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Panel on Home Affairs

Background brief prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat for the meeting on 24 March 2014

Government policy and initiatives on youth development under the policy purview of the Home Affairs Bureau

Purpose

This paper gives a brief account of the past discussions of the Panel on Home Affairs ("the Panel") on issues relating to youth development.

Background

2. As stated in the website of the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB"), youth development is one of the policy responsibilities of HAB with the objectives of (a) promoting positive values among young people; (b) enhancing their understanding of Chinese culture and heritage; (c) encouraging their participation in voluntary and community work; (d) broaden their perspectives; and (e) promoting leadership training among them.

3. In order to achieve the above objectives, HAB works with the Commission on Youth ("COY") in implementing programmes including the Community Participation Scheme for Organizing Exchange Tours to the Mainland, the Funding Scheme for Youth Internship in the Mainland, and the International Youth Exchange Programme ("IYEP"). HAB provides recurrent subvention to 11 uniformed groups and two non-governmental organizations¹

¹ According to HAB's website, these 13 organizations include Association of Hong Kong Flag-guards, Hong Kong Adventure Corps, Hong Kong Air Cadet Corps, the Hong Kong Girl Guides Association, Hong Kong Red Cross, Hong Kong Sea Cadet Corps, Scout Association of Hong Kong, Hong Kong St. John Ambulance Brigade Cadet Command, the Boys' Brigade Hong Kong, the Girls' Brigade Hong Kong, Hong Kong Road Safety Association (Hong Kong Road Safety Patrol), the Hong Kong Award for Young People and Agency for Volunteer Service.

("NGOs") for providing non-formal education and training programmes for young people, and also works with the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education in promoting civic education outside schools. In addition, HAB promotes the Youth Square² in Chai Wan as a focal point for territory-wide youth development activities.

4. According to the Administration's paper provided to the Panel in February 2010, apart from HAB, a number of bureaux and departments also undertook nurturing and support services for young people, including (a) the Education Bureau formulated and implemented education policies and legislation with a view to providing young people with quality school education; (b) the Social Welfare Department was in charge of integrated children and youth services centres, school social work services and outreaching social work services through subvented NGOs; (c) the Hong Kong Police Force operated programmes including the Junior Police Call and the Police School Liaison Programme; and (d) the Narcotics Division of Security Bureau carried out anti-drug education and publicity.

Initiatives announced in the 2014 Policy Address

5. In his briefing on the Chief Executive's 2014 Policy Address at the Panel meeting on 24 January 2014, the Secretary for Home Affairs ("SHA") advised that HAB would continue to work with COY and various community organizations in fostering a culture of multi-faceted excellence and promoting the concept of multiple pathways. New initiatives as stated in the briefing paper are as follows -

- (a) A funding of \$100 million was proposed for a Scholarship Scheme that encouraged universities and tertiary institutions to admit about 20 local students who excelled in sports, arts and community service annually starting from the 2015-2016 academic year on a full cost recovery basis;
- (b) NGOs would be provided with additional resources to enhance career guidance for secondary students in collaboration with schools. More publicity work would be done to promote the idea that there were multiple pathways other than entering university for secondary school graduates to pursue career and further education;

² The Youth Square, formerly known as the Centre for Youth Development, is constructed with funding approved by the Legislative Council. It provides facilities and venues for youth development and training activities for the enhancement of young people. It also provides offices and multi-purpose facilities for youth organizations committed to youth development.

- (c) Funding would be increased such that 14 000 young persons could benefit from the Funding Scheme for Youth Internship in the Mainland and the Community Participation Scheme for Organizing Exchange Tours to the Mainland each year, while the feasibility of extending IYEP to more places would also be explored;
- (d) Recurrent subvention for uniformed groups would be doubled in 2014, and the funding for the Assistance Scheme for Needy Student Members would be increased to encourage more needy students to join these uniformed groups;
- (e) Two projects of Youth Hostel in Sheung Wan and Tai Po respectively were preparing for pre-construction consultancy studies, and two more projects would be launched in Mongkok and Jordan respectively. The four projects were expected to provide a total of 1 000 rented hostel places, the first batch of which could be completed in 2016-2017 the earliest;
- (f) Additional resources would be allocated to strengthen the networking and communication with young people at district level, through organizing various activities including voluntary services, leadership training camps and study tours.

