

Family Council
Minutes of 24th Meeting held on 12 February 2015

Date: 12 February 2015 (Thursday)

Time: 3:00 – 5:40 p.m.

Venue: Conference Room 1, G/F, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

Attendance

Chairman

Prof SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel

Official Members

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

Miss Annie TAM, Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (*attended on behalf of Secretary for Labour and Welfare*)

Mr Tony TANG, Deputy Secretary for Education (4) (Acting) (*attended on behalf of Secretary for Education*)

Prof WONG Chack-kie, Member (2)/Central Policy Unit (CPU) (*attended on behalf of Head/CPU*)

Ex-officio Members

Dr 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
Ms LOO Shirley Marie Therese
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 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
Dr LI Sau-hung, Eddy
Miss TANG Pui-yee, Phoebe
Ms WONG Pik-kiu, Peggy

For agenda item 3

Mr CHEUNG Leong, Executive Director, Charities, The Hong Kong
Jockey Club
Ms Imelda CHAN, Executive Manager, Charities, The Hong Kong
Jockey Club
Ms Macy CHUI, Charities Manager, Charities, The Hong Kong Jockey
Club
Ms Alice WAN, Project Administrator of Family Project, School of
Public Health, The University of Hong Kong

Dr Brandford CHAN, Research Officer of Family Project, School of Public Health, The University of Hong Kong

For agenda item 4

Mr LAM Ka-tai, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)

Welcome Remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to the 24th meeting of the Family Council (the Council).

Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 23rd meeting of the Family Council

2. The minutes of the 23rd meeting were confirmed without amendments.

Item 2 – Matters Arising from the previous meeting

3. The Chairman informed the meeting that the Council Secretariat had circulated a progress report to Members for information and consideration. As Members had no further comments, the progress report was endorsed.

Item 3 – Family Project Cohort Study (Paper FC 2/2015)

4. With a view to building a more harmonious society, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (the Trust) had invited the School of Public Health of the University of Hong Kong (HKU) to collaboratively launch a project entitled “The Family Project” since 2007. Amongst other initiatives, a territory-wide household survey was carried out from 2008 to 2014 to (a) examine health, happiness and

harmony (3Hs) at both individual and household levels as well as (b) identify factors associated with changes in 3Hs. Upon invitation of the Chairman, Mr CHEUNG Leong (Executive Director, Charities, The Hong Kong Jockey Club) and Prof LAM Tai-hing (Principal Investigator, Family Project, School of Public Health, HKU) took Members through a powerpoint presentation. In gist, the presentation covered a brief introduction of the survey and its findings on 3Hs, with highlights on specific themes including family support in single-parent families, family harmony in three-generation families as well as work/family conflict in working families. The salient points were covered in the paper FC 2/2015.

5. Following the presentation, Members were invited to give comments which were summarised as follows –

- (a) in line with the findings of the “Family Survey 2013” conducted by the Council, about 90% of the respondents indicated that they were either “very happy” or “happy” and there was family harmony in three-generation families;
- (b) as 20 964 randomly selected households comprising 47 697 participants were involved in the survey, it formed a very representative sample of the Hong Kong general population. Results of the survey provided very good insight and reference for both the Government and relevant non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in planning the provision of family-related services both from a territory-wide and district perspectives. The Project team might explore if comparison with overseas countries could be made as well;
- (c) from the perspective of service providers, the findings not only generated evidence-based data from district perspective, but also longitudinal “social barometer” databank in terms of assessment of 3Hs of Hong Kong’s people. They were useful for identification of service gaps; and

(d) the Trust had played an important role in fostering cross-sectoral collaboration. The “Family Project” collaboratively launched by the Trust and the HKU was one of the successful examples. Apart from providing useful baseline data in understanding the situation of Hong Kong families, it also helped promote the well-being of Hong Kong families. It was also noted that the Trust had provided funding support to continue the “Family Project” with focus on promoting Family Holistic Health through various community-based programme and public education events.

6. Mr CHEUNG of the Trust would take note of the views expressed by Members in planning the programmes under the “Family Project”. He emphasized that promotion of family well-being had always been the work focus of the “Family Project” and reassured Members that the data collected from the territory-wide survey would be shared with relevant stakeholders through reports and web-based Geographic Information System.

7. The Chairman thanked Mr CHEUNG and Prof LAM for their presentations and Members for their comments. Given the wide coverage of the survey, it was worthwhile for the Government to explore with the Trust as well as HKU on how to make better use of the data and support its maintenance, if necessary.

