

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)1495/19-20  
(These minutes have been  
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/WS+HA

**Panel on Welfare Services and Panel on Home Affairs**

**Minutes of joint meeting**  
**held on Monday, 8 June 2020, at 10:45 am**  
**in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members present** : Panel on Welfare Services

- \* Hon KWONG Chun-yu (Chairman)
- \* Hon SHIU Ka-chun (Deputy Chairman)
- Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
- Prof Hon Joseph LEE Kok-long, SBS, JP
- \* Hon Michael TIEN Puk-sun, BBS, JP
- \* Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, SBS, MH, JP
- Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
- \* Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP
- \* Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
- Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
- \* Hon Andrew WAN Siu-kin
- \* Hon Wilson OR Chong-shing, MH
- \* Dr Hon Pierre CHAN
- \* Hon LUK Chung-hung, JP
- Dr Hon CHENG Chung-tai

Panel on Home Affairs

- Hon LAU Kwok-fan, MH (Chairman)
- # Hon CHAN Chi-chuen (Deputy Chairman)
- Hon Claudia MO
- Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS
- Hon MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP
- Hon IP Kin-yuen

Hon Jimmy NG Wing-ka, BBS, JP  
Hon SHIU Ka-fai, JP  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan, JP  
Hon HUI Chi-fung  
Hon Kenneth LAU Ip-keung, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

**Members  
absent** : Panel on Welfare Services

\* Hon CHU Hoi-dick

Panel on Home Affairs

Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP  
Hon Alvin YEUNG  
Dr Hon Junius HO Kwan-yiu, JP  
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding  
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP

**Member  
attending** : Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP

(\* Also members of the Panel on Home Affairs)

(# Also a member of the Panel on Welfare Services)

**Public Officers  
attending** : Item II

Mr Jack CHAN Jick-chi, JP  
Under Secretary for Home Affairs  
Home Affairs Bureau

Ms Carmen KONG Ka-man  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Civic Affairs)<sup>2</sup>  
Home Affairs Bureau

The Family Council

Professor Daniel SHEK  
Chairman of the Family Council

Items II and III

Ms PANG Kit-ling  
Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare)  
Social Welfare Department

**Clerk in attendance** : Ms Wendy JAN  
Chief Council Secretary (2) 4

**Staff in attendance** : Ms Catherina YU  
Senior Council Secretary (2) 4

Miss Alison HUI  
Legislative Assistant (2) 4

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Action

**I. Election of Chairman**

Mr KWONG Chun-yu, Chairman of the Panel on Welfare Services, ("WS Panel") advised that, as agreed with Mr LAU Kwok-fan, Chairman of the Panel on Home Affairs, he should chair the joint meeting. In accordance with rule 22(k) of the House Rules, members agreed that Mr KWONG would chair the joint meeting.

**II. Work progress of the Family Council**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1116/19-20(01) to (02)]

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Prof Daniel SHEK, Chairman of the Family Council, briefed members on the work progress of the Family Council since the last briefing at the WS Panel meeting held on 11 June 2018.

Formulation of family-related policies

3. Noting that some government bureaux and departments ("B/Ds") had consulted the Family Council on family-related subjects (Annex B to the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(2)1116/19-20(01)) referred), Mr POON Siu-ping enquired about the Family Council's recommendations on these subjects and the responses of relevant B/Ds to its

recommendations.

4. Under Secretary for Home Affairs ("USHA") responded that B/Ds were required to consult the Family Council on policies which might have impact on families. B/Ds would take into account the Family Council's recommendations in formulating policies or implementing measures which carried family implications. He added that the introduction of the statutory paternity leave and the proposed extension of the statutory maternity leave from 10 weeks to 14 weeks were some of these examples.

5. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen opined that as many family-related policies and measures were targeted for traditional families, families composed of same sex couples or families with members who were sexual minorities ("sexual minority families") were unable to receive the necessary assistance. He enquired about how the Family Council defined "family" and whether the Family Council would take into account the needs of sexual minority families when advising the Government.

6. Prof Daniel SHEK responded that the Family Council adopted the same definition of "family" as that in the legislation in Hong Kong. He further said that the Family Council would study issues relating to sexual minority families if necessary. Opining that the legal definition of "family" was too narrow, Mr CHAN Chi-chuen took the view that the Administration should put more efforts in addressing the needs of sexual minority families.

