

Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony
Notes of the meeting on 19 September 2019

Present

Home Affairs Department (HAD)

Miss Vega Wong (Chairperson)	Deputy Director of Home Affairs
Mr Howard Yam	Assistant Director of Home Affairs
Ms Rebecca Chan	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Alfred Shum (Secretary)	Senior Executive Officer

Official Members

Ms Judy Chung	Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (5), Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
Ms Elaine Ng	Education Officer (Placement & Support)2, Education Bureau
Ms Kelly Chan	Principal Information Officer (Local Promotions), Information Services Department
Mr John Chong	Labour Officer (Employment Services)2, Labour Department

Non-official Members

Mr Mohamed Ibramsa Sikkander Batcha
Ms Ping Somporn Bevan
Dr Theresa Cunanan
Mr Syed Ekram Elahi
Ms Rita Gurung
Mr Vijay Harilela
Mr Hung Chiu Wah, Derek
Ms Kong Man Wai, Vivian
Mrs Poonam Vijayprakash Mehta

Ms Rigam Rai
Dr Chura Bahadur Thapa
Ms Tsui Hang On, Yvonne
Mr Wong Ka Chun
Mr Wong Man Ho, Matthew

In Attendance

Mr Raymond Ho Senior Equal Opportunities Officer,
Ethnic Minorities Unit,
Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC)

For Agenda Item (3)

Mr Ivan Fu Chairperson, Task Force on Ethnic Minorities
in Construction,
Construction Industry Council (CIC)
Miss Joey Lam Deputy Secretary for Development (Works)1,
Development Bureau
Mr Peter Lam Member, Task Force on Ethnic Minorities in
Construction, CIC
Ir Yu Sai Yen Member, Task Force on Ethnic Minorities in
Construction, CIC
Mr Chu Yin Lin Assistant Director - Training, Hong Kong
Institute of Construction
Mr Ivan Ko Senior Manager – Trade Testing, CIC

For Agenda Item (4)

Ms Teresa Chan Principal Assistant Secretary for Education
(Education Commission and Planning),
Education Bureau (EDB)
Ms Kim Ng Education Officer (Development and
Support)1, EDB
Mr Kim Wong Representative,
HKTA The Yuen Yuen Institute No.3
Secondary School

Absent with apologies

Mr Akil Khan

Ms Cheung Yee May, Mimi

Mr Avinash Chandiram Hotchadani

1. Introduction

1.1 The Chairperson welcomed Members to the meeting. She congratulated Mr Vijay Harilela on receiving the Chief Executive's Commendations for Community Services. The Chairperson welcomed four new Members, namely Ms Kong Man Wai Vivian, Ms Tsui Hang On Yvonne, Mr Wong Man Ho Matthew and Mr Wong Ka Chun, who had been appointed to the Committee since 1 June 2019. Another newly appointed Member, Ms Rahman Lamia Sreya, was unable to attend the meeting due to prior commitment.

2. Confirmation of the notes of discussion on 7 March 2019

2.1 The notes of the last meeting held on 7 March 2019 were confirmed.

3. Matters arising from the meeting on 7 March 2019

3.1 There was no matter arising from the meeting on 7 March 2019.

4. Employment and support for ethnic minorities (EMs) in the construction industry

4.1 At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr Ivan Fu and other members of the Task Force on Ethnic Minorities in Construction (Task Force) of CIC briefed Members on measures implemented by CIC to support EM construction workers. Mr Chu Yin Lin of the Hong Kong Institute of Construction introduced CIC's skill enhancement courses and Mr Ivan Ko of CIC introduced the Trade Testing Services.

4.2 Issues raised by Members and the discussions were summarised below:

4.2.1 A Member suggested that CIC might deliver career talks or offer internship opportunities to secondary schools students so as to broaden their horizons and increase their understanding of the construction industry. Mr Fu replied that they would explore different opportunities for early engagement with students.

