

Committee on the Promotion of Racial Harmony
Notes of the meeting on 25 October 2022

Present

Home Affairs Department (HAD)

Miss Vega Wong (Chairperson)	Deputy Director of Home Affairs
Mr Wilson Kwong	Assistant Director of Home Affairs
Ms Rebecca Chan	Chief Executive Officer
Mr Nichole Cheng (Secretary)	Executive Officer I

Official Members

Miss Winnie Yeung	Assistant Secretary (Constitutional & Mainland Affairs)5A, Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
Mr Alex Chui	Assistant Education Officer (Placement and Support)32, Education Bureau
Ms Kelly Chan	Principal Information Officer (Local Promotions), Information Services Department
Ms Cecilia Yu	Labour Officer (Employment Services)2, Labour Department

Non-official Members

Ms Ping Somporn Bevan
Ms Rita Gurung
Mr Mohammad Ilyas
Ms Kong Man-wai, Vivian
Mrs Poonam Vijayprakash Mehta
Mr Vishal Melwani
Mr Zaman Minhas Qamar
Ms Lamia Sreya Rahman
Ms Tika Rana
Ms Himeshika Samaradivakara

Dr Chura Bahadur Thapa
Mr Wong Man-ho, Matthew
Mr Yeung Tsz-hei
Mr Yuon Fuk-lung Eric

In Attendance

(i) For all items

Mr Raymond Ho	Senior Equal Opportunities Officer Ethnic Minorities Unit Equal Opportunities Commission
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(ii) For item (3) : Employment of Non-ethnic Chinese in Civil Service

Ms Alice Yeung	Principal Assistant Secretary for Civil Service (Appointments), Civil Service Bureau (CSB)
Miss Christy Leung	Assistant Secretary for Civil Service (Appointments), CSB
Mr Rocky Ng	Senior Station Officer (Operational Support)1, Fire Services Department (FSD)
Mr Jeffrey Lai	Senior Station Officer (Ethnic Minority), FSD

(iii) For item (4) : Racial Diversity Employment Programme

Miss Cindy Yim	Senior Labour Officer (Employment Services) (Policy), Labour Department (LD)
Ms Winnie Yung	Labour Officer (Employment Services)(Special Duties), LD
Ms Carol Lee	Service Head (Training and Employment Service), the Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service (BOKSS)
Ms Janet Lau	Marketing Manager, BOKSS
Mr Chan Yee Fei	Head of Service (Hong Kong), New Home Association (NHA); and
Ms Yang Wang	Case Manager, NHA

Absent with apologies

Mr Syed Ekram Elahi
Mr Avinash Chandiram Hotchandani
Ms Tsui Hang-on, Yvonne
Mr Wong Ka-chun

1. Introduction

1.1 The Chairperson welcomed Members to the meeting. She welcomed seven new Members, namely Mr Mohammad Ilyas, Mr Vishal Melwani, Mr Zaman Minhas Qamar, Ms Tika Rana, Ms Himeshika Samaradivakara, Mr Yeung Tsz Hei and Mr Yuon Fuk-lung, Eric. She congratulated Mr Zaman Minhas Qamar and Mrs Poonam Vijayprakash Mehta for awarding the Medal of Honour and Chief Executive's Commendations for Community Services respectively in recognition of their dedicated services to ethnic minorities. She also congratulated Miss Vivian Kong on winning an individual gold medal and a team silver medal at the Asian Championships 2022 in Seoul and winning bronze medal in the women's epee at the Fencing World Championships 2022 in Cairo.

2. Confirmation of the notes of discussion on 21 May 2021

2.1 The notes of the last meeting held on 21 May 2021 were confirmed.

3. Matters arising from the meeting on 21 May 2021

3.1 There was no matter arising from the meeting on 21 May 2021.

4. Employment of Non-ethnic Chinese in Civil Service

4.1 At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms Alice Yeung and Mr Rocky Ng briefed Members on effort from CSB and FSD in facilitating non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) to pursue a career in civil service. Ms Yeung informed Members that CSB had adopted various measures to provide equal employment opportunities for NEC, including conducting on-going review on the Chinese language proficiency requirements (LPRs) of all civil service grades; strengthening promotional efforts on access to

governmental job opportunities for NEC and organising internship programme for NEC students in summer since 2019. Mr Ng of FSD advised that FSD had approached potential ethnic minority applicants through organising various kinds of outreaching activities, creating community bonding with ethnic minority youths and communities and organising targeted trainings to equip ethnic minorities with hard and soft skills e.g. physical fitness and language.

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

4.2.1 A Member considered that NEC officers would bring benefit to civil service especially for Hong Kong Police Force, Hong Kong Customs and Excise Department and Immigration Department which frequently dealt with individuals of different cultural backgrounds. He asked whether CSB would review the bilingual requirement for every position in the civil service and consider adopting overseas experience such as Canada in which they allowed people who could not meet the bilingual proficiency requirement to join civil service on probationary terms and provide language training to them afterwards. Ms Yeung said that many civil service posts required bilingual communications and on-going review on Chinese LPRs of all civil service grades had been conducted to ensure that the LPRs for all the grades of the civil service were relevant to and commensurate with the satisfactory performance of the job so that NEC had equal access to government job opportunities. Regarding the reference to overseas experience, Ms Yeung said that appointment to civil service was based on the principle of open and fair competition. While appropriate trainings such as English, official writing, Cantonese and Putonghua would be arranged for civil servants after their appointment to improve their job performance, it would not be fair to employ people who could not readily meet the entry requirements (including LPRs) and provide them training afterwards. Ms Yeung also appealed to members to bring home the importance of learning Chinese in their communities.

