

**Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF  
Submission to the Legislative Council Panel on  
Constitutional Affairs Meeting on Monday, 18 March 2013  
regarding Second Report of HKSAR  
under the Convention on the Rights of the Child**

UNICEF, United Nations Children's Fund, as the leading United Nations organization working specifically for and a dedicated champion for children, is concerned about the slow progress and lack of focus of the Government in raising awareness and disseminating information on the Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) to both adults and children which is stipulated in Article 42 of CRC as the undertaking of the Government.

According to the concluding observation made by UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (the Committee) on the first report of HKSAR under CRC in 2005, the Committee was concerned that professionals working with and for children, as well as children and parents themselves, have limited awareness and understanding of CRC. However, we see no comprehensive strategy being devised and progress made by the Government in this area.

The Government tries to strengthen its efforts in disseminating the Convention by making the child-friendly UNCRC booklets available to more students, funding an interactive educational kit produced by UNICEF HK, sponsoring UNCRC educational **activities organized by schools and NGOs through the Children's Rights Education Funding Scheme**, and launching UNCRC advertisements on mass media. However, the efforts lack a strategic and holistic approach and thus remain piecemeal and ineffective.

Child rights are an optional module in civic education and liberal studies. Due to the inadequate knowledge of teachers in the subject area and the overwhelming learning needs of both primary and secondary studies, the module is normally skipped by teachers.

We are concerned about the low awareness and lack of understanding of child rights of duty bearers as well. With the continuous lack of focus of educating child rights in Hong Kong over the years, we believe the general awareness and understanding on child rights in the society remains low. It is thus hard to help children learn about their rights and facilitate duty bearers, i.e. parents, teachers, etc. to understand the proper ways to safeguard children's rights. Though the Government has launched some advertisements to raise the awareness and understanding of child rights in 2001 and 2009, they appear to be tactical with no impact, lack an integrated promotion plan to sustain the noise and fail to deliver the messages effectively.

The Government reported that there are established channels to monitor the human rights situation in Hong Kong and decided not to conduct a survey on human rights which was planned by the former Working Group. We have not seen any holistic and systematic report to monitor child rights situation in Hong Kong yet and are doubtful on the decision made.

In view of the concerns above, we urge that the Government quickly evaluates the current situation and devises a long-term strategy and plan to integrate all key elements including but not limited to education system, training resources, and mass media to promote child rights. Child rights should be implanted in the school settings, i.e. school policy, curriculum, extra-curricular activities, through holistic, careful, and thorough planning. We believe this is the most solid, fundamental and effective approach to **improve children's understanding of their rights. Alongside, resources should be invested** in facilitating in-depth learning of child rights by teaching professionals and parents. Besides, the Government should enlist the full support of the media to develop holistic, sustainable and integrated marketing plan to promote child rights in Hong Kong.

Last but not least, to properly fulfill this undertaking in CRC, we believe the Government should leverage the best practices of over 70 countries in the world and seriously consider the establishment of a Children's Commission to strategically and properly work on the well being of children in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong Committee for UNICEF  
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