4.2.2 Another Member said that construction jobs were demanding and might not be suitable for young students owing to safety concerns. Instead, recruitment effort should target at unemployed persons aged 25 or above. Furthermore, all workers including those undergoing training should be insured. Mr Fu replied that CIC's full-time programmes were intended for adults while its part-time programmes were intended for workers already working in the industry. CIC proposed to reach out to schools with a view to providing more career options to the students. On the safety issue, he said that statistics on industrial accidents showed that the construction industry was not as dangerous as perceived. Furthermore, among more than 150 trades in the construction industry, some trades like plastering or painting were much safer. On the insurance issue, Mr Chu said that all staff and trainees of CIC were covered by a group insurance policy and it was a requirement for construction contractors to buy insurance for all employees. Miss Lam of the Development Bureau emphasised that safety was always accorded paramount priority in the construction industry and the industry provided good career opportunities for people of different abilities.

4.3 The Chairperson thanked representatives from CIC and Miss Lam for their presentation.

5. Measures to facilitate the integration of non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students into mainstream schools

5.1 At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms Teresa Chan of EDB briefed Members on the measures implemented by EDB to facilitate NCS students' learning of Chinese and integration into mainstream schools, and Mr Kim Wong, representative of HKTA The Yuen Yuen Institute No. 3 Secondary School, shared school experiences of supporting NCS students with the provision of the additional funding disbursed by EDB.

5.2 Issues raised by Members and the discussions were summarised below:

5.2.1 A Member asked Mr Wong about arrangements for Chinese lessons for NCS students in his school. Mr Wong replied that NCS students had five hours of Chinese lessons per week as compared with four hours for Chinese-speaking students. Furthermore, they had developed a school-based Chinese Language curriculum to cater for the diverse abilities of students and adopted small class teaching, for which the teacher-to-student ratio was around 1:15.

5.2.2 Another Member said according to his own experience, most Chinese-speaking students would transfer to other schools within a short period if they were allocated to schools that traditionally admitted a larger number of NCS students. These schools might then recruit more NCS students to fill the vacancies. In this connection, he enquired about EDB's policy of setting the ratio of Chinese-speaking students to NCS students in schools.

5.2.3 Ms Chan explained that the prevailing school places allocation systems provided NCS students with equal opportunities for admission to public sector schools as their Chinese-speaking peers. Secondary school places were allocated according to the parents' choices and other factors such as school nets and student banding, etc. It was EDB's policy to encourage parents of NCS students to send their children to schools with an immersed Chinese language environment as early as possible for better integration and mastery of the Chinese language. Due to various reasons, including the location of schools in districts where more NCS people resided, parents' preference for sending their children to study in the same school with their older siblings, and some parents' preference for schools with rich experience in teaching NCS students, etc., it would be infeasible to set a ceiling or target ratio of NCS students in schools, which would affect the parental choices of those NCS families and limit the school choices of Chinese-speaking students. Furthermore, Ms Chan said that schools with a high concentration of NCS students were encouraged to make arrangements such as forming learning circles with other schools admitting fewer NCS students or arranging for NCS students to participate in community services and uniform groups to facilitate their integration into the community and increase their exposure

to Chinese and interaction with Chinese-speaking peers. In response to the Member's concern on whether more schools were willing to admit NCS students as they were faced with problems in student enrolment, Ms Chan added that student population had been rebounding in recent years and therefore student shortage was not a concern in the school sector in these years.

5.2.4 A Member asked whether the learning progress or content of NCS students studying Chinese Language in "pull-out" classes would be different from that of those who were studying in mainstream classes. Ms Chan said that teachers would assess the Chinese proficiency of NCS students so as to decide whether they should learn in mainstream classes or "pull-out" classes to cater for learners' diverse abilities and needs. For NCS students in "pull-out" classes, teachers would develop tailor-made learning and teaching materials according to the "Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework" ("Learning Framework"), which was drawn up in consultation with teachers and language experts and developed from the perspective of second language learners. The Learning Framework had adopted a "small step" approach with a view to helping NCS students overcome the difficulties in learning Chinese. Ms Chan stressed that learning a language required extra efforts and determination. She appealed to parents of NCS students to encourage their children to channel more efforts into learning Chinese after school hours such as reading Chinese books or watching Chinese programmes. They might also consider sending their children to after-school remedial programmes offered by the Chinese Language Learning Support Centres, which were operated in different districts funded by a tertiary institution commissioned by EDB, or taking Summer Bridging Programmes offered by some schools during summer holidays with subsidies from EDB for incoming NCS Primary 1 entrants, as well as NCS students proceeding to Primary 2, 3 and 4.

