

**WOMEN'S COMMISSION**  
**Notes of the 81st Meeting held on 16 October 2015**

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| <u>Present:</u>                   | Mrs Stella LAU<br>Miss Annie TAM  | (Chairperson)<br>Permanent Secretary for<br>Labour and Welfare<br>(Vice-chairperson)                                     |
|                                   | Ms Teresa AU<br>Professor Cecilia CHAN<br>Ms Aruna GURUNG<br>Professor Shirley HUNG<br>Dr. Maggie KOONG<br>Ms Angelina KWAN<br>Ms Leona LAM<br>Dr. Trisha LEAHY<br>Ms Juan LEUNG<br>Mrs Miranda LEUNG<br>Ms Yolanda NG<br>Ms Catherine WONG<br>Mr. Robert WONG<br>Ms Sandy WONG<br>Ms WONG Siu-wah<br>Ms Rabi YIM |  |
|                                   | Ms Carol YIP  | Director of Social Welfare   |
| <u>Absent with<br/>Apologies:</u> | Dr. Lawrence TANG<br>Mr. Philip TSAI<br>Ms WONG Shu-ming<br>Ms Yvonne YEUNG   |  |
|                                   | Mr. DC CHEUNG   | Principal Assistant<br>Secretary (Constitutional &<br>Mainland Affairs)5,<br>Constitutional & Mainland<br>Affairs Bureau |

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| <u>In attendance:</u>  | Ms Doris Cheung   | DS(Welfare)1   |
|                        | Miss Fiona LI     | PAS (Welfare)2   |
|                        | Ms Winnie CHAN    | AS (Welfare)2A (Secretary)   |
|                        | Mr. Syrus TSUI    | AS (Welfare)2C   |
|                        | Mrs Annie CHAN    | CEO(SD)  |
| For Agenda Items 1 & 2 | Mr. LAM Ka-tai    | Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services)                         |
|                        | Mr. Kenneth CHENG | Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 1, Labour and Welfare Bureau |

**Item 1: Suggestions and Priorities on Family, Child and Youth Welfare Services in 2016-17 (WoC 17/15)**

1.1 At the invitation of the Chairperson, Mr. LAM Ka-tai, Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD), briefed Members on the various suggestions on family, child and youth welfare services made by the welfare sector, and the related government initiatives and services, with the aid of a powerpoint presentation.

1.2 For family services, Members were generally supportive of the efforts made by SWD in promoting family harmony/solidarity and parenting education. In view of the recent spate of family tragedies and the increasing pressure faced by the students, a Member suggested that consideration should be given to encouraging the parents to listen to the views of their children and not to judge them only by academic

achievements, so as to enhance family harmony. A Member asked about progress of the “Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services”.

1.3 As regards the handling of compassionate rehousing cases, a Member raised concern over the decreasing number of approvals given for compassionate rehousing cases recently.

1.4 Regarding the promotion of the concept of continuing parental responsibility of both parents even after divorce, a Member suggested that SWD should consider promoting the concept through more channels (e.g. uploading SWD’s recently published set of handbooks on co-parenting onto the website of the Women’s Commission), so as to step up the promotional efforts.

1.5 For child care services, some Members opined that the current supply of child care services had yet to meet the increasing demand. While recognising the Government’s efforts in addressing the demand for child care services, they suggested that provision of more child care services (especially the places for long whole-day kindergarten-cum-child care

centre (KG-cum-CCCs) services) would be conducive to helping women balance work and family commitments. A Member further suggested that consideration should be given to stationing social workers in kindergartens (KGs) for early identification of and intervention with the children and families in need. Another Member suggested that the “Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project” should be regularised, with a view to providing more employment opportunities for women as well as releasing more parents (in particular women) to join the workforce.

1.6 Recognising the Labour Department’s efforts in promoting family-friendly practices, a Member suggested that consideration should be given to formulating family-friendly policies as the next step.

1.7 As regards welfare services for ethnic minorities, some Members suggested that SWD should step up promotional efforts to raise their awareness of these services. A Member expressed concern over the special needs of and employment services for persons with disabilities.

1.8 The Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services) thanked Members for their views and provided the following responses –

(a) In view of the positive response to the “first-hire-then-train” pilot scheme on care services in the elderly sector, the Government had earmarked \$147 million to implement the “Navigation Scheme for Young Persons in Care Services” and extend it to the rehabilitation sector. Five non-government organisations (NGOs) would provide a total of 1 000 places in the coming years for young people to undertake training and internships in elderly or rehabilitation service units. Consideration was also being given to creating a career ladder for these participants within the welfare sector;

(b) To promote the concept of continuing parental responsibility, a set of handbooks prepared by SWD were being distributed to parents and their children and had been uploaded onto a thematic website developed by SWD, which would provide useful information on co-parenting for divorced parents. New television and radio Announcements of Public Interest as well as posters had also been rolled out under the publicity campaign named “Marriage may end but

parenthood goes on”;

