

Family Council
Minutes of 55th Meeting held on 19 December 2023

Date: 19 December 2023 (Tuesday)

Time: 10:00 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Venue: Conference Room 4, G/F., Central Government Offices, Tamar

Attendance

Chairman

Ms PANG, Melissa Kaye

Ex-officio Members

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

Mr LEUNG Yuk-wai, Kenneth, Vice-Chairman of the Youth Development Commission

Non-official Members

Mr FONG Yick-jin, Eugene, Convenor, Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education

Dr HSIN PANG Che-kwan, Gigi

Dr LAM Chi-yan, Kay, Convenor, Sub-committee on Family Support

Mr LAM Sum-lim, Sam

Ms LAU Oi-sze, Alice

Mr LAW Fai, Felix, Deputy Convenor, Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education

Mr LOU Yiu-tong, Perry

Ms PUN Siu-fung, Cindy

Mr WONG Bing-kin, Solomon

Miss WONG Lok-yin, Koby, Deputy Convenor, Sub-committee on Family Support

Mr YAU Siu-hung, Kelvin

Official Members

Ms Shirley LAM, Permanent Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs
(attending on behalf of Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs)

Ms Rachel KWONG, Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Children)
(attending on behalf of Secretary for Labour and Welfare)

Ms Louise SO, Deputy Secretary for Education (4)
(attending on behalf of Secretary for Education)

Secretary

Ms Joyce CHAN, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs
(Home Affairs)1

In Attendance

Ms Adia LAM, Chief Executive Officer (Home Affairs)(1)1

(For agenda item 3)

Mr Alex WONG, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services), Social Welfare Department

(For agenda item 4)

Mr Nick AU YEUNG, Deputy Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs
(Home Affairs)

Absent with apologies

Dr LI Kwok-tung, Donald, Chairman of the Elderly Commission
Prof. CHEN Yu-hai, Eric

Prof. Albert LEE
Mr LUK Hua, Warren
Mr YOUNG Chi-on, Jeremy

Welcome Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to the 55th meeting of the Family Council (the Council), in particular Ms Joyce CHAN, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs (Home Affairs)¹ and Ms Rachel KWONG, Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Children) who attended the Council meeting for the first time.

2. The Chairman informed Members that Ms Joyce Chan took up the post of Principal Assistant Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs (Home Affairs)¹ in September 2023 following the transfer of Ms Mandy WONG out of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau. The Chairman suggested and Members agreed to record a vote of thanks to Ms Wong for her contributions to the Council.

Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 54th Meeting of the Family Council

3. The minutes of the 54th meeting were confirmed without amendment.

Item 2 – Matters Arising from the Previous Meeting

4. The Chairman noted that the Council Secretariat had circulated a progress report to Members for information, and invited Chief Executive Officer (Home Affairs)(1)¹ (CEO(HA)(1)¹) to brief Members on the report. In respect of the application of the Family Impact Assessment (FIA)

checklist, CEO(HA)(1)1 reported that the FIA had been applied to 1 050 Legislative Council briefs as at 30 November 2023. Besides, the project brief of the Family Survey in 2024 was being finalised with a view to conducting a quotation exercise to engage a research company to carry out the survey.

5. As regards the Scheme on Thematic Sponsorship to Support Family-related Initiatives, CEO(HA)(1)1 reported that all sponsored organisations had submitted the half-yearly progress reports to the Council Secretariat in October 2023. CEO(HA)(1)1 also informed the meeting that as at 30 November 2023, the Council’s Facebook page had attracted over 34 300 followers and the average number of “Reaction”, “Comments” and “Sharing” per post was over 340. Besides, the roving drama series entitled 《愛畢氏家庭》互動教育劇場, comprising a premiere on 18 February 2023 and 64 performances staged at different secondary schools between end February and August 2023, received very good response from the audience. On 24 September 2023, the family publicity event to promote the theme of the Council’s 2023-24 publicity campaign, i.e. “Marital Happiness and Harmony” was successfully held at the auditorium of the Hong Kong Palace Museum.