5.2.5 Following up the student enrolment issue, a Member asked Mr Wong whether the number of NCS students had increased upon withdrawal of Chinese students from his school. Mr Wong replied that the ratio of Chinese-speaking and NCS students in his school remained steady at around 50:50 and he had not seen any significant drop in the number of Chinese-speaking students as the number of NCS student increased in his

school over the years. He added that many Chinese parents appreciated the school's efforts in providing a learning environment with mixed cultures.

5.2.6 A Member pointed out that it was confusing to the parents of NCS students as to whether they should indicate by checking box 7 of the application form for Primary One Admission that their children could not use Chinese as the learning medium. Ms Chan replied that the said option allowed parents to choose, in Part B of the Choice of School Forms for Central Allocation, schools on the list of primary schools traditionally admitting more NCS students in addition to the schools in the applicant children's residing school nets. EDB had been encouraging parents of NCS students to send their children to schools with an immersed Chinese language environment and had made it clear at various Primary One Admission briefings arranged for parents of NCS students that the additional school options were only meant for parents of NCS students who still had concerns that their children might have difficulties in studying in schools with an immersed Chinese language environment. They could, according to their own will, send their children to schools with more experience of supporting NCS students. She reiterated that enrolment figures showed that the number of schools admitting NCS students was on the rise, which covered about two-thirds of the schools in the territory in the 2018/19 school year. It reflected that more parents of NCS students had confidence in sending their children to "mainstream schools".

5.2.7 It was heard that some tertiary institutions might reject applicants who did not possess the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (Chinese Language) qualification. A Member suggested that EDB should approach the nine universities with a view to enhancing the transparency of the admission requirement in respect of Chinese Language for NCS students through the Joint University Programmes Admissions System (JUPAS). In response, Mr Wong shared that the percentage of NCS students admitted to tertiary institutions through JUPAS was increasing in his school. He quoted the results of JUPAS 2018 that the percentage of NCS students admitted to tertiary institutions was actually higher than that of Chinese-speaking students. Ms Chan supplemented that 385 out of 1 206 NCS students (around 32%) had met

the general entrance requirement of undergraduate programmes in 2018. The percentage of NCS students receiving an offer under JUPAS increased from 11.2% in 2014 to 26.8% in 2018, which showed that there was a trend of gradual improvement in NCS students' access to post-secondary programmes. Ms Ng added that all JUPAS participating-institutions had uploaded the accepted alternative Chinese Language qualifications, minimum grade required, and special requirements for alternative Chinese Language qualifications in respect of individual programmes onto the JUPAS website.

5.2.8 Mr Raymond Ho of EOC told the meeting that EOC's Working Group on Education for Ethnic Minorities would release a study report on the Chinese language learning system for ethnic minority students in the following week.

5.3 The Chairperson thanked Ms Chan, her team and Mr Wong for their presentation.

6. Any Other Business

6.1 Enhanced interpretation and translation services in the CHEER Centre

6.1.1 The Chairperson said that with the provision of additional resources available in 2019-20, CHHER Centre had enhanced its translation service since June 2019, including the launch of new service in Vietnamese.

6.2 District- based Programmes for Racial Harmony 2019-20

6.2.1 The Chairperson reported that the District-based Programmes for Racial Harmony 2019-20 was launched earlier this year to engage non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to organise district-based activities to encourage interaction and exchange between Chinese and ethnic minorities. She thanked Members for passing the invitation for proposals to their community partners. NGOs had been engaged to implement 16 projects between August 2019 and February 2020. An event calendar had been posted on the Race Relations Unit website and members of both Chinese and ethnic minority communities were welcome to join the activities.

6.3 The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

6.4 For the date of next meeting, Members would be duly informed nearer the time.

**Home Affairs Department
December 2019**