



For discussion on 9 July 2018

Hong Kong Unison's Submission to LegCo Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities on the work of the Steering Committee on Ethnic Minorities

1. Hong Kong Unison ('Unison') is a local non-governmental organization that serves ethnic minority residents in Hong Kong. We aim at eliminating all forms of racial discrimination in Hong Kong through policy advocacy, and we focus on fighting for equal and equitable education rights for ethnic minority children.
2. Unison welcomes the Chief Secretary's initiative to set up and chair the Steering Committee to enhance collaboration within the Government on coordinating, reviewing and monitoring support for ethnic minorities (EMs). Unison hopes that working groups for different concerned areas can be developed in due course and ethnic minority stakeholders be included in these groups. We look forward to the Terms of Reference for the Steering Committee.
3. It is of utmost importance that reporting schedules and key performance indicators on measures in areas such as education, employment, social and health welfare, and community education and integration be established and made transparent.
4. Merely providing services and dedicated support for EMs cannot facilitate meaningful integration into society; the Government must lead by example to ensure people of all races are equally protected under the law. The Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) is the weakest of the four discrimination laws and has been criticized repeatedly by various United Nations human rights bodies that it does not comply with international standards. The Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD) is concerned about the efforts of the Government to amend the RDO, as highlighted in the "List of Themes"¹. The Government should put forward without delay an amendment bill to include all government functions and powers in the scope of its application, and to include

¹ List of themes in relation to the combined fourteenth to seventeenth periodic reports of China (including Hong Kong, China, and Macao) published on 13 June 2018, International Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination.



indirect discrimination with regard to language, immigration status and nationality among the prohibited grounds of discrimination.

5. In order to effectively cater to the needs of EMs, the Government should collect statistics disaggregated by ethnicity and sex, on the enjoyment of economic, social and cultural rights, including access to education, housing, social security and health-care services, and on employment, and unemployment etc.; the data collection form should be designed in consultation with concerned stakeholders.
6. The Government encourages non-Chinese speaking (NCS) parents to send their children to local kindergartens; however, many NCS parents face difficulties enrolling their children in local “Chinese” kindergartens. In 2016/17 school year, almost 40% of all NCS students in local kindergartens were concentrated in 25 schools (out of the total 876 local kindergartens). Monitoring measures should be stepped up to ensure kindergartens do not have racial discriminatory and unwelcoming attitudes towards NCS families.
7. To prepare newly-arrived NCS children integrate into local education, the Steering Committee should review the current induction and initiation programmes to ensure children acquire a basic language proficiency before they enter mainstream schools.
8. There is no lack of research and projects on enabling NCS students integrate into mainstream Chinese language curriculum, as revealed in Unison’s study “A comprehensive review of learning and teaching of Chinese for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong 2006-2016”². Unison urges the Steering Committee to set up an Education Sub-committee consisting of experienced front-line teachers and experts from different institutions in Hong Kong, to collaboratively work on curriculum and pedagogy, teaching strategies, teacher training, assessment tools, as well as adapted teaching and learning materials, and make the resources available to all schools (from kindergarten to secondary) so that ethnic minority students can bridge over to mainstream curriculum smoothly.

² *A comprehensive review of learning and teaching of Chinese for ethnic minority students in Hong Kong 2006-2016*, Hong Kong Unison, May, 2018. <https://bit.ly/2KCqVCl>