Item 3 – Chief Executive’s 2023 Policy Address: Family-Related Policy Initiatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (Paper FC 14/2023)

6. The Chairman invited Mr Alex WONG, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) of the Social Welfare Department to brief Members on the various new family-related initiatives under the Labour and Welfare Bureau as announced by the Chief Executive in the 2023 Policy Address. The salient points of the briefing were summarised as follows –

- (a) the Government would strengthen support for working families in childbearing, including increasing child care centre places and allowances, extending the After-School Care Programme for Pre-primary Children to cover all districts, and

strengthening the home-based child care service. The rates of the household and child allowances under the Working Family Allowance Scheme would also be increased by 15% across the board with effect from the claim month of April 2024;

- (b) the Government would follow up on and progressively implement the relevant recommendations of the Committee on Review of Residential Child Care and Related Services. The incentive payment for foster families would also be substantially increased starting from April 2024;
- (c) for targeted poverty alleviation, the Government would implement various projects catering for the needs of three identified groups (i.e. households residing in sub-divided units (SDU), single-parent households and elderly households), including enhancing the Strive and Rise Programme, launching a Pilot Programme on Community Living Room, operating the School-based After School Care Service Scheme, and engaging the District Services and Community Care Teams (Care Teams) in Tsuen Wan and Southern districts as pilot, to arrange visits and contacts for elderly households (including singleton, doubleton and three-person-and-above elderly households) and carers of elderly persons or persons with disabilities;
- (d) support for persons with disabilities would continue to be strengthened which included implementation of a three-year pilot scheme to provide an additional subsidy of \$500 per month to employed disabled recipients of the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, increase in nursing staff in residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs), and enhancement of the services of Integrated Community Centres for Mental Wellness in 2024;

- (e) the Government would continue its efforts to support carers through the expansion of network of respite services, strengthening of peer support services and support to special school leavers and their carers, and expansion of the scope of the Innovation and Technology Fund for Application in Elderly and Rehabilitation Care to allow eligible elderly/rehabilitation service units to procure gerontechnology products for lending to the needy elderly/persons with disabilities/their carers for household use; and
- (f) as regards the caring for the elderly, the Government would explore extending the Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong to include specific residential care homes for the elderly (RCHEs) operated by Mainland organisations in 2024, expand the Residential Care Service Voucher Scheme for the Elderly, and inject an additional \$80 million into the Elder Academy Development Foundation to promote active ageing.

7. Members' views were summarised as follows –

- (a) a Member reckoned that in addition to the incentive payment, the Government might consider other means to encourage more families to become foster families. She also commented that support and counselling services for parents of children with special educational needs should be enhanced;
- (b) a Member suggested (i) working out a clear timetable of extending the existing after-school care service for children to all districts in Hong Kong; and (ii) strengthening the promotion of the Strive and Rise Programme to attract more people to join as mentors;

- (c) a Member appreciated the Government's effort in supporting singleton or doubleton elderly households and hoped that the engagement of the Care Teams to assist these households could be extended to districts other than Tsuen Wan and Southern districts the soonest possible;
- (d) a Member opined that the Government could consider (i) providing more subsidy to aided standalone child care centres so that parents could pay less for obtaining the required child care services; and (ii) offering better security for people who participated in the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project; and
- (e) a Member considered that the Pilot Programme on Community Living Room was a good move to provide people living in SDU with additional living space in their respective communities, and should be extended to other local communities with SDU households.

8. The Chairman thanked Mr Wong for the briefing and Members' comments. In response, Mr Wong stated that the Government would review the effectiveness of mobilising the Care Teams in the two pilot districts, and subject to review, consider extending the services to other districts. He also supplemented that over the next three years starting from 2024, ten more aided standalone child care centres (CCCs) would be set up in phases, providing about 900 additional places for day child care services. The Child Care Centre Parent Subsidy, which was applicable to all government-aided standalone CCCs and CCCs attached to kindergartens, would also be increased from April 2024.

9. Ms Shirley LAM pointed out that the Care Teams had been set up in all 18 districts. They had to reach specific key performance indicators, such as making a certain number of home visits to households in need. The Care Teams had also been arranged to receive training as appropriate to equip

them with skills to perform their duties. In addition to the Social Welfare Department, it was announced in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address that the Health Bureau would provide mental health support training to the Care Teams, so as to facilitate early referral of persons in need of mental support. Besides, with the commencement of the seventh-term District Councils on 1 January 2024, a total of 470 District Councilors were required to perform the functions stipulated under Article 97 of the Basic Law. In particular, they had to set up ward offices to establish a regular communication mechanism with the people in their Districts, and could work together with the Care Teams to achieve better results in supporting the Government's district work and strengthening community network.

