

Family Council

Minutes of 21st Meeting held on 20 February 2014

Date: 20 February 2014 (Thursday)
Time: 4:30 p.m.
Venue: Room 2, G/F, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

Attendance

Chairman

Prof SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel

Official Members

Mr TSANG Tak-sing, Secretary for Home Affairs

Mr Kevin YEUNG, Under Secretary for Education

(attended on behalf of Secretary for Education)

Ms Doris CHEUNG, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare)¹

(attended on behalf of Secretary for Labour and Welfare)

Prof WONG Chack-kie, Member (2)/Central Policy Unit (CPU)

(attended on behalf of Head/CPU)

Ex officio Member

Mr CHAN Chun-bun, Bunny, Chairperson of the Commission on Youth

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

Non-official Members

Mrs CHU YEUNG Pak-yu, Patricia

Dr KOONG May-kay, Maggie

Prof LAM Tai-hing

Ms LAW Suk-kwan, Lilian
Mr LEE Luen-fai
Dr LI Sau-hung, Eddy
Ms LOO Shirley Marie Therese
Miss TANG Pui-yee, Phoebe
Dr TSUI Luen-on, Gordon
Miss WONG Siu-ling, Gabriella
Ms YAU Oi-yuen, Irene
Mr YIU Tze-leung, Ivan

Secretary

Ms Aubrey FUNG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs
(Civic Affairs) 2

In attendance

Ms Gracie FOO, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)
Ms Hera CHUM, Principal Assistant Secretary (Special Education &
Kindergarten Education), Education Bureau
Ms Jessica CHENG, Chief Executive Officer (Family Council)

Absent with apologies

Prof CHAN Cheung-ming, Alfred, Chairperson of the Elderly
Commission
Prof AU Kit-fong, Terry
Ms WONG Pik-kiu, Peggy

For agenda item 3

Prof LEUNG Nai-kong, Chairman of the Child Fatality Review Panel
Mr WONG Kwok-ming, Secretary (Review Panel), Social Welfare
Department
Ms MA Sau-ching, Annisa, Chief Social Work Officer (Domestic
Violence), Social Welfare Department

For agenda item 4

Dr Catherine LAM, Consultant Paediatrician, Child Assessment Service,
Department of Health

Mr LAM Bing-chun, Chief Social Work Officer (Rehabilitation and
Medical Social Services)¹, Social Welfare Department

Welcome Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to the 21st meeting of the
Family Council (the Council).

Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 20th meeting of the Family Council

2. The minutes of the 20th meeting were confirmed without
amendments.

Item 2 – Matters Arising from Last Meeting

3. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Council
Secretariat had circulated a paper setting out the views of the Council
on the population policy public consultation document for Members’
information and consideration.

4. Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1) (DSHA(1)) took the
opportunity to brief Members the initiatives which the Council had
taken on board in supporting a pro-family environment –

- (a) the family education package for families with newborn
babies to be launched by the Sub-committee on the
Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education
was part of the idea in engendering a culture of loving
family and sending positive messages on supporting
parenthood; and

- (b) the promotion of family-friendly employment practices was part of the on-going work of the Council. The Council had been organizing the “Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme” on a biennial basis since 2011.

5. On a related note, the Council had put forward the proposal of conducting the study on “The Tenth Phenomenon” (“第十名現象”) in its submission to the Steering Committee on Population Policy in response to the phenomenon of over-emphasizing the academic achievements in the society. DSHA(1) remarked that it was worthwhile for the Council to further develop the idea and explore the possibility of conducting a similar study in Hong Kong in conjunction with the Education Bureau (EDB) and CPU at the Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education.

6. After further deliberations by Members, the Chairman agreed that the Council would continue its endeavour in supporting a pro-family environment, particularly on areas as set out in paragraphs 4 and 5 above.

(Action: the Council Secretariat)

Item 3 – First Report of the Child Fatality Review Panel (Papers FC 3/2014 and FC 4/2014)

7. Upon invitation of the Chairman, Prof LEUNG Nai-kong (Chairman of the Child Fatality Review Panel (the Panel)) took Members through the powerpoint presentation on the First Report of the Panel (the Report). Prof LEUNG explained that the Report covered review of the death cases of 238 children¹ in 2008 and 2009 of both natural and non-natural causes. The Report aimed at raising public awareness and encouraging concerted efforts in preventing avoidable child deaths.

¹ Children is defined as under the age of 18.

8. The presentation covered the highlights of the Report as well as the overview of child death cases reviewed. In gist, the Panel had put forward the following recommendations –

- (a) care of parents and care-givers was considered vital in preventing child death cases;
- (b) public education should be strengthened to raise the awareness of children, parents as well as care-givers on road and home safety issues. On a related note, those who had close contact with children should be more sensitive to any potential risks the children might encounter with a view to providing timely intervention and effective prevention; and
- (c) family life education should be strengthened, so that parents were in a better position to help their children build up resilience in overcoming challenges and adversities in life.

9. Members expressed their views, which were summarized as follows –

- (a) the Report provided a very comprehensive review of child death cases. Besides, recommendations put forward by the Panel gave useful insights on the prevention of child death. Amongst others, family education was considered important, particularly for grass-root families. The Government might consider utilizing maternal and child health centres as a point of intervention;
- (b) another area of concern was the provision of pre-marital education to the prospective couples. The Government should consider strengthening pre-marital education, so that the prospective couples would be more ready to take

up parental responsibilities when they contemplated having children in the future; and

- (c) the observation made by the Report regarding coping abilities of students was agreed. In facing challenges, students were usually observed to be in lack of confidence and resilience. To enhance their coping abilities, life skill training should be further strengthened.

