

WOMEN'S COMMISSION
Notes of the 71st Meeting held on 5 December 2012

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| <u>Present:</u> | Mrs Stella LAU Ms Doris CHEUNG Ms Teresa AU Ms AU YEUNG Po-chun Dr Ronnie HUI Dr Maggie KOONG Prof LAM Ching-man Ms Leona LAM Mr Christopher LAW Dr Trisha LEAHY Ms Ally LEE Dr LEUNG Lai-ching Mrs Miranda LEUNG Ms Sandy WONG Ms WONG Shu-ming Ms Constance YUE Mr FUNG Man-chung | (Chairperson) |
| | Miss Emily CHAN | Assistant Director (Family and Child Welfare), Social Welfare Department Assistant Secretary 5B, Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau |
| <u>Absent with Apologies:</u> | Dr Polly CHEUNG Ms LAM Yuk-chun Mrs Ayesha M LAU Ms Catherine WONG Mr Robert WONG | |
| <u>In attendance:</u> | Mrs Alison LAU Mr Louis LO Miss Jeanne FUNG Mr Andrew FAN Ms Cheryl TSANG Miss Ida TSE Mr LEUNG Shek-hay Ms Shirley CHAN | PAS (Welfare)2 AS (Welfare)2A (Secretary) AS (Welfare)2B AS (Welfare)2C SEO (Welfare)2 PPO (Welfare)2 RPO (Welfare)2 EA (Welfare)2 |

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| For Agenda | <u>Education Bureau (EDB)</u> | Principal | Assistant |
| Item 1: | Ms IP Ling-bik | Secretary | (Education |
| | | Commission & Planning) | |
| | Mr David LEUNG | Assistant Secretary | |
| | | (Corporate Services) | |
| | <u>Social Welfare</u> | | |
| | <u>Department (SWD)</u> | | |
| | Mr FUNG Man-chung | Assistant Director (Family | |
| | | and Child Welfare) | |
| | Ms IP Siu-ming | Chief Social Work Officer | |
| | | (Family & Child Welfare)2 | |

Opening Remarks by the Chairperson

1.1 The Chairperson welcomed Mr FUNG Man-chung and Ms IP Siu-ming of SWD, and Ms IP Ling-bik and Mr David LEUNG of EDB to the meeting to brief members respectively on the childcare and after-school care services in Hong Kong.

Item 1: Childcare and After-school Care Services (WoC 14/12 and WoC 15/12)

2.1 The Administration introduced the papers WoC 14/12 and WoC 15/12.

2.2 Members raised the following views and suggestions regarding childcare and after-school care services –

- Childcare and after-school care services were important in releasing women from childcare duties and enabling them to work. Such services should thus be regarded as investment for the community rather than assistance for the needy. In addition to the grassroots, services targeted at the middle-class families should also be provided.
- After-school care services often put too much emphasis on improving the academic results of students. They should be revamped to focus more on students' all-round development.

- The operation hour of some after-school services was considered too long. This would not only encourage parents to shirk from their parental responsibilities, but also add burden to teachers as they have to stay late in schools and take up relevant duties. Education to parents on their parental responsibility should be provided.
- The number of places provided by aided standalone childcare centres (CCCs) and occasional childcare services (OCCS) were inadequate compared with the population of children in Hong Kong. Their supplies were also not evenly distributed across different districts.
- There was concern about the quality of services provided under the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP), in particular whether the carers had been properly trained before they were recruited.

2.3 In response to Members' comments, the Administration explained that the target beneficiaries of after-school care and childcare services included children from both middle-class and grass-root families. To ensure that the provision of relevant services were flexible and could respond to the demands of different districts, more resources had been allocated to districts with higher demand of such services (e.g. Yuen Long).

2.4 On reviewing the effectiveness of after-school care services, the Administration said that reviews on the School-based After-school Learning and Support Programme (the Programme) were conducted in 2006/07 and 2010/11 respectively to assess the effectiveness of the Programme, including the learning results of students. Arrangements of the Programme were subsequently fine-tuned to better achieve the objective of the Programme. Instead of focusing on academic results, the Administration added that the Programme was aimed at improving students' learning effectiveness, broadening their learning experiences outside classroom and raising their understanding of the community as well as sense of belonging.

2.5 The Administration shared that while society had a need for childcare and after-school care services, parents still had the responsibility to take care of their children. Parent education would be strengthened to reinforce this message as appropriate. As regards the additional workload of teachers in conducting after-school activities, the Administration pointed out that some schools had collaborated with NGOs in running relevant activities so as to alleviate the workload of teachers.

2.6 The Administration said that it would strive to ensure the availability, accessibility and affordability of childcare services. At present, childcare centres were available in all districts and in most public housing estates to provide convenience to service users. The regularization of NSCCP in 2011 has provided further flexibility to users as they could recruit carers from their neighbourhood.

2.7 On the number of places provided by CCCs, the Administration explained that since the harmonization of childcare centres and kindergartens in 2006, the majority of childcare places in the former had been attached to the latter. While the number of places provided by standalone CCCs had reduced, there were over 20 000 places attached to kindergartens. As regards the number of places of OCCS, the Administration explained that the demand had dropped persistently especially after the launch of NSCCP. There was thus a re-engineering exercise to reduce the provision and to deploy the surplus resources to provide family support activities to parents instead.

2.8 On NSCCP, the Administration stressed that registered social workers were responsible for recruiting carers. Social workers would also provide support and training to carers to help them carry out their duties.

Item 2: Women's Commission Conference 2012

3.1 The Chairperson briefed members on the arrangements for the pre-conference activities and the main conference to be held on 19 and 20 December 2012 respectively. The Chairperson said that the Task Force on WoC Conference had organised an exchange session with the women's groups and

relevant NGOs to collect their views on the arrangements for the pre-conference and main conference. The theme of the conference as well as other arrangements had been finalized taking into account the suggestions and comments received.

Item 3: Confirmation of Minutes of the 70th Meeting (WoC 16/12)

4.1 The minutes of the 70th meeting were confirmed without amendment.

Item 4: Verbal Reports by Working Groups

5.1 The Meeting noted the verbal reports made by the respective working groups.

Item 5: Secretary's Report (WoC 17/12)

6.1 The Meeting noted the paper WoC 17/12.

Item 6: Any Other Business

7.1 The Meeting noted that the theme for the cocktail reception of the International Women's Day 2013 would be Gender Mainstreaming (GM). An API on GM was being produced to enhance public awareness of the concept and its application. Further details of the promotional measures for GM and the IWD celebration arrangements would be discussed by WGEE and WGPE.

7.2 There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

**Women's Commission Secretariat
March 2013**