/Strategic Planning 5, of the Planning Department (PlanD) to brief Members on the key findings and recommendations of “Hong Kong 2030+: Towards a Planning Vision and Strategy Transcending 2030” (Hong Kong 2030+).

10. Ms Chan took Members through the PowerPoint presentation which was covered in paper FC 27/2016. The salient points of the presentation were summarised as follows –

- (a) Hong Kong was facing many challenges including an ageing population plus a shrinking labour force. “Hong Kong 2030+” aimed to update the territorial development strategy to guide planning, land and infrastructure development, and the shaping of the built and natural environment of Hong Kong to meet our present and future social, environmental and economic needs and aspirations;
- (b) a six-month public engagement exercise commenced in October 2016 and the study was expected to be completed within 2018;

- (c) the three building blocks were planning for a liveable high-density city, embracing new economic challenges and opportunities, and creating capacity for sustainable growth;
- (d) in pursuit of a liveable high-density city, the overall approach was to optimise development in new development areas, retrofit the densely developed urban areas, and enhance the liveability of our high-density city through promoting eight city attributes ;
- (e) one of the major issues of planning was to promote age-friendly planning and design concept catering for the elderly's needs and ageing in place;
- (f) another issue was to leverage our green and blue assets and promote a healthy city by incorporating urban climatic and air ventilation considerations into planning and urban design as well as embracing “active design” concept to promote physical activities and healthy lifestyle such as walking and cycling;
- (g) to enhance living space, it was suggested to adopt a higher open space per capita standard of 2.5m^2 , and to review the planning standards for Government, Institution or Community facilities; and
- (h) on the front of embracing new economic challenges and opportunities, it was suggested to create strategic economic nodes outside the Metro Areas.

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

- (a) a member commented that the plot ratio adopted for public housing estates might need to be reviewed in view of inadequate transportation support and carparking provision. The undesirable living environment could be a factor contributing to some family problems and tragedies. She supported the recommendation under Hong Kong 2030+ to raise the open space per capita standard;
- (b) a member expressed concern about drawing up a planning framework for the remote future from today's perspective. He considered it necessary to take into account the rapid development of innovation and technology in the planning process;
- (c) on the recommendation of promoting innovation, technology and collaboration, a member pointed out the need to update various land administration matters to synchronise with the planning ambit;
- (d) a member enquired if there was any long-term planning on addressing the housing needs of the elderly and suggested making reference to the arrangements in Canada. Another member suggested that to facilitate the integration of the elderly with their families, there should be different types of flats to house various types of families in the same housing estate;

- (e) a member commented that the Government should take heed of the experience of developing the North East New Territories and work out pragmatic solutions in addressing land related issues. He expected some concrete and workable solutions from Hong Kong 2030+. For example, consideration could be given to providing incentives to private developers to build housing estates for the elderly;
- (f) a member opined that consideration should be given to building a family-friendly community which was not merely age-friendly; and
- (g) a member informed the meeting that the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development promulgated by the Division for Social Policy and Development, Department of Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations was adopted by world leaders in September 2015, and the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) officially came into force on 1 January 2016. In these SDGs, apart from the issues raised in the Hong Kong 2030+ which put much emphasis on the hardware and infrastructure, there were many issues that needed to be addressed in Hong Kong, such as the role of the family and how sustainable development would affect family life and well-being. Since these would have wider implications on family policies, she proposed PlanD to make reference to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development when mapping out strategies and policies for the long-term sustainable development of Hong Kong.

12. In response to Members' views, Ms Amy CHEUNG of PlanD made the following responses –

- (a) to improve the development capacity of Hong Kong, the approach of Hong Kong 2030+ was to create development capacity. Hong Kong 2030+ would continue to underscore a rail-based development approach to promote the use of public transport instead of private vehicles. As proposed under Hong Kong 2030+, the open space per capital provision standard would be reviewed;
- (b) PlanD would closely liaise with relevant B/Ds to take forth the proposals under 2030+, and a high-level steering structure within the Government was proposed to be set up for co-ordinating, prioritising and monitoring relevant initiatives;
- (c) strategic planning directions in support of promoting age-friendly and family-friendly planning and design, ageing in place and inter-generational support would be taken into consideration in Hong Kong 2030+; and
- (d) appropriate degree of flexibility was provided for in Hong Kong 2030+ to cater for any foreseeable and unforeseeable developments in future.

13. The Chairman thanked Ms Cheung for the sharing. He considered it important to apply family perspective in the planning

process. He asked the Council Secretariat to collect views from Members after the meeting for onward transmission to the PlanD.

(Action: Council Secretariat)

Item 5 – Progress of Work of the Sub-committees under the Family Council (Paper FC 28/2016)

14. The Chairman invited the Convenors of the Sub-Committee on the Promotion Sub-committee and the Sub-Committee on Family Support to report work progress.

15. On the work of the Promotion Sub-Committee, Ms Shirley LOO reported that the research team for the Study on “Parenting Practices in Hong Kong” had presented its findings at the meeting held on 15 November 2016. The Promotion Sub-Committee generally agreed with its observations and suggested the research team to fine-tune its recommendations having regard to the latest findings of 2015 Family Survey, and give some thoughts to encouraging collaboration among different sectors, and enhancing the parenting role of fathers. In respect of the promotional videos of the pre-marital family education package, the Promotion Sub-Committee found the first rough cut quite impressive. It was also agreed at the meeting that “intergenerational communication” and “extended family support” be adopted as the themes for 2017-18 publicity campaign.

16. Mrs Patricia CHU reported that the Support Sub-committee had deliberated on the draft final report of the Mediation Study and discussed the arrangement for the 2017-18 Pilot Scheme at the meeting on 22 November 2016. Executive summary of the draft final report was tabled for members' reference. If members had no further comments, the report would be accepted and uploaded onto the websites of the Council and CPU for public information. The Council Secretariat would also arrange for its circulation to relevant B/Ds for information and follow up action as appropriate. The themes of the 2017-18 Pilot Scheme would be "Parent Education – Parenting Stress" and "Step and Split Families". Having reviewed the experience of the 2016-17 Pilot Scheme, the Support Sub-Committee agreed to set up, on top of the existing arrangement, a new category of "seed projects" with sponsorship between \$200,000 and \$599,999 to provide funding to small scale projects with innovative elements.

Item 7 – Any Other Business

17. On invitation of the Chairman, Ms Lilian LAW shared her experience of attending the 5th CIFA Regional Symposium organised by the Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region (CIFA) from 3 to 5 November 2016 in Seoul, Korea. Both Ms. Lilian Law and Prof. TH Lam remarked that it was a very successful symposium. Mrs. Chu informed members that the next CIFA Regional Symposium in 2018 would be held in the format of an Asian Family Summit, and all Council members be invited to join.

18. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m.. The next meeting would be held on 28 March 2017 (Tuesday) at 2:30 p.m.

**Family Council Secretariat
March 2017**