- (c) To meet the needs of children in a pre-school setting, the Government would launch a pilot scheme, with funding support from the Lotteries Fund, to provide on-site rehabilitation services to enable children with special needs (who were studying in KGs or KG-cum-CCCs) to receive professional services as early as possible;
- (d) Apart from setting up a new aided standalone child care center (CCC) to provide about 100 additional long full-day child care places for children aged below three, SWD would increase by phases subsidized places of Extended Hours Service at CCCs and KG-cum-CCCs by 5 000 from about 1 200 to around 6 000. Out of these 5 000 places, some 1 200 places had already been added in September 2015;
- (e) SWD would review the “Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project” under the consultancy study on the long-term development of child care services to be commissioned in 2015-16; and

(f) In respect of compassionate rehousing cases, no quota had been set for the number of approval of such cases. Recommendations would be made for the individuals or families in need and the eligibility of the cases was assessed by social workers having regard to the circumstances/merits of the cases.

1.9 The Director of Social Welfare supplemented that SWD was aware of the demand for welfare services and the expectations from the public. SWD would prioritise the tasks with the resources allocated. In parallel, SWD would also need to ensure that public money was used in a proper and prudent way.

1.10 The Chairperson thanked SWD for providing an overview of the key initiatives on family, child and youth welfare services.

## **Item 2: Pilot Project on Child Care Training for Grandparents**

2.1 With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, the Deputy Director of Social Welfare (Services), briefed Members on the pilot project on child care training for grandparents.

2.2 The Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (PSLW) said that as mentioned in the 2015 Policy Agenda, the primary objective of the pilot project was to reinforce the support for nuclear families by helping grandparents become well trained child carers in a home setting. The pilot project served to promote active ageing of grandparents and should help reduce demand for child care services and unleash women to take up employment. Welfare NGOs which were also recognised training bodies of the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) would be invited to submit proposals for delivering the training programme for grandparents and grandparents-to-be. While the training programme would be adapted from the relevant ERB courses on child care, the social workers from the welfare NGOs would be able to offer suitable soft-skills training and organise self-support groups to meet the needs of grandparents. Welfare NGOs could also try out different models to serve grandparents in different social settings of their choices such as grandparents from grassroot families, middle class, ethnic minority families, etc. Funding support would be provided from the Lotteries Fund for implementing the pilot project and if it were to be regularized at a later stage, the Government would explore whether the relevant training courses could be included



in the list of “reimbursable courses” under the Continuing Education Fund.

2.3 Members agreed that the pilot project could bring positive impact on the families concerned. A Member raised that in view of the change to nuclear family structure in Hong Kong, there were people other than grandparents who were taking up the role of child carer e.g. foreign domestic helpers (FDHs) or other close relatives. Consideration could be given to providing child care training for them as well. Another Member suggested that grandparents of both gender should be encouraged to join the pilot project.

2.4 A Member said that it would be important to customise the contents of the training programme to meet the needs of grandparents. Knowledge and skills in caring for young children, occupational safety and information technology like use of smart phones should also be included in the training programme. Another Member said that it would be useful to share with grandparents how they could handle the relationships and interactions with other carers (e.g. parents of the young children and the FDHs) in taking care of the young

children to minimise possible family disputes.

2.5 A Member said that careful consideration should be given to selecting the suitable type of welfare NGOs (e.g. those specializing in elderly, youth or children services) for running the training programme to better suit the needs and meet the objectives of the pilot project. Another Member suggested that focus might be given to the underprivileged families as a start.

2.6 PSLW said that LWB and SWD would take Members' views into account when discussing the implementation of the pilot project with the NGOs concerned. The proposed project was a pilot. It would focus on the grandparents at this stage and the training of FHDs would be dealt with separately. Efforts would be made to encourage grandfathers, in addition to grandmothers, to join the pilot project but the number of grandmothers should be greater as women in Hong Kong had a longer life expectancy. Through this pilot project, the welfare NGOs might get in touch with some families in need and offer assistance and services as deemed necessary.

2.7 The Chairperson thanked Members for their views and invited Members to help publicise the pilot project if suitable opportunities arose.

**Item 3: Confirmation of Minutes of the 80<sup>th</sup> Meeting (WoC 18/15)**

3.1 The minutes of the 80<sup>th</sup> meeting were confirmed without amendments.

**Item 4: Verbal Report by Working Groups**

4.1 The Meeting noted the verbal reports made by the co-convenors of respective working groups.

**Item 5: Secretary's Report (WoC 19/15)**

5.1 The Meeting noted the Secretary's Report.

**Item 6: Any Other Business**

6.1 There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

**Women's Commission Secretariat  
December 2015**