

**Summary of the views expressed at  
the Seventh Meeting of  
the Committee on Social Development and Quality of Life  
of the Commission on Strategic Development  
held on 1 March 2007**

The Chairman welcomed Members, Ir Otto Poon, Member of the Council for Sustainable Development (Council for SD) and Chairman of the Council for SD Strategy Sub-committee, Mr Fung Hing-wang, Commissioner for Census & Statistics, and other attendees (see Annex) to the meeting.

**Matters Arising from the Last Meeting**

2. The Chairman reported that the workshop on income disparity and social mobility had been held on 24 January 2007. Two speakers (Professor Nelson Chow and Professor Lui Tai-lok) were invited to make presentations at the workshop. The summary of views expressed at the workshop was distributed to Members for reference and uploaded to CSD's website on 22 February. The summary of views of the sixth meeting of this Committee was also issued to Members as well as relevant bureaux and departments, and uploaded to CSD's website on 31 January.

**Council for Sustainable Development - Report on the Public  
Engagement Process on Population Policy  
(Paper Ref: CSD/SC/1/2007)**

General

3. Members generally agreed with the recommendations regarding the principles and targets set out in the draft Report. Some Members remarked that it would be equally important to include more concrete proposals and implementation details on how and when those targets would be achieved. Some Members suggested that the Government should take into account the close economic and social interaction between the Pearl River Delta and Hong Kong when reviewing the population policy.

4. Members were very supportive to the community engagement process adopted by the Council for SD to engage the public in preparing the Report. Similar process would also be suitable for forging community consensus on major principles in handling other long-term strategic issues. A Member however pointed out that the community engagement process might not be efficient enough in handling current and urgent issues which were controversial.

5. Members also considered that the following specific views and suggestions should be taken into account in finalizing the Report.

#### Quality of Life

6. A number of Members opined that town planning would have significant influence on our built-environment and the quality of life of a city. A Member considered that urban renewal projects and demolition of historical buildings had adversely affected established local communities and uprooted the sense of belonging of the affected local residents. The Government should accord priority to in-situ refurbishment and rehabilitation instead of large scale redevelopment.

7. Some Members suggested that the Report should set out more concrete proposals, define quantifiable targets and identify a delivery mechanism with a view to achieving a good quality and sustainable environment. With reference to international experience, a Member put forward that the Government should turn the “Hong Kong Planning Standards and Guidelines” to a statutory document. It was considered that this was the only effective way to ensure strict observance of the relevant planning requirements on urban design and town planning. Separately, a Member suggested that the Government should consider allowing other agents apart from the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, e.g. District Councils, to design and manage public spaces in the community.

8. A Member suggested that issues related to global warming and carbon dioxide emission should also be addressed in the Report.

### Declining Fertility Rate

9. Members generally agreed that better work-life balance, introduction of family-friendly practices, e.g. paternal leave, flexible working hours, etc., and strengthening of community support to families, such as community-based childcare services, were important supportive measures in both improving the quality of life and encouraging people to raise children in Hong Kong. Some Members suggested the Government to provide tax incentives to encourage the business sector to implement family-friendly initiatives. Another Member also mentioned that education was one of the major factors that affected couples in making childbearing decisions.

10. A number of Members opined that promotion of family values and parenthood was crucial in influencing childbearing decisions of individuals. Specifically, some Members suggested starting education on marriage and parenthood as early as in primary schools, and strengthening relevant publicity efforts, e.g. to sponsor production of television drama promoting family values to be shown during prime time. Furthermore, with reference to the Korean experience, a Member suggested the Government to consider providing match-making services for single males and females in Hong Kong. However, other Members considered that marriage and family formation were matters of personal choice. It would be more important to promote social harmony and caring in the society.

11. A number of Members supported the recommendation to establish a Family Commission to coordinate relevant government policies and measures with a view to providing an environment conducive to family and parenthood, and to assess and advise policy bureaux on the impact of government policies on the family.

12. Separately, in view of the significant increase in the number of babies born by non-Hong Kong residents, a Member cautioned that the Government should endeavor to collect information on whether and when those babies would settle in Hong Kong or be brought back to the Mainland, so as to assess the demand and resource implication on social welfare, housing, medical services and education in future.

