

Speech by CS at Diversity List 2024 Launch Event (English only) (with video)

Following is the speech by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, at the Diversity List 2024 Launch Event today (June 20):

Shalini (Co-founder and Chief Executive Officer of The Zubin Foundation, Ms Shalini Mahtani), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Good afternoon. It gives me great pleasure to join you today – not just to catch up with our friends of ethnic minority communities, but also to congratulate all the talented individuals on this year's Diversity List presented by The Zubin Foundation.

Hong Kong has long been a diverse, multicultural metropolis. More than 300 000 ethnic minority residents call Hong Kong home, making up more than four per cent of our population.

According to the latest census, as of 2021, 15.2 per cent of our ethnic minority population were born in Hong Kong, about two per cent more than a decade earlier. The ethnic minority population is also younger, with a median age of 37.6.

Hong Kong's high degree of internationalisation is one of our distinctive advantages. We also proudly celebrate the cultural traditions, and civic contributions, that our ethnic minority communities bring to Hong Kong. Their wide-ranging talent, energy and innovation enrich us all.

The Zubin Foundation has long been a close partner of the Government. We share a common vision of providing equal opportunities for our ethnic minorities and enabling their integration into the larger community.

The inter-departmental Steering Committee on Ethnic Minorities Affairs that I chair works to enhance support and services for ethnic minorities in wide-ranging areas – from education and employment, to community and social needs.

The Chief Executive, in his Policy Address last year, expanded Government support for our ethnic minority communities – in education, employment, integration into the community, and support services.

That includes setting up two additional support service centres – one in Kowloon Central, the other in the New Territories East – bringing the total to ten. The two new centres are expected to be open in the fourth quarter.

Eight Ethnic Minority Care Teams will begin service next month, with two others expected to be in place by year's end.

Education makes a big difference when it comes to community integration and employment. To that end, we are boosting support for non-Chinese-speaking students to help them learn Chinese.

Initiatives include providing diverse online learning materials and self-learning resources, as well as after-school Chinese-language courses, for lower primary non-Chinese-speaking students. We are also expanding the Summer Bridging Programme to cover all primary school grade levels, and enhancing school-based life-planning services.

As for employment, more than 50 civil service grades, including 18 degree or professional grades, in the Government have adjusted their Chinese-language proficiency requirements to increase job opportunities for ethnic minorities. Our government departments and disciplinary forces are gradually introducing their own job-oriented language tests. These provide additional prospects for applicants to meet job requirements.

We also offer job tasting, I am pleased to note. More than 140 students have participated in the Government's internship programme targeting non-ethnic Chinese university students since its launch in 2019.

In addition, the Racial Diversity Employment Programme of our Labour Department has been regularised, with additional measures to support ethnic minorities in learning vocational language. To date, the Programme has served more than 270 ethnic-minority job-seekers.

Meanwhile, we are working to better address the social needs of ethnic minorities. The Government's Ethnic Minority District Ambassador pilot scheme, launched in 2020, has been extended to 2026 in the welfare service units of non-governmental organisations, and our Social Welfare Department at large, to strengthen welfare support.

Last December, The Zubin Foundation was commissioned to operate a service centre, providing emotional support and counselling services for ethnic minorities. I'm sure many of you have played a part in driving this important initiative.

Ladies and gentlemen, with all the continuing efforts I have just mentioned, as well as the support from each and every one of you here today, we will inspire more of our ethnic minorities to fly high and, in turn, strengthen our community and our economy.

Once again, my congratulations to the outstanding individuals on this year's Diversity List. And my thanks to the Diversity List Committee for their commitment, and to The Zubin Foundation for making it all happen.

On that note, I wish you all the best of business, health, and opportunity in the coming year. Thank you very much.