

**For discussion on
23 May 2013**

Paper FC 6/2013

**Reconstitution of the Sub-committees
and Work Plan of the Family Council in 2013/14**

PURPOSE

This paper seeks Members' comments on the reconstitution of the sub-committees and work plan of the Family Council (the Council) in 2013/14.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE, MODUS OPERANDI AND FOCUS OF
THE FAMILY COUNCIL**

2. The Council provides a high level platform for examining family-related policies and promoting a culture of loving families in the community. At its meeting on 14 December 2007, the Council approved its terms of reference (**Annex A**). As the existing terms of reference have adequately reflected the objectives and goals of the Council, there is no imminent need to conduct a review for the time being. As and when required, the Council Secretariat, in consultation with the Council, will re-examine the issue again. Regarding the modus operandi, it has been adopted since the establishment of the Council in 2007. Taking the reconstitution of the Council and operational experience into account, the revised modus operandi is proposed at **Annex B**.

3. Provision of direct services to family is currently delivered by services agents including relevant government departments and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) alike. With a view to achieving better synergy and optimizing existing resources, the Council should not re-invent the wheel in contemplating to provide direct services to family. In the new term of the Council commencing on 1 April 2013, focus of the Council is recommended to be geared towards the following directions –

- (a) to advocate for cherishing the family as a main driver for social harmony;

- (b) to advise Bureaux/departments (B/Ds) on the application of family perspectives in the policy-making process; and
- (c) to initiate research to promote better understanding of matters on family.

With these focus, the Council targets to create an environment which is conducive to family.

RECONSTITUTION OF THE SUB-COMMITTEES

4. To align with the Council's focus in the new term, we recommend the reconstitution of the sub-committees¹ by amalgamating the Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values with the Sub-committee on Family Education. The new Sub-committee (Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education) will be responsible for formulating the overall public relations strategies on the promotion of family core values and family education, so that the publicity efforts will be more focused. Besides, it will seek to develop a sustainable family education framework which is able to meet the needs of family at different stages of the family life cycle. For the Sub-committee on Family Support, it will focus on rendering advice to B/Ds on the application of family perspectives in the policy-making process as well as policies to strengthen families. To promote better understanding on matters related to the family, it will conduct family-related researches, as and when required. The proposed terms of reference of respective Sub-committees are at **Annex C**.

WORK PLAN

5. The ensuing paragraphs give an account of the work plan of the Council in 2013/14.

¹ At present, there are three subcommittees, namely (a) Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values; (b) Sub-committee on Family Education; and (c) Sub-committee on Family Support

Promotion of Family Core Values

Happy Family Campaign and Happy Family Info Hub

6. Leveraging on the social awareness on family core values already established, the Council will launch initiatives to promulgate family core values and create a pro-family environment in 2013/14 in a sustainable manner. The Council will continue to collaborate with relevant stakeholders to publicize family core values and related messages through the “Happy Family Campaign”² (the Campaign) and “Happy Family Info Hub”³. In 2013/14, activities under the Campaign include the re-run of the “LARTE” musical⁴ and thematic subvention to the Uniformed Groups for organising family-related events⁵.

2013/14 Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme

7. Riding on the success of the debut launch of the “Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme” (the Award Scheme) in 2011, the Council will organize the Award Scheme for the second time this year. In addition to the private corporations already included in the last round, the scope of the Scheme will be expanded to cover non-business sector including NGOs and social enterprises. The 2013/14 Award Scheme will be launched in the third quarter of 2013, with enrolment to be invited in the fourth quarter of 2013. During the enrolment period, networking briefings will be conducted to reach out the business sectors, NGOs as well as different sectors of the community. After the screening and adjudication of the applications in the first quarter of 2014, the prize presentation ceremony

² It was announced in the 2009-10 Policy Address that the Council would organise a territory-wide “Happy Family Campaign” to further promote family core values through a series of activities with a view to promoting a culture of loving family.

³ This is an online platform of the Council to share family-related materials. Since its launch in May 2010, it is very well-received with an average monthly hit rate of over one million.

⁴ In 2012-13, the Family Council, together with the Commission on Youth, the Elderly Commission and the Women’s Commission, launched the “Love and Respect Thy Elders” (LARTE) Campaign to encourage and mobilize every member of the family to respect the elders by putting “love”, “Concern”, “Respect” and “Care” into practice. The LARTE musical was one of the publicity highlights. It was premiered on 27 December 2012 and re-staged on 13 April 2013. More than 3 000 audiences attended the musical. To further promulgate the message, we plan to invite different theatrical companies, based on the same script, to re-run the musical again in the fourth quarter of 2014.

