

**Minutes of the meeting of
Rehabilitation Advisory Committee
held on 18 February 2009 at 3:00 pm
at Room 215, 2/F, Main Wing, Central Government Offices,
Lower Albert Road, Central, Hong Kong**

Attendance

Present

Dr Joseph KWOK (Chairperson)

Mr Raymond LEE (Vice-chairperson)

Prof Chetwyn CHAN

Miss Ophelia CHAN

Dr Timothy CHAN

Mr CHEUNG Tak-hai

Mr Herman HUI

Mr IP Kwok-chung

Dr James LAM

Dr Ernest LEE

Mr Hansen LEE

Mr Philip LEE

Mrs Connie LO

Mr MA Fung-kwok

Mr Kim MOK

Mr Wilfred NG

Ms Scarlett PONG

Ms Ann SO

Prof TANG Siu-wa

Ms Jane TSUEI

Mr Stephen FISHER

Director of Social Welfare
Social Welfare Department

Ms WU Po-ling

Principal Assistant Secretary
(School Administration & Support)
Education Bureau

Dr Sarah CHOI

Principal Medical and Health Officer (4)
Department of Health

Mr Stephen SUI

Commissioner for Rehabilitation
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms Elia WONG

Assistant Secretary for Labour & Welfare
(Rehabilitation)
Labour and Welfare Bureau
(Secretary)

In attendance

Ms Eliza LEE

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

Mrs Cecilia YUEN

Assistant Director
(Rehabilitation & Medical Social
Services)
Social Welfare Department

Ms Stella IP

Chief Executive Officer (Rehabilitation)
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Miss Josephine CHAN

Senior Executive Manager (Rehabilitation)
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Ms Ada HIN

Executive Officer (Rehabilitation) 1
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Absent with apologies

Dr Daisy DAI

Mr Lawrence LEE

Mr David TSE

Mr Anthony YEUNG

The **Chairperson** welcomed and introduced the four new Members who had recently been appointed by the Chief Executive to the Rehabilitation Advisory Committee (RAC), namely Ms Ophelia CHAN, BBS, Dr Timothy CHAN, Mr Philip LEE and Mr MA Fung-kwok, SBS, JP. They all had the relevant professional expertise and/or substantial experience in rehabilitation. The addition of the new members would strengthen the membership of the RAC and enable the RAC to effectively carry out its new role of assisting the Government in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (the Convention).

2. The **Chairperson** also welcomed Dr Sarah CHOI who would be representing the Department of Health at the RAC meeting from then on.

**I. Confirmation of minutes of the last meeting held on
31 October 2008**

3. **Members** confirmed the draft minutes of the last meeting of the RAC with no amendment.

II. **Matters arising**

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

4. **The Administration** updated Members that the Chief Executive had also approved the revised terms of reference of the RAC by inclusion of RAC's role of assisting the Government in promoting and monitoring the implementation of the Convention in Hong Kong. The revised terms of reference, together with the new membership had been circulated to all Members before the meeting.

5. **The Administration** also reported that the RAC, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Joint Council for People with Disabilities, conducted a sharing session on 24 November 2008 for the rehabilitation sector to exchange views on the implementation and promotion of the Convention. The suggestions received from the sector were incorporated into the draft public education and promotion plan for the Convention (RAC Paper 2/2009) to be discussed under agenda item IV of the meeting. He highlighted that having regard to the views of RAC Members and the rehabilitation sector, the Labour and Welfare Bureau would significantly increase the budget for the RAC Sub-committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation in 2009-10 to facilitate reinforcement of the public education efforts and implementation of additional programmes for the promotion of

the Convention.

Policy Initiatives for 2008-09 on Rehabilitation Services for Persons with Disabilities

6. To follow up on paragraph 11 of the minutes of the last meeting on the new initiative of setting up 16 new district community support centres, **the Administration** said that the RAC secretariat would arrange Members to visit one of these centres after they were in full operation. To exercise its monitoring role, the RAC would, starting from the current meeting, examine the progress in implementing the recommendations set out in the 2007 Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan (RPP) after one year of its publication. The RAC would review about two areas in each meeting. The visit to a district community support centre would be arranged to tie in with the schedule for discussion on the development of community support services.

