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The Government of
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3 April 2018

Ms Joanne MAK
Clerk to Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms Mak,

Analytical Reports related to Ethnic Minorities

The Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities discussed the poverty issues of ethnic minorities at the meetings of 12 June and 10 July 2017, and noted that the Government and the Commission on Poverty (CoP) were conducting two analyses on relevant topics. I write to report the latest progress.

At the aforementioned meetings, the Government responded that the Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit and the Census and Statistics Department were compiling the Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic Minorities 2016 based on the statistics from the 2016 Population By-census. In addition, the Special Needs Groups Task Force under the CoP also commissioned a research team to conduct the Study on Ethnic Minorities' Awareness and Satisfaction towards Selected Public Services. Both analyses have been completed and released recently. The executive summaries of the two reports are at the Appendix, and the full reports have been uploaded to the CoP's website (www.povertyrelief.gov.hk) for public consumption.

The Government and the CoP attach great importance to the well-being of ethnic minorities. In view of the findings and recommendations of the

reports, bureaux and departments concerned will continue to improve their existing services, offer better support and explore new measures to enhance ethnic minorities' awareness and use of public services, with a view to alleviating their poverty situation. To enhance collaboration within the Government on support for ethnic minorities, the Government will also set up a steering committee, to be chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, to co-ordinate, review and monitor work in this area. The 2018-19 Budget has earmarked \$500 million for this purpose.

Yours sincerely,



(Timothy WONG)

Administrative Officer, Special Duty Unit
Chief Secretary for Administration's Office

c.c. Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (Attn.: Ms Cathy Li)

Executive Summary

Introduction

- ES.1 Given our position as Asia's World City, people of various ethnic origins are attracted to work or settle in Hong Kong. Some may encounter challenges in adaptation and integration into the community, and are perceived as being more disadvantaged and in need of assistance. The Government and the Commission on Poverty (CoP) attach great importance to the well-being of the disadvantaged, including ethnic minorities (EMs). Various measures have been introduced to help EMs adapt to life in Hong Kong, attain self-reliance, and move upwards along the social ladder. These tasks align with the goals of preventing and alleviating poverty.
- ES.2 The Government released the *Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic Minorities 2014* at the end of 2015, which analysed in detail the poverty situation of EMs. Drawing reference to the latest findings of the 2016 Population By-census conducted by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) and based on the poverty line analytical framework, this Report provides an update of the major poverty statistics of EMs to facilitate continuous monitoring of their poverty situation.

Overview of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong in 2016

- ES.3 In 2016, persons of Chinese ethnicity constituted the majority of the whole population in Hong Kongⁱ (91.9%), while EMsⁱⁱ (including foreign domestic helpers (FDHs)) only made up the remaining 8.1% or 575 400 persons. Among these EMs, more than half were FDHs (55.7% or 320 700 persons) who were mainly from the Philippines and Indonesia.
- ES.4 After excluding FDHsⁱⁱⁱ, the EM population stood at 254 700 in 2016, accounting for 3.8% of the whole population (excluding FDHs) in Hong Kong. The number of Filipinos and Indonesians, who formerly constituted

i Unless otherwise specified, the whole population in Hong Kong in the analysis of this Report refers to the overall land-based population in domestic households.

ii In statistical surveys, the ethnicity of a respondent is determined by self-identification. The classification of ethnicity is determined with reference to concepts such as cultural origins, nationality, skin colour and language. As Hong Kong is a predominantly Chinese community, "EMs" refer to non-Chinese.

iii Unless otherwise specified, FDHs are excluded from the statistics in this Report.

the majority of EMs, shrank markedly. Instead, South Asians (SAs)^{iv} stood out as the largest ethnic group, with 78 000 persons or 30.6% of the EM population, followed by the Mixed population (58 500 persons or 23.0%) and Whites (55 900 persons or 21.9%). The EM population resided in 123 300 EM households^v, or 4.9% of all domestic households.

ES.5 The EM population continued to expand rapidly in the five years between 2011 and 2016 at an average annual rate of 5.8%, which was much faster than the 0.5% growth rate of the whole population in Hong Kong. Among the major ethnic groups, SAs (e.g. Indians and Nepalese) maintained robust population growth, and the growth rate of the Mixed population^{vi} was also visible. Indonesians and Filipinos, with relatively small population sizes, also recorded remarkable growth rates. As a result of such rapid growth, the share of EMs in the whole population rose from 2.9% in 2011 to 3.8% in 2016.

ES.6 Many EMs have settled in Hong Kong and some were born and raised locally. They have become members of our society. Ethnic groups exhibited relatively distinctive demographic and socio-economic attributes, which varied considerably across ethnic groups. These variations are closely associated with the poverty risks of individual groups.

ES.7 In terms of demographic and social characteristics, 2016 statistics show that EMs had a relatively young population, in contrast to the overall ageing population in Hong Kong. This was more notable in the case of SAs. Furthermore, Thais, Indonesians and Filipinos were predominantly female. Yet, the shares of elders (persons aged 65 and above) for Thais and Indonesians increased remarkably in recent years. As SA households^{vii} were mostly large families with more children (persons aged below 18) living therein, the average household size of SA households was 3.0 persons, larger than those of all EM households and all households (both were 2.7 persons),

iv According to the classification of territories adopted by the United Nations Statistical Commission, SA countries include India, Pakistan, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bhutan, Iran and the Maldives. Owing to limitations in data collection, this Report only includes breakdown of the first five ethnic groups.

v EM households refer to households with at least one EM member (excluding FDHs). Not all household members are necessarily EMs.

vi “Mixed” is categorised as a separate ethnic group in C&SD’s surveys. The questionnaire design for the 2016 Population By-census was enhanced to make it easier for respondents to provide information on multiple ethnicities. As such, special attention should be paid when comparing the statistics on the Mixed population in 2016 with those in previous years.

vii Household-based analyses of individual ethnic group are conducted based on households of a single ethnicity to facilitate a simpler and more focused analysis.

and with even bigger household sizes among Pakistanis and Nepalese (3.9 and 3.2 persons respectively).

ES.8 As regards educational attainment, it varied visibly among EMs. Whites, Japanese & Koreans and Indians tended to be more educated, while Pakistanis, Nepalese, Thais and Indonesians who had attained post-secondary education were rather low in proportion. Furthermore, the school attendance rates^{viii} of EMs aged 19-24 were generally lower than the territorial average, though improvement was observed in some ethnic groups between 2011 and 2016. However, the school attendance rate of Nepalese youths stood at 13.8% only, reflecting a still less desirable situation among some SA youths in terms of attainment in higher education.

