

**Minutes of the meeting of
Rehabilitation Advisory Committee
held on 31 October 2008 at 3:00 pm
at Room 1007, Citibank Tower
3 Garden Road, Central, Hong Kong**

Attendance

Present

Dr Joseph KWOK (Chairperson)

Mr CHEUNG Tak-hai

Mr Herman HUI

Mr IP Kwok-chung

Dr James LAM

Dr Ernest LEE

Mr Hansen LEE

Mr Lawrence LEE

Mrs Connie LO

Mr Kim MOK

Mr Wilfred NG

Ms Ann SO

Prof TANG Siu-wa

Mr David TSE

Mr Anthony YEUNG

Mr Stephen FISHER

Director of Social Welfare
Social Welfare Department

Ms Eliza LEE

Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Welfare) 1
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms WU Po-ling	Principal Assistant Secretary (School Administration & Support) Education Bureau
Dr Catherine LAM	Consultant (Child Assessment Service) Department of Health
Mr Stephen SUI	Commissioner for Rehabilitation Labour and Welfare Bureau
Ms Elia WONG (Secretary)	Assistant Secretary for Labour & Welfare (Rehabilitation) Labour and Welfare Bureau
 <u>In attendance</u>	
Miss CHAN Ka-lin	Assistant Commissioner Census and Statistics Department
Ms Rebecca SIU	Senior Statistician (Social Statistics) 1 Census and Statistics Department
Ms Joann LEE	Statistician (General Household Survey) 1 Census and Statistics Department
Mr FONG Kai Leung	Chief Social Work Officer (RM) 2 Social Welfare Department
Mr Philip TANG	Senior Social Work Officer (RM) 6 Social Welfare Department

Ms Stella IP

Chief Executive Officer (Rehabilitation)
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms Josephine CHAN

Senior Executive Manager (Rehabilitation)
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Absent with apologies

Mr Raymond LEE

Prof Chetwyn CHAN

Ms Scarlett PONG

Ms Jane TSUEI

Dr Daisy DAI

I. Confirmation of minutes of the last meeting held on 11 July 2008

Members confirmed the draft minutes of the last meeting of the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC) with no amendment.

II. Matters arising

2. **The Administration** updated Members on the progress of the enactment of the Building (Planning) (Amendment) Regulation 2008, and highlighted that the new *Design Manual: Barrier Free Access 2008* would take effect on 1 December 2008. He also said that the proposed regulation

was passed by the Legislative Council in July 2008 with overwhelming support.

3. The Secretary reported on the progress of the promotion of the Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP), with emphasis on the employment of persons with disabilities, to various sectors. Key efforts made included:

- (a) Subsequent to RAC's presentation at the District Council (DC) Chairpersons' regular meeting on 15 May 2008, the Secretariat had arranged the RAC to visit 12 DCs, namely Southern, Islands, Tuen Mun, Kwun Tong, Sai Kung, Kowloon City, Tsuen Wan, Yuen Long, Kwai Tsing, Wan Chai, Shatin and Yau Tsim Mong. Meetings with the remaining six DCs had also been lined up. The tour to all the 18 DCs would be completed in early January 2009;
- (b) Targeting the business sector, the Secretariat had arranged the RAC to appeal to the human resources professionals, the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers and the financial sector for their support in employment of persons with disabilities. Members were also encouraged to attend and show support for the Disability Fair, which targeted multi-national corporations, to be organized by the Community Business Network on 7 November 2008. A meeting with the Small and Medium Enterprises Committee was being

scheduled; and

- (c) As regards NGOs, the Secretariat had arranged the RAC to meet with the senior executives of the Tung Wah Group of Hospitals on 29 September 2008, and was liaising with the other major subvented NGOs for meetings on promoting the employment of persons with disabilities.

4. The **Chairperson** invited Members to share their experience of participating in the series of promotional activities. **A member** said that the responses of the target audience were generally positive and it was a very worthwhile networking exercise. He said that follow-up actions were needed to sustain the impact. **Another member** said that it was a good strategy to let the target audience know that Members of RAC were not civil servants but volunteers from different sectors. Their active participation demonstrated collaborative efforts in taking forward the recommendations of RPP through tripartite partnership. **Another member** said that the visits were very useful in encouraging community support to the various RPP initiatives and establishing sustainable working relationship between the RAC and the DCs.