Licensing Scheme of the Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities

7. On the proposed Licensing Scheme of the Residential Care Homes for Persons with Disabilities discussed at the last meeting, **the Administration** updated Members that the Administration briefed the Legislative Council Panel on Welfare Services on 12 January 2009 on the progress of the preparation work for the scheme. The Administration was in the process of drafting the Bill and the related regulations, while in

parallel working out a host of complementary measures for implementing the scheme.

General Household Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases

8. **The Administration** said that the Census and Statistics Department already issued the *Special Topics Report No. 48 on the General Household Survey on Persons with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases* on 22 December 2008. It had been uploaded to the Government's website for perusal by the public for free, while printed copies were also made available for sale. Sufficient number of copies of the report were tabled for all RAC Members' retention and reference. **A member** said that the report was very important for the rehabilitation sector as it provided a comprehensive set of statistical information on various aspects of persons with disabilities and chronic diseases.

III. Promotion of 2007 Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan and Employment of Persons with Disabilities [RAC Paper 1/2009]

9. **The Administration** presented the paper which summarized the efforts and achievements of the RAC in reaching out to the various sectors, including all the 18 District Councils, the business sector and NGOs; and in soliciting their collaboration in taking forward the strategic directions and

recommendations as set out in the RPP. He said that the annexes to the report would be updated quarterly to keep Members abreast of the progress of the efforts made by various sectors of the community in promoting the employment of persons with disabilities and building an inclusive society.

10. **The Administration** added that under the leadership of the Vice-chairperson and his Sub-committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation, a dedicated website was being set up to provide a one-stop information platform for job seekers with disabilities and potential employers to facilitate the employment of persons with disabilities and to promote the goods and services provided by persons with disabilities. He invited Members to continue to contribute views and suggestions on how the RAC could sustain the efforts and build on the achievements made thus far.

11. RAC Members actively contributed their views. The suggestions made by **11 members** are summarized below:

- (a) organizing a job fair to facilitate small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and other businesses to employ persons with disabilities;
- (b) encouraging more persons with disabilities to register with the Selective Placement Division of the Labour Department for job matching;
- (c) adding a convenient link on the index page of the GovHK

website to the dedicated website on employment of persons with disabilities;

- (d) adopting a user-oriented approach in designing the website for the employment of persons with disabilities to enable interested parties to conveniently obtain the key information they need simply with only a couple of clicks;
- (e) consolidating the publicity efforts in promoting the products and services of persons with disabilities, and streamlining the arrangements to facilitate interested parties to purchase or place orders for these products and services;
- (f) reminding all government bureaux and departments to consider procuring goods and services under the SEPD (“Support the Employment of People with Disabilities) brand;
- (g) soliciting the support of business organisations, such as the Employers’ Federation of Hong Kong, the Chinese General Chamber of Commerce and the Hong Kong Chinese Enterprises Association, etc.;
- (h) setting up a standardized work capability assessment mechanism that would be applicable for most persons with disabilities, if not all;

- (i) applying for short-term leases of government lands for setting up social enterprises to provide more employment opportunities for persons with disabilities;
- (j) showcasing the capabilities of persons with disabilities, such as the Paralympic athletes who demonstrated their athletic talents in international sports arena and at the same time were engaged in gainful employment;
- (k) organizing a high-profile award scheme to recognize caring employers who were supportive in promoting the employment of persons with disabilities;
- (l) requesting the Marketing Consultancy Office (Rehabilitation) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD) to coordinate with the rehabilitation social enterprises to ensure reliable and steady provision of products and services, and to formulate effective strategies to promote their products and services to the public at large ;
- (m) providing training to the management of rehabilitation social enterprises in business management and marketing skills; and
- (n) enhancing psychological and emotional counseling for employees with disabilities to help them stay in their jobs.