ES.9 Similarly, notable variations were observed in economic characteristics across EM groups. The key observations on the 2016 statistics are as follows:

(i) Diverse levels of labour force participation: the labour force participation rates (LFPRs) of male EMs were generally higher than the overall male average, in particular among the population of relatively higher age. Meanwhile, the proportion of female Pakistanis participating in the labour market was still low despite some pick-ups in recent years. On the other hand, Nepalese, regardless of gender, had higher LFPRs, and many young Nepalese quit school early and join the workforce. It is worth noting that between 2011 and 2016, many ethnic groups posted higher LFPRs, particularly in the case of Pakistanis.

(ii) Distribution of occupations mirrored educational attainment: higher-educated Whites, Japanese & Koreans, and Indians were largely higher-skilled workers^{ix}. By contrast, other SAs and Southeast Asians were mainly engaged in grassroots positions. In particular, the proportions of elementary workers among Pakistanis, Nepalese, Thais and Indonesians all exceeded 30%.

(iii) Notable variations in employment earnings and household incomes: Whites, Japanese & Koreans, and Indians fared better in the labour market with visibly higher earnings. Relatively speaking, Pakistani, Nepalese, Thai and Indonesian employed persons earned less. As for household income, they were also lower for Pakistani, Nepalese, Thai and Indonesian households. Investigation into the root causes suggests

viii The school attendance rate is the percentage of the population attending full-time educational institutions within the respective age group.

ix Higher-skilled workers include managers and administrators, professionals, and associate professionals.

that apart from relatively lacklustre employment earnings among workers of these ethnic groups, the lower shares of economically active households (e.g. Thai and Indonesian households) accounted partly for the situation.

- ES.10 It is noteworthy that with solid development of the labour market amid sustained moderate expansion of the Hong Kong economy between 2011 and 2016, as well as population growth and higher LFPRs of EMs, the numbers of employed persons and shares of the population residing in working households^x among major ethnic groups increased significantly in general. Furthermore, the median employment earnings of various ethnic groups were higher between 2011 and 2016, albeit with growth mostly lower than the overall figure. Yet, the EM population grew rapidly with high mobility, possibly leading to considerable changes in labour composition. The changes in the employment earnings distribution among ethnic groups were subject to a number of factors, including changes in the skill distribution of labour and an increase in the number of less experienced workers who were new entrants or new immigrants.
- ES.11 In sum, among the EMs in Hong Kong, relatively more grassroots families were found among SAs and Southeast Asians. SAs, characterised by a larger population size, rapid population growth, large families, and higher child dependency, were more representative among grassroots EMs.

Poverty Situation of Ethnic Minorities in 2016

- ES.12 By applying the poverty line analytical framework to the data of the 2016 Population By-census to update the major poverty figures of EMs, the findings show that in 2016, **before policy intervention**, there were 22 400 poor EM households and 49 400 poor EMs, with a poverty rate^{xi} of 19.4%. The corresponding figures **after policy intervention (recurrent cash)** were lower, at 19 500 households, 44 700 persons and 17.6% respectively.
- ES.13 A comparison of the 2016 and 2011 poverty figures reveals that the EM poverty rates posted upticks before and after policy intervention: the **pre-intervention** poverty rate was up from 15.8% to 19.4% while the **post-intervention (recurrent cash)** poverty rate was up from 13.9% to 17.6%. Alongside the rises in the poverty rates and the notable growth in the overall

x Working households are domestic households with at least one employed member, excluding FDHs. Not all members residing in working households are necessarily employed persons.

xi The percentage share of poor EMs in the total number of EMs.

EM population and their number of households, the size of the poor EM population and their number of households likewise increased before and after policy intervention over the period.

- ES.14 Analysing the **pre-intervention** poverty situation of EMs by ethnic group shows that, among the 49 400 poor EMs before policy intervention in 2016, SAs accounted for 40.6% while Pakistanis constituted about one-fifth (20.2%).
- ES.15 The pre-intervention poverty rate of SAs was relatively high at 25.7%. Among SAs, Pakistanis registered a high poverty rate of 56.5%. Besides, the poverty rates of Thais and Indonesians, with smaller size of poor population, were also comparatively high at 26.5% and 35.4% respectively, while those of Filipinos and the Mixed population stood at 19.2% and 21.8% respectively. On the other hand, the poverty rates of Japanese & Koreans and Whites, etc. were not high.
- ES.16 Reviewing the forms of poverty among the major EM groups in 2016, on one hand it is shown that employment is effective in lowering poverty risk: ethnic groups with higher proportions of population living in working households registered visibly lower poverty rates. Moreover, high dependency ratios increase poverty risk. The higher the economic dependency ratio of a household, the heavier would be the family burden, and the higher would be the poverty rate in general. The findings corroborate those of the *Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report*.
- ES.17 Further analyses on the distinctive characteristics of poor EMs (before policy intervention) in 2016 show that the poor population of ethnic groups (except for Japanese & Koreans and Whites) generally resided in working households, while SA groups mostly lived in larger households. These two aspects differed considerably from the overall poverty situation of Hong Kong. Specifically:
- (i) **Working poverty was common:** 64.7% of poor EMs resided in working households, higher than the 50.3% of the overall poor population in Hong Kong. This was more notable in the case of SAs, among which around 80% of poor Pakistanis and Nepalese resided in working households; and
 - (ii) **Mostly residing in larger households:** over half (50.5%) of poor EMs resided in 4-person-and-above households (the corresponding proportion for the overall poor population in Hong Kong was only 34.4%), which was mostly observed among SAs. Nearly 70% of poor SAs resided in

4-person-and-above households, and for Pakistanis in particular the proportion was as high as 85.9%.

- ES.18 Compared with 2011, the poverty rates (before policy intervention) of various ethnic groups generally increased in 2016 except for Pakistanis, whose poverty rate fell from a high of 59.2% to 56.5%. As a result, the poverty rates of SAs declined from 26.4% to 25.7%. On the other hand, the poverty rate of Indonesians rose more notably from 27.8% to 35.4%.
- ES.19 It is evident in the analysis that the changes in the size of the pre-intervention poor population of the major ethnic groups mainly resulted from the increase of the poor population in working households, with the exception of Japanese & Koreans and Whites. On the other hand, the decrease (of 600 persons) in the poor population of Pakistanis was mainly due to the reduction in their poor population in non-working households between 2011 and 2016.
- ES.20 An examination of the causes of working poverty of EMs shows that working poverty might be attributable to their lacklustre employment earnings as a result of the relatively low educational attainment and skill level of the working poor in 2016. Shorter durations of residence in Hong Kong of the working population in certain ethnic groups (e.g. Indians) might also be a factor. A higher proportion of part-timers / underemployed persons among Southeast Asian workers was also one of the factors leading to their limited employment earnings. On the other hand, among the poor population of some ethnic groups, such as Pakistanis and Nepalese, their unemployment rates^{xii} were slightly higher than that of the overall poor population. This indirectly reflects the relatively high incidence of these ethnic groups falling below the poverty line due to unemployment.
- ES.21 In analysing the causes of working poverty in terms of household financial burden, apart from lower employment earnings, working poor members in various ethnic household groups generally had to shoulder the family burden alone. This was particularly so for SAs, in which 2016 statistics showed that there were only 1.2 working members to support a household size of as many as 4.2 persons on average in their working poor households (before policy intervention), i.e. each working member had to support 2.6 non-working members on average. Among them, Pakistani households were in the most severe situation (each working member had to support 3.5 family members on average).

