

**Meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Forum**  
**24 November 2020 at 3:00 p.m.**  
**30/F Conference Room, Southorn Centre, Wan Chai**

**Present**

**Government representatives**

Assistant Director of Home Affairs (3)	Mr Howard Yam (Chairperson)
Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs(5)	Miss Cathy Li
Chief Executive Officer (3), Home Affairs Department	Ms Rebecca Chan

**Representatives of public bodies**

Senior Equal Opportunities Officer, Equal Opportunities Commission	Ms Devi Novianti
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**Representatives of non-government organisations**

Caritas – Hong Kong	Mr Bill Lay
Christian Action	Mr Tommy Tang
Global Social Service Ltd.	Mr Qaim Khani Shakeel Ahmed
Hong Kong Christian Service	Mr Cheung Muk Yan Mike
Hong Kong Nepalese Federation	Ms Rita Gurung
Hong Kong SKH Lady MacLehose Centre	Mr Jonathan Chan
Hong Kong Unison	Ms Payal Biwas
India Association Hong Kong	Mr Mohan Chugani
Justice Centre Hong Kong	Ms Carissa Tsang
Mission for Migrant Workers	Ms Tong Hiu Yan
Muslim Youth Association	Mr Muhammad Din Malik
Nepali Social Service Hong Kong	Mr MB Thapa
New Home Association	Mr YF Chan
Nigerian Community Hong Kong	Mr PC Clement
OXFAM Hong Kong	Mr Louis Wong
The Hong Kong Council of Social Service	Mr Moses Mui

The Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic  
Community Fund of Hong Kong  
The Zubin Foundation  
Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service

Mr Qamar Zaman Minhas

Ms Mariam Bibi  
Ms Yim Yan Lok

### **Other attendees**

#### *For Agenda Item 1*

Senior Manager (Course Development),  
Employees Retraining Board (ERB)  
Manager (Course Development), ERB

Mr Lam Chi Kong

Ms Helen Young

#### *For Agenda Item 2*

Acting Principal Assistant Secretary for  
Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (5)  
Senior Executive Officer (Constitutional &  
Mainland Affairs) 5,  
Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau

Miss Cathy Li

Ms Cecilia Yeung

#### *For Agenda Item 3*

Centre-in-charge, CHEER Centre  
Team Leader of Interpreter/Translator

Ms Katherine Shum

Ms Ellen Chow

### **Secretary**

Senior Executive Officer (RRU),  
Home Affairs Department

Mr Alfred Shum

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 The Chairperson welcomed attendees to the meeting.

## **2 Employees Retraining Board's Training Courses and Support Services for Ethnic Minorities**

2.1 At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr Lam Chi Kwong of the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) briefed attendees on the ERB's training courses and support services for ethnic minorities.

2.2 Issues raised by attendees and the discussions were summarised below:

2.2.1 An attendee asked if there was any alternative for ethnic minorities who do not have a local bank account to collect the training allowance. Mr Lam said the trainees had the option of receiving the allowance by cash cheque.

2.2.2 With regard to the most popular types of courses among ethnic minorities, Ms Young said that the Cantonese speaking and Chinese writing and reading courses are the most popular ones in recent months. For skills upgrading course, many chose to take the property management course. For placement-tied course, kitchen assistant and LCCI bookkeeping, interpreter training courses were also popular.

2.2.3 An attendee commented that for some courses, such as the interpreter training course, were cancelled due to insufficient enrolment. Mr Lam said ERB had adopted a more flexible arrangement in respect of the minimum class size for dedicated courses for ethnic minorities to make it easier for training bodies to commence class.

2.2.4 In response to an enquiry on the availability of training centres in Tung Chung, Mr Lam replied that the Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council operated in Yat Tung Estate of Tung Chung.

2.2.5 An attendee enquired about the prospect of bridging over to higher academic qualifications such as Diplomas. Mr Lam replied that ERB's courses assisted the ethnic minority trainees in acquiring foundation

knowledge, thus laying a good foundation for continuous learning or career development.

