**Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony**

**Notes of the meeting on 19 October 2012**

*(Revised on 20 June 2013)*

**Attendance:**

**Home Affairs Department (HAD)**

Mr Jack Chan (Chairman) Deputy Director of Home Affairs (2)

Miss Dora Fu Assistant Director of Home Affairs (3)

Mr K Y Cheng Chief Executive Officer (3)

Ms Shirley Chan (Secretary) Senior Programme Officer (Race Relations Unit)

**Official members**

Ms Li Wing Hang, Amanda Executive Officer of Constitutional and Mainland Affairs

Mr Leung Kwok Yan Senior Education Officer (Placement & Support), Education Bureau

Mrs Sunnie Lam Young Kit Chee Principal Information Officer (Local Promotions), Information Services Department

Ms Ruby Chu Labour Officer (Employment Services), Labour Department

**Non-official members**

Mr Dewan Saiful Alam

Mr Brian Chau

Mrs Cheung-Ang Siew Mei, JP

Mr Kul Prasad Gurung

Dr Sharmila Gurung

Ms Ho Wai-yee, Lucilla

Mr Hameed Jalal

Ms Rosalia Kamariah Kesuma

Mr Mohammad Liaqat

Mr Amirali Bakirali Nasir, JP

Dr Rizwan Ullah

Mr Yeung Chuen Chow, Thomas

**In Attendance:**

Dr Ferrick Chu Head, Policy and Research Unit, Equal Opportunities Commission

Mr Antony Lui Senior Manager (Business Support Services)2, Hospital Authority

Ms Barbara Hsui Manager (Support Services Development), Hospital Authority

Mr Tse Sau Kong, Fred Senior Superintendent,

Support Branch, Police

Mr Chan Yun Kam, Felix Chief Inspector, CIP General Support,

Support Branch, Police

Ms Emily Wong Project Manager, Ambassador Scheme

Ms Samantha Ale Worker, Ambassador Scheme

Mr Fanjang Limbu Worker, Ambassador Scheme

**Absence with apologies:**

Ms Daisy Catherine Mandap

Ms Bungon Tamasorn

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The Chairman welcomed four new Committee Members to the meeting, including Mr Dewan Saiful Alam, Mr Kul Prasad Gurung, Dr Sharmila Gurung and Mr Brian Chau.

1.2 The Chairman also congratulated Mr Hameed Jalal and Ms Rosalia Kamariah Kesuma on their being awarded Secretary for Home Affairs’ Commendations in 2011.

**2. Confirmation of the notes of discussion on 13 December 2011**

2.1 The notes of the last meeting held on 13 December 2011 were confirmed.

**3. Matters arising from the meeting on 13 December 2011**

3.1 Mr Cheng (HAD) reported that following discussions at the last meeting, the Secretariat had organised two visits for Committee Members as follows -

(a) Visits to the HOPE Centre and CHEER Centre were arranged on 22 February 2012. Seven Committee Members and 28 members of the Ethnic Minorities (EM) Forum joined the visits. They observed a Cantonese class provided by the HOPE Centre and a demonstration of telephone interpretation provided by the CHEER Centre;

(b) Visits to the Employment Retraining Board Service Centre, the Labour Department Employment in One-stop Centre and the District-based Integration Programme in Yuen Long were arranged on 11 September 2012. A total of four Committee Members and 14 members of the EM Minorities Forum joined the visits. During the visits, members were briefed of the ERB courses, Labour Department’s one-stop employment services for EMs and observed a Fung Fu class organised by Yuen Long Town Hall.

3.2 Mr Cheng informed members that the Secretariat would arrange visits to schools that admitted ethnic minority students. A member suggested that the Committee might visit a public hospital situated in districts where there were comparatively more EM population. The Chairman requested the Secretariat to consider the ideas when planning future visits.

*[Post-meeting note: Visits to Delia Memorial School (Hip Wo) and the Diabetes Ambulatory Care Centre of the United Christian Hospital were arranged on 14 May 2013.]*

**4. Interpretation Services at Public Hospitals/Clinics by Hospital Authority**

4.1 At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Lui (HA) gave a presentation on the interpretation service that was available in public hospitals and clinics under the management of Hospital Authority (HA). He mentioned that HA had engaged a service contractor to provide patients with interpretation service, including on-site and telephone interpretation service, in 16 common EM languages. The service was provided on the site from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm for 16 languages, or through telephone from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm for 16 languages and 24 hours for 8 languages, depending on the needs in each case.