xii Estimates of unemployed persons based on population census / by-census data are likely to have a lower degree of accuracy. In the absence of a valid basis for analysing the unemployment situation of EMs, the relevant unemployment statistics are for general reference only.

- ES.22 In a nutshell, though EMs mostly resided in working households, they were subject to heavy family burdens as a result of generally larger families and a limited number of employed persons with lower employment earnings. Therefore, it was relatively difficult to move out of poverty even for self-reliant households with working members, resulting in the prevalence of working poverty among EMs.
- ES.23 Besides, while working poverty was a distinctive poverty characteristic of EMs, 2016 data also revealed a higher share of poor elders (before policy intervention) in the poor population of many ethnic groups. This was particularly notable among Southeast Asians such as Thais and Indonesians. As elders tended to be economically inactive in general, a higher share of elders in an ethnic group might put some upward pressure on its poverty rate.
- ES.24 Analysing the poverty situation of EMs **after policy intervention**, 2016 statistics show that after policy intervention (recurrent cash), there were 19 500 poor EM households and 44 700 poor EMs, with a poverty rate of 17.6%. The Government's recurrent cash benefits lifted 4 600 persons out of poverty, reducing the poverty rate by 1.8 percentage points, which was comparable to the situation in 2011 (the reduction in the poverty rate was 1.9 percentage points). Meanwhile, the average monthly poverty gap of poor EM households after policy intervention in 2016 was \$5,100, representing a reduction of \$1,100 on the pre-intervention gap as compared to \$1,900 in 2011. This conceivably reflects in part a larger number of self-reliant EMs and a lower proportion of EMs dependent on social benefits over the period.
- ES.25 Apart from recurrent cash policies, the provision of non-recurrent cash and in-kind benefits (primarily public rental housing (PRH)) has also helped alleviate the financial burden of poor EMs. Specifically, after policy intervention (recurrent + non-recurrent cash) in 2016, the poverty rate of EMs was 16.1%, a further reduction of 1.5 percentage points on the corresponding figure after recurrent cash intervention. Moreover, the poverty rate of EMs after policy intervention (recurrent cash + in-kind) in 2016 was 14.5%, representing a significant reduction of 4.9 percentage points on the pre-intervention figure (an additional reduction of 3.1 percentage points).
- ES.26 Similar to the situation before policy intervention, the poverty rate of SAs after policy intervention in 2016 was relatively high (23.0%) among ethnic groups, while their poor population was the largest (accounting for 40.1% of the poor EM population). In addition, the poverty rates of Thais and Indonesians were also rather high at 22.4% and 33.2% respectively, whereas the poverty risk of Japanese & Koreans and Whites was not obvious.

- ES.27 EMs largely achieved self-reliance through employment with a lower proportion of them dependent on social welfare. The Social Welfare Department (SWD)'s statistics reveal that the number of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) recipients of the major ethnic groups decreased between 2011 and 2016. Besides, it was estimated from the pre-intervention poverty figures of EMs in 2016 that the shares of the poor population among the major ethnic groups in receipt of the Low-income Working Family Allowance (LIFA) (to be renamed as the Working Family Allowance Scheme on 1 April 2018) and the shares of poor elders among the major ethnic groups in receipt of the Old Age Living Allowance (OALA) / Old Age Allowance (OAA) were generally lower than that of the overall poor population. The share of non-recipients of major cash benefits (including CSSA, Social Security Allowance (SSA)^{xiii} and LIFA) was generally higher among the poor population of the major ethnic groups between 2011 and 2016, leading to a notably smaller reduction in the poverty gap brought about by recurrent cash policies.
- ES.28 Nevertheless, ethnic groups at a higher poverty risk, such as Pakistanis, Thais and Indonesians, still posted larger reductions in poverty rate after recurrent cash intervention in 2016. The poverty rate of Pakistanis was reduced significantly from 56.5% before policy intervention to 48.6%, though it remained relatively high.
- ES.29 Based on estimates of the effectiveness of individual policy intervention measures in 2016, CSSA was the most effective major recurrent cash benefit in poverty alleviation, lifting 3 700 EMs out of poverty and reducing the poverty rate by 1.5 percentage points. Moreover, SSA also helped reduce the poverty rate by 0.7 percentage point. LIFA was also effective in reducing the poverty rate by 0.3 percentage point. Besides, the poverty alleviation impacts of non-recurrent cash policies and the provision of PRH were also visible, with the EM poverty rates reduced by 1.5^{xiv} and 1.8 percentage points respectively.
- ES.30 SAs are more representative of the situation of grassroots EMs. A focused analysis on the poverty situation of SAs after policy intervention (recurrent cash) indicates that in 2016, there were 4 400 poor SA households and 17 900 poor SAs, with a poverty rate of 23.0%.

xiii SSA include OALA, OAA and Disability Allowance (DA).

xiv Additional poverty alleviation impact after taking into account all recurrent cash policies.