Item 4 – 2015 Policy Address – Family-related Policy Initiatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (Paper FC 3/2015)

8. The Chairman invited the Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (PSLW), Miss Annie TAM, to take Members through a powerpoint presentation on the new family-related policy initiatives under the purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB), particularly on “Low-Income Working Family Allowance”, supporting residents of public rental housing estates with intakes, strengthening

child care services and residential child care services, enhancing after-school care services, follow up on the Law Reform Commission Report on Child Custody and Access, combating domestic violence, paternity leave to eligible male employees as well as publicity and education efforts to encourage wider adoption of family-friendly employment practices. The salient points were covered in the paper FC 3/2015.

9. Before inviting Members' comments, the Chairman briefly recapped the gist of discussion of the Council on pre-school rehabilitation at its 22nd meeting held on 20 February 2014. On the basis of Members' views expressed at the meeting and subsequent supplementary written comments, a letter setting out the views of the Council was submitted to the Chief Secretary for Administration on 27 May 2014. The Chairman was pleased to note that the Government had taken the views of the Council into account and introduced new policy initiatives on pre-school rehabilitation services in the 2015 Policy Address.

10. Regarding pre-school rehabilitation services, Members expressed the following views –

(a) the Government's endeavour in providing some 1 400 places for subvented pre-school rehabilitation services within the current Government's term was noted. While this was a welcomed arrangement, the additional places might not be able to meet the growing demand in the long run. Given the importance of early identification, there was a genuine need for the Government to step up its efforts in increasing pre-school rehabilitation places on a continuous basis;

(b) the Government's initiatives to launch a pilot scheme for providing on-site rehabilitation services (Pilot Scheme)¹

¹ Non-governmental organisations operating subvented pre-school rehabilitation services are invited to provide on-site rehabilitation services for children with special needs who are studying in ordinary kindergartens, or kindergarten-cum-child care centres.

was noted. The implementation of the Pilot Scheme would provide valuable experience and insights in formulating future mode of delivery of pre-school rehabilitation services; and

- (c) with a view to providing more pre-school rehabilitation places in the long run, it was gratifying to note that the Government had taken on board the proposal of the Council concerning the better use of the land owned by NGOs through launching of the “Special Scheme on Privately Owned Sites for Welfare Uses” (the Scheme).

11. Regarding other family-related services under the purview of LWB, Members raised the following comments –

- (a) on strengthening child care services, the initiative in providing 5 000 additional places of Extended Hours Service (EHS) at aided child care centres and kindergarten-cum-child care centres in districts with high demand was praiseworthy. To sustain the initiative, it was desirable for the Government to work out a thorough logistics plan with long-term manpower strategy. Consideration should also be given to explore its interface with the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project;
- (b) in implementing free education in the context of 15-year free education, the Government should adopt a holistic approach by engaging all related bureaux in exploring the integration of relevant services in a comprehensive manner, such as interface with after-school care services;
- (c) in relation to the shortage of paramedical and supporting staff in the welfare sector and increasing demand for services for pre-school rehabilitation, elderly care, child care, etc., it was important for the Government to devise a long-term manpower plan; and

- (d) noting that a consultancy study would be commissioned to formulate the long-term development of child care services in Hong Kong with a view to meeting the needs of the families in Hong Kong, it was advisable for the Government to include the review of the funding mode, mode of operation, manpower plan, etc. in the consultancy study.

12. PSLW thanked Members' views and made the following response –

- (a) in view of the growing demand for pre-school rehabilitation services, the Government would continue its endeavour to provide additional places both in Early Education and Training Centres and Special Child Care Centres;
- (b) increasing the provision of places of EHS was a challenge to the Social Welfare Department (SWD) in terms of implementation. SWD would engage relevant stakeholders to deliberate on the manpower requirement and logistics arrangements;
- (c) it was expected that the consultancy study on child care services would kick start in the fourth quarter of 2015 and Members' comments would be suitably taken into account in the process;
- (d) on the follow-up regarding the Law Reform Commission Report on Child Custody and Access, LWB, the Department of Justice and other relevant Bureaux/departments had already commenced the initial law drafting work to consolidate the provisions dealing with disputes relating to children into one ordinance. LWB would consult the Council on the draft legislation as and when appropriate; and

- (e) with a view to fostering a family-friendly work environment, the Government would invite NGOs to consider establishing work-based child care centres through the Scheme, without compromising social welfare services planned for the projects under the Scheme.