- 2.2.6 With regard to the eligibility for refugees to take ERB courses, Mr Lam pointed out that the service targets of ERB are Hong Kong eligible employees who are holders of Hong Kong Identity Card or certificate of exemption, and are not subject to any condition of stay.

### **3 Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality**

- 3.1 Miss Cathy Li of CMAB briefed attendees on the revised Administrative Guidelines on Promotion of Racial Equality (“Guidelines”) which had been implemented with effect from April 2020.

- 3.2 Issues raised and discussed after the presentation were summarised below -

- 3.2.1 An attendee asked how complaints against individual bureau or department about its non-compliance with the Guidelines should be lodged. Miss Li replied that the complaints could be dealt with by the existing complaint-handling mechanism of bureaux and departments concerned.

- 3.2.2 An attendee suggested that 24-hour on-site interpretation service should be made available in the Accident & Emergency Department of all public hospitals. Miss Li noted the suggestion and undertook to relay the suggestion to the Food and Health Bureau and the Hospital Authority for consideration.

- 3.2.3 A representative of an interpretation service provider added that with the activation of Emergency Response Level in public hospitals in response to the latest situation of COVID-19, on-site interpretation service was temporarily suspended in public hospitals in order to reduce the risk of cross-infection. However, such services would still be arranged should circumstances warrant.

- 3.2.4 An attendee commented that African people living in Hong Kong still encountered various difficulties in their daily lives such as opening a bank account or getting a job. Miss Li remarked that the Equal

Opportunities Commission (EOC) had taken active steps enabling equal access to banking services by people of diverse race, and advocating equal opportunities in employment.

- 3.2.5 Ms Devi Novianti of the EOC added that the EOC had worked with the Hong Kong Monetary Authority and Hong Kong Association of Banks to find ways to facilitate equal access of banking services by people of diverse race and to provide training to frontline staff so as to enhance service provision to their clients of diverse race. Besides, the EOC had been promoting diversity and inclusion in workplace and encouraging companies to provide job opportunities for ethnic minorities through various activities and programmes, such as the Racial Diversity & Inclusion Charter for Employers.
- 3.2.6 An attendee said they had received their clients' comment that interpretation service was not always available in police stations. Another attendee suggested that Hong Kong Police Force should employ more ethnic minority officers to facilitate communication. Miss Li said that TRANSLINK system had been installed in all police report rooms and reporting centres. By using this system, instant telephone interpretation services (between English and 8 common non-ethnic languages) provided by the CHEER Centre could be arranged to facilitate communication between police officers and members of public with language service needs.
- 3.2.7 An attendee welcomed the introduction of the revised Guidelines for application by all bureaux and departments and that active steps were taken to facilitate equal access to public services by people of diverse race. He suggested that the good practices adopted by bureaux and departments could be shared within the Government. Miss Li thanked for the suggestion. She said that CMAB would consider sharing information on good practices with all public authorities as appropriate.
- 3.2.8 An attendee enquired whether Home Affairs Department would collect information of newly arrived ethnic minorities. The Chairman replied that Home Affairs Department commissioned an NGO to deploy a team of information ambassadors at the airport to collect contact information from newly arrived ethnic minorities, distribute information kits to them and answer any enquires they might have. In addition, Home Affairs

Department enhanced the translation services in the CHEER Centre and introduced new services in Vietnamese. The eight support service centres would also provide dedicated familiarisation programmes for the new arrivals.

#### **4 Any Other Business**

- 4.1 At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms Ellen Chow of the CHEER Centre briefed attendees on the service enhancements introduced last year including a strengthened interpretation team and new Vietnamese interpretation services.
- 4.2 An attendee suggested that this forum should meet more frequently. The Chairman replied that meetings would be arranged if there were suitable agenda items. In addition, there could also be other occasions on which attendees could meet and exchange views, e.g. visits to organisations which provide support services for ethnic minorities.
- 4.3 For the date of next meeting, attendees would be duly informed nearer the time.

**Home Affairs Department  
December 2020**