

立法會
Legislative Council

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LC Paper No. CB(2)1289/16-17
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities

**Minutes of the meeting
held on Monday, 13 March 2017, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 2 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** :
- Hon Paul TSE Wai-chun, JP (Chairman)
 - Hon Alice MAK Mei-kuen, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
 - Hon Claudia MO
 - Hon Dennis KWOK Wing-hang
 - Hon IP Kin-yuen
 - Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
 - Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP
 - Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
 - Hon CHU Hoi-dick
 - Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP
 - Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding
 - Hon SHIU Ka-fai
 - Hon SHIU Ka-chun
- Members absent** :
- Hon Abraham SHEK Lai-him, GBS, JP
 - Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
 - Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
 - Hon KWOK Wai-keung
 - Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
 - Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan
- Public Officers attending** :
- Miss Joyce KOK Sen-yee
 - Principal Assistant Secretary (Housing) (Private Housing) / Assistant Director (Private Housing)
 - Mrs Rosa HO LOK So-fun
 - Assistant Director (Housing Subsidies)
 - Housing Department

Miss NG Chui-ping
Chief Housing Manager (Applications)
Housing Department

Clerk in attendance : Ms Joanne MAK
Chief Council Secretary (2) 3

Staff in attendance : Mr Dennis HO
Council Secretary (2) 3

Mrs Fonny TSANG
Legislative Assistant (2) 3

Action

I. Housing problem of ethnic minorities (including difficulties in gaining access to public housing services and in renting private premises)

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)940/16-17(01) to (02), CB(2)967/16-17(01) and CB(2)972/16-17(01) to (02)]

The Subcommittee deliberated (index of proceedings attached at **Annex**).

Follow-up actions required of the Administration

Admin 2. The Chairman requested the Administration to:

- (a) provide details of the training provided by the Housing Department ("HD") on promotion of equality for ethnic minorities ("EMs") and the number of HD staff who had received the training;
- (b) ascertain whether information on the floor representative elections, Mutual Aid Committees ("MACs"), and Estate Management Advisory Committees ("EMACs") in public rental housing ("PRH") estates would be provided in both Chinese and English for EM tenants;
- (c) provide the number of EM PRH sitting tenants and confirm how many of them were the floor representatives or members of MACs and EMACs;

- (d) follow up cases of refusal by the Link Real Estate Investment Trust to let shop premises to EMs for sale of ethnic food;
- (e) provide the number of PRH applicants who were likely to be EMs on the waiting list and their waiting time;
- (f) consider the suggestion of compiling a list of estate agents who had a track record of providing estate agency services to EM clients in consultation with the Estate Agents Authority; and
- (g) install webcams in more estate management offices of HD to facilitate the provision of interpretation service through three-way video conference among staff, EM sitting tenants and the interpreter and to look into why only 12 requests for the interpretation service had been received in the past three years.

II. Any other business

3. The Chairman reminded members that the next meeting would be held on 10 April 2017 at 2:30 pm. The Subcommittee agreed to discuss the following items at the next meeting:

- (a) issues relating to the use of healthcare services by EMs; and
- (b) support service centres for EMs.

4. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:17 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
26 April 2017

**Proceedings of the meeting of the
Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities
on Monday, 13 March 2017, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 2 of the Legislative Council Complex**

Time marker	Speaker(s)	Subject(s) / Discussion	Action required
<i>Agenda item I - Housing problem of ethnic minorities (including difficulties in gaining access to public housing services and in renting private premises)</i>			
000417 - 001523	Chairman Administration	<p>Opening remarks</p> <p>Briefing by the Administration [LC Paper No. CB(2)940/16-17(01)]</p> <p>The Administration said that it had considered a suggestion that the Housing Department ("HD") should make available the public rental housing ("PRH") application forms and key information pertaining to PRH application in ethnic minority ("EM") languages as well but considered it not feasible since it would be difficult for the staff, whom were not proficient in EM languages, to process the relevant applications. Instead, the Administration considered that the interpretation service provided by the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents ("CHEER") was effective and EM applicants would be encouraged to resort to it if necessary.</p>	
001524 - 002056	Chairman Deputy Chairman Administration	<p>The Deputy Chairman enquired:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) how many times interpretation service through webcam had been arranged for EM PRH applicants/tenants and the number of EMs who had received the service; (b) how many EM Hall Attendants were deployed in the Housing Authority Customer Service Centre ("HACSC") and whether they were actually the security staff; and (c) the reason for the information leaflets of HD being translated into six EM languages by CHEER but not by HD staff. <p>The Administration responded that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) in the past three years, interpretation service through webcam had been arranged for five times, and interpretation service on-site had been arranged for seven times; 	