Members' Concerns

6. Issues relating to youth development were discussed by the Panel at a number of meetings since 2009, and major concerns of members are summarized in the ensuing paragraphs.

Youth development and COY

7. Pointing out that COY was tasked to advise the Government on matters relating to youth development, some members suggested that the Administration should increase the representation of young people in COY. However, there was another view that COY should have a balanced mix of representatives of various age groups and backgrounds to facilitate the exchange of views from different perspectives.

8. According to the Administration, as in the case of other advisory and statutory bodies, the suitability of a candidate for appointment to COY was mainly considered on the basis of merits such as ability and experience. Members of COY would be drawn from a wide spectrum of sectors in the community in order to promote the expression of views from different

perspectives. The Administration advised that it would consider members' suggestion of increasing the number of youth representatives in COY.

Communication with the youth

9. A suggestion was made at the Panel meeting on 5 February 2010 that the Administration should provide more communication channels/platforms for young people, especially the "post-eighties" and "post-nineties" generations, who had actively participated in social movements and voiced their views on various social issues in recent years. There was also a view that the Administration should support the continuous operation of district youth forums, in addition to the territory-wide Youth Summit, so that young people could express their views and participate in social affairs on a more regular basis.

10. The Administration assured members that it was committed to enhancing communication with young people. Public consultation of major policy initiatives would be conducted through various consultation mechanisms, and young people were welcome to express their views through these channels, as well as other non-governmental forums in the community. The Administration noted that young people preferred to express their views at social websites via the Internet platform, and it would actively consider how to make better use of the Internet to communicate with young people so as to better understand their views and concerns.

Youth Square

11. In response to members' concern about the utilization rate of the facilities in the Youth Square, the Administration advised that the Youth Square Management Advisory Committee had introduced measures to promote the Youth Square's mission as the focal point of youth development activities. In order to encourage youth entrepreneurship and support the development of social enterprises, the Youth Square would offer rental discount to young entrepreneurs and social enterprises that operated youth-related business at a concessionary level equivalent to that offered to registered non-profit making organizations.

Youth Hostel Scheme

12. When the Panel discussed issues related to the Youth Hostel Scheme ("YHS") at its meeting on 18 February 2013, some members held the view that the number of hostel units offered under YHS was inadequate to address the long existed housing shortage problem.

13. The Administration advised that the aims of YHS were to unleash the potential of under-utilized sites in the hands of NGOs, and provide some relief to the current shortage of housing accommodation of young people. The scheme was intended to be a measure to meet the aspirations of some working youths by giving them an alternative to having their own living space for a period of time, and not meant to provide a permanent accommodation. Hostel tenants were expected to make use of the opportunity to accumulate savings to meet their aspirations for future development, and make their own plans and arrangement to solve their long-term housing needs. In response to a concern about whether NGOs would maintain the rental of their hostels at affordable level, the Administration advised that a standard level of rental would be set for compliance by NGOs.

Volunteer services and uniformed groups

14. During the discussion on the Administration's support for youth development through volunteering service at the Panel meeting on 12 June 2009, members questioned the Administration's statement that the promotion of youth volunteering would help marginalized youth to combat the influence of gambling and drug abuse. There was a view that the Administration should study the different profiles of marginalized youth prior to designing programmes to address their individual problems. The Administration advised that young people were expected to build positive values through their participation in volunteer services, which might help them to combat the negative influence of drug abuse and gambling.