5. **The Administration** added that initial feedback indicated that the promotional efforts had achieved the desired outcome. For example, a number of DCs had undertaken to allocate resources and organise events to promote the employment and/or integration of persons with disabilities in the community. To address DCs' concerns on transport related issues, the

RAC Sub-committee on Access would invite the Highways Department and Transport Department to provide regular progress reports of their efforts in this regard. NGOs met with the RAC and/or approached by the Secretariat also demonstrated support in employing more persons with disabilities. At the meetings with the business sector, **a member**'s demonstration of the work capabilities of persons with disabilities was very impressive, resulting in instant interest from employers in employing persons with disabilities.

III. United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [RAC Paper 7/2008]

6. The **Chairperson** said that the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities had applied to Hong Kong SAR since 31 August 2008. **The Administration** said that the Secretary for Labour and Welfare had written to all the Principal Officials, Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Department to remind them of the Government's obligation to implement the Convention and to enlist their support in ensuring that all public policies and measures under their respective purview would comply with the requirements therein. In accordance with Article 33 of the Convention, a monitoring mechanism should be identified to oversee the implementation of the Convention in Hong Kong, and RAC was well positioned to take up such role. **The Administration** briefly introduced RAC Paper 7/2008 which set out the proposed way forward for Members' consideration. With the entry into force of the Convention in Hong Kong,

the Bureau saw a need to reflect in the existing terms of reference of RAC the major role it would undertake in assisting the Government in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the Convention in Hong Kong; and would proceed to seek the approval of the Chief Executive of the revised terms of reference. **A member** echoed that the RAC was in the best position to take up this role. Other Members also agreed.

7. **The Administration** also proposed that the RAC would co-organise with the Joint Council for People with Disabilities a sharing session with the rehabilitation sector to exchange views on how to promote the spirit and values enshrined in the Convention and give suggestions on the related public education programmes. In parallel, the Bureau had taken the initiative to explore with the relevant Government bureaux and departments ways to develop training programmes for civil servants, particularly the frontline staff, to raise their awareness on the requirements of the Convention. **A member** said that more resources should be allocated for public education on the Convention, e.g. the RAC could allocate more subsidies to DCs to organise activities to promote the Convention in the community.

8. The **Chairperson** said that States Parties were required to submit their first report regarding the Convention within two years of their implementation of the Convention. He considered that relevant authorities, when drawing up the report, should consult the rehabilitation sector. While the United Nations welcomed NGOs to submit their own reports, it would be better for the image of Hong Kong if the official report

had incorporated the voices of the community.

9. The **Chairperson** concluded that the meeting unanimously agreed that the Commissioner for Rehabilitation should serve as the focal point within the Government and the RAC should take up the role of assisting the Government in monitoring the implementation of the Convention in Hong Kong.

IV. Policy Initiatives for 2008-09 on Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Disabilities [RAC Paper 8/2008]

10. The **Secretary** introduced the paper and highlighted that the Government would provide additional places for pre-school training, day training, vocational rehabilitation and residential care services for persons with disabilities in need. The Government would also strengthen the manpower of medical social services to meet the increasing demand of patients and their family members, thereby facilitating their rehabilitation and reintegration into society. As on-going initiatives, the Government would continue to enhance the Rehabus service, and aim to set up 16 district support centres by January 2009 to provide community support services to persons with disabilities in all districts of the territory.

11. In response to **a member**'s enquiry, **the Administration** clarified that each district support centre would be set up through reengineering the existing community support services available in the area. Therefore, the

set-up and operation of each of these centres would be different. A member suggested arranging the RAC to visit one of these Centres when they were in operation. Members supported the proposal.

V. **Licensing Scheme of the Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities [RAC Paper 9/2008]**

12. **The Administration** introduced the paper. Members were briefed on the progress of the Social Welfare Department (SWD)'s preparatory work for a licensing scheme to regulate the operation of residential care homes for persons with disabilities (RCHDs) and invited to give their comments on the revised Code of Practice (CoP) for RCHDs.