10. The Chairman thanked Prof LEUNG for his presentation and Members for their comments. Members were welcome to give further written comments to the Secretariat for onward transmission to the Panel, if any.

Item 4 – Rehabilitation Services for Pre-School Children (Papers FC 5/2014 and 6/2014)

11. Upon the invitation of the Chairman, Dr Catherine LAM of Department of Health (DH) and Mr LAM Bing-chun of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) briefed Members on the provision of child assessment services by DH and rehabilitation services for pre-school children by SWD respectively, particularly on prevailing situation and relevant statistics.

12. The Chairman thanked Dr LAM and Mr LAM for their presentations and informed the meeting that Dr Maggie KOONG had prepared a submission on “Early Childhood Education and Rehabilitation Service Model” which had been tabled to Members for information. In light of the presentations, Members made the following comments –

- (a) the Government’s endeavour in providing additional 1,471 places in the coming five years (from 2013-14 to 2017-18) for children with special education needs (SEN children) was noted. This notwithstanding, the additional places might not be able to meet the growing demand. Given

early identification and assessment helped enhance the rehabilitation progress of SEN children, there was a genuine need for the Government to step up its efforts in increasing pre-school rehabilitation places;

- (b) while waiting for rehabilitation places, SEN children were usually enrolled in ordinary kindergartens. Consideration should be given to further enhancing in-service teachers' understanding of the SEN children and capability in catering for learning diversity;
- (c) as Early Education and Training Centres (EETCs) targeted to disabled children from birth to the age of six with a view to providing early intervention programmes with particular emphasis on the role of the disabled child's family, the Government should consider setting up more EETCs with a view to making them one-stop community resource centres for needy families;
- (d) to address the concern of different stakeholders, relevant Government departments should adopt a holistic approach by further strengthening their collaboration in establishing an inter-departmental mechanism for formulating a policy on rehabilitation of pre-school children;
- (e) taking the experience of overseas countries into account, the Government should consider empowering parents of the SEN children through collaboration with the non-governmental organisations as well as exploring the option of "peer counsellor", so that better home-based support could be provided to families of SEN children; and
- (f) the Government should explore with the non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on how to make better use of the land owned by NGOs through re-development or in-situ expansion with a view to providing more pre-school rehabilitation places. Manpower shortage of professional

staff was also a matter of concern. It was desirable for the Government to formulate a long-term manpower planning strategy to cope with the steady growing demand for rehabilitation places.

13. Principal Assistant Secretary (Special Education & Kindergarten Education) (PAS(SE&KE)) of EDB provided further supplementary background information on the harmonization of pre-primary services and added that rehabilitation services for children under six, including Integrated Programme² in KG-cum-CCCs were funded under the ambit of SWD. EDB would take note of Members' views on improving the training for kindergarten teachers and continue to organize professional development programmes to enhance kindergarten teachers' capacity in catering for the diverse learning needs of their students. On a related note, EDB had set up the Committee on Free Kindergarten Education (the Committee) in April 2013 to make specific proposals on how to practicably implement free kindergarten education. A sub-committee with representatives from DH and SWD had been set up under the Committee to study how to enhance the support of SEN students in kindergartens.

14. The Chairman thanked PAS(SE&KE) of EDB for her supplementary information and Members' comments. On the basis of the deliberations made at this meeting, the Council Secretariat was invited to prepare a submission to the Chief Secretary for Administration (CS) setting out the views of the Council on the provision of pre-school rehabilitation services. Members were also welcome to give further comments to the Secretariat, so that a consolidated submission could be made to CSO in due course.

(Action: Council Secretariat)

² The programme provides training and care to children aged between two and six with mild disabilities with a view to facilitating their future integration into the mainstream education as well as in the society.

Item 5 – Progress of Work of the Sub-committees (Paper FC 7/2014)

15. The Chairman invited the Convenors of the two Sub-committees to report work progress.

16. Regarding the work progress on the promotion of family core values and family education, Ms Shirley LOO reported that 1,814 companies/organisations had enrolled for the “2013/14 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme”. Upon the completion of the adjudication process in April 2014, the prize presentation ceremony was scheduled to be held on 19 June 2014 (Thur) at Kowloonbay International and Trade Exhibition Centre. On the side of promotion of family education, possibility of production of baby journal to families with new-born babies was also discussed. The Secretariat would seek the views and receptiveness of Members as well as stakeholders before deciding on the way forward.

17. On the Sub-committee on Family Support (the Sub-committee), Mrs Patricia CHU reported that the Sub-committee had given its advice on “Legislative Proposal on Paternity Leave” and “Proposed Amendments to Chinese Permanent Cemeteries Ordinance and Chinese Permanent Cemeteries Rules”. Besides, the Sub-committee had also deliberated on the report of the “Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong” which was endorsed after incorporating Members’ comments.

18. The meeting noted the progress reports made by the Convenors of the two Sub-committees.

Item 6 – Any Other Business

19. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 6:00 p.m. The next meeting would be held on 29 May 2014 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m. at Room 3, G/F, Central Government Offices, Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong.

**Family Council Secretariat
May 2014**