- ES.31 Comparing the pre- and post-intervention poverty figures, recurrent cash benefits in 2016 lifted 2 100 SAs out of poverty, reducing the poverty rate by 2.7 percentage points. Meanwhile, the average monthly poverty gap of poor SA households after policy intervention was \$4,700, representing a reduction of \$1,500 on the pre-intervention gap.
- ES.32 The situation of SA poor population further improved with the policy intervention of non-recurrent cash and in-kind benefits: in 2016, the poverty rate of SAs fell to 20.9% after policy intervention (recurrent + non-recurrent cash), and declined further to 18.0% after policy intervention (recurrent cash + in-kind).
- ES.33 Analysed by age, children and adults aged 18-64 accounted for the majority of the poor SA population after policy intervention (recurrent cash) in 2016, while the number of poor SA elders was relatively small. On the other hand, the poverty rate of SA children reached 33.6%, notably higher than that of all EM children at 23.4% as well as those of SAs and EMs in the older age groups. Nevertheless, the poverty rates of SA and all EM elders (23.1% and 25.9% respectively) were lower than that of the whole population (31.6%).
- ES.34 Analysed by selected socio-economic household group, after policy intervention of recurrent cash, most poor SAs were from SA households with children, while poor SAs from working households and large households were also common. In terms of poverty rates, the rates of SAs across the selected socio-economic household groups were generally higher than the corresponding figures of all EMs. Noteworthy was that the poverty rate of SA households with children (29.1%) was much higher than that of those without children (12.1%) and the former was almost 2.5 times the latter. Moreover, the poverty rate increased with household size: the poverty rate of 1- to 2-person SA households was only 9.9%, while that of 5-person-and-above SA households reached 29.4%.
- ES.35 On the other hand, the poverty rate of SA working households was 19.0%, notably lower than the 75.7% of SA economically inactive households but still higher than the 13.0% of all EM working households. Furthermore, poor EM and SA households were mostly private or PRH tenants.
- ES.36 An analysis by district shows that, after policy intervention of recurrent cash, Kwai Tsing and Sham Shui Po had larger numbers of poor SAs and higher poverty rates, while Yau Tsim Mong and Yuen Long also had a fairly large number of SAs in poverty.

- ES.37 Language and communication abilities are very crucial to the integration of EMs into mainstream society. In this regard, this Report draws on detailed statistics on language abilities from the 2016 Population By-census to examine the major language characteristics and abilities of the SAs and their poor population.
- ES.38 The findings show that only a small proportion of poor SAs adopted either Chinese^{xv} or English as their usual language, while some of them could speak / read / write neither Chinese nor English. SAs were apparently less proficient in Chinese than in English. However, children were more adept than adults at the two languages, particularly Chinese. The analysis also shows that while only a minority of the working poor among SA groups were unable to speak / read / write either Chinese or English, the corresponding proportion among economically inactive non-school-attending persons was notably higher. This reflects that language abilities might be one of the factors affecting their employability.

Key Observations

- ES.39 This Report firstly analyses and compares the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the major EM groups in Hong Kong based on the results of the 2016 Population By-census, and then applies the poverty line analytical framework to the Population By-census data to quantify and analyse the latest poverty situation of EMs. A consolidation of the analyses in this Report comes up with seven key observations as follows:
- ES.40 **Observation 1: Poverty risk faced by EM groups varied distinctly, with SAs still at more severe risk**
- **All EMs:** the number of poor households, the size of the poor population and the poverty rate before and after policy intervention in 2016 were as follows:
 - Before policy intervention: 22 400 households, 49 400 persons and 19.4%;
 - After policy intervention (recurrent cash): 19 500 households, 44 700 persons and 17.6%;
 - After policy intervention (recurrent + non-recurrent cash): 18 200 households, 41 100 persons and 16.1%; and

xv Chinese includes Cantonese, Putonghua and other Chinese dialects (such as Hakka and Shanghainese).

- After policy intervention (recurrent cash + in-kind): 16 500 households, 36 800 persons and 14.5%.

The poverty situation of EM groups varied distinctly, with SAs in more severe poverty: more than 40% of the poor EM population were SAs, whose poverty rate was relatively high among various ethnic groups.

- **SAs:** the number of poor households, the size of the poor population and the poverty rate before and after policy intervention in 2016 were as follows:
 - Before policy intervention: 5 000 households, 20 000 persons and 25.7%;
 - After policy intervention (recurrent cash): 4 400 households, 17 900 persons and 23.0%;
 - After policy intervention (recurrent + non-recurrent cash): 4 100 households, 16 300 persons and 20.9%; and
 - After policy intervention (recurrent cash + in-kind): 3 700 households, 14 000 persons and 18.0%.

After policy intervention (recurrent cash), Pakistanis accounted for nearly half (8 600 persons) of the poor SA population and had a poverty rate of 48.6%, the highest of all SA groups.

ES.41 Observation 2: In contrast to the overall poverty situation, working poverty characterised the poverty situation of EMs while the increases in their poverty rate were largely attributed to the increase in number of working poor households

- Vastly different from the overall poverty situation in Hong Kong, EMs largely achieved self-reliance through employment and the poor population (before policy intervention) generally resided in working households (64.7%), which was more obvious in the case of SAs (77.4%).
- Between 2011 and 2016, the poverty rates and the sizes of the poor population of ethnic groups before and after policy intervention generally increased. An analysis of the changes in the poor population reveals that the increase was mainly due to the increase in the size of the poor population living in working households.
- A more acute working poverty situation among EMs was also reflected by poverty rates: after policy intervention (recurrent cash) in 2016, the poverty rate of SA working households was 19.0% while the poverty rate

of all EM working households was 13.0%, both higher than that of the overall population at 8.0%.

ES.42 Observation 3: Lower employment earnings due to lower educational attainment and skill levels of employed persons were the major causes of working poverty. Additionally, with generally larger household sizes, such employed members generally had to shoulder the family burden alone, which rendered it more difficult for them to move out of poverty even with employment

- It is a cause for concern that EMs were subject to more severe working poverty. This might be attributable to the lacklustre employment earnings of the poor working persons as a result of their relatively low educational attainment and skill levels, as well as shorter durations of residence in Hong Kong of the working poor in certain ethnic groups (e.g. Indians). In addition, the limited employment earnings of Southeast Asian employed persons was also attributable to a higher proportion of part-timers / underemployed persons.
- In addition, the working poor in various ethnic household groups generally had to shoulder the family burden alone. This was particularly so for SAs, in which there were only 1.2 working members to support a household size of as many as 4.2 persons on average in their working poor households (before policy intervention). Among them, Pakistani households were in the most severe situation. Therefore, it was relatively difficult to move out of poverty even for self-reliant households with working members, resulting in the prevalence of working poverty among EMs.

ES.43 Observation 4: Higher incidence of certain ethnic groups falling below the poverty line due to unemployment

- The unemployment rates of the poor population of some ethnic groups were relatively high. For example, the unemployment rates (before policy intervention) of the poor Pakistanis and Nepalese (18.7% and 17.9% respectively) were slightly higher than that of the overall poor population (16.6%). This indirectly reflects the higher incidence of these ethnic groups falling below the poverty line due to unemployment.

ES.44 Observation 5: Apart from working poverty, a higher share of poor elders (especially Southeast Asians) was observed in recent years, though the overall poverty rate of EM elders was still lower than that of the whole population in Hong Kong

- While working poverty was a notable poverty characteristic of EMs, higher shares of poor EM elders (especially Southeast Asians like Thais and Indonesians) in the poor population of various ethnic groups were observed in 2016 when compared with 2011.
- As elders tended to be economically inactive, a higher share of elders in an ethnic group might push up the poverty rate. It is worth noting that the poverty rates after policy intervention (recurrent cash) of SA and all EM elders (23.1% and 25.9% respectively) were lower than that of the whole population (31.6%).

