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**Ethnic Minorities Forum**

**New Support Service Centre and Sub-centres for Ethnic Minorities**

**Purpose**

 This paper informs Members of the progress of the Government’s new support service centre for ethnic minorities (EMs) in Yau Tsim Mong (YTM) district and two sub-centres in Sham Shui Po (SSP) and Tung Chung respectively.

**Background**

1. Since 2009, the Government has commissioned four non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to establish and operate four support service centres for EMs in Wan Chai, Kwun Tong, Tuen Mun and Yuen Long respectively to provide various tailor-made learning classes, counselling and referral, integration programmes and interpretation services for EMs to facilitate their early integration into the community. To strengthen the support services for EMs, the Government decided to set up a new support service centre in YTM district and two sub-centres in SSP and Tung Chung respectively in 2012-13.
2. Similar to the establishment of the four existing support service centres for EMs, an open “invitation of proposals” exercise for the set-up and operation of the YTM Centre and SSP Sub-centre as well as the Tung Chung Sub-centre was conducted in mid 2012. Publicity was made through an invitation notice and a project brief uploaded to the HAD website; issue of press release and advertisements in Chinese and English newspapers; and letters to members of the Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony and the EM Forum. A briefing session was also arranged for interested organisations. An inter-departmental vetting panel, comprising representatives from the Home Affairs Department, Labour Department and Social Welfare Department was formed to assess the proposals received. After assessment of the proposals, the Government commissioned the New Home Association to run the YTM Centre and the SSP Sub-centre; and the Neighbourhood Advice-Action Council to run the Tung Chung Sub-centre.

**The HOME** (**H**armony, **O**pportunity, **M**ulti-cultural and **E**quality) **Centre and Sub-centre**

1. The HOME Centre in YTM and Sub-centre in SSP have commenced operation since 11 December 2012. Both of them have been operating smoothly and progressing well. As at end May 2013, 10 language classes, 12 tutorial classes for EM students and 34 integration programmes have been conducted at the YTM Centre, while 2 language classes, 6 tutorial classes for EM students and 26 integration programmes have been conducted at the SSP Sub-centre.
2. EM residents in the districts greatly appreciate the provision of support services to meet their needs. The centre and sub-centre are actively exploring collaboration opportunities with and promoting their services to the EM communities through their community network, including EM organisations, religious bodies, district organisations, NGOs, schools and government departments. A multi-functional mobile centre, which is converted from a van, will soon be in operation in July 2013 to enhance the support services for EMs as well as strengthening the publicity of the programmes and activities of the centre and sub-centre.
3. The centre and sub-centre have collaborated with the Construction Industry Council in holding a Family Fun Day and a recruitment day for EMs on 24 March and 7 April 2013 respectively. Both events attracted hundreds of EM participants and that more than 200 job applications from EMs were received.

**TOUCH** (**T**ogetherness with **O**penness, **U**nderstanding and **C**aring **H**earts) **Sub-Centre**

1. The TOUCH Sub-centre in Tung Chung has commenced operation since 21 December 2012. The sub-centre has also been operating smoothly and progressing well. As at end May 2013, 4 language classes, 8 tutorial classes and 28 integration programmes have been conducted.
2. EM residents in Tung Chung greatly appreciate the support services provided by the sub-centre. In the past, they seldom took part in related activities due to geographical constraint. Tutorial classes for students, and activities for youths and women provided are particularly popular. The sub-centre has also organised a cricket team for EM youths to provide training for them and a team of health ambassadors formed by EM women to disseminate health care information to their own ethnic groups.
3. The sub-centre has established working relationship with commercial enterprises on Lantau Island, such as Cathay Pacific, Hong Kong Disneyland, Ngong Ping 360 and hotels, to promote employment support and job opportunities for EMs.

**Way Forward**

10. The Government has been monitoring closely the operation and performance of these new centre and sub-centres through different means, such as regular reports and meetings, visits and inspections, feedbacks from service users and EM communities, etc. Necessary adjustments will be made in the light of operational experiences and service needs.

11. We will also keep reviewing the overall support services for EMs to ensure that the services would best suit their needs.

**Advice Sought**

12. Members are invited to note the progress of the new centre in YTM district and two sub-centres in SSP and Tung Chung respectively set out in paragraphs 4 to 9 above.

Home Affairs Department

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