

Fourteenth Meeting of the Human Rights Forum
23 May 2008 at 3:00 p.m.
30/F, Conference Room, Southorn Centre

Present

Non-government Organizations (NGOs)

Amnesty International Hong Kong	Mrs Milabel Cristobal Amar
Civil Human Rights Front	Ms Wei Siu-lik
Equal Opportunities Commission	Mr Ferrick Chu
Hong Kong Christian Institute	Ms Chan Yuk-fan Mr Fan Lap-hin
The Hong Kong Council of Social Service	Ms Rachel Wong
Hong Kong Human Rights Monitor	Mr Kwok Hiu-chung Mr Law Yuk-kai
Hong Kong Institute of Education	Mr Leung Yan-wing
Hong Kong Sex Culture Society	Mr Matthew Mak
Hong Kong Women Christian Council	Miss Loh Yuen Ching
Human Rights Council of Hong Kong	Mr Hilton Cheong-Leen
Justice	Mr Frank Ching
The Law Society of Hong Kong	Mr Kevin She
Office of Emily Lau, Legislative Councillor	Ms Emma Tam Ms Yeo Wai-wai
Shum Shui Po Community Association	Mr Chong Yiu-kwong

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB)

Mr. Arthur Ho (Chairman)	Deputy Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs
Mr. Victor Ng	Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs
Mr. Stanley Ng (Secretary)	Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs

Introduction

1. The Chairman welcomed members to the meeting. The Chairman said that the agenda items had taken into account suggestions from members.

Human Rights Education and Promotion (Agenda Item 1)

2. The Chairman said that as human rights covered a wide scope of areas, different Government bureaux would focus on the various aspects of human rights education and promotion. For example, in addition to coordinating the Government's polices related to human rights, the CMAB was also responsible for promotion of rights against racial discrimination, rights of children and equal opportunities for people of different sexual orientation. The Labour and Welfare Bureau was responsible for promotion of rights of women and persons with disability while the Education Bureau was responsible for human rights education in schools for teachers and students. The Equal Opportunities Commission also played an important role in the promotion of human rights and equal opportunities.

3. Some members raised concerns on whether sufficient resources were spent on human rights education. One member said that at the Legislative Council Panel of Home Affairs meeting held on 14 March 2008, the amount spent on national education was reported but not that

spent on human rights education. The Chairman responded that he would follow up on this.

[post-meeting note: expenditure on education on human rights by the key bureaux and party involved in 2008-09 is as follows -

CMAB \$14 million

Education Bureau \$48 million (includes both national education and education on human rights)

Committee on promotion of civil education: \$0.4 million]

4. In response to a member's enquiry, the Chairman said that the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education (CPCE) had not commenced the survey on human rights situation in Hong Kong. As a result of streamlining its organization, the CPCE had decided that work of the human rights education task force would be taken up by the Publicity Subcommittee under the CPCE. The Chairman said that various measures were needed to promote human rights and resources should be used efficiently. For example, the Administration had earmarked \$16 million in 2008/09 to establish regional support centres to enhance support for the ethnic minorities. At present, CMAB had no plan to conduct a survey on the situation of human rights in Hong Kong.

5. A few members expressed doubts on whether it was effective for various bureaux to be responsible for different aspects of human rights instead of having one bureau to take the lead. The Chairman responded that as human rights covered a wide range of issues and policies, it would not be effective for one bureau to deal with all the education and promotion work. Instead, individual bureaux having responsibility for the relevant policies would be better placed to focus on their subject areas and carried out more in-depth work. It would also be more efficient for individual bureaux to deploy resources to implement measures under their purviews.

6. In response to the concern raised on whether there was a change of policy since CMAB took up the subjects on human rights from the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) since July 2007, the Chairman explained that CMAB would continue with the relevant tasks. The immediate task was to complete the legislative process of the Race Discrimination Bill in this LegCo session. CMAB would also continue to provide funding for non-government organizations to organize programmes on promotion of human rights.

7. Members suggested that the Government should have an implementation plan on promoting human rights and assessing the work

done, in particular, in the area of school education. The Government should also take reference from comments made by international bodies, for example, the Concluding Observations made by the various United Nation human right committees. The Chairman agreed to invite an EDB representative to attend the next meeting to brief members on education of human rights in school.

Sexual Minorities Forum (Agenda Item 2)

8. The Chairman explained that no meeting had been held since April 2007 due to a dispute among members regarding the qualification of a particular attendee. No consensus had been reached since then. The Administration would conduct a meeting on 20 June 2008 and it would discuss the matter again.

9. In regard to the issues raised by a member on the Forum, i.e., why the Forum was held as a back to back meeting, the handling of the minutes of the Forum and the meeting frequency of the Forum, the Chairman said that they would be dealt with in the meeting of the Forum on 20 June 2008.

Development of the Human Rights Forum (Agenda Item 3)

10. The Chairman said that the Human Rights Forum would continue as a platform for the exchange of views between members and the Administration on issues related to human rights.

11. In response to members' views on the issuing of minutes, setting of Agenda items and the meeting frequency, the Chairman said that the Secretariat would aim to send out the minutes in about a month's time after the meeting. The Secretariat would also follow up with relevant bureaux and departments on matters as discussed at the meeting. Proposals of agenda items from members would be welcome and a meeting would be arranged depending on the urgency and priority of the proposed items.

12. The Chairman said that the Secretariat would also aim to advise Members of the meeting date with the proposed agenda items about one month in advance.

13. Members' suggested that the following items should be considered to be include in future meetings –

Development of political system in Hong Kong;
Legislation on sexual orientation;
Personal Data Privacy Ordinance;
Immigration policy;
Public broadcasting policy;
Review of the Equal Opportunities Commission
Rights of sex workers

14. Mr. Victor Ng suggested that members should provide more information on the proposed topics, including particularly the specific areas of interest and issues for discussion, so as to facilitate consideration of agenda items and invitation of relevant representatives to participate in discussions as necessary.

Any other business

15. There was no other business.

**Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
July 2008**