ES.45 Observation 6: Government's welfare transfers continued to help alleviate the poverty situation of EMs by relieving their financial burden, though they were mostly self-reliant and less dependent on social benefits (such as CSSA)

- With higher prevalence of working households among EMs, they largely achieved self-reliance through employment and were less dependent on cash assistance. In general, the shares of non-recipients of major cash benefits among the poor population of the major ethnic groups increased evidently between 2011 and 2016.
- Nevertheless, in 2016, various poverty indicators after policy intervention (recurrent cash) still fared better than those before policy intervention. The provision of non-recurrent cash and in-kind benefits (primarily PRH) contributed further to the improvement of poverty indicators and helped relieve EMs of their financial burden. Among the major recurrent cash benefits, CSSA was the most effective while SSA and LIFA also showed their effectiveness in poverty alleviation. Moreover, non-recurrent cash benefits and PRH were also very effective in alleviating the poverty situation of EMs.

ES.46 Observation 7: Given the low educational attainment of SAs, the proportions of young people in some ethnic groups entering post-secondary programmes were quite low. Having lower language proficiency was one of the factors that hindered their employability and community integration

- The proportions of population attaining post-secondary education were low in some SA and Southeast Asian ethnic groups. Between 2011 and 2016, despite the improvement in the school attendance rate of young EMs, the corresponding rate of young Nepalese remained at a low level. This indicates that some young SAs still fared worse in terms of

educational attainment at the post-secondary level and conceivably some of them even quit school early and join the workforce.

- In terms of language abilities, SAs were generally more proficient in English than in Chinese, while their proficiency in reading and writing Chinese were lower than that in conversing. SA children were more adept at English and Chinese than their adults. Besides, economically inactive non-school-attending SAs were less proficient in Chinese and English than employed SAs in general. This indicates that proficiency in Chinese and English might be one of the factors affecting their employability.

Policy Implications

ES.47 The Government attaches great importance to poverty alleviation, and in particular how to better cater for the needs of the underprivileged, including EMs. To help EMs adapt to life in Hong Kong, the Government will continue to provide targeted support measures well suited to the different needs of EMs through various bureaux and departments.

ES.48 **Employment and training support:** Employment helps reduce poverty risk while economic growth, job creation and skill upgrading are conducive to poverty alleviation at source. The findings of this Report further show that the number of new entrants to the EM workforce was visible, whereas the LFPRs of some ethnic groups remained relatively low and the poor population was subject to more acute unemployment. On the other hand, the low language proficiency of some EM persons might affect their employability. These observations suggest that their poverty risk can be reduced by enhancing their language proficiency and LFPR.

ES.49 The Labour Department (LD), Employment Retraining Board, Vocational Training Council and Construction Industry Council will continue to provide support to the employment of EMs and appropriate job-related training to facilitate skill enhancement and income growth.

ES.50 **Education support:** Education is crucial to alleviation of inter-generational poverty while proficiency in the Chinese language is the key to EMs' integration into the community and admission to post-secondary programmes. It is evident in the findings that the shares of population attaining post-secondary education for some SA and Southeast Asian ethnic groups were not high. Furthermore, though a higher school attendance rate for EM youths was observed, the situation among some SA youths (e.g. Nepalese youths) in terms of higher educational attainment was still less desirable.

- ES.51 As a matter of importance, given the relatively young EM and in particular SA population, more support should be provided to this new generation of Hong Kong for upgrading the quality of our overall future manpower. The Education Bureau will continue to enhance support for non-Chinese speaking students and their parents.
- ES.52 **Welfare services:** insofar as welfare services are concerned, all Hong Kong residents in need, irrespective of their nationality or race, enjoy equal access to social welfare services as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. The Labour and Welfare Bureau will continue to assist EMs to integrate into the local community, through various services including family and child welfare services, services for young people, medical social services, different social security schemes, etc., thereby helping to alleviate their adjustment problems and enhancing their social functioning and capacity for self-sufficiency.
- ES.53 The findings show that EMs largely achieved self-reliance through employment and working poverty was a notable characteristic of poor EMs. They were less dependent on cash assistance. Besides, compared with the overall poor population, a generally higher share of non-recipients of major cash benefits was observed among poor EMs of major ethnic groups and the proportions generally rose in recent years.
- ES.54 SWD, the Working Family Allowance Office of the Working Family and Student Financial Assistance Agency and LD will also continue to step up promotion of the existing assistance (including the LIFA Scheme and the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme) to enhance EMs' awareness and understanding of the schemes, with an aim to facilitate their submission of applications when needed.
- ES.55 **Community involvement and integration:** EMs have settled in Hong Kong with many of them being locally born and raised. They have already become members of the Hong Kong society. It is of utmost importance for them to integrate into the community and live and work happily. The Government will continue to promote community cohesion among EMs and give them support while assisting them in using public services. Publicity to EMs (especially SAs) will be stepped up by the Home Affairs Department for the implementation of more effective and fruitful support policies.
- ES.56 **Continuous monitoring of poverty situation:** given the faster growth in SA population and their higher poverty risk, the Government needs to monitor their poverty situation on a regular basis, via, e.g. population censuses / by-censuses. These can continuously provide statistical updates in monitoring the poverty situation of EMs (especially SAs).

A Study on Ethnic Minorities' Awareness and Satisfaction towards Selected Public Services

Executive Summary

Introduction

Objectives of the Study

1. The aim of the Study is to assess ethnic minorities' (EMs') awareness and satisfaction towards major public services and identify the underlying causes for the phenomena identified in the study. More specifically, the study was pursued on the following terms: –
 - (a) in the interests of having a manageable scope without compromising the depth, the study should cover selected public services of greater relevance to the integration of EMs. It was decided that the following four public services would be covered in the study, namely,
 - (i) employment services of the Labour Department (LD), including job search, referral and employment advisory services provided mainly through its job centres;
 - (ii) training/ retraining programmes provided by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) through its training bodies;
 - (iii) family and child welfare services, services for the youth, community development services, and services for the elderly provided through the Integrated Family Service Centres (IFSCs) / Integrated Services Centres (ISCs), Integrated Children and Youth Services Centres (ICYSCs), District Elderly Community Centres/ Neighbourhood Elderly Centres as operated or subvented by the Social Welfare Department (SWD); and
 - (iv) integration services provided by the Home Affairs Department (HAD) through its support service centres and sub-centres for EMs (EM centres), including the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (CHEER Centre) which provides general interpretation and translation services in addition to its basic services.
 - (b) the target EM groups would be EMs of South Asian ethnicities (viz. Indians, Nepalese and Pakistanis) as the EM Poverty Report has identified this ethnic group as more vulnerable to poverty risk. They may have a greater need for public services in their integration into the local community; and
 - (c) as one of the objectives to identify underlying causes or factors for the assessed awareness and satisfaction levels with a view to formulating improvement measures, a qualitative study would be conducted via focus group discussions or interviews with stakeholders. Efforts should be made to ensure that the EM participants cover a sufficiently wide cross-section of target EM respondents based on parameters such as age, ethnicity, gender,

socio-economic status and length of residence in Hong Kong.