13. On whether RCHDs should be provided with dedicated social workers on their establishment, **the Administration** said that modelling on the CoP for RCHEs, mandatory provision of social worker in individual RCHDs was not considered necessary. After all, residents of RCHDs and RCHEs could have access to welfare services through day training services, community rehabilitation and support services, medical social services units as well as integrated family service centres in the community. **The Administration** added that at present many private RCHDs did not have any social worker on their establishment. There were a number of private RCHDs in Yuen Long. After the setting up of the integrated community support centre in Tin Shui Wai in March 2009, outreaching social work service to residents of these private RCHDs will be provided

by the centre. SWD would continue to review the feasibility of such mode of operation.

14. The **Chairperson** said that while he appreciated that it would be difficult for RCHDs of a small scale to have social worker on their establishment, he opined that RCHD would benefit from social workers' advice particularly on cases concerning bodily restraint. **A member** said that if RCHDs were not required to have social workers, the CoP should have guidelines on what RCHD operators should do when their residents needed social work service.

15. In response to **a member**'s question on whether there would be a large number of RCHDs not meeting with the licensing requirements, **the Administration** responded that as in the case of RCHEs, a grace period would be given to the RCHDs to allow reasonable time for them to enhance their facilities and services in order to meet the statutory requirements. The **Chairperson** said that given the built-in flexibility of the licensing mechanism and the proposed discretionary power to be given to the Director of Social Welfare, there should be sufficient leeway and time for the RCHD operators to comply with the licensing requirements. The possibility of displacement of a large number of residents should not arise. He concluded that the RAC supported the introduction of the proposed licensing scheme for the RCHDs.

VI. General Household Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases

16. **The Administration** gave a general introduction on the background of conducting the General Household Survey (GHS) on Persons with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases. In light of the experience gained from the previous survey conducted in 2000, the concept and methodology of the current survey had been refined. It comprised three parts. The first part was a special topic enquiry (STE) on “persons with chronic diseases” collecting data from some 7,000 households within a scientifically selected sample. The second part was a STE on “persons with disabilities” collecting data from persons with disabilities residing in some 41,000 households. The third part was an institution survey collecting data from those persons with disabilities and chronic diseases who resided in some 100 sample institutions.

17. **The Administration** then conducted a powerpoint presentation on the definitions, restrictions and initial findings of the survey. The survey findings indicated that there were a total of some 361, 300 persons in Hong Kong with one or more of the eight identified types of disabilities as defined in the RPP. This did not include the number of persons with intellectual disability in Hong Kong, which was estimated to be in the region of 67 000 – 87 000. The findings also indicated that some 1 152 700 persons required long-term medical treatment consultation or medication for certain types of diseases in Hong Kong. **The Administration** also provided further survey findings about the age, sex,

educational attainment, economic, medical and daily activity status of persons with disabilities and chronic diseases. **The Administration** said that the percentage of persons with disabilities who were economically active remained at about 13% given that the majority of the persons with disabilities were elderly persons and retirees.

18. In response to Members' enquiries, **the Administration** said that the survey had also collected data on the mode of transportation used by persons with disabilities, their employment situations and occupations. Further analysis of the findings in individual areas could be provided to the RAC and related sub-committees, relevant Government bureaux, departments and organisations as required to facilitate planning and development of rehabilitation services. The use of information technology by persons with disabilities was not covered under the survey but relevant information could be provided by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO).

19. The **Chairperson** said that C&SD was one of the forerunners in the world to conduct such a detailed survey on persons with disabilities. He hoped that with the development of a common set of survey methodology and questionnaire internationally, findings of the next survey to be conducted around 2011 would be suitable for global comparison. Members could have a more detailed analysis of the survey when the report was released in end December 2008.

VII. Any Other Business

20. A member invited Members to join a seminar on employment of persons with disabilities “兩岸四地復康人士就業研討會” to be organized by the Working Group of Kwun Tong District Council on 8 January 2009 at the Kwun Tong Government Primary School.

21. The Administration informed Members of the Seminar on Augmentative and Alternative Communication Survey Findings to be held on 13 December 2008 at Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

22. There being no other business, the Chairperson concluded the meeting and asked the Secretary to inform Members of the date of the next meeting when scheduled.

Secretariat

Rehabilitation Advisory Committee

February 2009