#### Impact of the social incidents on families and youths

7. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung expressed grave concern that the social incidents which started in June 2019 had given rise to many family problems. He said that according to some media reports, the mother of a 13-year old boy had supported her son to act as a reporter at a protest scene of the social incidents. He took the view that it was an example of family problems caused by the social incidents. He further said that many young people had suffered from emotional distress due to the social incidents and had to consult psychiatrists. He enquired whether the Family Council had conducted in-depth studies on the impact of the social incidents on families and how the Administration would resolve family, youth and social problems caused by the social incidents.

8. USHA responded that the Administration had made efforts to resolve problems brought about by the social incidents. He further said that the Family Council attached great importance to youth-related issues and did

conduct researches on youth matters before. Since its establishment in 2007, the Family Council had held 44 meetings and discussed youth-related matters at 10 of these meetings. The Family Council had also discussed the impact of the social incidents on families and youths with participation of representatives from the Education Bureau, the Food and Health Bureau, the Security Bureau ("SB"), the Department of Justice and the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") at its meetings in September 2019 and May 2020. The Family Council considered it necessary to provide long-term support for families, students, principals and teachers on areas such as how students should handle their emotions and feelings, and how the relationships among family members, between teachers and students and between schools and local communities could be re-established.

9. Prof Daniel SHEK supplemented that the Family Council had discussed the social incidents and would give its views about this subject matter to SB and other relevant B/Ds and request them to provide a response. Sharing the view that many youth problems might stem from family problems, Prof SHEK said that the Family Council would keep in view youth-related issues.

10. Regarding the 13-year old boy acting as a reporter in a protest scene, Dr Fernando CHEUNG opined that the problem did not rest with the family but was a result of the governance problem of the Administration and "police violence".

#### Assistance for maintenance payees

11. Ms YUNG Hoi-yan pointed out that around 90% of maintenance payees were having difficulties in collecting maintenance payments. She asked whether the "Further Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong" ("the Divorce Study") conducted by a research team from The University of Hong Kong ("Research Team") had covered issues on arrears of maintenance. She further said that as many women organizations considered it more appropriate for the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") than the Home Affairs Bureau ("HAB") to oversee matters in relation to maintenance payments, she enquired whether the Research Team had recommended putting relevant work under the purview of LWB.

12. USHA responded that the scope of the Divorce Study included analyzing the demographic and socioeconomic landscape of divorce in Hong Kong, reviewing the existing systems of collection of maintenance payments and enforcement of maintenance orders, examining the effectiveness of judgment summons proceedings in recovering defaulted

maintenance payments and setting up of a maintenance board. The Family Council had set up a working group, which was chaired by the Chairman of the Family Council ("Working Group"), to oversee the Divorce Study.

13. Mr SHIU Ka-chun pointed out that subsequent to the "Study on the Phenomenon of Divorce in Hong Kong" conducted by the Administration in 2014, the Family Council commissioned the Research Team to conduct the Divorce Study in June 2018. He was worried that upon completion of the Divorce Study, the Administration would conduct more studies on divorce-related issues, thereby prolonging the implementation of enhancements to the systems of collection of maintenance payments and enforcement of maintenance orders. In this connection, he enquired whether the Research Team would make concrete recommendations on measures to assist maintenance payees to collect maintenance payments upon completion of the Divorce Study.

14. USHA responded that the Administration attached great importance to the Divorce Study. Relevant B/Ds would examine the findings of the Divorce Study and give due consideration to the recommendations therein. He further said that the Administration had provided information on the enforcement situation of maintenance orders to the WS Panel in 2017 (LC Paper No. CB(2)807/16-17(01)). The WS Panel was also briefed on the progress of the Divorce Study at one of its meetings in 2018.