Item 4 – Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address: Family and Women-Related Policy Initiatives of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (Paper FC 15/2023)

10. The Chairman invited Mr Nick AU YEUNG, Deputy Secretary for Home and Youth Affairs (Home Affairs) to brief Members on the major family and women-related initiatives of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) set out in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address. The salient points of the briefing were summarised as follows –

- (a) with a view to enhancing the Government's efforts in supporting the development of healthy and loving families, as well as women's development, HYAB would take forward a series of policy initiatives, including setting up under HYAB a dedicated Women Affairs Team and designating the post of Commissioner for Women Affairs to steer work related to women's affairs on 1 April 2024;
- (b) the key initiatives to be launched in the second half of 2024 included (i) the launch of a one-stop family and women information portal; (ii) the organisation of the first Family and Women Development Summit; and (iii) the launch, through

Community Care Fund, of a maintenance mediation pilot scheme;

- (c) HYAB and the Council would launch a brand new five-year Funding Scheme on the Promotion of Family Education in the latter half of 2024 to support non-profit-making community projects to promote family education; and
- (d) HYAB would continue to support the work of the Council, and assist Government bureaux and departments (B/Ds) in the applications of family perspectives in the policy formulation process. Besides, the Government, in collaboration with the Women's Commission, would continue to promote the well-being and interests of women, as well as gender mainstreaming and its application when formulating policies and programmes.

11. Members' views were summarised as follows –

- (a) a Member considered that cross B/Ds collaboration was important to strengthen the Government's efforts in supporting the development of healthy families and women. Consideration might also be given to work out a blueprint to take forward such efforts in a systematic manner;
- (b) a Member mentioned that for the new Funding Scheme on the Promotion of Family Education, the scope of which might cover projects that could benefit female employees who were either working on full-time or part-time basis;
- (c) a Member stated that in the case that an agreement could not be reached during the course of mediation arranged under the maintenance mediation pilot scheme, other support measures should be considered; and

- (d) a Member welcomed the designation of the post of Commissioner for Women Affairs who could help coordinate and ensure better communication between B/Ds in handling work related to women’s affairs.

12. The Chairman thanked Mr Au Yeung for the briefing as well as Members for their comments. Mr Au Yeung added that with the designation of the post of Commissioner for Women Affairs and the organisation of the first Family and Women Development Summit in 2024, the Government could better focus on work related to women’s affairs, and collect views to facilitate formulation of more focused measures to support women’s development and promote family education respectively. As regards the maintenance mediation pilot scheme, Mr Au Yeung said that the Government would keep under review the effectiveness of the pilot scheme and would continue to assist people in need to recover maintenance payments by keeping the system of collection of maintenance payments and enforcement of maintenance orders under review.

Item 5 – Progress of Work of the Sub-committees under the Family Council (Paper FC 16/2023)

13. The Chairman invited Mr Eugene Fong to report on the work progress of the Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education (Promotion Sub-committee). Mr Fong reported that for production of the new series of family education videos entitled “Ingredients of Marriage” (婚姻料理私房菜) which echoed the theme of “Marital Happiness and Harmony” (「家•信守一生」) of this year’s Publicity Campaign, a video production agency was commissioned through a quotation exercise in August 2023. The Promotion Sub-committee considered the viewing rates of the first two videos encouraging, and suggested placing advertisement on suitable social media platforms and digital platforms to further publicise the videos, with a view to boosting the viewing rates and reaching out to more people in the community. Besides,

the Promotion Sub-committee agreed to adopt the theme of “Inheritance of Good Family Traditions and Customs” (傳承優良家風) and use the Chinese title of 「傳承好家風」推廣運動 for the Council’s 2024-25 Publicity Campaign.

(Action: Promotion Sub-committee)

14. The Chairman invited Dr Kay Lam, Convenor of the Sub-committee on Family Support (Support Sub-committee) to report on the work progress of the Support Sub-committee. Dr Lam reported that two organisations, namely the Hong Kong Single Parents Association and the Society for Truth and Light briefed the Support Sub-committee on the progress of their projects which were sponsored under the Thematic Sponsorship Scheme to Support Family-related Initiatives 2022, at its meeting on 15 November 2023. The Support Sub-committee considered that both projects were progressing well and reminded the two organisations to continue to review the feedback of participants so as to ensure the effectiveness of the projects. The other two sponsored organisations, namely Yan Chai Hospital Social Services Department and the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch would report the progress of their projects at the next Support Sub-committee meeting.

(Action: Support Sub-committee)

Item 6 – Any Other Business

15. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m. The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for 13 March 2024 (Wednesday).

Family Council Secretariat
February 2024