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		<p>(b) two EM Hall Attendants were deployed in HACSC to offer assistance to PRH applicants including EMs. These staff were not security staff; and</p> <p>(c) the translation of the key information pertaining to PRH application was done by CHEER as part of the language support services provided by CHEER to facilitate PRH applications by EMs.</p>	
002057 - 002651	Chairman Mr Andrew WAN Administration	<p>Mr Andrew WAN said he had heard that the HD staff were not proactive in promoting the free interpretation service to EM PRH applicants. He considered that the interpretation service should be extended to the estate management offices of HD as well to cater for the need of EM tenants. He also expressed concerns that there were no English templates of the notification letters related to PRH application for the EM applicants.</p> <p>Based on the names of the applicants, the Administration estimated that currently there were about 4 000 EM PRH applicants. Every time when HD sent notification letters to PRH applicants regarding their application status, or invitation letters for detailed vetting interview or flat selection, if HD believed the applicants were likely to be EM, HD would attach an information note written in six EM languages, informing them of the language support services provided by the support service centres (including the interpretation service provided by CHEER upon reservation). In fact, a substantial number of EM PRH applicants, who were not conversant with English/Chinese, would bring along their friends or relatives who could speak English/Cantonese to offer translation for them when contacting HACSC.</p>	
002652 - 003122	Chairman Mr POON Siu-ping Administration	<p>Mr POON Siu-ping enquired:</p> <p>(a) whether the Hall Attendants would assist EM applicants in filling out the application forms and whether the Administration would hire more Hall Attendants to meet service demands; and</p> <p>(b) what training was provided by HD on promotion of equality for EMs.</p> <p>The Administration stressed that the PRH applicants should complete their application forms themselves, although CHEER could assist by providing interpretation service upon request. With regard to the training arrangement for the HD frontline staff, the Administration advised that half-day training sessions on the Race Discrimination Ordinance ("RDO") and experience sharing sessions with CHEER on</p>	

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		racial awareness and sensitivity were arranged on a regular basis for all HD frontline staff. The relevant training materials were also uploaded to HA's intranet for the staff's reference. The Chairman requested the Administration to provide details of the training including the number of staff who had received the training.	Admin (paragraph 2 of minutes)
003123 - 003636	Chairman Mr CHU Hoi-dick Administration	<p>Mr CHU Hoi-dick expressed concern about the lack of participation of EM PRH tenants in estate management matters due to the language barrier. Mr CHU enquired:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) whether information on the floor representative elections, Mutual Aid Committees ("MACs"), and Estate Management Advisory Committees ("EMACs") in PRH estates would be provided in both Chinese and English for EM tenants; (b) the number of EM sitting tenants, and how many of them were floor representatives or members of MACs and EMACs; and (c) whether the Administration would follow up cases of refusal by the Link Real Estate Investment Trust to let shop premises to EMs for sale of ethnic food. <p>The Administration undertook to provide the requested information in writing after the meeting.</p>	Admin (paragraph 2 of minutes)
003637 - 004157	Chairman Ms Claudia MO Administration	<p>Ms Claudia MO also expressed concern that HD did not provide notification letter templates in English for the EM sitting tenants. With reference to the submission from the Equal Opportunities Commission ("EOC") [LC Paper No. CB(2)967/16-17(01)], Ms MO enquired:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) whether the Administration would set up a regulatory body with powers to promote and oversee the quality of community interpretation service; (b) whether the Administration would launch a large-scale public education exercise to improve racial acceptance and respect for different sectors, and create a shift in mindset and attitude of landlords; and (c) the Administration's measures to eliminate the public's negative association of EMs with bogus torture claimants. <p>The Administration advised that HD had been providing interpretation service to EM PRH applicants in collaboration with CHEER, and would continue to strive for improvements in the light of feedback from EOC.</p>	

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004158 - 004732	Chairman Mr SHIU Ka-chun Administration	<p>While acknowledging HD's effort in allocating two adjacent PRH flats for EMs with large households to shorten their waiting time, Mr SHIU Ka-chun expressed concern that the arrangement had incurred a higher rent to the EM households concerned. He suggested that HD should improve communication with EM applicants regarding the Express Flat Allocation Scheme ("EFAS"), as some EMs were discontented with the flats (e.g. remotely located) allocated to them through the scheme. The Administration explained that invitation letters to PRH applicants contained a summary of EFAS and advised that HD would provide EM applicants with "cue cards" (in six EM languages) to advise them on the flat selection process. Mr SHIU enquired about the number of disputes reported to HD involving discrimination against EM sitting tenants or cultural conflicts between EM and local tenants. The Administration advised that it did not have such information.</p> <p>Mr SHIU said he had heard that some landlords and estate agents were biased against EM tenants and they considered that they might create nuisance to neighbours due to their habits of curry cooking and their large household sizes. EM tenants of private housing had also complained that they were unable to understand tenancy agreements which were mostly prepared in Chinese. Mr SHIU urged the Administration to address the problems.</p>	
004733 - 005059	Chairman Mr Andrew WAN Administration	<p>Mr WAN enquired and the Administration replied that webcams were provided at the Tuen Mun North District Tenancy Management Office and Tin Yuet Estate Office for provision of interpretation service for EMs.</p> <p>Mr WAN urged HD to look into why only 12 requests for the interpretation service had been received in the past three years, which was not in proportion to the number of EM applicants (about 4 000) handled by HD.</p>	Admin (paragraph 2 of minutes)
005100 - 005434	Chairman Ms Claudia MO Administration	<p>Ms Claudia MO urged HD to provide English translation of its notification letters for EM PRH applicants. She also considered that many EM people suffered from discrimination in renting private accommodation and urged the Administration to step up support measures for EMs.</p> <p>The Administration explained that HD would issue notification letters to PRH applicants in either Chinese or English according to the language used by the applicant in filling out the application form. If HD believed that the applicants were likely to be EM, HD would also attach an information note written in six EM languages, informing them of the language support services provided by the support</p>	

