

## Family Council

### Minutes of 15<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 9 February 2012

Date: 9 February 2012 (Thursday)

Time: 3:00 p.m.

Venue: Room 2509, 25/F, Central Government Offices,  
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

#### Attendance

##### Official Members

Mr Stephen LAM, Chief Secretary for Administration (Chairman)

Mr TSANG Tak-sing, Secretary for Home Affairs

Mr Matthew CHEUNG, Secretary for Labour & Welfare

Mrs Cherry TSE, Permanent Secretary for Education (*attended on behalf of Secretary for Education*)

Prof LEE Ming Kwan, Member (2)/Central Policy Unit (*attended on behalf of Head/Central Policy Unit*)

##### Ex officio Members

Prof CHAN Cheung-Ming, Chairperson of the Elderly Commission

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

Mr CHOW Yung, Robert

Dr KOONG May-kay, Maggie

Ms LAI Fung-yee, Angelina

Ms LAW Suk-kwan, Lilian

Dr LEE Wai-yung

Dr LI Sau-hung, Eddy

Ms LOO Shirley Marie Therese

Dr PANG King-chee

Prof SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel

Dr WONG Chung-kwong

Prof WONG Po-choi

Ms WONG Pik-kiu, Peggy

Ms YAU Oi-yuen, Irene  
Mr YIU Tze-leung

Secretary

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

In attendance

Mr CHENG Yan-chee, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)  
Dr CHEUNG Kwok-wah, Principal Assistant Secretary for Education  
(Curriculum Development)  
Mr Bruno LUK, Administrative Assistant to Chief Secretary for  
Administration  
Mr Gilford LAW, Press Secretary to Chief Secretary for Administration  
Mr Michael KWAN, Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (2)1  
Ms Jessica CHENG, Chief Executive Officer (Family Council), Home  
Affairs Bureau

For agenda item 4 – Report of the Family Survey 2011 - Preliminary  
Findings

Mr YIP Hak-kwong, Director of Policy 21  
Ms Ruby LO Tsz-fung, Deputy Director of Policy 21

For agenda item 6 – Any Other Business

Mr Tony TANG, Principal Assistant Secretary for Education (Support  
Services)  
Dr Shirley LEUNG, Assistant Director of Health (Family and Elderly  
Health Services)

**Welcoming Remarks**

The Chairman welcomed all to the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the  
Family Council, in particular the newly appointed ex officio member,  
Mrs LAU KUN Lai-kuen, Stella, who was serving on the Family  
Council in her capacity as the Chairperson of the Women's Commission.

## **Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Family Council**

2. The minutes of the 14<sup>th</sup> meeting were confirmed without amendments.

## **Item 2 – Matters Arising from Last Meeting**

3. The Chairman informed the meeting that the progress report on matters arising from last meeting had been circulated to Members for information. Members noted the progress report.

## **Item 3 – Measures in Support of the Policy Directions Arising from Findings of the Four Thematic Studies on Youth Prostitution, Youth Drug Abuse, Elderly Neglect and Child Neglect (Paper FC 1/2012)**

4. The Convenor of the Subcommittee on Family Support, Prof Daniel SHEK presented the paper, highlighting the salient points of the studies and the Administration's implementation of relevant measures.

5. The Chairman invited Members' views on the implementation of relevant measures in support of the policy directions. Members' comments were summarized as follows -

- (a) promotion of family core values was of paramount importance as the cultivation of proper values would bring positive and long-term influence to the development of families. In view of its importance, the Government should take a leading role in the promotion of family core values, alongside with the implementation of other family-related initiatives;
- (b) regarding the measures to support the policy direction of "Family engagement", Hong Kong could draw reference from the successful experience of overseas countries, such as the offer of concessionary rates to family for public transport

and recreational venues, and explore the way forward. Another viable option worth considering was the introduction of the “Family Impact Assessment” in the policy formulation process. It enabled the Government to assess the impact of the policies might have on families;

