

Women's Commission

The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address: Family and Women-Related Policy Initiatives of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the major family- and women-related initiatives of the Home and Youth Affairs Bureau (HYAB) set out in the Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address.

INTRODUCTION

2. The Government has all along attached great importance to the contribution of women to society and the work of supporting women. Since the re-organisation of the Government in July 2022, the work of promoting women's development has been transferred from the Labour and Welfare Bureau to HYAB. In collaboration with the Women's Commission (WoC) and the community as a whole, HYAB strives to promote the empowerment of women. Apart from that, cherishing family is a core value of our society. The Government therefore attaches great importance to the healthy development of families in Hong Kong. For HYAB, we are committed to supporting the work of the Family Council (the Council) to promote a culture of loving families in the community.

3. With a view to enhancing our efforts in supporting women's development, as well as the development of healthy and loving families, we will take forward a series of policy initiatives as listed in the ensuing paragraphs.

NEW INITIATIVES

Family and Women's Development

4. Following the allocation of additional funding to establish the Women Empowerment Fund (WEF) last year, the Chief Executive announced in his 2023 Policy Address to set up under HYAB a dedicated Women Affairs Team and designate the post of Commissioner for Women Affairs to steer work related to women's affairs. In this regard, HYAB will designate the post of the Commissioner for Women Affairs (a Principal Assistant Secretary (D2) post) on 1 April 2024, and launch the following key initiatives in the second half of this year:

- (a) launching a one-stop family and women information portal to pool together information on family education, marriage and women's health, etc. and share legal information relating to family and women affairs;
- (b) organising the first Family and Women Development Summit to collect views for formulating more focused measures to support women's development and promote family education; and
- (c) launching, through Community Care Fund, a maintenance mediation pilot scheme to subsidise non-governmental organisation (NGO) in providing mediation services on maintenance, so as to assist the parties concerned, including women who are victims of maintenance arrears, to resolve disputes through mediation.

5. Besides, HYAB and the Council will launch a brand new five-year Funding Scheme on the Promotion of Family Education in the latter half of 2024 to support non-profit-making community projects to promote family education. The new scheme will consolidate the existing Thematic Sponsorship Scheme to Support Family-related Initiatives which is administered by the Council, with the scope of funding enlarged, and the amount of funding increased from \$4 million in each round of the existing scheme to \$8 million per year in the new scheme. Projects funded by the new scheme may cover education for new parents, parent-child education, maintaining of family relationship and other marriage-related subjects, with a view to meeting the needs of different families.

ONGOING INITIATIVES

Women's Development

6. The Government, in collaboration with WoC and the community as a whole, will continue to promote the well-being and interests of women through a three-pronged strategy, namely the provision of an enabling environment, empowerment of women and public education, with a view to enabling women to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life. Besides, we will continue to encourage women's groups and NGOs to make good use of the WEF under WoC to facilitate women's development of their own potential and self-enhancement. In addition, the Greater Bay Area Exchange Programme under the WEF will be regularised in 2024-25 and a new dedicated scheme will be introduced to encourage women to participate in community services.

7. The Government will also continue to promote gender mainstreaming and its application when formulating policies and programmes. We will continue to facilitate women's participation in the work of Advisory and Statutory Bodies (ASBs) of the Government. As at June 2023, the proportion of female appointed as non-official members of ASBs (by posts) stood at 35.4%, which has met the relevant gender benchmark.

Family Council

8. HYAB has all along been supporting the work of the Council to promote family core values, i.e. "Love and Care", "Respect and Responsibility" and "Communication and Harmony" and a pro-family culture. In the coming year, HYAB will continue to support the Council in collaborating with different stakeholders to organise programmes and activities relating to the promotion of family core values and a culture of loving families, including promotion through different electronic media, production of family educational videos, publicity via the social media, providing funding support to NGOs to organise family-related initiatives, and encouraging the wider adoption of more diversified and flexible family-friendly employment practices, etc. HYAB will continue to work closely with the Council and assist Government bureau and departments on the application of family perspectives in the policy formulation process.

ADVICE SOUGHT

9. Members are invited to note and give comments on the initiatives set out above.

**Home and Youth Affairs Bureau
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