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		service centres (including the interpretation service provided by CHEER upon reservation).	
005435 - 005812	Chairman Mr CHU Hoi-dick Administration	<p>Mr CHU Hoi-dick enquired about the support measures to EMs who faced difficulties in renting private premises and in handling the tenancy agreements. He also asked whether an English sample of a tenancy agreement could be provided for reference by landlords.</p> <p>The Administration replied that support services were provided by support service centres for EMs, e.g. CHEER would provide interpretation service to EMs. The Administration would collaborate with the Estate Agents Authority ("EAA") to promote good tenancy practices to estate agents and landlords through public education.</p>	
005813 - 010923	Chairman Mr Holden CHOW Administration	<p>Mr Holden CHOW declared that he was a member of EOC. He suggested that the Administration should consider compiling a list of estate agents who had a track record of providing estate agency services to EM clients for reference by EMs in seeking private accommodation. This would also encourage estate agents to provide good service to EM clients.</p> <p>The Administration responded that the suggestion would be potentially sensitive and the Government might be seen as promoting the business of certain group of estate agents. The Administration would need to carefully consider the feasibility of the suggestion in consultation with EAA.</p>	Admin (paragraph 2 of minutes)
<i>Break</i>			
010924 - 011409	Chairman Ms Claudia MO Administration	<p>With reference to the submission from the Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong – Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers (Kowloon) [LC Paper No. CB(2)972/16-17(01)], Ms MO was of the view that the Administration should offer rent assistance to the EM PRH households with financial needs. Noting that HD no longer provided large PRH flats (for six persons or above) in new PRH projects, Ms MO suggested that the Administration should supply large PRH flats on a pro rata basis according to the demand for such flats (say, 1% of the 71 000 flats planned to be supplied between 2016-2017 and 2020-2021).</p> <p>The Administration advised that due to the decreasing household sizes, the largest flat size of newly-built PRH was two bedroom flats (accommodating up to five persons). However, in addition to the option of two adjacent PRH flats, large households could also be allocated with recycled PRH flats in existing estates which were larger in size (for up to nine persons). The Administration also said that each PRH</p>	

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		applicant was entitled to three offers in the flat allocation process, so there would be a reasonable chance for the applicant to be allocated with a flat that would suit his needs.	
011410 - 012129	Chairman Dr Junius HO Administration	<p>Dr Junius HO enquired:</p> <p>(a) whether the Administration would provide a mobile telephone number to handle public enquiries about PRH;</p> <p>(b) the number of EM applicants who were on the waiting list of PRH; and</p> <p>(c) the average waiting time of EM PRH applicants and that of local PRH applicants.</p> <p>The Administration advised that HD adhered to the same PRH allocation procedure in handling all PRH applications regardless of the applicants' ethnic background. Many factors, including household sizes, choice of districts and supply of flats, might affect the waiting time for PRH. With regard to the hotline service, the Administration said that both the HD hotline (2712-2712) and "1823" catered for PRH-related enquiries. The Administration advised that the overall average waiting time for PRH was 4.7 years, and HD did not keep a separate record of the average waiting time of EM applicants since the applicants were not required to indicate their ethnicity in their application.</p> <p>At the request of the Chairman, the Administration would collate available information on the number of applicants who were likely EMs on the waiting list and their waiting time for members' information.</p>	Admin (paragraph 2 of minutes)
012130 - 012448	Chairman Mr SHIU Ka-chun Administration	Mr SHIU Ka-chun suggested that the Administration should install webcams in more estate management offices to facilitate the provision of a three-way video conference among staff, EM sitting residents and the interpreter. The Administration agreed to consider the suggestion.	Admin (paragraph 2 of minutes)
012449 - 014613	Chairman Mr Holden CHOW Administration Dr CHIANG Lai-wan Mr SHIU Ka-fai Dr Junius HO Ms Claudia MO	Dr CHIANG Lai-wan considered that ethnic clustering in PRH allocation might not be conducive to fostering EMs' social integration. She suggested that the Administration might explore dispersing ethnic clusters through the PRH allocation process. Mr Holden CHOW expressed similar views. Mr SHIU Ka-fai considered that ethnic clustering was natural. The Administration advised that it did not have a specific policy to encourage ethnic clustering. Ms Claudia MO disagreed that the Administration should aim to disperse ethnic clusters through the PRH allocation.	

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		Dr Junius HO requested the Administration to provide more support to EMs to help them integrate into the community. The Chairman also considered that, without violating current Government policies or the existing anti-discrimination legislation, the Administration should strive to enhance support to EMs.	
<i>Agenda item II - Any other business</i>			
014738 - 014808	Chairman	Items for discussion at next meeting Closing remarks	

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
26 April 2017