- (c) to maximise the synergistic impact, a cross-sectoral approach in devising new family-focused measures should be adopted. Not only was it important to devise new measures, but it was equally essential for the Government to consider how to enhance and consolidate existing measures through collaboration with different stakeholders;
- (d) a sectoral approach was usually adopted in implementing family-related measures, especially at the district level. To better support the new policy directions, it was high time for the Family Council to consider playing a leading role in formulating forward looking family-related strategies/measures for territory-wide adoption in the future. Besides, the Government should also explore an effective point of intervention for implementing such family-related initiatives. The Maternal and Child Health Centres might be a suitable platform;
- (e) the preliminary findings of the Family Survey 2011 indicated that about 15 per cent of the respondents were dissatisfied with their family life. In formulating the family-focused measures, the Government should attempt to identify the specific causes leading to their dissatisfaction and examine if sufficient resources had been put in place to address their problems;
- (f) with a view to bringing about a substantive and positive transformation, awareness of the problem alone might not be sufficient to solve the problems involved. The Government should draw up implementable action plans to address the problems;

- (g) strengthening family education was an effective measure to support the policy direction of “Preventive strategy”. The Government should consider whether special attention was required for specific target groups, such as the disadvantaged families and Mainland-Hong Kong families;
- (h) given the increasing number of Mainland-Hong Kong families, the Government might consider giving more resources to provide family/parent education for these families. Besides, the Government should also take their special circumstances into account in devising pertinent measures on family/parent education that suited their needs. For this type of families, it was not uncommon that the parents were not residing in Hong Kong and as such, the relatives (e.g. grandparents) of the children took up the guardianship role. In order to enable more families to receive family/parent education, the Government should expand the target recipients of the courses by including “guardians”;
- (i) under the existing practice, it was quite common that mother, instead of father, attended the family/parent education courses. As gender stereotype might have adverse influence on the functioning of the family, a review on the mode of delivery should be carried out; and
- (j) consolidation of existing measures in support of the new policy directions to combat the social problems was important. Although cultivating proper family core values was an imperceptible process involving cross-sectoral collaboration, consideration might be given to deploying more resources to support stakeholders in taking forward worthwhile family-related initiatives.

6. The Chairman thanked Members for their constructive and useful views and made the following concluding remarks for relevant bureaux/departments (B/Ds) to follow up -

- (a) the Government had a role to play in implementing family-focused measures in support of the new policy directions. Owing to limited resources, the measures should be specific, focused, targeted and actionable. In supporting the policy direction of “Family engagement”, the offer of concessionary rates to families for recreational venues and public transport should be further encouraged and explored. While the development of a pro-family environment should not be the sole domain of the Government, the Family Council and the Home Affairs Bureau should consider how to actively promote family core values across different sectors and gainfully utilize the resources allocated to the Family Council and leverage through the work of the non-governmental organisations (NGOs);

(Action: Transport and Housing Bureau,  
Home Affairs Bureau)

- (b) both holistic and sectoral approaches should be adopted in implementing measures to support the new policy directions. In evaluating their effectiveness, the measurement of qualitative aspect might not be easy and would involve complications. This notwithstanding, it might still be desirable for B/Ds to set performance indicators as a tool for monitoring the effectiveness of the measures; and
- (c) family education should be further strengthened. Taking Members’ view into account, a new perspective on the promotion of family education should be introduced, such as the promotion of family education to Mainland-Hong Kong families and the inclusion of “guardians” as the target recipients of parent education.

7. Members noted the measures in support of the policy directions. The Subcommittee on Family Support would keep in view the long-term strategies to implement these policy directions and

report to the Family Council when necessary.

(Action: Subcommittee on Family Support)

**Item 4 – Report of the Family Survey 2011 – Preliminary Findings  
(Paper FC 2/2012)**

8. The Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1) briefed Members on the background of the Family Survey 2011 (the Survey) and introduced Mr YIP Hak-kwong, Director of Policy 21, to present the preliminary findings of the Survey. In gist, the presentation covered the findings on the current state of Hong Kong families in a wide range of areas covering attitudes on family core values, marriage and divorce, work-life balance, parenthood, family functioning, satisfaction with family life and respondents' awareness of family-related programmes.