15. Regarding the Administration's support for uniformed groups, there was a view that the Administration should increase the funding for uniformed groups so as to promote positive values and proper life attitude among young people. There was, however, another view that the Administration should provide more support for young people to organize programmes and activities independently, which would be more effective in promoting their growth and development. The Administration advised members that it had been the Government's policy to encourage the involvement of young people in the planning and organization of youth activities, including those initiated by HAB-subsented uniformed groups and NGOs, and those administered by the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education.

Motion passed by the Council

16. On 8 January 2014, the Legislative Council ("LegCo") passed a motion moved by Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, and amended by Hon Kenneth LEUNG,

Hon KWOK Wai-keung, Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che, Hon CHAN Kin-por and Hon Michael TIEN on "Assisting young people in their development on all fronts". The motion urged the Administration, among others, to -

- (a) strengthen local sports development as well as training and support for athletes to enable young people to follow the direction of sports in developing their personal goals and career;
- (b) promote young people's participation in community services and devotion to voluntary services, so as to instill proper values in young people;
- (c) extensively collect views from young people when formulating development policies for young people by ways such as increasing their participation in the Government's advisory framework; and
- (d) introduce a local talent scheme for funding local talents to enroll in the programmes of the best academic institutions all over the world which are not offered locally or are markedly different from local programmes in quality.

The wording of the motion is in **Appendix I**.

Latest Development

17. The Administration will brief the Panel on Government's youth development policy and the outcome of the review of the operation and positioning of the Youth Square at the meeting on 24 March 2014.

Relevant papers

18. A list of relevant papers on the LegCo's website is in **Appendix II**.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
18 March 2014

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Assisting young people in their development on all fronts”
moved by Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan
at the Council meeting of 8 January 2014**

**Motion as amended by Hon Kenneth LEUNG, Hon KWOK Wai-keung,
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che, Hon CHAN Kin-por and Hon Michael TIEN**

That, as young people are the future masters of Hong Kong society, the Government should provide young people with room for development and upward mobility opportunities; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to allocate resources to increase the variety of and places for local higher education programmes and expand various training and employment support services targeted at young people; at the same time, the Government should adopt concrete policies and assistance measures to promote diversified economic development for supporting young people in starting up businesses, thereby enabling young people to freely choose the academic discipline, occupation and lifestyle suitable to them, so as to help them to build a bright future with greater confidence and a pragmatic attitude; specific proposals are as follows:

Education —

- (1) to increase the number of subsidized places in post-secondary and tertiary institutions, and strengthen vocational education for students, so that young people can identify as early as possible their objectives of career prospects, and lay a good foundation for upward mobility;
- (2) to comprehensively review the assistance as well as loans and repayment arrangements under the various existing student finance schemes, including providing indigent students with more tuition fee remission and additional support, and alleviate the tuition fee burden of university students by ways such as allowing tax deduction on repayment amounts of university education loans, studying the feasibility of allowing local students to apply for student loans for further studies overseas, and increasing the amount of grant for tertiary students, etc.;
- (3) to comprehensively review the Continuing Education Fund Scheme, including raising the cap on the amount of subsidy receivable by each applicant to \$40,000, extending the period of four years within which

applicants must submit all claims as required by the scheme to 10 years, and abolishing the restriction on applicants to make a maximum of four claims, etc., so as to encourage young people to pursue continuous education;

Employment –

- (4) to formulate a comprehensive employment policy for young people with the objectives of developing young people's potentials and strengthening the productivity of society;
- (5) to review and consolidate the various existing training programmes for young people, and enhance the practicability and effectiveness of the training and employment support structure for young people, so as to encourage young people to join industries which need new blood, such as the construction industry, transport industry and shipping industry, etc.;
- (6) to proactively approach long-term unemployed young people and hidden youths, and provide career counselling and support to them;
- (7) to extend and consolidate the various similar apprenticeship schemes, such as the Technician Apprenticeship (Traineeship) Training Scheme, Modern Apprenticeship Scheme as well as Beauty Care and Hairdressing Traineeship Scheme;
- (8) to subsidize young people from low-income families, particularly ethnic minority young people, so as to support them to attend self-enrichment courses and enhance their competitiveness in choosing career;
- (9) to support the development of small and medium enterprises by ways such as offering appropriate subsidies and tax concessions, so as to actively encourage them to employ young workers and trainees;
- (10) to review and improve the existing Employment Ordinance to strengthen the protection for young people who take up part-time and short-term jobs or are employed on a contractual basis;
- (11) to conduct a study on enacting legislation to require an annual three-day paid training leave for employees, so as to encourage young employees to pursue continuing education;
- (12) to adopt diversified measures to attract overseas enterprises to come to Hong Kong for investment, and establishing new and emerging