15. Prof Daniel SHEK supplemented that given the wide range of subject areas covered by the Divorce Study, the Research Team required more time to collect data and information. Moreover, as the offices of some organizations/stakeholders were not open for visits or face-to-face discussions during the outbreak of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 ("COVID-19"), the Research Team had to spend more time to collect data and information from such organizations/stakeholders for further analysis and study. The Research Team was still in the course of conducting the Divorce Study and was expected to submit the draft report to the Family Council in mid-2020 for discussion. Given that the Divorce Study was supposed to be completed in late 2019/early 2020, the Chairman, Mr SHIU Ka-chun and Ms YUNG Hoi-yan urged the Family Council to speed up the progress of the Divorce Study.

16. Expressing grave concern about the long delay in implementing support measures for maintenance payees and setting up of a maintenance board, the Chairman and Dr KWOK Ka-ki enquired about the timetable for implementing support measures for divorced families. Dr KWOK further opined that the Administration should consider according priority to

divorced families, in particular new arrival single-mother families, on the allocation of public rental housing units. The Administration should also enhance the support for children with special educational needs ("SEN") from divorced families.

17. Prof Daniel SHEK responded that the Family Council would impress upon the Administration to implement support measures for divorced families and single mothers as early as practicable. The Working Group would continue to review the progress of the Divorce Study on a regular basis. As regards support measures for SEN children, he said that the Family Council had recommended to the Chief Executive to increase the number of pre-school rehabilitation service ("PRS") places. On account of the Family Council's recommendations, the Administration had implemented pilot schemes on PRS which had subsequently been regularized. He added that the Family Council had been putting forward family-related policy proposals to the Government and would draw the attention of the Chief Secretary for Administration ("CS") to matters requiring swift actions.

18. Dr Fernando CHEUNG opined that the Research Team's recommendations of resolving disputes about maintenance payments through mediation and introducing loan schemes to maintenance payees could not address the imminent financial needs of maintenance payees. Given that it was extremely difficult to recover defaulted maintenance payments and the relevant legal proceedings were lengthy, he suggested that a mechanism should be established to assist maintenance payees with financial difficulties. Under the proposed mechanism, the Administration would make advance maintenance payments to maintenance payees and recover the defaulted maintenance payments on behalf of the maintenance payees concerned.

19. Dr Fernando CHEUNG further said that according to the Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report 2018, the poverty rate of single-parent families was 35% after policy intervention and the poverty rate of single-mother families was even higher. In his view, the proposed mechanism would help prevent divorced families, particularly single-mother families, from falling into poverty. He also suggested that the Administration should consider providing emergency fund for maintenance payees who were defaulted on maintenance payments.

20. Prof Daniel SHEK responded that as it was very difficult to locate some defaulters, the Working Group might not consider the recommendation of resolving disputes about maintenance payments

through mediation as a viable solution. He said that the Working Group had regular meetings with the Research Team and provided it with comments on the interim report of the Divorce Study. The Research Team had revised the interim report having regard to the views of the Working Group. He further responded that the Family Council would discuss the feasibility of providing emergency fund for divorced families in need at its meeting tentatively scheduled to be held in August 2020.

21. Mr SHIU Ka-chun pointed out that SWD would deduct the amount of maintenance from the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") payments payable to CSSA recipients who were concurrently receiving maintenance payments. Opining that such an arrangement was a double blow for CSSA recipients who were defaulted on maintenance payments, he called on SWD to make the deduction of CSSA payments after maintenance payees had successfully recovered the defaulted maintenance payments.

#### Research on implications of working hours on family life

22. In response to Mr LUK Chung-hung's enquiry about whether the Family Council had conducted studies on the correlation between working hours and family relation/harmony and between working hours and divorce rate, Prof Daniel SHEK said that the Family Council had not conducted such studies. He added that according to some overseas studies, long working hours had an impact on family life. Mr LUK opined that working long hours would cause stress and might result in domestic violence. Long working hours might also worsen the relationship among family members. He strongly urged the Family Council to place emphasis on conducting scientific studies on the implications of long working hours on family life and on marriage to facilitate the Administration's consideration of implementing standard working hours ("SWH"). Prof SHEK responded that the Family Council would give due consideration to Mr LUK's request.

23. In response to Mr POON Siu-ping's enquiry about whether the Family Council had put forward any recommendations on the implementation of SWH to the Administration, Prof Daniel SHEK said that the Family Council had discussed SWH at its meeting in July 2016 and views of members of the Family Council had been conveyed to the then CS.

