

Family Council
Notes of 7th Meeting

Date: 24 September 2009 (Thursday)

Time: 3 p.m.

Venue: Conference Room (Room 1220), CGO, West Wing

Attendance

Official Members

Mr Henry TANG, Chief Secretary for Administration (Chairman)

Mr TSANG Tak-sing, Secretary for Home Affairs

Mr Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung, Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mrs Betty IP, Deputy Secretary for Education (3)
(attend on behalf of SED)

Prof LEE Ming-kwan, Member (2)/Central Policy Unit
(attend on behalf of H/CPU)

Ex-officio Members

Ms KAO Ching-chi, Sophia (高靜芝女士), Chairperson of the Women's Commission

Dr the Hon LEONG Chi-hung, Edward (梁智鴻議員), Chairperson of the Elderly Commission

Mr CHAN Chung-bun, Bunny (陳振彬先生), Chairperson of the Commission on Youth

Non-official Members

1. Mr CHOW Yung, Robert (周融先生)
2. Ms LAI Fung-yee, Angelina (黎鳳儀女士)
3. Dr LEE Wai-yung (李維榕教授)
4. Mr LEONG Kwok-kuen, Lincoln (梁國權先生)
5. Mrs Justina LEUNG NGAI Mou-yin (梁魏懋賢女士)
6. Dr KOONG May-kay, Maggie (孔美琪博士)
7. Mrs KWAN HO Shiu-fong, Cecilia (關何少芳女士)
8. Dr PANG King-chee (彭敬慈博士)
9. Ms TAO Chee-ying, Theresa (杜子瑩女士)
10. Dr WONG Chung-kwong (黃重光醫生)
11. Prof WONG Po-choi (黃寶財教授)
12. Mr WONG Ying-wai, Wilfred (王英偉先生)

Absent with apologies

Ms CHAU Chuen-heung (周轉香女士)

Prof SHEK Tan-lei, Daniel (石丹理教授)

Secretary

Miss Christine CHOW, Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (Civic Affairs)²

In attendance

Ms Grace LUI, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)

Ms Sally WONG, Commissioner for Narcotics (*Item 2 only*)

Mrs Susan MAK, Deputy Secretary for Food & Health (Health)¹ (*Item 3 only*)

Mr Kirk YIP, Acting Principal Assistant Secretary (Health)² (*Item 3 only*)

Dr Deacons YEUNG, Deputising Chief Manager (Cluster Performance), Hospital Authority (*Item 3 only*)

Ms Vivian SUM, Administrative Assistant to Chief Secretary for Administration

Ms Doris LUI, Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (2)^{SD}

Ms Elaine MAK, Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (2)¹

Mr LAU Cheuk-kwan, Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (2)³

Ms Grace PAT, Senior Executive Officer (2)

Welcoming remarks

The Chairman welcomed all to the 7th meeting of the Family Council.

Item 1 – Confirmation of minutes of the 6th meeting of the Family Council

2. The minutes of the 6th meeting of the Council were confirmed without amendments.

Item 2 – Youth Drug Abuse in Hong Kong (Paper FC 4/2009 and Paper FC 5/2009)

3. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Commissioner for Narcotics briefed Members on Youth Drug Abuse in Hong Kong and the progress of the preparation of the Trial Scheme on School Drug Testing in Tai Po District. The scheme would strengthen the resolve of the majority of students who had not taken any drugs to continue to stay away from drugs, and would help motivate those students abusing drugs to quit drugs and seek help. As the primary objectives of the scheme are prevention and provision of support for students, but not investigation of drug offences, the privacy of students would be further protected. As such, police would not be provided with the personal information of the students obtained under the scheme for follow-up action.

4. Deputy Secretary for Education (3) supplemented that prior written consent of both the students and parents would be obtained at the same time regardless of the students' age. In case of questions, school teachers would explain the details of the Scheme to both the students and parents. Nevertheless, students' wishes would be respected if they did not want to participate in the drug testing for various reasons, such as illness.