4.2.2 A Member thanked the great efforts of CSB and FSD in promoting equal employment opportunities in the civil service to NEC. He said the Government should also promote the opportunities in Greater Bay Area to NEC so that they would not be left behind. In addition, he suggested that NEC elderly population in Hong Kong was growing and the Government

should provide more supports such as wheel chairs and nursing care beds to the elderlies at home. The Chairperson agreed to convey his view to the relevant bureau or department for consideration.

(Post-meeting notes: Member's opinion was passed to the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Social Welfare Department for consideration on 15 November 2022.)

- 4.2.3 The Chairperson thanked Ms Yeung and Mr Ng for their presentations and wished them every success in recruiting NEC to civil service.

5. Racial Diversity Employment Programme

5.1 At the invitation of the Chairperson, Miss Cindy Yim briefed Members on the latest progress and achievements on the pilot programme, namely the Racial Diversity Employment Programme (RDEP) which was launched in November 2020 to provide employment support services for ethnic minority job seekers in a case management approach. The RDEP was launched on a pilot basis in collaboration with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) so as to utilise NGOs' community network, expertise in case management and experiences in serving ethnic minorities. Two NGOs, namely the Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service (BOKSS) and the New Home Association (NHA) were commissioned as service providers to implement the RDEP across the territories. After review, Labour Department would regularise the Programme.

5.2 Ms Carol Lee of BOKSS and Ms Wang Yang of NHA shared their experiences of operating the RDEP, difficulties encountered by ethnic minority job seekers and how the RDEP helped the ethnic minority job seekers as well as potential employers.

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

5.3.1 A Member enquired if there would be any training provided to tackle the potential cultural problem encountered by participants during job interviews. Ms Lee replied that they would discuss with job seekers on their strength and expectation to the job. Mock interviews would also be conducted so as to let the participants familiarise with the job and interview

settings. Mr Chan Yee Fei of NHA added that they would spend time to meet the job seeker so as to identify their personal needs and direction before matching them with suitable job vacancies.

5.3.2 A Member commended the hard work from LD and the two NGOs in which they understood the difficulties encountered by ethnic minorities in Hong Kong during job seeking and provided solutions to the problems.

5.3.3 A Member asked how the RDEP provided assistance to ethnic minorities who had limited proficiency in Chinese. Ms Lee agreed that language barrier was a very challenging issue for ethnic minorities. Their organisation provided vocational Chinese class for participants and they also tried to develop the participants' insight in learning Chinese. Mr Chan also agreed that language barrier was one of the biggest challenges. He suggested that both the employers and employees should adapt to each other. He shared the experience of HOME Centre which was currently operated by NHA in which operation manual of the organisation was issued in bilingual to facilitate the work of ethnic minority staff. NHA also encouraged employers to develop "Workplace Chinese" vocabulary set and provided training for ethnic minority staff so that they could pick up the job related vocabularies more easily.

5.4 The Chairperson thanked Miss Yim and representatives of the two NGOs for the presentation.

6. Any Other Business

Ceremony of Celebration Activities for Ethnic Minorities for the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR

6.1.1 The Chairperson reported that HAD held the Ceremony of Celebration Activities for Ethnic Minorities for the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of the HKSAR to share the joy of celebrating the 25th Anniversary of Hong Kong's return to the motherland with ethnic minority communities on 28 August 2022 at North Point Community Hall. The event was a huge success with more than 300 participants and she would like to thank Members who have supported the event. She also took this

opportunity to introduce Mr Wilson Kwong, Assistant Director of Home Affairs, who joined the HAD in July 2022 to the meeting.

6.2 Business Shadowing Programme for Ethnic Minority Student

6.2.1 The Chairperson informed the meeting that as initiated by one of the Members, Mr Matthew Wong, the HAD organised in August 2022 a pilot programme, namely “the Business Shadowing Programme for Ethnic Minority Students”, which aimed to broaden the exposure of ethnic minority students and equip them with working experience in the private sector. The programme was in collaboration with a consultant firm which offer job shadowing opportunities to six selected students for one week. The feedbacks from both the company and the students were positive. The students joining the programme found the experience very rewarding. The Chairperson thanked Mr Wong for his offer in organising this programme and other members for nominating suitable candidates in their community.

6.3 A Member noted there were concerns raised by the Ombudsman, the Equal Opportunities Commission as well as the Audit Commission on the support of Chinese learning for non-Chinese speaking students in recent years. He would like to know the progress of the Education Bureau in responding to these concerns. The Chairperson replied that the Secretariat would convey the message to the Education Bureau and circulate the feedbacks from the Education Bureau to members.

(Post-meeting notes: Information on the follow up measures on the support of Chinese learning for NCS students was sent to Members on 14 December 2022.)

6.4 A Member enquired about the number of NGOs applied for funding under the District-based Programme for Racial Harmony 2022-23. The Chairperson said relevant information would be shared to members later after the meeting.

(Post-meeting notes: Information on the District-based Programme for Racial Harmony 2022-23 was sent to Members on 15 November 2022.)

6.5 The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 p.m.

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

Home Affairs Department
November 2022