enterprises or industrial/commercial businesses, so as to create more positions for Hong Kong and increase the employment and promotion opportunities for young people;

- (13) to encourage and support young people to develop their career in the Mainland, and enrich their understanding of the Mainland;
- (14) to set up a handicraft apprenticeship training scheme to train young people for engaging in work on creativity or with traditional characteristics, such as arts fairs, music performances, dragon boat training and fireworks production etc.;
- (15) to increase the Government's budget and funding for culture and arts, so that arts groups can increase placement opportunities for young art workers;

Business start-up –

- (16) to establish business start-up funds and provide relevant education and information for offering concrete support to young people to start up businesses;
- (17) to set up creative industry parks in various districts for providing studios with stable rents and long-term tenancy agreements to young people who aspire to a career in creativity, culture and arts;

Personal growth –

- (18) to increase the number of hostel places in various tertiary institutions, so that young people can experience communal living during university studies and cultivate their skills of interpersonal communication and companionship as well as co-operative abilities;
- (19) to increase the number of internship places in Hong Kong and overseas for students of various tertiary institutions, and continue to increase the number of countries and places under the Working Holiday Scheme to enable young people to gain experiences and have exchanges in various places in the world, so as to broaden their international vision;
- (20) to strengthen local sports development as well as training and support for athletes to enable young people to follow the direction of sports in developing their personal goals and career;

- (21) to strengthen the manning ratio of guidance personnel for young people in schools and non-profit-making organizations, so as to assist them in facing problems of education, family, making friends and career prospects, etc.; and
- (22) to promote young people's participation in community services and devotion to voluntary services, so as to instil proper values in young people;

this Council also urges the Government to extensively collect views from young people when formulating development policies for young people by ways such as increasing their participation in the Government's advisory framework, and increase the number of school social workers in secondary schools to provide young people with services related to 'career and life planning'; at the same time, the Government should actively enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness and promote economic development, including driving the development of headquarters economy, so as to provide young people with more high-quality positions and let them have more upward mobility opportunities; the Government should also attach importance to the balanced development of young people's physical and mental well-being, encourage them to occupy themselves with wholesome activities or hobbies and avoid over-indulging in the virtual network, and teach them to stay away from drugs; this Council also urges the Government to:

- (23) substantially upgrade the level of the CreateHK agency, and set up an advisory committee on creative industry under the direct leadership of the Financial Secretary for co-ordinating the work of relevant government departments, and invite members of the industry to join the committee, so as to support the development of the creative industry, and provide upward mobility opportunities for young people who are highly creative but not good at conventional academic subjects; and
- (24) introduce a local talent scheme for funding local talents to enrol in the programmes of the best academic institutions all over the world which are not offered locally or are markedly different from local programmes in quality, so as to encourage Hong Kong young people to pursue excellence in different academic disciplines, nurture top-class talents in various fields in Hong Kong and assist in the diversification of Hong Kong's industries in the long run.

Appendix II

Relevant papers on Government's Youth Development Policy

Committee	Date of meeting	Paper
Panel on Home Affairs	12.6.2009 (Item V)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	5.2.2010 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Panel on Home Affairs	18.2.2013 (Item VI)	Agenda Minutes
Legislative Council	8 & 9.1.2014	Official Record of Proceedings (8.1.2014) Pages 5419 to 5476 (9.1.2014) Pages 5477 to 5555 (Members' Motion on "Assisting young people in their development on all fronts")

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