5. In the light of presentation given by the Commissioner for Narcotics on the trial scheme on school drug testing, Members made the following comments –

- (a) Through the joint cooperation of the Government and various stakeholders, Members noted that the efforts spent on the anti-drug campaign were bearing fruits and demonstrated the resolve of the community in tackling the youth drug problem. Sustained efforts should be made to keep up the momentum of the campaign;
- (b) Members noted the merits in not providing the Police with the personal information of the students obtained under the scheme for follow-up action, and noted that the list of participants was to be kept confidential and only accessible to

those who had a need-to-know;

- (c) Whilst students' wishes need to be given due respect, Members opined that parents should be kept closely informed of their children's consent so as to ensure that no students would stay away from the scheme without consulting their parents;
- (d) Participation from professionals such as social workers in the scheme was important so as to provide counselling to help students to stay away from drugs. Close cooperation from other stakeholders such as parents, teachers and the Police was equally important to ensure success of the scheme;
- (e) Apart from conducting drug tests in schools, initiatives which aimed at early prevention were important in the battle against youth drug abuse. Towards this end, the dissemination of positive life and family values should be stepped up, and the Family Council could consider ways to, for example, further facilitate cross-generational communication and sharing of experiences amongst different families and stakeholders to enhance support for parents, families and the youth, and help instill positive values amongst the Hong Kong families to say no to drugs;
- (f) To ensure the effectiveness and to maximise the impact of the school drug test trial scheme, consideration could be given to implementing the scheme on a sustained basis and to apply school drug test in other districts in the long run, so as to reinforce the anti-drug message and avoid giving the public a false impression that the scheme was merely a one-off operation.

6. The Chairman thanked Members for their valuable advice, and concluded that the Administration would continue to step up and sustain efforts of the anti-drug campaign.

Item 3 - Issues relating to Mainland-HKSAR Families (Paper FC 6/2009)

7. Deputy Secretary for Food and Health (Health) 1 briefed Members on the arrangements for the use of obstetric services by Mainland women whose spouses were Hong Kong residents.

8. Members noted that the objectives of the obstetric service arrangements were to ensure that local pregnant women were given proper obstetric services and priority to use such services; to limit the number of non-local pregnant women coming to Hong Kong to give births to a level that could be supported by the healthcare system in Hong Kong; and to deter the dangerous behavior of non-local pregnant women in seeking emergency hospital admissions through the Accident and Emergency Departments for delivery shortly before labor.

9. Members were aware that from the family perspective, there might be expectation from the concern groups and certain sectors of the community that the Government should consider to provide “special” treatment to non-local pregnant women whose husbands were Hong Kong residents, for example, a “two-tier” obstetric service charge for those whose spouses were Hong Kong residents and those with no marital ties in Hong Kong.

10. Noting that under the existing policy, all non-local pregnant women were not eligible for public obstetric services at a heavily subsidised rate, including two-way permit holders whose spouses were Hong Kong residents, Members recognised the need to balance the “family” angle against existing policy objectives and considerations, and on balance, they generally supported the fundamental principle that Hong Kong residents should be given proper and adequate obstetric service taking into account that public resources were finite, and that under the existing health care policy, eligibility for highly subsidised public healthcare services, including obstetric services, was restricted to Hong Kong residents.

11. Members noted that the eligibility for one-way permit applications of separated spouses was further relaxed in 2009, thereby shortening the waiting time from five years in 2005 to four years. In addition, the unused places under the sub-quota for long-separated spouses had since 2001 been allocated to spouses separated for a shorter period and their accompanying children. Members opined that considerations should not be confined to the eligibility issue alone, but also the well-being and long-term needs of these families. Towards this end, Members noted the importance of upholding the existing policy objectives to maintain a proper “firewall” or “threshold” to protect the interests of Hong Kong residents. Members opined that without compromising the long-term sustainability of the social services having regard to the resources and implications on the public services, the Administration could keep in view the provision of support services for and the needs of Mainland-HKSAR families in the context of the population policy.

12. The Chairman thanked Members for the views expressed and concluded that there was a need to balance consideration of a multitude of factors, and to ensure the long-term sustainability of social services in a holistic manner. In this respect, the implementation of the existing obstetric service arrangement for non-local women was effective and no review was considered necessary at this stage.

Item 4 - The Happy Family Campaign

13. Members noted the promotional activities planned to be launched in the coming year to enhance the promotion of family core values.

Item 5 – Any Other Business

14. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:30 p.m.

Item 6 – Date of Next Meeting

15. The next Council meeting would be held on 17 December 2009 (Thursday) at 3 p.m. at the same venue.

Family Council secretariat
November 2009