13. The Chairman thanked PSLW for her presentation and showed appreciation of LWB's readiness to embrace challenges in launching proactive family-related initiatives. As a concrete proposal on the Pilot Scheme would be available at a later stage, the Council would give its views on the Pilot Scheme as and when appropriate. Members were also welcome to give further written comments to the Secretariat, if any.

Item 5 – Progress of Work of the Sub-committees under the Family Council (Paper FC 4/2015).

14. The Chairman invited the Convenors of the Family Support Sub-committee (FS Sub-committee) and the Sub-committee on Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education (PR&FE Sub-committee) to report work progress.

15. On the work of the FS Sub-committee, Mrs Patricia CHU reported that the FS Sub-committee had deliberated on the scope of the research on "Family Studies in Hong Kong: A Summary Analysis and Annotated Bibliography" as well as "Family Survey 2015". Regarding the 20th Anniversary of the International Year of the Family, Mrs CHU reported that all the programmes had been successfully organised with favourable response.

16. As far as the work progress on the promotion of family core values and family education was concerned, Mrs Shirley LOO reported that the PR&FE Sub-committee had reviewed the family education package with new-born babies (the package) produced by the Boys' &

Girls' Clubs Association of Hong Kong and was pleased with its content as well as the presentation. The package would be available for release in March 2015. Besides, the PR&FE Sub-committee had also examined the family education package for new arrival families which would be ready for release in June 2015.

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

Item 6 – Any Other Business

18. In response to the Chairman's concern on the efforts of NGOs and the Government in resolving family conflicts after the Occupy Movement (the Movement), Ms Shirley LOO² and Mr Ivan YIU³ shared their relevant work experience and insights. Both pointed out that resolution of family conflicts was always an important work agenda of NGOs and shared that the Movement, to a certain extent, brought up the inadequacy of trans-generational communication, particularly parent-child communication. To address the problem of family conflict, the community should put all relevant issues into perspective. It was an opportune time for the community to reflect the roles of parents in nurturing their children as well as the need of trans-generational transmission, particularly on important family core values, such as filial piety.

19. As far as the efforts of the Council were concerned, the Secretary briefed Members that the Council would continue its endeavour to advocate cherishing the family as a main driver for social harmony. In 2015-16, the Council would launch a large-scale publicity campaign “家·多一點愛” in collaboration with Radio 2 and ETV online of RTHK. Deputy Secretary for Education (4)

² Ms Shirley LOO is currently the Director of Family Heartware (NGO specialising in family education).

³ Mr Ivan YIU is currently the Community Services Secretary of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, with nearly 180 community services centres.

supplemented that the Education Bureau would continue to reinforce family core values through the platform of home-school co-operation.

20. Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs also remarked that the Government attached great importance to the work in easing tension in the society after the Movement. In bringing positive thinking to the community, it was appropriate for the Council to take the lead in launching large-scale publicity campaign to promote family core values across generations, including elderly and youth in 2015.

21. On a related note, Members expressed their views which were summarised as follows –

- (a) it was noted that many social problems could trace their roots back to the family. Better family relationships meant fewer social problems. Towards this end, it was important to strengthen the function of family. Consideration could be given to enhance parent and family education, particularly on communication competencies of parents as well as conflict resolution within the family;
- (b) as Hong Kong was predominantly a Chinese society, the importance of traditional family core values should not be overlooked. In this connection, NGOs and schools alike should consider organising more programmes to promote family core values to echo the efforts of the Government in maximising synergistic impact; and
- (c) the Movement indicated that it was the pursuit of ideal which drove the youth to participate in political affairs. To address their concerns, both the society and parents should have new mindset in listening to their voices. It was also worth exploring to widen the opportunities for the youth's participation in public affairs.

22. The Chairman thanked Ms LOO and Mr YIU for their sharing and Members for their views. To further strengthen education on conflict management within the family, the Chairman invited the PR &FE Sub-committee to brainstorm more ideas.

(Action: PR & FE Sub-committee)

23. There being no other business, the meeting adjourned at 5:40 p.m. The next meeting would be held on 26 May 2015 (Tuesday) at 2:30 p.m. at Conference Room 3, G/F, Central Government Offices, Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong.

Family Council Secretariat
May 2015