Methodology

Approach

2. In conducting this study, attempt was made to reach EMs with different economic activity status, language ability and educational level in order to effectively gauge problems faced by them in accessing public services. The measures adopted are summarized below:
 - a) EMs residing in different districts were approached through NGOs serving EMs in different districts;
 - b) A balanced mix of EMs in terms of age, educational attainment and economic activity status (whether employed, homeworkers, unemployed and retired) were invited to focus group discussions;
 - c) Efforts were made to reach out to hard-to-be-contacted EMs who did not participate in activities organized by NGOs. Examples of such efforts were approaching them at the entrance of religious places where EMs usually frequented, and referrals by other EMs using a snow-ball sampling approach;
 - d) To overcome language barriers, EMs were employed as translators/facilitators in focus group discussions in which the discussants do not speak Cantonese, Putonghua or English;
 - e) To further reduce reluctance on the part of female EMs to participate in focus group discussions, female researchers from the Project Team were deployed to be facilitators of focus group discussions when there were female EMs present;
 - f) Separate focus group discussions were arranged for Indian and Pakistani discussants.

Stakeholders consulted

3. A total of 30 in-depth interviews and 16 focus group discussions were held involving 179 stakeholders. A breakdown of the interviewees and discussants is set out below: -

| Interviewees/discussants | | No. of in-depth interviews | No. of focus group discussions | No. of stakeholders participated |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---|
| Key informants | | 6 | - | 6 |
| Government departments/agencies | | 11 | - | 23 |
| Service providers | Support service centres | 4 | - | 6 |
| | Other NGOs | 7 | - | 9 |
| | EM organisations | 2 | - | 5 |
| EM participants* | | - | 16 | 130 |
| Total | | 30 | 16 | 179 |

* EM participants covered a diverse background in age, gender, education attainment, occupation and length of residence in Hong Kong.

4. Out of the 130 EM participants, 34 were Indian, 57 were Pakistani and 39 Nepalese. About 65% of them were female. Approximately 72% of the participants were aged 25-64, with 16% aged between 15-24 and the remaining 12% aged 65 or above. Nearly 58% of EM participants have resided in Hong Kong for more than 10 years, whilst another 21% have resided in Hong Kong for less than 7 years.
5. Out of the 130 EM participants, only 7 were users of all selected public services, while 22 were non-users of any of the selected public services. Of all the participants, less than half were users of services of LD, ERB and SWD, at approximately 31%, 14% and 44% respectively. Approximately 62% of the EM individual respondents have used the services provided by HAD through its EM centres.

Limitations

6. Given the scope and nature of the study, there are a number of limitations as follows: -
 - (a) Views expressed by stakeholders in this study represented their individual comments and insights. The research team was not in a position to verify the statements/ comments made by the discussants.
 - (b) Most EMs whom the research team consulted were not users of public services.
 - (c) Given that one respondent may be the user of services of one organisation and not another, it is difficult to make delineation of service users as opposed to non-service users when collecting their views during the course of the focus group discussions.
 - (d) Non-EM stakeholders consulted may have good knowledge of the needs of EMs through their years of research on and contact with EMs. Nevertheless, they are often not first-hand users of EM services.

Services provided by HAD

7. HAD provides support services for EMs to help them integrate into the community. It commissions NGOs to operate six support service centres and two sub-centres for EMs (EM centres) to provide tailor-made classes, integration programmes, etc. All EM centres are running smoothly. Feedback from service recipients has been very positive and they think that the services can meet their special needs.
8. Apart from the EM centres, HAD also implements other programmes, including

community support teams, ambassador schemes, district-based integration programmes, Harmony Scholarships Scheme, etc. to help EMs' early integration into the community.

9. To disseminate useful information to EMs, HAD sponsors radio programmes in five EM languages, operates a dedicated website and publishes guidebooks in six EM languages and English, and commissions an NGO to distribute information kits to newly arrived EMs and handle enquiries at the airport. To promote racial harmony, EM and Chinese staff of the Race Relations Unit (RRU) under HAD conduct school talks and roving exhibitions on cultural diversity and racial harmony.

Stakeholders' views on HAD's services

10. Most EMs consulted were of the view that the language courses were pitched at the very basic level necessary for "survival". The computer class was also a basic one. EMs were only informed of the availability of training courses at short notices. As a result, many EMs had difficulties in rescheduling their commitments to attend the courses. As regards after-school tutorials for children, the demand is great but the number of places available is not adequate.
11. Several EMs consulted felt that many activities organized by EM centres are recreational activities. It does not help much as far as integration is concerned as participants are mainly EMs. It was pointed out that the ultimate objectives should be to facilitate the integration of EMs in the local community and to enhance harmony among residents of different ethnicities. Activities organized by EM centres to gather EMs together were only the first step.
12. Furthermore, a number of EMs consulted opined that activities organized by EM centres do not have specific target groups within EM community, and fail to take into account the different and diverse needs of EMs. EMs who have recently arrived in Hong Kong have very different needs from those who have been in Hong Kong for quite some time. It was suggested to gather information on EMs who have newly arrived in Hong Kong in order to provide follow up services to them.

Difficulties faced by service providers

13. In organizing activities for EMs, EM centres have difficulty finding venues in convenient locations. High rental of premises has restricted the type of activities EM centres can organize. Furthermore, some EM centres that cannot afford to pay high rental increases have to move to remote locations with lower rental. This has affected these centres' ability to retain existing members and attract new ones.

14. Furthermore, EM centres are only awarded two-year grant agreements by HAD. It is difficult for the EM centres to draw up long-term plans. For school activities, which are usually planned one year in advance, the EM centres have less than a year to plan and conduct activities. This leaves staff at the EM centres very little time to build up its relationship with and engage the EM students, seriously affecting the effectiveness of their programs.