9. The Chairman and Members expressed appreciation for the comprehensive and detailed coverage of the Survey and remarked that it was a good attempt for the Family Council to take a proactive step to embark on a territory-wide survey in understanding and gathering empirical information on the current state of Hong Kong families. The Chairman invited Members' views on the preliminary findings for further enhancement of the final report. In response, Members expressed the following views -

- (a) the findings of the Survey provided many useful insights and empirical data on how to strengthen family education, such as limited communication time with family members and the need for a role model;
- (b) to enable the Family Council to have a better understanding on the public's attitude towards divorce, it would be useful if the future survey could extend the coverage by including questions to ascertain respondents' attitude on counseling services;

- (c) the findings revealed that more than half of the respondents spent less than thirty minutes with their fathers in a week, indicating that communication with family members was in general limited. The situation was quite alarming and should be addressed;
- (d) in understanding the problem of communication, the development of information and technology should be taken into account as more and more people relied on computers or mobile devices as the means of communication;
- (e) the findings indicated that most respondents would seek assistance from family and friends in case of emotional problems. To reflect a holistic picture, the Survey should also cover the availability of assistance from the Government and/or NGOs;
- (f) insofar as satisfaction with family life was concerned, it would be useful if the Survey could cover the comparison with overseas countries for benchmarking purpose. On a related note, the Survey also attempted to analyse satisfaction with family life from the occupational perspective, which revealed that some occupational groups were less satisfied with their family life. For a more in-depth analysis, the Survey should also ascertain if long working hours had adversely affected the respondents' attitude on satisfaction with family life;
- (g) inter-generational relationship was also a matter of concern. If the scope and coverage of the present Survey did not include inter-generational relationship, it might be desirable to extend the scope of the future survey to cover this aspect and examine if the importance of filial piety was deteriorating; and
- (h) in view of the useful observations gained, the Survey should be carried out on a regular basis, so that the Family Council

would be in a better position to keep track of the development of Hong Kong families.

10. The Chairman thanked Members for their useful comments on the preliminary findings of the Family Survey 2011. To conclude, the Chairman made the following remarks -

- (a) both horizontal (comparison with overseas countries) and vertical (in-depth examination) analyses should be included in the final report of the Survey;
- (b) the findings on communication with family members was insightful. To improve communication among family members, strengthening of family education was necessary. Furthermore, it was noted that in assessing communication, a wider interpretation of communication should be adopted in the future survey to take into account the development of information technology;
- (c) attitude on divorce was an issue warranting special attention. Statistics had shown that the number of divorce in Hong Kong was on the rise in the past few decades. Not only would it lead to disintegration of families, it would also create irrevocable damages to family. To facilitate a better understanding on the extent of the problem, it was advisable for the Family Council to carry out an in-depth research on divorce; and
- (d) the Central Policy Unit (CPU) and Prof Daniel SHEK, Convenor of the Subcommittee on Family Support, were invited to work together to conduct focus groups to probe the meaning and implications of the Survey findings. The CPU should also make use of the opportunity to formulate action plans arising from the focus group discussions for the Family Council's consideration.

11. Members noted the preliminary findings of the Survey. The full report would be submitted to the Subcommittee on Family Support

for endorsement after incorporating Members' comments. The Subcommittee would also follow up to devise the strategies to take forward the recommendations.

(Action: CPU, Subcommittee on Family Support)

### **Item 5 – Progress of Work of the Subcommittees under the Family Council (Paper FC 3/2012)**

12. The Convenors of the three Subcommittees reported the progress of work of the Subcommittees. The winning entry of the “愛多啲一家人” video competition under the “Open Category” was shown to Members for information. The meeting also noted that the winning videos would be widely broadcast through different channels.

### **Item 6 – Any Other Business**

13. The Chairman informed the meeting that Dr Maggie KOONG had requested to discuss a proposal on “early education” (“早教”), and her proposal had been circulated to Members.

14. Dr KOONG briefed Members on the background of “early education” (for children aged between 0 to 3). In particular, she was impressed by the implementation of structured “early education” in Shanghai under which parents and children could receive parent education and pre-nursery education respectively. She further proposed that the Government should take the lead in promoting “early education” in Hong Kong, such as the development of the resource portal for “early education”.

15. The Chairman thanked Dr KOONG for her introduction and invited the Subcommittee on Family Education to further deliberate the proposal and submit a paper for consideration by the Family Council at the next meeting.

(Action: Subcommittee on Family Education)

16. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m. The next meeting would be held on 7 June 2012 (Thursday) at 3:00 p.m.

**Family Council Secretariat  
March 2012**