⁵ Annual subvention has been provided to 11 Uniformed Groups to organise family-related programmes.

will be held in the second quarter of 2014. Subsequent to the prize presentation ceremony, a series of experience sharing sessions will be organised to share the good practices of the family-friendly employment practices with relevant stakeholders.

Family Education

8. With a view to strengthening family core values and to better utilize the “Happy Family Info Hub”, the Council has stepped up its work on family education through the introduction of a series of family education materials including the “18 Handy Tips for Parents” and “Family Therapy Package” in 2011 and “Marital Relationship” in 2012. All these family education packages have been uploaded onto the “Happy Info Hub”, with very positive response. In the second half of 2013, the Council will collaborate with the RTHK to promote the family education package on “Marital Relationship”. Radio programmes, with 12 half-hour weekly radio segments, will be broadcast from May to August 2013 with a view to further promulgating the importance of maintaining good marital relationship.

9. New family education packages are planned to be launched in late 2013/early 2014, with special focus on addressing the needs of young families, underprivileged families, cross-border families and families of ethnic minorities. Proposals will be submitted to sub-committee for consideration.

10. To take stock of the existing landscape on the provision of family education and to provide evidence-based information on the possible areas for improvement, the Council commissioned a consultancy study on family education (the study) in 2011. The study was completed in March 2012 and provided useful insights on the way forward for the Council to map out the strategies in promoting family education. The Sub-committee will keep in view B/Ds’ progress in taking forward the recommendations in developing a sustainable family education framework.

Collaboration with stakeholders

11. Promotion of family core values and creating a pro-family environment should not be the sole domain of the Council and the Government alone. Only through different forms of collaboration can a synergistic impact be made. To further reinforce our co-ordinated efforts, the Council will continue to seek opportunities to collaborate with stakeholders.

12. In the second quarter of 2013, we will collaborate with our stakeholders to co-organise family-related events, with details as follows –

| Date | Stakeholder | Event |
|-----------------|--|--|
| 15 May 2013 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Hong Kong Council for Social Service (HKCSS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Family Summit |
| 25-26 June 2013 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">The Consortium of Institutes on Family in the Asian Region | <ul style="list-style-type: none">Exchange Programme on Asian Award for Advancing Family Well-being 2012 |

13. We will continue to keep in view collaboration opportunities. In the second half of 2013, we plan to invite the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and School of Public Health, the University of Hong Kong to present their “FAMILY” Project and the HKCSS for its finding on the “Family Impact Assessment” study.

Family Perspectives in Policy Formulation

14. From April 1 this year, the established approach of including family perspectives in the policy-making process has been further enhanced by introducing a mandatory assessment of family implications for all policies. B/Ds are also encouraged to consult the Council on new policies which may carry family implications. To further consolidate the

Council's role in rendering advice to B/Ds on application of family perspectives, we will invite relevant B/Ds to present how they have taken into account the family perspectives in their formulation of policies, programmes, measures and services under their respective purview not only in new policies but also for current policies and programmes. The Central Policy Unit (CPU) will brief the Council on population policies on encouraging marriage and childbirth in this meeting, while the Security Bureau on "The drug situation in Hong Kong in 2012" in August. The Secretariat of the Family Council has extended invitations to the Steering Committee on Population Policy, the Long Term Housing Strategy Steering Committee, Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau and the Labour Welfare Bureau to brief the Council on the family-related policies under their purview. Arrangements will be made in the second half of 2013 and early 2014.

Consultation with the Family Council on new policies with family implications

15. Though it is not a mandatory requirement for B/Ds to consult the Council on new policies with family implications, B/Ds are encouraged to do so. Consultation sessions will be arranged at the sub-committee level, so as to achieve a more focused and dedicated discussion of the family implications involved.

Researches to promote better understanding on matters of family and strategies on creating a pro-family environment

Research

16. To promote better understanding of matters relating to the family, the Council has been engaging tertiary institutes / research organizations to conduct researches and surveys. "The phenomenon of divorce in Hong Kong" and "2013 Family Survey" are in the pipeline. They will be completed by August and November 2013 respectively. Their findings will be presented to the Council. Subject to the endorsement of the findings by the Council, press briefings and experience sharing sessions will be organised in the first and second quarters of 2014.

