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Subcommittee on Poverty

**Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat
for the meeting on 25 April 2014**

**Measures to support ethnic minorities in relation to employment and
integration into the community**

Purpose

This paper summarizes the major concerns raised at the meetings of the Council and the relevant committees on measures to support ethnic minorities ("EM") in relation to employment and integration into the community.

Background

2. According to the Administration, it has been providing a range of support services to facilitate EM to seek employment and help them integrate into the society. On the employment front, business enterprises are encouraged to employ EM who are provided with assistance through support service centres to apply for vacancies in business enterprises. Some of the projects launched by social enterprises which are subsidized by the Home Affairs Department ("HAD"), such as the Hong Kong Translingual Services and the Bread Bunch Bakery, offer dedicated employment opportunities and training for EM.

3. To help EM integrate into the community, HAD commissions non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") to run support centres to provide tailor-made learning classes, counseling and referral, integration programmes and interpretation services for EM. It also sponsors two community support teams (i.e. the Pakistani and Nepalese teams) to provide special service for the EM groups through their own communities. Under the District-based Integration Programmes, HAD commissions NGOs to organize various activities for EM, including adaption courses, mutual help networks, employees' training, volunteer service, community visits, etc. in districts. Funding has been provided for five radio programmes broadcast in EM languages (Nepali, Urdu, Hindi, Thai and Bahasa Indonesian) to keep EM

abreast of updated information and government services. Two Community Care Fund programmes of providing subsidy for non-school attending EM to take language courses had been incorporated into the regular support services of HAD from September 2013.

Members' deliberations

Employment assistance for EM

4. A written question was raised at the Council meeting of 13 November 2013 regarding whether the Labour Department ("LD") would set up an employment services division dedicated to providing services for EM. The Administration advised that LD provided comprehensive employment services to help able-bodied job seekers, including EM job seekers, through a network of 12 job centres, two industry-based recruitment centres, the Telephone Employment Service Centre, the Interactive Employment Service website and numerous vacancy search terminals located throughout the territory. Special counters and resource corners were also set up at all job centres to provide job referral services for EM job seekers. Furthermore, tailor-made employment briefings were organized regularly to help them better understand the local employment market situation and improve job search skills. EM job seekers could meet Employment Officers who would provide them with information on the employment market situation and training/retraining courses, conduct career aptitude assessment, and/or provide job search advice according to their individual needs. Employment Officers would also assist job seekers to participate in LD's various employment programmes to enhance their employability.

5. According to the Administration, LD liaised with employers to canvass vacancies suitable for EM job seekers and encouraged them to give employment opportunities to EM. Employers placing vacancies with LD were advised to consider the genuine occupational needs when specifying the language requirement. Large-scale and district-based job fairs were also organized to enhance the flow of vacancy information and provide on-the-spot job interview opportunities. LD had strengthened its collaboration with NGOs providing services to EM, and had also made use of the community network of the Police Community Relations Office of the Hong Kong Police Force, to actively publicize LD's employment services and disseminate information on the job fairs to EM.

6. As regards employment services for job seekers with disabilities (including EM job seekers with disabilities), the Administration advised that LD would conduct interviews with them to understand their job aspirations,

provide them with latest information on the employment market, match them to job vacancies and refer suitable candidate to job interview where appropriate. After they had secured employment, LD would keep in view their progress and provide assistance where necessary to ensure harmonious working relationship. In the light of the dedicated and personalized employment service provided for EM by LD, the Administration had no plans to set up an employment services division for EM.

7. Some members of the Panel on Education were of the view that it was necessary to equip EM students with basic Chinese literacy to enable them to find jobs. The Administration should step up its efforts in assisting these students to acquire basic Chinese Language skills to enhance their employability.

8. The Administration explained that since the 2011-2012 school year, it had launched the pilot scheme on Workplace Chinese Language Programme to help NCS students meet workplace or trade-specific requirements in terms of Chinese proficiency to enhance their employability. The Programme pegged at Levels 1 to 3 of the Qualifications Framework with validation by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications.