## Manpower

13. To facilitate our development towards a knowledge-based economy, a Member raised that it would be important for Hong Kong to attract quality migrants so as to maintain Hong Kong's productivity and competitiveness. In particular, a Member emphasized the importance of attracting Hong Kong students studying abroad and Hong Kong migrants to return to Hong Kong. Another Member suggested that the Government should review the existing One-Way Permit Scheme which regularly imported a significant number of low-education and low-skilled new arrivals to Hong Kong. A Member highlighted the issue of skill mismatch between the supply of low-skilled workforce and the labour market demand. It was also pointed out that the Government should not overlook the importance of nourishing local talent.

14. A few Members noted that there was no recommendation on the education issue in the Report, although education was frequently mentioned during the community engagement process.

## Ageing Population

15. Members noted the ageing trend in Hong Kong. They agreed that ageing in itself might not be a problem as long as the community proactively considered ways responding to the phenomenon. It was suggested that the Government should as a matter of priority, review the sustainability of existing healthcare financing arrangement as well as the public resource allocation for social security and retirement protection. A Member also considered that the Government should consider ways to increase the productivity of elderly people with a view to alleviating the loss of workforce due to ageing. A possibility was to promote development of social enterprises to provide job opportunities for the elderly.

16. In response to Members' enquiries on the 2006 By-census statistics, the Commissioner for Census & Statistics commented that –

- (a) there was no comparable figure on fertility rates at city level

internationally. A closer one was Singapore where their fertility rate was higher than that of Hong Kong. A major factor leading to our low fertility rate was delay in marriage among women. According to the 2006 By-census, there was a continuous increase in the proportion of female in Hong Kong who married late or never married;

- (b) the decrease in domestic household income between 2001 Census and 2006 By-census periods was partly due to the decrease in household size and the increase in number of elderly households. In addition, the income redistribution effect arising from taxation and various kinds of government subsidies (e.g. allowance on housing and education) should be considered from the perspective of disposable household income. The Census & Statistics Department would publish a report on income distribution in Hong Kong based on the By-census statistics and other relevant information later this year;
- (c) statistical data on disabled persons were not covered in the population census or by-census since interviewers with special skill were required to collect the necessary information. Census & Statistics Department had commenced an exercise to collect information related to disabled persons in the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2006 through the General Household Survey, which would last for one year. A similar exercise was earlier conducted in 2000; and
- (d) on calculation of the fertility rate of Hong Kong women, it would only include a baby born in Hong Kong if either the father or mother or both parents were Hong Kong permanent residents. Those babies whose parents were both non-Hong Kong permanent residents would not be included.

17. Ir Otto Poon thanked Members for the comments, and agreed that a sustainable population policy would largely hinge on the values upheld by society. He would convey Members' views to the Council for SD for

consideration.

18. The Chief Secretary for Administration stated that –

- (a) the Government was committed to the promotion of social harmony and support for family values. In response to a Member's concern on the possible increase in rental rates for families living in public rental housing if working members were added, which would have an effect of discouraging working family members in public rental housing to live together with their parents, the Secretariat was instructed to relay the concern to relevant bureaux for consideration;
- (b) with the enhancement of district administration and expanded role of the District Councils, more resources had been allocated to the Councils. The District Councils would have more flexibility and resources in carrying out creative design and projects to suit their district needs to improve the quality of local environment;
- (c) the Council for SD would take into account Members' views in finalizing the Report; and
- (d) the Council for SD would submit its Report to the Government later this year. The Government would consider the recommendations in the Report in its formulation of a long-term strategy on population policy.

19. The Chairman stated that the Secretariat would prepare a summary of views expressed at the meeting, and distribute to Members as well as the Council for SD for reference.

20. The attendance list of the participants is at Annex.

Secretariat to the Commission on Strategic Development  
March 2007

策略發展委員會  
社會發展及生活質素委員會第七次會議  
2007年3月1日

Seventh Meeting of  
the Committee on Social Development and Quality of Life  
of the Commission on Strategic Development  
1 March 2007

出席人士

**Attendance List**

主席 :

Chairman :

Chief Secretary for Administration

政務司司長

官方委員 :

Official Member :

Head, Central Policy Unit

中央政策組首席顧問

非官方委員 :

Non-Official Members :

Dr CHAN Kin-keung, Eugene

Mr CHAN Siu-hung

Dr CHAN WONG Lai-kuen, Anissa, M.H.

