**Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony**

**Notes of the meeting on 11 July 2014**

**Attendance:**

**Home Affairs Department (HAD)**

Mr Jack Chan (Chairman) Deputy Director

Miss Dora Fu Assistant Director

Mr K Y Cheng Chief Executive Officer

Mr Ken Cheung (Secretary) Senior Executive Officer

**Official Members**

Mr Michael Yau Assistant Secretary

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau

Miss Yik Wai King Principal Information Officer (Local Promotion) Information Services Department

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

Miss Book Wai Man, Winty Labour Officer (Employment Services)

Labour Department

**Non-official Members**

Mr Dewan Saiful Alam

Mr Brian Chau

Mrs Cheung-Ang Siew Mei, JP

Dr Sharmila Gurung, MH

Ms Ho Wai-yee, Lucilla

Mr Hameed Jalal

Mr Mohammad Liaqat

Ms Daisy Catherine L Mandap

Dr Rizwan Ullah

Mr Yeung Chuen Chow, Thomas

**In Attendance**

Miss Eunice Chan Assistant Secretary (Appointments), Civil Service Bureau

Ms Kitty Lam Senior Policy and Research Officer

Equal Opportunities Commission

Mr Sheridan Lee Principal Education Officer (Curriculum Development), Education Bureau

Mr Osbert Wong Assistant Commissioner for Census and Statistics (Economic 2), Census and Statistics Department

Dr Billy Li Senior Statistician (Social 3), Census and Statistics Department

**Absence with apologies**

Mr Kul Prasad Gurung

Ms Rosalia Kamariah Kesuma

Mr Amirali Bakirali Nasir, JP

Ms Bungon Tamasorn

**1. Introduction**

1.1 The Chairman welcomed Members to the meeting and informed the meeting that on 1 July 2014, Dr Sharmila Gurung was awarded the Medal of Honour and Ms Bungon Tamasorn and Ms Rosalia Kamariah Kesuma were awarded the Chief Executive’s Commendations for Community Services. He congratulated them for their award of honours.

**2. Confirmation of the notes of discussion on 5 December 2013**

2.1 The notes of the last meeting held on 5 December 2013 were confirmed.

**3. Matters arising from the meeting on 5 December 2013**

3.1 Mrs Cheung-Ang Siew Mei, JP, informed Members that Dr York Chow, Chairman of Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), had visited the Community Development Team of the SHINE Centre in Jordan in March 2014. She said that Dr Chow appreciated the efforts made by HAD and the non-government organisations concerned in providing support services for ethnic minorities to facilitate their integration into the community.

**4. Enhanced Chinese learning and teaching for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students**

4.1 At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Sheridan Lee of the Education Bureau (EDB) briefed Members on the introduction of enhanced support measures for NCS Students in learning Chinese with the aid of a PowerPoint presentation.

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

1. **Recognition of Applied Learning Chinese for NCS students**

4.2.1 A Member asked about the equivalence between the subject of Applied Learning Chinese and traditional mainstream classes of Chinese under Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE). Mr Lee replied that EDB was liaising with various stakeholders to reach a consensus. In principle, the standard of Applied Learning Chinese was pegged to Qualification Framework Levels 1-3 and the results would be recorded in the certificate of HKDSE.

4.2.2 A Member raised the concern that it would be hard to compare the academic results between local students who have taken HKDSE examination and NCS students who have taken the Applied Learning Chinese examination. Mr Lee said the purpose of launching the Applied Learning Chinese framework was to raise the Chinese Language competence of NCS students.

4.2.3 A Member remarked that the presentation materials were informative and asked to have a copy of the Powerpoint presentation. Mr Lee acceded to the request.

*[Post-meeting note: On 23 July 2014, the Secretariat sent the Powerpoint presentation to Members for reference.]*

**(b) Application of Learning Framework in schools**

4.2.4 A Member asked why the “Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework” (“Learning Framework”) was not introduced in kindergartens. Mr Lee explained that there was no formal academic curriculum for kindergartens. He further informed the meeting that the University of Hong Kong had recently applied for the Quality Education Fund to conduct a project on formulating a similar framework at the kindergarten level.

4.2.5 A Member was concerned whether teachers were well-trained to teach NCS students under the new learning framework. Mr Lee responded that teachers were well-prepared for the challenges ahead. Meanwhile, EDB had conducted training courses for them. EDB would also invite school heads to join the training courses.

4.2.6 A Member said that EDB should take the initiative to encourage more schools to bring in ethnic minority students. Mr Lee replied that this was the policy currently adopted by EDB but it was the decision of parents of ethnic minority NCS students to decide which schools they would like to enrol their children in.

4.2.7 The Chairman thanked for the presentation made by Mr Lee.

**5. Survey on households with school children of South Asian ethnicities**

5.1 At the invitation of the Chairman, Mr Osbert Wang of the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) gave a PowerPoint presentation on the forthcoming survey on households with school children of South Asian ethnicities.

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

**(a) Details of the survey**

5.2.1 A Member enquired why some ethnic groups, such as the Filipino group, were not included in the survey. Mr Wang replied that according to the 2011 Population Census, the South Asian population comprised the largest proportion among all ethnic minorities in Hong Kong (32%), followed by the Southeast Asian population (15%). There were more than 60 000 South Asian ethnic minority people living in Hong Kong, representing an increase of 50% over the past decade.