#### Motion

24. Dr Fernando CHEUNG moved the following motion:



"鑒於贍養費拖欠情況普遍，追討非常困難，導致單親家庭貧窮率高達 35%。本委員會促請政府在短期內設立危機家庭緊急援助金，幫助家庭在出現突變的情況下免於墮入貧窮。中長期應成立贍養費局，以協助執行、追討及調查贍養費拖欠的問題。"

(Translation)

"Given the prevalence of default cases and the extreme difficulties involved in the recovery of maintenance payments, which has resulted in a high poverty rate of 35% among single-parent families, this Panel urges the Government to set up an emergency relief fund for families at risk in the short term, so as to help prevent these families from falling into poverty in the event of sudden changes. In the medium and long run, a maintenance board should be set up to facilitate the enforcement and recovery of maintenance payments and the investigation into the default cases concerned."

25. The Chairman put the motion to vote. As the majority of the members present voted for the motion, the Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

### **III. Language support services and dedicated outreach services teams for ethnic minorities**

[LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1116/19-20(03) to (04)]

26. At the invitation of the Chairman, Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare) ("AD(Family and Child Welfare)") briefed members on the language support services and dedicated outreach service teams for ethnic minorities ("EMs").

#### Interpretation services for ethnic minorities

27. Mr Andrew WAN and Dr Fernando CHEUNG shared the view that some frontline staff of SWD's service units had failed to provide necessary interpretation and assistance services for EMs. Mr WAN opined that the Administration should provide suitable training for the frontline staff of SWD, so that they could render appropriate assistance to EMs in need. Dr CHEUNG suggested that the Administration should put in place additional measures to enable EMs having easy access to the interpretation services provided by the Administration, and that the Administration

should monitor the usage of these interpretation services.

28. AD(Family and Child Welfare) advised that the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents ("CHEER"), which was one of the support service centres for EMs ("SSCs"), provided interpretation services for EMs. The service units of SWD, if approached, would arrange interpretation services, including on-site and telephone interpretation services, through CHEER for EMs. A notice on "Assistance and interpretation services for ethnic minorities" in EM languages was also put up for display at the reception of SWD's service units to inform visiting EMs of the channels to acquire social welfare services and interpretation services.

29. In response to Mr Andrew WAN's enquiry about the number of occasions on which SWD had engaged CHEER to provide interpretation services for EMs, AD(Family and Child Welfare) advised that SWD had arranged interpretation services for EMs on 218 occasions in 2019. In addition, SWD had since April 2020 collected information on the cases which EMs had refused to use the interpretation services arranged by SWD and the reasons for their refusal.

30. Mr SHIU Ka-chun was concerned that frontline staff of SWD's service units had not strictly followed the "Points-to-note in providing welfare services for EMs" issued by SWD. AD(Family and Child Welfare) advised that the "Points-to-note" contained information on how to arrange suitable interpretation and translation services for EMs, and reminded the staff to make known to EMs their right to receive such services. Staff of service units should follow the "Points-to-note" when providing welfare services for EMs.

31. At Mr SHIU Ka-chun's request, AD(Family and Child Welfare) undertook to provide a list of the 10 service units of SWD which had installed web-cam facilities for conducting tripartite video conferencing among EMs, staff of the service units and interpreters.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration's response was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1252/19-20(01) on 23 June 2020.)*

#### Employment of ethnic minorities as frontline staff

32. Noting that SWD had employed three EM Urdu speakers as Welfare Support and Liaison Assistants ("WSLAs") for its integrated family service centres ("IFSCs"), Mr POON Siu-ping enquired about their work locations

and workload. He also asked whether the Administration would employ more EMs in IFSCs. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that although these WSLAs were stationed at the IFSCs in Yau Tsim Mong and Yuen Long districts respectively, SWD would flexibly deploy them among IFSCs and other service units of SWD as appropriate to render support services to EMs. SWD would consider employing more EMs as WSLAs having regard to the workload of the serving WSLAs.

