

**Family Council**  
**Minutes of 16<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 7 June 2012**

Date: 7 June 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 and Welfare  
Mrs Michelle WONG, Deputy Secretary for Education (*attended on behalf of Secretary for Education*)  
Prof LAU Siu-kai, 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  
Ms LAI Fung-ye, 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 YAU Oi-yuen, Irene  
Mr YIU Tze-leung

Secretary

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

In attendance

Mr Raymond YOUNG, Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs  
Mr CHENG Yan-chee, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)  
Mr Bruno LUK, Administrative Assistant to Chief Secretary for  
Administration  
Mr Gilford LAW, Press Secretary to Chief Secretary for Administration  
Dr Florence FONG, Senior Researcher/Central Policy Unit  
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 – Consultancy Study on Family Education

Prof CHAN Yuk-chung, Professor of the Polytechnic University of  
Hong Kong  
Mr CHUNG Cho-pang, Research Executive of the Polytechnic  
University of Hong Kong

Absent with apologies

Dr KOONG May-kay, Maggie  
Ms WONG Pik-kiu, Peggy

**Welcoming Remarks**

The Secretary for Home Affairs welcomed all to the 16<sup>th</sup>  
meeting of the Family Council. He explained that as the Chief  
Secretary for Administration (CS) had another urgent commitment, he  
would chair the meeting for the time being.

## **Item 1 – Confirmation of Minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Family Council**

2. The minutes of the 15<sup>th</sup> meeting were confirmed without amendments.

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

3. The Secretary for Home Affairs 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 – Progress of Work of the Family Council (Paper FC 4/2012)**

4. The Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1) (DSHA(1)) briefed Members on the background of the paper. Arising from the discussion at the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Welfare Services meeting on 12 March 2012, the Administration was requested to provide a brief account of the work progress of the Family Council (the Council) since its establishment in 2007. DSHA(1) highlighted the major areas of work that the Council had accomplished since its establishment as well as the way forward.

5. The Secretary for Home Affairs invited Members' views on the paper. Members' comments were summarized as follows –

- (a) the paper gave a detailed account on the work done by the Council in the past years. That said, the role of the Council as a high-level platform for examining family-related policies and promoting a culture of loving families in the community should be highlighted as well;

- (b) the terms of reference of the Council provided useful benchmark to take stock of the work progress of the Council. Due weight should be given to examining how the Council had fulfilled its role in advising the Government on the formulation of strategies for supporting and strengthening the family;
- (c) given the fact that the formulation and implementation of family-related programmes involved collaborations of different bureaux and departments (B/Ds) as well as relevant sectors, the progress report should set out the co-ordination and collaborations between the Council and B/Ds as well as major stakeholders;
- (d) notwithstanding the fact that the progress report had given a factual account of the deliverables of the Council in the past years, it was important that some major achievements accomplished (e.g. the “2011 Family-friendly Employers Award Scheme” and its promotional efforts in promoting family core values) should be given prominent highlights. Besides, consideration should be given to presenting the progress report with some touching stories of families so that the achievements could be easily identified by members of the public;
- (e) the progress report should also set out the strategic directions that the Council was driving at and the support measures implemented by relevant B/Ds in support of those strategic directions; and
- (f) in elaborating the Council’s efforts and achievements in creating a pro-family environment, more concrete examples should be given to support how family perspectives had been taken into account in the process of policy/programmes formulation. In view of its importance, the promotion of family perspective in policy formulation by B/Ds should be

highlighted as a way forward of the Council.

6. The Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs thanked Members for their valuable views and responded that the role of the Council on the formulation of family-related policies and programmes in the past years was to advocate rather than direct the consideration of family perspectives among B/Ds. He shared the concerns raised by Members and agreed that the progress report should be beefed up by incorporating the major achievements, examples and illustrations on how the family perspectives had been taken into account in the process of policy/programme formulation as well as on collaborations among various stakeholders in promoting family core values and creating a pro-family environment.

7. The Secretariat would refine the paper in the light of Members' comments before submission to the LegCo Welfare Services Panel.