4.2 Issues raised by members and the discussions were set out below:

1. **Usage of interpretation service**

4.2.1 A member asked the usage rate of interpretation service among various hospitals and the number of cases in which the requests of interpretation service were declined. Mr Lui replied that the usage rates of interpretation service by hospitals in the New Territories West cluster and the Kowloon West cluster were relatively high. The current mechanism could entertain all requests from EM patients for interpretation service. HA would engage a contractor to provide on-site interpretation service for 16 EM languages. In case of urgent situation, telephone interpretation service could be provided by the contractor.

4.2.2 A member was concerned that the interpretation service provided by the HA was based on the decisions of the hospital staff instead of upon requests of patients. Mr Lui confirmed that patients could request clinical staff for arrangement of interpretation service.

4.2.3 Some members asked whether HA would consider recruiting their own pool of interpreters on a full-time basis to supplement the interpretation service provided by the service contractor. Mr Lui noted the suggestion.

1. **Promotion of service**

4.2.4 Some members asked whether measures were in place to promote interpretation services to EMs. Mr Lui explained that HA had provided its frontline staff with response cue cards and patient information sheets in a number of EM languages to enhance the communication between the clinical staff and patients. In addition, HA had displayed posters and video in their service units to remind needy people to seek help from hospital staff for arrangement of interpreters.

4.2.5 The Chairman suggested that the support service centres and public enquiry service centres could assist to promote the availability of interpretation service to EMs.

1. **Language coverage**

4.2.6 A member noted that most European patients, namely German, French and Spanish, who were proficient in English, might have low demand of interpretation service. He suggested that additional resources should be deployed for provision of interpretation service in the common spoken languages of South Asians who encountered language barrier to access medical services. Mr Lui said that HA paid the interpretation fees based on the number of cases handled and there was no pre-set limit for each language. HA would continue to review the coverage of languages for interpretation service for HA patients.

4.2.7 A member proposed HA to include Pushto, another dialect commonly spoken by most Pakistanis in Hong Kong, in the service in addition to Urdu as the official language of Pakistan. Mr Lui agreed to consider the suggestion with the service contractor.

1. **Quality assurance**

4.2.8 Some members asked whether interpreters were proficient in medical terminology and whether they had received training on cultural sensitivity. Mr Lui explained that the service contractor had cooperated with Baptist University to organise ethnic minority medical interpretation certificate courses for the professional development of interpreters. The training of interpreters involved medical professionals with introduction of public hospital services, common medical terminology and prescription procedures, site visits to hospitals as well as local academia of interpretation discipline. For those sensitive or gender-specific interpreting assignments, EM patients could make request to clinical staff for arrangement of male or female interpreters. HA also provided training to frontline staff on handling of requests for interpretation services.

4.2.9 In response to an enquiry about service quality management, Mr Lui explained that Baptist University had designed an assessment mechanism to collect the feedback from service providers and service users. Another member suggested that HA should analyse the feedback received to examine differences in service utilisation among users of different ethnicities, age and gender with a view to improving and evaluating interpretation services. Mr Lui agreed that HA would continue to review with the contractor the service utilization and users’ feedback on the interpretation service.

**5. Enhanced Liaison Services for Ethnic Minorities by Police**

5.1 At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Felix Chan and Mr Fred Tse of the Police briefed members on the enhanced liaison services for non-ethnic Chinese (NEC).

5.2 Issues raised by members and the discussions were set out below:

1. **Crime figures**

5.2.1 A member asked about the number of resident NEC involved in crime, the number of asylum seekers and refugees involved in crime and the number of NEC arrested this year. Mr Chan (Police) agreed to collect the respective data and conveyed to Members through the Secretariat.

*[Post-meeting note: The Police do not maintain inter-racial figures of arrested persons or offenders. According to the police record, the numbers of arrested persons who are not holding identification of HKSAR, Taiwan and Mainland China in 2010 and 2011 were 3,795 and 4,010 respectively].*

1. **Police appointments**

5.2.2 Some members expressed concern that recruitment of NEC into the Police Force was not possible because all applicants had to pass a written test, a part of which was in Chinese. Mr Chan said that all candidates should meet the language proficiency requirement to join the Police as Inspector or Constable. Applicants, including NEC, meeting the basic academic qualifications and minimum English language proficiency standard but did not have the required minimum Chinese language proficiency standard could attend the Government Standard Examination (GSE), which was conducted by the Civil Service Bureau and the examination paper was set a level equivalent to Level 2 of the Chinese Language subject in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination or the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination. In addition, scores would be awarded to Police Constable candidates with foreign language skills such as Urdu, Tagalog etc in the selection process.