17. The Council will continue its effort in conducting researches on family-related issues. In consultation with the CPU, we will explore areas worth studying and propose possible topics to the sub-committee for consideration in the fourth quarter of 2013.

Family Mediation Service

18. The Council takes every proactive step to create a pro-family environment in the community. Noting that some NGOs have expressed concerns about the lack of funding to provide family mediation service to separating families with financial difficulties, the Council took the initiative to launch a pilot scheme to sponsor organizations for family mediation service.

19. In May 2012, the Council launched a two-year pilot scheme (the Scheme) to provide sponsorship to interested organizations on family mediation service. A total amount of \$1,836,000 was approved as sponsorship to four NGOs, namely the Caritas Hong Kong, the Hong Kong Catholic Marriage Advisory Council, the Hong Kong Family Welfare Society and the Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service in the first year. We will invite another round of applications in late May 2013. The Council will review the cost-effectiveness of the Scheme and recommend the way forward towards the end of the Scheme in the third/fourth quarter of 2014.

ADVICE SOUGHT

20. Members are invited to comment on the proposed reconstitution of the Sub-committees as well as the work plan of the Council in 2013-14.

Family Council Secretariat
May 2013

Terms of Reference of the Family Council

- (a) To advocate for cherishing the family as a main driver for social harmony, and to promote a family-based support network to forge closer and harmonious relationships amongst family members;
- (b) To advise the Government on the formulation of policies and strategies for supporting and strengthening the family and on development of related programmes/activities, and to monitor their implementation;
- (c) To advise the Government on the integration of family policies and related programmes across different bureaux and departments for individual age and gender sectors to ensure effective coordination;
- (d) To plan/implement programmes and activities for particular age and/or gender sectors; and rationalize the work of the Elderly Commission, the Women's Commission and the Commission on Youth; and
- (e) To initiate research to promote better understanding of matters related to the family as necessary.

Modus Operandi of the Family Council

(a) Confidentiality

The agenda, papers, and records of meetings of the Council are open documents and will be uploaded onto the “Happy Family Info Hub”, except in situations where premature disclosure of considerations/discussions of the meeting that might give rise to unnecessary concerns in community, in which case, the papers and relevant records of meetings will be classified as confidential. These situations include, for example, discussion of policies/strategies that are at a preliminary stage of formulation. To ensure a frank and candid deliberation and exchange of views at the meetings of the Council, views expressed at the meetings will not be attributed in the records of meetings.

(b) Language

The documents for the Council meetings will be prepared in English. Chinese translation will be arranged as necessary. As for communication at the Council meetings, both English and Cantonese are allowed.

(c) Frequency of meetings

Taking into account the time required to prepare relevant papers for meetings, the Council will meet on a quarterly basis. The Council may meet more frequently as and when circumstances required.

(d) Advice/Conclusions

Advice/conclusions should be reached by consensus as far as possible. Where this is not possible and the matter is put to vote at any meeting of the Council, it shall be decided by a majority of votes of Members present, and, in case of an equality of votes, the Chairman shall have a casting vote.

(e) Sub-committees, Research, exchanges and visits

To facilitate the Council's work, the Council may from time to time appoint such sub-committees as may be deemed necessary and may determine their terms of reference, powers, duration and composition including appointment of co-opted members. The Council may commission either through the Central Policy Unit or the Home Affairs Bureau, Secretariat of the Family Council, research and/or studies on family related matters as and when necessary. It may also arrange visits/ exchanges/ meetings/ forums/seminars with overseas/local agencies as required.

(f) Communications with the public

Taking into consideration the importance of keeping the public abreast of the Council's work, the Chairman or members designated by the Council may speak to the media at the end of the Council meetings as necessary. Press release may be issued after Council meetings as circumstances require. To take due account of views of the public on the subjects discussed or on major topical issues, the Council may consider arranging consultations/meetings with the public/interest groups/deputations as required.

Proposed Terms of Reference of the Sub-committees

Sub-committee on the Promotion of Family Core Values and Family Education

To advise on:

- (a) the strategies to promote family core values and family education in the community;
- (b) the implementation of the strategy including media and publicity campaign; and
- (c) the development of a sustainable family education framework in Hong Kong for reference by relevant stakeholders.

Sub-committee on Family Support

To advise on:

- (a) the application of family perspectives in policy-making process;
- (b) policies and strategies to strengthen families;
- (c) policies and strategies to promote a pro-family society; and
- (d) family-related researches.