

## **Proposed Research Outline**

### **Child Protection in Selected Overseas Places**

#### **1. Background**

1.1 At the meeting of the Panel on Welfare Services on 29 June 2006, the Panel requested the Research and Library Services Division (RLSD) to conduct a research on the child protection policies and measures in overseas places to facilitate Members' discussion on the situation in Hong Kong.

#### **2. Scope of research**

2.1 The study of child protection policies and measures in selected overseas places will focus on the following aspects:

- (a) legal framework for child protection;
- (b) guiding principles and policy framework for child protection;
- (c) funding for child protection measures;
- (d) mode of service provision relating to child protection, including the respective roles of the government and non-government organizations as well as their relationship in the planning and delivery of such services;
- (e) government intervention strategies and other measures for supporting children in various age groups and their families;
- (f) protection of children's rights in legal proceedings; and
- (g) mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing the implementation of child protection measures, including whether authorities independent of the government are in place to safeguard children's rights.

2.2 The analysis chapter will include a comparison of the key features of the child protection policies and measures in the selected places and Hong Kong.

### **3. Overseas places to be studied**

3.1 RLSD proposes to study the following places, each of which has distinctive features in child protection:

- (a) England in the United Kingdom;
- (b) the Province of Ontario in Canada; and
- (c) the State of New South Wales (NSW) in Australia.

3.2 In England, following the death of a child abused and murdered by her carers in 2000, new legislative measures have been introduced to create clearer accountability for children's services and secure a better focus on safeguarding children. Such measures include the creation of a Children's Commissioner, who is responsible for promoting awareness of the views and interests of children and has power to initiate inquiries into child abuse and negligence cases.

3.3 In Ontario, the government's role in child protection is to legislate, fund and monitor the child welfare system, while child protection services are provided exclusively by local and non-profit children's aid organizations. The establishment of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services by the provincial government in 2003 has strengthened the government's commitment to child protection. New legislation has also been enacted recently to improve the child protection system, especially for vulnerable children.

3.4 Comparable to Hong Kong in population size, NSW has the largest child protection agency in Australia. Since 2002, the government has allocated an extra AUS\$1.2 billion (HK\$6.9 billion) to launch a five-year project to improve its services to children, young people and families of the State, focusing on prevention of and early intervention in child abuse, and out-of-home care for children.

### **4. Proposed completion date**

4.1 RLSD proposes to complete the research in October/November 2006.