Prof CHANG Hsin-kang, G.B.S., J.P.

Mr CHENG Wai-sun, Edward, J.P.

Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che

Mr DING Wai-chuen, Raphael

Dr HUI Ka-wah, Ronnie

Mr LAI Kwong-tak, Albert

The Hon LAU Kong-wah, J.P.

Dr LAW Chi-kwong, S.B.S., J.P.

Mr LAW Kin-chung, Christopher

Ms LAW Suk-kwan, Lilian

Mrs LAW SHING Mo-han, Yvonne

Mr LEE Chung-tak, Joseph, B.B.S., J.P.

陳建強醫生

陳紹雄先生

陳黃麗娟博士, M.H.

張信剛教授, G.B.S., J.P.

鄭維新先生, J.P.

張國柱先生

丁偉銓先生

許家驊醫生

黎廣德先生

劉江華議員, J.P.

羅致光博士, S.B.S., J.P.

羅健中先生

羅淑君女士

羅盛慕嫻女士

李宗德先生, B.B.S., J.P.

Dr LO Wing-lok, J.P.  
Dr NG Cho-nam, B.B.S.  
Prof POON Chung-kwong, G.B.S., J.P.  
Mr PUI Kwan-kay, M.H.  
Mr PUN Tin-chi  
Mr SHIH Wing-ching, J.P.  
Mr SO Kam-leung, Gregory, J.P.  
Mr SZE, Kyran  
Mr TAI Hay-lap, B.B.S., J.P.  
Mr WONG Kwok-keung, Peter, J.P.  
Mr WONG Kwok-kin, B.B.S.  
Mr WONG Sau-ching, M.H.  
Mr WONG Ying-wai, Wilfred, J.P.  
Mr YUNG Wing-ki, Samuel, M.H.

勞永樂醫生, J.P.  
吳祖南博士, B.B.S.  
潘宗光教授, G.B.S., J.P.  
貝鈞奇先生, M.H.  
潘天賜先生  
施永青先生, J.P.  
蘇錦樑先生, J.P.  
施家殷先生  
戴希立先生, B.B.S., J.P.  
王國強先生, J.P.  
黃國健先生, B.B.S.  
黃守正先生, M.H.  
王英偉先生, J.P.  
容永祺先生, M.H.

## 列席

### In Attendance

Ir Otto POON  
Member of the Council for Sustainable Development  
and Chairman of the Council for Sustainable  
Development Strategy Sub-committee

可持續發展委員會成員暨  
策略工作小組主席  
潘樂陶先生

Mr FUNG Hing-wang  
Commissioner for Census & Statistics

政府統計處處長  
馮興宏先生

Mrs Vicki KWOK  
Secretary to the Council for Sustainable Development

可持續發展委員會秘書  
郭黃穎琦女士

## 因事未能出席

### Apologies

官方委員 :  
Official Member :

Director, Chief Executive's Office

行政長官辦公室主任



非官方委員 :

**Non-Official Members :**

Ms CHAN Yu

Prof CHIU Wing-kai, Stephen

Mr HEUNG Cheuk-kei, Daniel, S.B.S., J.P.

Ms KAO Ching-chi, Sophia, J.P.

Miss KI Man-fung, Leonie, J.P.

Prof LAM Shun-chiu, Dennis, J.P.

The Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung

Ms LOH Kung-wai, Christine

Ms MAR Yuet-har, B.B.S., M.H.

Prof NG Ching-fai, G.B.S.

Ms TAM Siu-ying, Iris, J.P.

Mr TIK Chi-yuen, J.P.

陳 瑜女士

趙永佳教授

香灼璣先生, S.B.S., J.P.

高靜芝女士, J.P.

紀文鳳女士, J.P.

林順潮教授, J.P.

梁耀忠議員

陸恭蕙女士

馬月霞女士, B.B.S., M.H.

吳清輝教授, G.B.S.

譚小瑩女士, J.P.

狄志遠先生, J.P.