

**For discussion on
11 December 2017**

Legislative Council Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities

**Provision of Venues in Districts for Ethnic Minorities to
Conduct Religious and Cultural Activities**

Purpose

This paper briefs Members on the support provided by the Home Affairs Bureau (“HAB”), Home Affairs Department (“HAD”) and the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (“LCSD”) for ethnic minorities (“EMs”) to conduct religious and cultural activities.

Religious Facilities

2. The Civic Affairs Division of HAB is responsible for liaising with local religious bodies and plays a co-ordinating role in local religious affairs. While adhering to the principle of non-intervention of the freedom of religion and religious bodies’ internal affairs, HAB listens to the views of respective religious bodies and, where necessary, renders assistance to them through appropriate channels.

3. Religious bodies in Hong Kong may apply to the Lands Department for using government land to develop religious facilities according to their needs. Under the prevailing policy, HAB may give policy support to religious bodies’ applications for government land for building religious facilities at concessionary land premium or rental in respect of the floor areas occupied by such facilities. Each application will be considered on its own merit.

Community Halls and Community Centres Facilities

4. There are 105 community halls/community centres (“CHs/CCs”) under the management of HAD. Local organisations (including EM organisations) may apply to use these venues for organising religious and community activities such as social groups and civic education activities, training courses and celebration, recreational and sports activities.

5. Since 2008, District Councils (“DCs”) have participated in the management of CHs/CCs. A District Facilities Management Committee (“DFMC”) has been set up under each DC for the purpose. The respective District Offices (“DOs”) and DFMCs have formulated a set of procedures for application and timeslot allocation as well as criteria for using CHs/CCs facilities in their districts, taking into account the specific local situation, such as the demand for CHs/CCs facilities and the nature of local organisations. DOs would manage the CHs/CCs and process applications for use of CHs/CCs facilities in accordance with the criteria and procedures.

Support Services for EMs

6. Due to language barrier and cultural differences, some EMs encounter difficulties in adapting to life in Hong Kong. In view of this, HAD provides support service to EMs in need to facilitate their early integration into the community. Among these services, HAD has commissioned non-profit-making organisations to operate six support service centres and two sub-centres providing various services for EMs. According to the feedback collected by the centres, most of the service users consider that the Cantonese classes provided by the centres could enhance their communication skills; visits to community facilities have helped develop their understanding of as well as sense of belonging to Hong Kong and the community they live in; mutual support groups and various integration programmes have assisted EMs to establish social network to share their experiences in integrating into the community. In addition, the centres organise multicultural activities such as cultural performances, talent competitions, carnivals, etc. for EMs and local

Chinese to better understand each other's cultures and to foster social harmony.

7. Apart from commissioning support service centres for EMs, HAD also sponsors EM organisations to run two community support teams for Pakistani and Nepalese residents to facilitate their integration into the community. Other services include district-based integration programmes, ambassador schemes, language programmes and cross-cultural learning programmes for EM youths. Besides, HAD also provides funding for radio programmes in EM languages, publishes service guidebooks and operates a dedicated website to provide important information to EMs.

Cultural Activities

8. LCSD organises a wide variety of cultural activities for EMs and features EM artists and groups in its cultural programmes.

9. Since 2001, LCSD has been, in cooperation with Consulate-Generals / Consulates of the Asian countries, organising an annual outdoor carnival "Asian Ethnic Cultural Performances" ("the carnival") showcasing traditional music and dance performances by Asian ethnic groups residing in Hong Kong. The carnival in 2017 presented over 30 arts groups comprising about 350 artists.

10. LCSD has also been collaborating with the Philippine Consulate General in Hong Kong to organise the annual outdoor concert "Concert in the Park". Artists of different ethnic communities participate in the event with music and art performances.

11. Besides, the Hong Kong Public Libraries have been organising activities such as reading programmes, workshops, visits and storytelling for specific targets including EM groups in collaboration with different community organisations to promote reading culture. Programmes organised in 2016 and 2017 included "Under the Same Sky" in Kowloon City District, "Culture Without Borders: Achieving and Enhancing Multicultural Harmony" in Yau Tsim Mong District, "My Uniqueness –

Culture of Ethnic Minorities” in Yuen Long District, and Racial Harmony Series workshops in Wan Chai District.

Advice Sought

12. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

**Home Affairs Bureau
Home Affairs Department
Leisure and Cultural Services Department
December 2017**