Good practice adopted by EM centres

15. To address EMs' difficulties in finding jobs, certain EM centres organize recruitment days and job fairs for EM job-seekers, where employers can conduct job interviews and make job offers on the spot. The centres also arrange EM job-seekers to join job fairs and employment-related exhibitions organized by other NGOs and LD. Through efforts by the EM centres, employers are encouraged to offer job positions with less demanding requirements on spoken Cantonese. The employment support is considered quite effective in helping EMs find jobs.

Services provided by LD

16. LD provides a wide range of free employment services to job seekers, including EMs, through a network of 13 job centres, three recruitment centres for the catering, retail and construction industry, a Job Vacancy Processing Centre and a Telephone Employment Service Centre. Job seekers may also obtain the latest vacancy information through the Interactive Employment Service (iES) website, its mobile application as well as vacancy search terminals located throughout the territory.
17. Since September 2014, LD has implemented the Employment Services Ambassador (ESA) Programme for Ethnic Minorities to employ trainees of the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) who can communicate in EM languages as ESAs in job centres, industry-based recruitment centres and job fairs for six months. Moreover, since May 2017, LD has engaged two Employment Assistants proficient in EM languages at the Kowloon West Job Centre in Sham Shui Po and the Employment in One-stop in Tin Shui Wai on a pilot basis to strengthen employment support for EM job seekers, especially those of South Asian origins.
18. Furthermore, LD has set up an exclusive e-platform, a dedicated webpage for EM job seekers on the iES website (www.jobs.gov.hk/EM). The webpage, featuring job vacancies which are posted by employers welcoming EM job seekers and having no or little Chinese language requirements, also publishes successful employment stories of EMs.

LD's promotion of employment services to EMs

19. To raise EMs' awareness of LD's employment services, promotional leaflets are prepared in English and six EM languages. Moreover, with the support of the ESAs and Employment Assistants who are also members of the EM communities, LD proactively reaches out to EMs at their popular gathering spots such as mosques, district-based organisations, grocery stores, food establishments, activities targeted at EMs, etc. and distributes these promotional leaflets. In addition, on-going dialogue is maintained with NGOs serving EMs through the network of The Hong Kong Council of Social Service.

LD's promotion to employers

20. LD constantly reminds employers to consider the genuine occupational qualifications of the posts when specifying the language requirements and encourages them to provide bilingual job vacancy information. Employers are also required to specify the four aspects of Chinese language requirements (i.e., reading and writing Chinese, speaking Cantonese and Putonghua) individually and encouraged to open up their vacancies to EM job seekers who have little knowledge of written Chinese as far as practicable. Furthermore, experience sharing sessions are organized for employers to acquaint them with EM cultures and the skills to communicate with them.
21. In addition, LD has been making continuous efforts to canvass vacancies suitable for EM job seekers to enhance their employment opportunities. LD organizes large-scale and district-based inclusive job fairs at which EM job seekers can submit job applications and attend interviews with employers on the spot. In recruiting employers to join these job fairs, special efforts were made to encourage employers to relax the Chinese language requirements.

Stakeholders' views on LD's services

22. Many EMs consulted indicated that they usually obtain information on job availability through family members and friends. They are of the view that jobs offered through LD are mainly manual workers at construction sites or service workers. The job vacancies available are not diverse enough to cater for the employment needs of EMs with different educational levels and skills. Furthermore, the Chinese language requirement of many jobs offered to EMs, including English language teaching, book-keeping and IT jobs, is quite high.
23. There are some comments that LD staff manning the telephone employment service hotline is unable to fully communicate with EMs in English, reducing

the effectiveness of the hotline. Several EMs remarked that sometimes the EM users have to wait a long time for the interpretation service. While most EMs consulted found the LD staff in the job centres friendly and courteous, as far as finding jobs is concerned, their services are not helpful. Several EM users expressed that sometimes they have to wait a long time before obtaining any response from LD. This negative experience could probably be one of the reasons why some EMs were reluctant to make use of LD's employment services.

24. Furthermore, the role of ESAs is rather limited. They only help break the language barriers when EM job seekers try to use the facilities and services at the centres or job fairs. They do not have knowledge about local job market. Full-time staff should be employed. The stakeholders, on the other hand, are glad to note that LD has employed two full-time staff proficient in EM languages starting from May 2017.
25. It was noted by several EMs consulted that some employers may not be aware of EM cultures, including their religious rituals such as fasting during Ramadan and religious prayers (e.g. Salah five times a day), and may be reluctant to adjust the work or office arrangement (e.g. a quiet room for prayer).

Suggestions for LD

26. To help employers, it was suggested that LD should, in collaboration with NGOs, organize seminars for employers to enhance their cultural sensitivity by explaining to employers the working habits and religious practices of EMs. This will facilitate the adoption of good practices conducive to better relationship between EMs and their local Chinese counterparts in the workplace. Similarly, talks or seminars on the local labour market conditions, including the usual work habit and expectations of employers, should also be organized for EM job seekers.

Practices of NGOs considered effective

27. One NGO visited provides follow-up services after they have successfully secured employment for EMs. The follow-up services include providing employers with information on EM cultures and assist both employers and EM employees to understand and adapt to each other's work practices and expectations. Several NGOs also shared the view that such follow-up services are very helpful to both employers and EM employees. They find that a list of "do's and don'ts" in the workplace is often very useful to both employers and EM employees.

Services provided by ERB

28. ERB co-ordinates, funds and monitors training courses and services that are market-driven and employment-oriented so as to meet the changing needs of the employment market. Since 2007, ERB provides dedicated training courses delivered in English to suit EMs' aspirations and training needs. Since October 2016, ERB also subsidises training bodies to develop supplementary training materials and provide learning support services to facilitate EMs who can speak and comprehend Cantonese to attend some 500 training courses provided to members of the public.
29. To facilitate EMs who cannot commit their time for the full length of a course, the Modular Certificates Accumulation Scheme has been launched in 2016 so that EMs as well as other learners can accumulate certificates obtained through several shorter courses in order to acquire a fully recognized qualification which is only possible previously through attending a course of longer duration.
30. ERB reviews from time to time the training courses and services for EMs, and seeks the views of stakeholders in the process. On a periodic basis, ERB meets with the Focus Group on Training for Ethnic Minorities to discuss, among other things, the training and employment needs of EMs. The Focus Group comprises representatives of EM groups, social services organisations, training bodies, employers and relevant government bodies.

Promoting ERB's services

31. To promote the programme to the EM community, pamphlets in English and six ethnic minority languages (including Hindi, Urdu, Nepali, Indonesian, Tagalog and Thai) are published. The Course Prospectus is prepared in English, and advertisements are placed in newspapers in English, Urdu and Nepali to promote the courses for the EMs. The promotional leaflets and Course Prospectus are distributed through diverse channels.
32. Furthermore, ERB sponsors training bodies to organise district-based activities, including district guided tours, course and industry exhibitions as well as job fairs to disseminate training and employment information to members of the public, including EMs, to enhance their employment opportunities.