5.2.2 A Member asked about the objective of the survey. Mr Wang replied that the major objective of the survey was to collect the socio-economic characteristics of South Asian ethnicities as well as information relating to language use and community involvement. Survey findings would help the government and bureaux in formulating relevant support policies.

5.2.3 A Member raised concern about the promotion work for the survey. Mr Wang said that the drafting of the questionnaire was in progress. Views from stakeholders were being incorporated. He added that a pilot test would be launched in late September/early October 2014 to consider feasibility and respondent burden in enumerating the data items in the draft questionnaire.

5.2.4 A Member enquired about the target respondents in a sampled household as well as the languages to be used in conducting the survey. Mr Wang replied that all persons in the target households would be enumerated. Apart from Cantonese/English speaking enumerators, enumerators familiar with South Asian languages would also be employed for conducting the survey.

5.2.5 A Member would like C&SD to provide more background information in connection with the survey for Members’ reference. Mr Wang agreed to provide the required information after the meeting.

*[Post-meeting note:* *On 23 July 2014, the Secretariat provided Members with documents regarding the survey, which included a sample letter to schools principals, a sample letter to parents and sample reply slips by C&SD for their reference. Draft data topics for conducting the pilot test were also given to Members for their reference.]*

**(b) Timeline of the survey**

5.2.6 A Member asked when the results of the survey would be released. Mr Wang responded that C&SD targeted to complete the enumeration stage within2014. It was planned that the survey findings would be reported to the Commission on Poverty in late 2015.

5.2.7 The Chairman thanked for the presentation made by Mr Wang.

**6. Employment of ethnic minorities in the civil service**

6.1At the invitation of the Chairman, Miss Eunice Chan of the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) briefed Members about the current policies and situations of the employment of ethnic minorities in the civil service

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

1. **Acceptance arrangements of public examination results**

6.2.1 A Member asked about the acceptance arrangements of results of non-local examinations, such as General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE), International General Certificate of Secondary Education (IGCSE) and General Certificate of Education ‘Ordinary’ Level (GCE O Level), for the purposes of civil service appointments. Miss Chan replied that guidelines had been issued to Bureaux/Departments to ensure compliance with and consistent application of the acceptance arrangements in all civil service recruitment exercises. She undertook to provide members with the relevant information after the meeting.

*[Post-meeting note:* *On 23 July 2014, the Secretariat circulated to Members the supplementary information regarding the relevant non-local examinations for their reference.]*

6.2.2 A Member asked about the progress of EDB’s follow-up with CSB on the recognition of the Chinese Language Curriculum Second Language Learning Framework for civil service appointments. Miss Chan said that EDB was developing the Framework and would liaise with relevant stakeholders including CSB when more concrete details were available.

**(b) The recruitment of ethnic minorities in civil service**

6.2.3 A Member enquired about the number of government departments which had adjusted the arrangements of Chinese written test currently in place for the purposes of the recruitment selection process. Miss Chan said that individual departments were responsible for setting the recruitment formats and would make suitable adjustments where appropriate taking into account their operational needs. Some departments, such as Hong Kong Police Force and Correctional Services Department, had made suitable adjustments to relevant arrangements in the recruitment process.

6.2.4 A Member asked whether priority would be given for employing local candidates over non-ethnic Chinese candidates in case they had obtained the same marks during the interview. Miss Chan replied that appointments to the Civil Service would be based on the principle of open and fair competition. Civil service vacancies would be filled by selection from eligible candidates through a competitive process on the basis of merits. Departments would assess the overall suitability of the candidates having regard to selection criteria set according to the job requirements of the grades concerned. Race of a candidate would not be a relevant consideration in the selection process.

6.2.5 The Chairman thanked for the presentation made by Miss Eunice Chan.

**Any Other Business**

7.1A Member expressed her concern on the problem of stereotyping Filipino with the occupation of foreign domestic helper in a local textbook. The Chairman noted the concern and said that the stereotyping problem should be eliminated through education. He invited EDB to look into the issue.

*[Post-meeting note: After the meeting, Mr Leung Kwok Yan of EDB responded that the Bureau has attached great importance to the quality of textbooks. EDB’s document “Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks” issued to schools and publishers provides important criteria on the selection and writing of textbooks. Among other things, the document pinpoints that textbooks should not carry any biases in content, such as over-generalisation and stereotyping. The content and illustrations of textbooks should not carry any form of discrimination on the grounds of gender, age, race, religion, culture, disability, etc. Nor should they suggest exclusion. To deepen the understanding of publishers on writing stereotype-free textbooks, EDB has invited a representative from EOC to share with publishers on the issue. EDB would continue to work with EOC to enhance the awareness of schools and publishers on creating a pluralistic and inclusive society free of discrimination. EDB is concerned about the content of the textbook and its corresponding workbook in question, which has recently drawn public attention. Though the books are not on EDB’s Recommended Textbook List, nor have they been vetted by the Bureau, EDB has already met with the publisher to alert them of the pitfall in the existing treatment and its unhealthy implications on racial harmony and equality. The publisher has already engaged an academic to review the workbook at issue and has pledged to rectify the content accordingly. EDB would continue to monitor the situation and may take further actions as necessary. ]*

7.2 Another Member expressed her concerns about the charging of excessive commission from foreign domestic helpers by the employment agencies, as well as the time limit of six months to contemplate prosecutions against these agencies. The Chairman asked the Labour Department to follow up the issue as appropriate.

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

Home Affairs Department

November 2014