5.2.3 Members asked if measures were in place to promote the revised selection process to NEC. Mr Chan explained that career talks were conducted to schools that admit comparatively more non-Chinese speaking students. The revised selection process was available in the website of the Police. The recent recruitment of a Pakistani officer who was posted to Yuen Long, a district with high concentration of ethnic minorities, would motivate more NEC to join the Force.

5.2.4 A member questioned whether NEC was engaged in auxiliary police. Mr Chan said that the staff records of auxiliary police did not include ethnicities. Notwithstanding this, Mr Chan confirmed that the revised selection process was also applicable to appointments of auxiliary police officers.

1. **Crime prevention and fighting**

5.2.5 Some members asked the Police efforts to curb the rising delinquent ethnic youth involved in organised crime and triad. Mr Chan explained that the Police had worked in close partnership with schools to encourage ethnic youth to join Junior Police Calls. Initiatives including anti-drug and anti-crime seminars were regularly conducted to prevent ethnic youth from influence by triad society. Various District Police had elicited support from the ethnic communities to report crimes.

5.2.6 Upon a member’s enquiry about the Police’s strategies in the protection of NEC women victims from domestic violence, Mr Chan said some women police officers were specially trained with the necessary knowledge on dealing with cases of domestic violence and sexual offences. The Police adopted a multi-disciplinary approach and would make referral to Social Welfare Department for further assistance to the victims if necessary. A member suggested that the Support Service Centres for Ethnic Minorities could organise workshops in collaboration with the Police and Social Welfare Department on topics such as how to prevent and report domestic violence.

**6. Ambassador Scheme for Ethnic Minorities**

6.1At the invitation of the Chairman, Miss Fu (HAD) took members through the information paper on the Ambassador Scheme for Ethnic Minorities. Ms Wong (ISS) provided a PowerPoint presentation on the latest development of the Scheme.

6.2 Issues raised by members and the discussions were set out below:

1. **Manpower plan**

6.2.1 Some member asked if five staff ambassadors were adequate to handle the average workload of 12 home visits per day over a three-month period. Miss Wong (ISS) said that the daily household visits were handled by staff ambassadors and volunteer ambassadors from 9:00 am to 9:00 pm. They would recruit two more ambassadors and double the number of volunteers to maximise the service delivery.

6.2.2 The Chairman asked the role of Chinese volunteers in the household visits if they were not conversant with the ethnic minority languages. Miss Wong (ISS) explained that the local volunteers who were knowledgeable about the currently available services were valuable partners of ambassadors in the promotion of support services to EMs. Noting that the majority of Thais were able to speak Cantonese, the local volunteers were instrumental to provide interpretation service to facilitate the communication between the English speaking ambassadors and Cantonese speaking respondents.

1. **Challenges faced by ambassadors**

6.2.3 Upon a member’s enquiry about the operational difficulties encountered by the ambassadors, Ms Ale said that some security guards did not allow them to enter a building though they had displayed proper identification. The Chairman proposed ambassadors to consider stating in their identification cards that the project was funded by the Home Affairs Department, so as to help security guards gain better understanding on the purpose of household visits.

6.2.4 Mr Limbu supplemented that another challenge of the project was to complete a long questionnaire. In this connection, ambassadors would tactfully incorporate the questions in conversations with them and recorded the answers in writing after the interview process.

1. **Household surveys**

6.2.5 Some members suggested that more questions on service needs should be included in the questionnaire given that household survey was intended to identify the different needs of the respondents and refer persons in need to relevant government departments and non-government organisations for further assistance. Miss Wong said that the questionnaire was designed to collect basic household information of the EM respondents in a 30-minute interview. The data collected would be statistically evaluated to identify the services needs of the EM respondents. Miss Wong noted the suggestion and would strengthen the part on needs assessment.

6.2.6 A member considered the number of case referrals was relatively low. Since most respondents regarded the language barrier as a serious impediment to effective integration, ambassadors should encourage them to make use of the interpretation services and join the language programme provided by the support service centres. Miss Wong agreed to step up efforts in this regard.

**7. Any Other Business**

7.1There was no other business.

**8. Date of Next Meeting**

8.1 Members would be informed of the date of the next meeting in due course.

Home Affairs Department

June 2013