

(Translation)

**Motion on
“Actively promoting family-friendly policies”
moved by Hon Starry LEE
at the Council meeting of 5 June 2013**

**Motion as amended by Hon WONG Kwok-hing, Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
and Hon Claudia MO**

That with the occurrence of a number of family tragedies in Hong Kong in recent years, which has greatly shocked the society and reflected the existence of many unhealthy trends in today's society gradually breaking up, damaging and distorting the social and family relationships, this Council urges that the Government should make stronger efforts in promoting family-friendly policies, enhancing family cohesion and individual resilience against adversities, restoring mutual love among family members and building up positive family values, so as to create a harmonious society; the proposed measures include:

- (1) the relevant departments should assess the gravity of domestic violence in Hong Kong at present (with particular attention to the gradual increase in recent years in the number of cases of men being abused), enhance the relevant social welfare services, review the modes of professional services for handling and supporting families in crisis and the corresponding effectiveness of inter-departmental support services, and strengthen outreach services, so as to provide families in crisis with highly efficient, timely and targeted services, and, at the same time, allocate additional resources to assist men in resolving family problems, for example, setting up at service units special hotlines for men which are operated by male social workers or counsellors to provide dedicated crisis intervention and shelter services, etc. for abused men;
- (2) targetting on men's roles and problems connected with their family status, to formulate a comprehensive and long-term policy on men, and allocate resources correspondingly (for example, considering the setting up of a Men's Commission, studying the conduct of surveys on men's health, and establishing men's specialist clinics to promote men's health);
- (3) to expeditiously implement an impact assessment system in respect of public policies on families to assess the impact of existing social policies, legislation and measures on families, so as to make the relevant improvements;

- (4) to enhance the functions of the Family Council, and set up a ‘social fund for families’ to subsidize social welfare organizations to organize programmes and activities related to family education;
- (5) to actively step up publicity on positive family education on parenting, child duties and ethics, and promote family education through community service organizations, schools and the media, etc.;
- (6) to provide more child care support services to dual-income parents (including expanding community child-minding services, increasing the child-minding places in various districts, providing flexible-hour child-minding services, etc.); develop after-school remedial centres to enable children of dual-income parents to receive appropriate care after school;
- (7) to encourage public and private organizations to implement family-friendly employment policies more proactively for creating a family-friendly working environment, including encouraging organizations to provide staff with child care services and implementing a flexible working hour system with ‘flexible hours and flexible places’;
- (8) to include all public holidays other than Sundays as paid statutory holidays; and promote ‘International Day of Families’ to call on the community to cherish the value of family;
- (9) to raise the Child Allowance, subsidize the pre-primary education across the board, and conduct studies on extending the applicability of existing paid maternity leave to employees engaged under non-employment contracts, etc. so as to alleviate the financial burden on families in Hong Kong; and
- (10) to promote a housing policy which fosters inter-generational harmony, encourage the inclusion of residential complementary facilities suitable for both the elderly and the young in the designs of private and public housing, and improve community facilities to provide families with more room for parent-child activities;
- (11) to review the Conditional Tenancy Scheme and the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (‘CSSA’) Scheme to allow domestic violence victims who are new arrivals to apply for public housing and CSSA without having to have resided in Hong Kong for at least seven years, so that they can get assistance and rebuild a healthy family life;

- (12) to improve gender awareness and sexual orientation training for judicial, legal and healthcare personnel as well as social workers in handling domestic violence problems, and require abusers to receive counselling services;
- (13) to strengthen publicity and assist female victims of domestic violence in seeking legal protection, and set up a domestic violence court dedicated to handling the relevant issues, so that the judicial sector can accumulate experience to help abusers and victims in the legal respect;
- (14) to increase the number of medical social workers and the manpower of counselling and supportive grades of the Family and Child Protective Services Units of the Social Welfare Department to assist in handling domestic violence cases;
- (15) to set up transitional residential service centres, increase the places at refuge centres, support centres and singleton hostels and the resources for domestic violence victims, so as to resolve the existing problems of short duration of residence and the lack of catering services in such centres, enabling victims to avoid suffering from domestic violence and live a normal family life again;
- (16) to immediately allow elderly persons and persons with disabilities to apply for CSSA on an individual basis, and exempt their family members from having to make any declaration arrangement for not providing support to them, so as to stop breaking up the families of elderly persons and persons with disabilities; and
- (17) to introduce an extra-curriculum activity subsidy to reduce family frictions and social problems arising from the inability of low-income families to allow their children to participate in extra-curriculum activities due to financial difficulties;
- (18) to extend the service targets of the Government's existing employment support schemes, retraining services and child-minding services to all single-parent families to assist all single carers in finding jobs, so as to improve their family incomes and enable their children to grow up in a better environment;
- (19) to provide financial assistance to all low-income single-parent families, so as to help children in single-parent families grow up healthily; and
- (20) to allocate additional resources to set up more Integrated Family Service Centres in districts with greater service demands, and increase the

numbers of case-handling professional grade staff and other support staff, so as to provide families in need with more suitable activities and services.