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**By Fax (2511 8142)**  
9 April 2008

Mr Raymond TANG Yee Bong  
Chairperson  
Equal Opportunities Commission  
19/F, Cityplaza Three  
14 Taikoo Wan Road  
Taikoo Shing  
Hong Kong

Dear Mr TANG,

**Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to the Provision of  
Boarding Places, Senior Secondary Education and Employment  
Opportunities for Children with Special Educational Needs**

**Education for non-Chinese-speaking children  
with special educational needs**

I write on behalf of the Subcommittee concerning the provision of education for non-Chinese-speaking (NCS) children with special educational needs (SEN).

The Subcommittee received the views of 13 organizations and six individuals on the subject at its meeting on 3 April 2008. These organizations and individuals have pointed out that the special educational needs of Chinese-speaking children are catered for through 62 aided special schools and 641 special education classes in the mainstream schools. However, the only Government subvented English-speaking school which admits NCS children with SEN is The Jockey Club Sarah Roe School with 60 places operated by the The English Schools Foundation (ESF). Together with the 126 places in learning support classes run by ESF mainstream schools, the subvented school places available to NCS children with SEN are less than 200. The average waiting time for the limited places in ESF's learning support classes and The Jockey Club Sarah Roe School is 24 to 36 months. As independent international schools are reluctant to admit NCS children with SEN on resources consideration, many NCS children with SEN are given no choice but to enrol in public sector mainstream schools adopting Chinese as the medium of instruction. These children are struggling hard to learn in a language that is not conducive to the realization of their full potential.

Members are gravely concerned about the inadequate provision of education opportunities for NCS children with SEN to learn in English or their mother-tongue. Apparently, there is a lack of parity between the services provided for Chinese speaking and NCS children with SEN. NCS children with SEN are in dire need of equal opportunities in education to maximize their chances in life. Members are concerned whether the present situation is in breach of the international human right treaties applicable to Hong Kong and the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Ordinance. They have asked me to seek the views of the Equal Opportunities Commission on the matter.

As the Subcommittee is winding up its work, I should be grateful for your response **by the end of April 2008**.

Yours sincerely,

(Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung)  
Chairman of Subcommittee

c.c. Secretary for Education  
Secretary for Labour and Welfare