33. Ms Claudia MO and Mr Andrew WAN expressed concern that the Administration had not provided adequate language support services to EMs to ensure that they had equal access to welfare services. Ms MO also expressed concern that many EMs were not aware of the support services provided by the Administration, in particular the support services provided during the COVID-19 epidemic. She suggested that government departments and SWD's service units should employ more EMs as frontline staff to strengthen the provision of language support services for EMs.

34. AD(Family and Child Welfare) advised that SWD had commissioned non-governmental organizations ("NGOs") to set up three dedicated outreach service teams with employment of EM staff to proactively reach out to EMs through various channels with a view to enhancing EMs' accessibility to mainstream welfare services. Besides, the Administration had provided personal protective equipment to EM families during the COVID-19 epidemic. Mr SHIU Ka-chun held the view that the work of the dedicated outreach service teams would overlap with that of SSCs. He suggested that the Administration should strengthen the communication between the two parties to enhance the overall work effectiveness.

*(At 11:50 am, the Chairman extended the meeting for 15 minutes beyond the appointed ending time to allow sufficient time for discussion.)*

35. Regarding the three-year EM District Ambassador pilot scheme to be launched in 2020-2021, Ms Claudia MO opined that the Administration should provide members with information such as the target number of EMs that would benefit from the pilot scheme to facilitate members' monitoring of the implementation of the pilot scheme in future. Mr POON Siu-ping asked whether the Administration had started the recruitment work of the ambassadors and when the ambassadors would commence their service. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that SWD would liaise with the NGOs concerned to work out the recruitment arrangement for the ambassadors. It was expected that the ambassadors would start providing service in October 2020.

Provision of website information in ethnic minority languages

36. Mr Andrew WAN expressed concern that EMs were not fully aware of the mainstream welfare services provided by SWD. He suggested that the information on SWD's website should also be provided in various EM languages to facilitate EMs' understanding of SWD's mainstream welfare services. AD(Family and Child Welfare) responded that SWD had provided "Information for Ethnic Minorities" on its homepage in EM languages to enable EMs to better understand its mainstream services.

Chinese Language courses for ethnic minorities

37. Ms Claudia MO expressed concern that the Chinese language skills acquired by EMs in the Chinese language courses organized by SSCs were inadequate to enable them to communicate effectively in their daily lives. She called on the Administration to improve the quality of these Chinese language courses and set out clearly the language proficiency required of participants for advancement to the next level of these Chinese language courses. AD(Family and Child Welfare) said that as issues relating to the Chinese language courses organized by SSCs were outside the purview of SWD, she was not in a position to respond to members' concerns in this regard.

Attendance of public officers

38. The Chairman, Mr SHIU Ka-chun, Ms Claudia MO, Dr Fernando CHEUNG and Mr Andrew WAN expressed grave dissatisfaction with the non-attendance of representatives from HAB at the joint meeting. Mr WAN considered that representatives from HAB should attend the joint meeting to address questions in relation to the work of SSCs since these centres were funded by HAB. Ms MO opined that the non-attendance of representatives from HAB reflected that the Administration did not attach much importance to the provision of language support services for EMs.

39. Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested that the Chairman of the joint meeting should write to CS and convey to him members' dissatisfaction with the non-attendance of representatives from HAB at the joint meeting. He also suggested that the Chairman of the joint meeting should relay to CS major views and concerns of members on the provision of language support services for EMs as CS was the Chairman of the Steering Committee on Ethnic Minority Affairs.

*(Post meeting note: The aforesaid letter from the Chairman of the joint meeting to CS dated 12 June 2020 and the reply from the Administration dated 14 July 2020 were issued to members vide LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1373/19-20(01) and (02) on 17 July 2020.)*

Motion

40. Mr SHIU Ka-chun moved the following motion:

"本會譴責民政事務局沒有派員出席聯席會議，討論"為少數族裔人士提供言語支援服務及專責外展服務隊"。"

(Translation)

"This Panel condemns the Home Affairs Bureau for not sending any representative to attend the joint meeting for discussion on "Language support services and dedicated outreach services teams for ethnic minorities"."

41. The Chairman put the motion to vote. The majority of members present voted for the motion. The Chairman declared that the motion was carried.

**IV. Any other business**

42. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:17 pm.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
18 September 2020