(Action: Council Secretariat)

[Post-meeting note: An information paper entitled "Progress of Work of the Family Council" was submitted to the LegCo Welfare Services Panel on 16 July 2012.]

(CS resumed chairmanship of the meeting at this juncture.)

**Item 4 – Consultancy Study on Family Education (Paper FC 5/2012)**

8. Prof WONG Po-choi, Convenor of the Subcommittee on Family Education, briefed Members on the background of the Consultancy Study on Family Education (the Study) and introduced Prof CHAN Yuk-chung of the Polytechnic University of Hong Kong to present the preliminary findings and recommendations. In gist, the presentation covered the major preliminary findings on the current framework on family education, studies of overseas countries,

landscape studies, recommendations as well as the proposed framework for family education.

9. The Chairman and Members expressed appreciation on the detailed coverage of the Study and remarked that it was a good attempt for the Council to embark on a study in (a) understanding the current framework on family education; (b) identifying the gaps; and (c) proposing a framework on family education provisions for different stages of family life. The Chairman invited Members' comments on the preliminary findings and recommendations for further enhancement of the final report. In response, Members expressed the following views –

- (a) the objective of promoting family education in advocating and cherishing the family as a driver for social harmony should be explicitly specified in the Study. The promotion of family core values and moral values were issues that should not be overlooked as the cultivation of proper values would bring positive and sustainable influence to the development of families. These elements should be suitably incorporated into the modules of the proposed framework on family education. To assess the effectiveness of individual module, the proposed framework should include an evaluation mechanism on the results and outcome;
- (b) in the process of formulating the proposed modules of family education in different life stages, the Study Team should explore and identify effective points of intervention for implementing different modules;
- (c) taking into account the multifarious needs of families, a one-size-fit-all approach might not be appropriate for adoption in Hong Kong. Extra care should be exercised in formulating the proposed framework on family education which should be evidence-based;

- (d) to sufficiently address the needs of different forms of families in different situations, promotion of family education should adopt a multi-layered approach. Provision of family education to specific types of family including abusive-parent and single-parent families should be addressed in the Study;
- (e) the Study noted the difficulties faced by market players. However, recommendations put forward by the Study Team focused too much on funding support, which might over-simplify the issues involved. In order to have a better understanding of the problems and proposed solutions, the Study Team should provide more information and evidence to substantiate its recommendations;
- (f) the Study pointed out that the “paradox of family education” was one of the major issues which required attention. Realizing that the participants who took part in family education programmes were usually not the ones who needed them most, the Government should exercise care in the allocation of resources in order to avoid overlapping of provision of services. Apart from the “paradox of family education”, the lack of competent professionals in implementing family education programmes was another area that required special attention; and
- (g) insofar as the recommendations were concerned, the focus was on the role of the Government in promoting family education. This notwithstanding, the Study should point out that the responsibility of an individual was equally important in fostering harmonious family relationship.

10. In response to the remarks made by Members, the Convenor of the Subcommittee on Family Education clarified that the Study aimed at mapping out the current position on the provision of family education programmes and services for consideration by the Council and proposing a framework on family education, so that guidance could

be given to different service operators of various sectors in developing family education in Hong Kong. The proposed framework on family education was intended to be dynamic. It would be regularly fine-tuned, taking into account the changing needs of the society.

11. The Secretary for Labour and Welfare informed Members that “Family Life Education” (FLE) was one of the major services provided by the Social Welfare Department (SWD). FLE, both preventive and development in nature, aimed to enhance family functioning by helping family members to fulfill their roles and to strengthen family bonds. SWD, through the Integrated Family Service Centres, would continue its endeavour in promoting family life education and reaching those who had a genuine need for FLE.

