

Commission on Children convenes third meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the third meeting of the Commission on Children today (February 22).

The Commission agreed to implement a series of important tasks, including the commissioning of a Consultancy Study for developing a Central Databank on Children, the establishment of a Funding Scheme for Children's Well-being and Development, and the formulation of publicity strategy and promotional plans.

It was expected that the Consultancy Study for developing a Central Databank on Children would commence in the third quarter of this year and would take about 18 months to complete. The Study would provide analysis and recommendations on the implementation framework and other related issues, during which public engagement would be conducted to collect views from stakeholders, particularly children. Specific work in the future would draw reference from the findings and recommendations arising from the Study.

The Commission agreed to introduce the Funding Scheme for Children's Well-being and Development. Mr Cheung said that the Scheme would enable child concern groups and non-governmental organisations and more to seek funding for promotional and public educational projects on children-related issues and, through participation by children and stakeholders, promote the well-being and development of children. The Scheme is expected to be launched in the second quarter of this year.

The Commission also formulated a publicity strategy to enhance public awareness, interest and knowledge on children-related issues and children's rights and interests. The Commission agreed to launch a series of publicity initiatives, including a large-scale territory-wide publicity campaign, production of promotional videos, organisation of seminars and various competitions for students' participation.

Furthermore, the Commission set out the discussion priority and time frame for a number of issues concerning children with special needs and children protection, including early childhood intervention and development, children's health, inter-generational poverty alleviation, support for children with special education needs and ethnic minority children, prevention of student suicide, protection of children at risk, education development and academic pressure.

The meeting also noted the recommendations of the consultancy study commissioned by the Architectural Services Department on the design of play space for children in venues under the Leisure and Cultural Services Department; the newly developed design/procurement guidelines to make play space more attractive, inclusive and fun to play in while meeting the safety

requirements; and the strategy to promote community participation at the early design stage. The pilot scheme of the Tuen Mun Park Inclusive Playground that opened in December 2018 was cited as an example that had incorporated many recommendations from the consultancy study. Meanwhile, the meeting noted the upcoming "Pleasure and Leisure: A Glimpse of Children's Pastimes in Hong Kong" exhibition to be held at the Hong Kong Public Records Building, showcasing some play facilities and toys for children in the past.

The meeting also noted that the Hong Kong Children's Hospital (HKCH) commenced clinical service in phases in December 2018. The HKCH adopted a children-centred and family-friendly design to create a better child patient experience. It focuses on complex, serious and uncommon paediatric cases requiring multidisciplinary management, providing diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation services for child patients with relevant clinical needs, from birth to 18 years of age territory-wide.