

Government establishes Commission on Children

The Government announced today (May 31) the establishment of the Commission on Children, with the Chief Secretary for Administration as the Chairperson and the Secretary for Labour and Welfare as the Vice-chairperson, as well as the appointments of 21 non-official and nine ex-officio members for a term of two years, from June 1, 2018, to May 31, 2020.

As announced in the Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address, the Government planned to set up the Commission in mid-2018 to amalgamate the efforts made by relevant bureaux/departments and child concern groups, and focus on addressing children's issues as they grow. To this end, the Government established a Preparatory Committee chaired by the Chief Executive in 2017, and conducted a series of public engagement activities to canvass public views extensively, including those of children, on the establishment of the Commission.

The Commission will commence operation tomorrow (June 1). Its target group will cover children aged below 18, with a focus on children aged 14 or below. According to the Preparatory Committee's proposal, the Commission may consider covering issues including the following in its initial work plan: children's education needs (including the assistance for special education needs and the handling of absentee students), initiatives for ethnic minority children (including the learning of Chinese as a second language), children's healthy development (including their medical needs and mental health), protection of children (including the prevention of violence/neglect, social work service for pre-school children and primary school students) and the arrangement of compiling data on children.

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, said, "Children's growth and development is one of the priority policy areas of the current-term Government. The Commission will be an ongoing, action-oriented, responsive and high-level body that will drive the work for the benefit of children through policy formulation as well as co-ordination and follow-up on the implementation of measures. The Commission will listen to children's views, and will enhance its transparency by issuing information through its website and to the media, etc."

The Commission comprises non-official members from different sectors, including education, healthcare, academia, child concern groups, legal, arts and sports, community service, public relations/media, parents, non-Chinese speaking/ethnic minorities and children/youths.

"Non-official members of the Commission are highly representative and include experts and stakeholders involved in matters concerning children's growth and development. I am confident that the Commission will provide valuable advice to the Government on the wide-ranging issues of concern to children and reflect children's voices effectively. I look forward to working

closely with all the members to jointly promote children's growth and development in Hong Kong," Mr Cheung said.

The terms of reference of the Commission are:

With a vision of ensuring that Hong Kong is a place where the rights, interests and well-being of all children are respected and safeguarded and their voices are heard, and where all children enjoy healthy and happy growth and optimal development so as to achieve their fullest potential, the Commission on Children will:

1. Develop policies, set strategies and priorities related to the development and advancement of children, and oversee their implementation;
2. Enhance and monitor integration and rationalisation of children-related policies and initiatives under different bureaux/departments and with advisory bodies;
3. Review children-related services by the Government and non-governmental organisations, foster cross-sector collaboration, and identify areas for better integration and improvement;
4. Promote and promulgate children's rights as articulated in the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, and engage with children on matters that affect them;
5. Manage funding schemes for promotional and public educational projects which should have children's and stakeholders' participation, and organise other promotional activities; and
6. Develop a framework with indicators to monitor and evaluate the extent to which the vision is achieved.

Two Working Groups will be set up under the Commission to undertake specific areas of work. The two Working Groups are:

1. Working Group on Research; and
2. Working Group on Public Engagement, Education and Publicity.

In addition, the Commission can set up ad hoc task forces in respect of specific issues/matters.

The first meeting of the Commission will be held in June.

The membership of the Commission is as follows:

Chairperson

Chief Secretary for Administration

Vice-chairperson

Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Non-official Members

Mr Peter Au Yeung Wai-hong

Miss Bakar Fariha Salma Deiya

Miss Cheng Hui-kiu
Ms Janus Cheng Pui-wai
Mr Chow Wai-chung
Ms Kathy Chung Lai-kam
Mr Dennis Ho Chi-kuen
Dr Patrick Ip
Dr Sanly Kam Shau-wan
Mr Edwin Lee
Mrs Priscilla Lui Tsang Sun-kai
Ms Shalini Mahtani
Mr Kenny Ng Kwan-lim
Dr Halina Poon Suk-han
Ms Susan So Suk-yin
Ms Michelle Tam Chi-yun
Dr Sandra Tsang Kit-man
Mr Gary Wong Chi-him
Dr Lilian Wong Hiu-lei
Ms Kathy Wong Kin-ho
Dr Wong Kwai-yau

Ex-officio Members

Secretary for Education
Secretary for Food and Health
Secretary for Home Affairs
Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs
Director of Social Welfare
Director of Health
Director of Home Affairs
Chairperson of Family Council
Chairperson of Women's Commission

Biographical notes on the non-official members are in the Annex.