(Action: SWD)

12. The Chairman thanked Members for their useful comments on the preliminary findings and recommendations of the Study. To conclude, the Chairman made the following remarks -

- (a) the Study highlighted that only a small percentage of family education programmes (less than five percent) catered for separated/divorced families and new arrival families. Noting the existing gap, he encouraged the non-governmental organizations, as one of the major service providers on family education, to take proactive steps in providing more family education for these types of families;
- (b) recognizing the difficulties and practicability in implementing an accreditation system for family education, the Subcommittee on Family Education should further examine the issue in the light of the experience of Australia and other overseas countries; and

(Action: Subcommittee on Family Education)



- (c) the Education Bureau, Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) and the Labour and Welfare Bureau were tasked to study the report in greater detail and explore how to transform the recommendations into implementable action plans in their respective schedules for report to the Council in due course.

(Action: HAB to co-ordinate among B/Ds)

13. Members noted the preliminary findings and recommendations of the Study. The full report would be submitted to the Subcommittee on Family Education for endorsement after incorporating Members' comments.

#### **Item 5 – Action Plans of the 2011 Family Survey (Paper FC 6/2012)**

14. The Senior Researcher of the Central Policy Unit (CPU) was invited to brief Members on the gist of the focus group discussions arising from the 2011 Family Survey and the proposed action plans. The Chairman invited Members' views on the paper. Members' comments were summarized as follows -

- (a) strengthening of family life education was important. Recognising that the nature of the FLE was primarily preventive, it might be a subjective perception of describing FLE as outdated and lagging behind the social change in Hong Kong;
- (b) the Council should have a holistic perspective of the issues involved in considering how to take forward the action plans. Besides, it was worth noting that the role of the Council should be that of a facilitator, instead of a service provider;
- (c) the establishment of a "Family Development Fund" would encourage relevant stakeholders to initiate a wide range of family-related programmes in the community. That said, other considerations including strategic directions of the

Government and the proper allocation of resources to those in need were equally important; and

- (d) in proposing the establishment of a funding scheme, its objectives, focus and strategic direction should be clearly specified. An evaluation mechanism was necessary to evaluate the cost-effectiveness of the funding scheme.

15. The Chairman thanked Members for their comments on the proposed action plans arising from the 2011 Family Survey. To conclude, the Chairman made the following remarks -

- (a) it was noted that the Family Council had conducted quite a number of surveys and researches on family-related subjects in the past. In the light of these findings, the Government should explore how to make use of the data and findings and transform them into coherent implementable action plans;

(Action: CPU and HAB to co-ordinate among B/Ds)

- (b) the establishment of a “Family Development Fund” would provide sponsorship to stakeholders for organising worthwhile family-related initiatives. The Government would bid the necessary resources under the Resource Allocation Exercise if appropriate;

(Action: HAB)

- (c) as regards the proposed action plans on strengthening of family life education, they had been deliberated in the context of the consultancy study on family education. Relevant B/Ds had been tasked to map out the way forward; and

(Action: HAB to co-ordinate among B/Ds)

- (d) to avoid duplication of resources, the Council should not be involved in the provision of family-related services. It should provide strategic directions and co-ordination among B/Ds on formulation of family policies and measures.

16. Members noted the proposed action plans. Follow-up action would be taken up by relevant B/Ds as appropriate.

### **Item 6 – Proposal on Early Education (Paper FC 7/2012)**

17. Prof WONG Po-choi, Convenor of the Subcommittee on Family Education briefed Members on the deliberations by the Subcommittee on Family Education on the proposal on “early education” raised by Dr Maggie KOONG in the light of the successful experience in Shanghai.

18. In gist, the Subcommittee on Family Education considered that the existing regulatory framework and provision of services were adequate in addressing the needs of both parents and children before the age of three. As such, it was considered not necessary to institutionalize the implementation of “early education” at this stage.

19. Members noted the deliberations of the Subcommittee on Family Education on the proposal of “early education”.

### **Item 7 – Progress of Work of the Subcommittees under the Family Council (Paper FC 8/2012)**

20. The meeting noted the progress reports made by the Convenors of the three Subcommittees.

### **Item 8 – Any Other Business**

21. As it was the last Council meeting of the present term of Government, the Chairman thanked Members for their valuable contributions during the past few years.

22. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m. Members would be informed of the date of next meeting in due course.

**Family Council Secretariat  
July 2012**