Stakeholders' views on ERB's services

33. Some EMs consulted indicated that they were not aware of the services of ERB. When they were shown ERB promotional leaflets during focus group discussions, they were interested. The low level of awareness among EMs

consulted may explain their low participation in training courses offered by ERB.

34. For language courses, adverse comments on the quality of training were given by a number of EMs consulted. For instance, they pointed out that changes of lecturers affected the coherence and effectiveness of some courses.
35. It was commented by several EMs consulted that there is restriction on the number of ERB courses an applicant can apply. If a course an applicant applied has been cancelled due to insufficient number of applications, the applicant has to cancel his/her application before he/she can apply for another ERB course.
36. Several stakeholders commented that many job positions do not require training certificates from ERB as a requisite. EM trainees found that even after their ERB training, they can still only find the same types of job positions as before training. This may also explain why there is a lack of interest among EMs in attending ERB courses.
37. It was pointed out that the duration of 6 – 8 hours daily for most of the courses for EMs is not geared to the life practices of many EMs. For EMs who have part-time jobs or who have to take care of their children attending schools, they can only spare 2 – 3 hours to attend classes.
38. On the part of course providers, it was opined that the requirement on the minimum class size has created uncertainty for them, as it is often not possible to fill the class with sufficient number of EM learners.

Services provided by SWD

39. In planning and implementing welfare services, SWD has made reference to the statistics and information on EMs to better understand the social needs of ethnic minorities. “Points-to-note in providing welfare services for ethnic minorities” are issued to social workers / social security staff of concerned units so as to provide reference for serving EMs, including cultural practices of various EM groups and ways to arrange suitable interpretation and translation services, etc. There is a designated person in each administrative district to render internal support to district colleagues for providing welfare services to ethnic minorities.
40. To promote racial equality and enhance the equal access to relevant welfare services, key SWD service pamphlets are offered in 6 EM languages. They are available at service centres and also online. Besides, an eye-catching icon “Information for EM” has been incorporated into SWD’s Internet homepage to facilitate EMs’ easy access to information. SWD Hotline has provided callers of EM groups with instant access to telephone interpretation service in 7 common EM languages so as to facilitate their welfare service enquiry. In addition, SWD has

employed EMs as Welfare Support and Liaison Assistants in IFSCs to assist EMs who seek for help there.

Stakeholders' views on SWD's services

41. Many EMs consulted indicated that they know SWD when they apply for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) or Old Age Allowance. However, they do not know other services provided by SWD.
42. In addition, for activities run by NGOs, information leaflets and notices are written in Chinese. This has reduced considerably the chance of EMs who can speak Cantonese to participate in activities not organized specifically for EMs, thereby further inhibiting integration of EMs in the local community through activities in which both EMs and their local Chinese counterparts participate.
43. Furthermore, as revealed by EMs, when they approach the service counters of centres operated or subvented by SWD, they are seldom offered interpretation services even though there are noticeable communication gaps between EMs seeking services on the one hand and frontline staff providing services on the other. More specifically, several EMs consulted pointed out that services provided by subvented youth centres such as counselling are mainly conducted in Cantonese. This has discouraged EMs from seeking help from youth centres.
44. Several EMs also shared their experience seeking help from IFSCs. As many EMs have previous experience or have been told by their friends that interpretation service is not readily available, they have to ask their family members, EM friends or EM social workers to accompany them to IFSCs. EM staff of NGOs consulted also shared their experience of being asked to accompany EMs to SWD to serve as "interpreters".

Recommendations

General

Recommendation 1

45. *Whilst it is noted that certain indicators have been put in place by departments concerned to facilitate examination of the outcomes of services provided by them to EMs, and to assess if such outcomes are conducive to equal access to public services, it is recommended that HAD, LD, ERB and SWD should consider reviewing and, if applicable, refining their indicators from time to time taking into account the changing needs of EMs, so as to better assess the outcomes of their services for further service improvement.*

Recommendation 2

46. *It is recommended that a concerted effort be made by HAD, LD, ERB and SWD to publicize in a holistic manner their services, especially new measures introduced in recent years to help EMs, highlighting in particular success stories.*

Recommendation 3

47. *It is recommended that in delivery of public services, consideration should be given to funding NGOs to provide the services and to delivering the services in partnership with NGOs, with NGOs playing the role of engaging EMs and facilitating the development of mutual trust between EMs and the service providers.*

Recommendation 4

48. *It is recommended that in delivery of public services, consideration should be given to organizing on-the-job training for EMs, through the concerted efforts of employers, relevant government departments, and NGOs with funding support from government, with a view to building mutual trust between EMs and employers.*

Specific recommendations

Services provided by HAD

Recommendation 5

49. *It is recommended that consideration should be given by EM centres to review the operation of EM centres to see if they are meeting the different and diverse needs of EMs to facilitate their integration into the community.*

Recommendation 6

50. *It is recommended that HAD should consider devising a mechanism for following up EMs newly arrived in Hong Kong and commission NGOs to proactively contact these EMs and provide them with services including orientation programmes and language classes geared to the needs of newly arrived EMs.*

Recommendation 7

51. *It is recommended that HAD should actively consider funding more NGOs to providing services to EMs, based on a systematic assessment of demand, with*

emphasis primarily placed on integration through activities involving both EMs and local Chinese.

Recommendation 8

52. *It is recommended that HAD should review the adequacy of funding to EM centres and consider extending the contract to EM centres to more than two years.*

Services provided by LD

Recommendation 9

53. *It is recommended that enhanced follow-up services be provided for EM job seekers and employers employing EMs. Such follow-up services may include providing employers with information on EM cultures and assist both employers and EM employees to understand and adapt to each other's work practices and expectations.*

Services provided by ERB

Recommendation 10

54. *It is recommended that ERB should take step to encourage and facilitate different centres each receiving very few applicants to consolidate their applications such that one centre can commence class with sufficient number of applicants. In addition, ERB should consider offering courses in a more flexible mode, in terms of delivery and class time.*

Services provided by SWD

Recommendation 11

55. *It is recommended that SWD should develop performance indicators on the outcome of its services by EMs, taking into account the actual usage of the services.*

Interpretation services

Recommendation 12

56. *In line with the Administrative Guidelines, it is recommended that the relevant Government departments should approach and fund more NGOs, preferably located in different districts, to provide interpretation services to EMs to ensure their equal access to public services.*

Response by service providers

57. Response from HAD, LD, ERB and SWD on the views of stakeholders and recommendations is set out in Appendix 3 to the full report.