

[Call for joint efforts from local ethnic minorities to promote “Early Vaccination for All” \(with photo\)](#)

Around 20 local ethnic minorities (EM) leaders and representatives, non-governmental organisations serving the EM community and healthcare professionals attended a Round Table Discussion today (July 8) chaired by the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan, to exchange views and plan forward on promoting COVID-19 vaccination among the EM community in Hong Kong.

Professor Sophia Chan, while inviting local EM leaders and representatives to provide their views and insights on promoting COVID-19 vaccination to the EM community, appealed for their support to spread the messages to their friends and families and urge them to get vaccinated as early as possible.

"Hong Kong is fortunate to have secured sufficient supplies of COVID-19 vaccines. There is also a choice of vaccines offered – the CoronaVac developed by Sinovac and Comirnaty developed by BioNTech/Fosun Pharma. Tens of millions of the jabs have been administered worldwide, and both vaccines are proven to be safe, efficacious and of good quality. The Department of Health (DH) has been working closely with its partners to provide regular updates on the latest situation and soliciting their support and collaboration in promoting COVID-19 vaccination," she said.

The Zubin Foundation, which is committed to improving the lives of members of the EM community in Hong Kong, shared with participants its experience in helping the EM community in Hong Kong overcome language barrier to receive correct and updated information on COVID-19 vaccination. Founder and Chief Executive Officer of The Zubin Foundation, Ms Shalini Mahtani, said, "In partnership with the Centre for Health Protection and other organisations, The Zubin Foundation organised three webinars in Punjabi, Nepali and Urdu, respectively, in April and May 2021. During the webinars, healthcare professionals addressed participants' concerns on and clarified their myths regarding COVID-19 vaccination."

The United Christian Nethersole Community Health Service (UCNCHS) has been conducting a project to strengthen EM's knowledge on COVID-19 preventive measures, testing and vaccination, and further promote EM's registration in the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme. The Service Manager of the UCNCHS, Sharmila Gurung, said, "Since the start of the project in March 2021, home visits to EM households have been conducted and vaccinations bookings have been made. We hope that more members of the EM community will make use of our hotline service and make their vaccination booking through our service."

Council Member of the Hong Kong Paediatric Society, Dr Gilbert Chua, shared with participants the findings of a study on the determinants of

COVID-19 vaccination willingness among the EM community. "Strengthening education on COVID-19 related knowledge, and health and education talks addressing misconceptions and concerns related to the COVID-19 vaccines that the DH has been offering are useful to help boost vaccination awareness." He appreciated a cultural-sensitive supporting scheme to facilitate vaccination arrangement and support for the EM community.

The DH accords great importance to the dissemination of important information to the EM community. Health education materials are continuously translated into nine EM languages (Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia, Tagalog, Nepali, Urdu, Thai, Bengali, Sinhala and Vietnamese) and made available online. Selected materials are also being translated into French, Spanish, Punjabi and Tamil.

Also attending the Round Table Discussion were: the Director of Health, Dr Constance Chan; the Controller, Centre for Health Protection, Dr Ronald Lam; representatives from the Bethel Mission Church (Nepali Christian Council Hong Kong), the Hindu Association, Hindu Mandir Temple – Kowloon, Hong Kong, HK Shisil Chokyi Gatsal Society, the Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund of Hong Kong, Islamic Union of Hong Kong, Khalsa Diwan Sikh Temple, Namu Buddha Dharma Centre (Gumba) Hong Kong and Sri Lankan Buddhist Cultural Centre – Hong Kong.