Employment of EM for civil service posts

9. Some members of the Subcommittee on Poverty suggested that the language proficiency requirements ("LPRs") for EM for civil service posts and the requirement for written Chinese proficiency for disciplined service posts should be relaxed. EM who met the language proficiency requirement for either Chinese or English should be considered for appointments to the civil service.

10. According to the Administration, the race of a candidate was not a relevant consideration in the selection and appointment of civil servants. Heads of departments/grades would review LPRs and recruitment process for grades under their purview from time to time, taking into account the changing operational needs of the grade concerned, and make suitable adjustments as appropriate. For instance, the Administration had adjusted the requirement for Chinese proficiency for certain grades such as Workman and Motor Driver. The Police Force had revised the selection process for Police Constable, under which candidates' proficiency in language(s) other than Chinese and English would also be considered. The Correctional Services Department ("CSD") had replaced the Chinese written test with a group interview or an oral question session in the selection process for relevant grades. The Administration had launched another comprehensive review of LPRs of all

civil service grades to examine whether there was further room to adjust the LPRs of the relevant grades.

11. A written question was raised at the Council meeting of 27 February 2013 regarding the number of EM appointed to the civil service from 1997-1998 to 2002-2003 and from 2003-2004 to 2010-2011, and the current number of civil servants who were EM. The Administration advised that it would neither require candidates to declare their ethnic origins nor collect information about the ethnic origins of individual civil servants. The Administration conducted the first survey on the racial profile of the civil service in 2011 with a view to understanding the composition of the civil service by racial groups. The survey, conducted on a voluntary and anonymous basis, sought to reflect the overall racial profile of the civil service through compilation of consolidated information. A total of 26 671 civil servants (or 17% of the 156 781 serving civil servants as at 31 March 2011) responded by close of the survey period. According to the results of the survey, the distribution of individual EM groups in the civil service was broadly comparable to that in the general population as noted in the 2006 By-census.

Facilitating EM's integration into the community

12. At the Council meeting of 20 November 2013, a written question was raised about the measures taken in the past three years and to be taken in the next three years by the Administration to monitor the implementation of the Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality¹ ("the Guidelines"). The Administration replied that the Guidelines covered the key public services which were particularly relevant to meeting the special needs of EM and facilitating their integration into the community, namely, medical, education, vocational training, employment and major community services. In 2010, the scope of application of the Guidelines included 14 departments (namely the Education Bureau, Social Welfare Department, LD, HAD, Employees Retraining Board, Vocational Training Council, Food and Health Bureau, Department of Health, Hospital Authority, Construction Industry Council, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, Innovation and Technology Commission, former Office of the Telecommunications Authority and former Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority²). In 2013, the scope of application of the Guidelines was extended to eight additional

¹ In 2010, the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau issued the Guidelines to provide general guidance to the relevant government bureaux and departments and public authorities to promote racial equality and ensure equal access by EM to public services in key areas concerned, and to take this into account in their formulation, implementation and review of relevant policies and measures.

² On 1 April 2012, former Office of the Telecommunications Authority and former Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority merged to form the Office of the Communications Authority.

departments (namely the Housing Department, Hong Kong Observatory, Post Office, Legal Aid Department, Hong Kong Police Force, CSD, Customs and Excise Department and Immigration Department).

13. The Administration advised that, according to the Guidelines, the departments should draw up checklists of measures that would assist in promoting racial equality and equal access to key public services to enhance the transparency of their work. Where necessary, the departments would issue updates on the information of the checklists. The Administration would continue to review the implementation of the Guidelines as necessary and consider further extending the coverage of the Guidelines.

Relevant papers

14. A list of the relevant papers on the Legislative Council Website is in the **Appendix**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
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Appendix

Relevant papers on measures to support ethnic minorities in relation to employment and integration into the community

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Legislative Council	27 February 2013	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 68 – 71
Subcommittee on Poverty	8 May 2013 (Item II)	Agenda Minutes
Subcommittee on Poverty	17 June 2013 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Education	9 July 2013 (Item IV)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	13 November 2013	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 126 – 130
Legislative Council	20 November 2013	Official Record of Proceedings Pages 118 – 122
Subcommittee on Poverty	17 December 2013 (Item I)	Agenda Minutes

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