12. The **Vice-chairperson** said that the Sub-committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation would consolidate a promotion strategy to synergise the efforts of various parties, and incorporate the suggestions into the overall promotion plan as far as practicable.

13. In response to **a member**'s enquiry on the feasibility of setting a quota or an indicator for employment of persons with disabilities, **the Administration** said that setting a mandatory quota for employing persons with disabilities had not been proven successful overseas. Under a mandatory employment quota system, persons with disabilities would be perceived as a liability, making them difficult to be accepted by their employers and peers at work. Assistance should be given to persons with disabilities to seek employment on the basis of their abilities rather than disabilities. The RAC and its Subcommittee on Employment had discussed the proposal on a number of occasions and concluded that measures such as formulating policies on employment of and acquiring the services and products provided by persons with disabilities, setting an employment indicator on a voluntary basis, and positive encouragement measures, such as giving recognition to caring employers, would be more effective in promoting the employment of persons with disabilities. In this regard, the Government had put in place an established policy for the employment of persons with disabilities and taken the lead in this regard. The number of Government employees with disabilities consistently took up over 2% of the strength of the civil service. The Government also encouraged its subvented organizations and statutory bodies, as well as the business sector to put in place relevant policies and practices and to take

active measures in support of the employment of persons with disabilities in fulfilling their corporate social responsibilities.

14. The **Chairperson** concluded that RAC's efforts in promoting the RPP to various sectors, particularly in establishing collaborative relationship with the 18 District Councils, were very successful. He said that RAC could seek to establish a sustainable collaborative relationship with the District Councils through continued dialogue and cooperation, and suggested that RAC could consider revisiting the District Councils in two years' time.

IV. Public Education and Promotion Plan for the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities [RAC Paper 2/2009]

15. **The Administration** highlighted the public education initiatives formulated by the RAC Sub-committee on Public Education on Rehabilitation to promote the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities as set out in paragraph 5 of the RAC Paper 2/2009. She said that the Sub-committee already formed a working group to discuss implementation details on 19 February 2009. The **Chairperson**, on behalf of RAC Members, expressed appreciation for the Administration's efforts in securing additional resources for promoting the Convention.

16. The **Vice-chairperson** said that while the Sub-committee would

promote the spirits and contents of the Convention in general, it would also organise programmes focusing on specific issues, such as the employment of persons with disabilities, which could demonstrate the acceptance of the persons with disabilities by society at large. He considered that the mass media was the most effective tool to widely publicise the messages. The Sub-committee planned to roll out a series of publicity initiatives in the coming months, including a kick-off ceremony in July 2009 and a major publicity event towards the end of the year. The year-end event might tie in with the International Day of Persons with Disabilities and include an award ceremony to recognize corporations and organizations that had made substantial efforts and achievements in supporting the employment of persons with disabilities.

17. The **Chairperson** said that the Convention had included all the rights enshrined in the seven human rights conventions previously promulgated by the United Nations. It was a long-term project requiring a lot of thoughtful efforts to turn the abstract spirits enshrined in the Convention into practical advices for people and organizations concerned in society. He invited Members to contribute their views and share their experiences. The suggestions made by the **Chairperson**, **six members** and **the Administration** are summarized below:

- (a) using television and other electronic media to promote the Convention and producing docudrama series;

- (b) organising drama performances and video shows at schools together with interactive education programmes to bring out the messages;
- (c) creating more opportunities for interaction between the general public and persons with disabilities to facilitate the public's better understanding of the abilities and needs of persons with disabilities, e.g. arranging volunteers/students with disabilities to provide voluntary services to persons in need;
- (d) collaborating with the mass media to give a more accurate portrait of persons with disabilities;
- (e) soliciting support of various funding schemes, e.g. Summer Youth Programme, to encourage funding applicants to involve persons with disabilities in their projects;
- (f) supporting workshops or programmes like Dialogue-in-the-Dark or Blind Experience, which could facilitate the general public to have a better understanding of the needs and capabilities of person with disabilities;
- (g) organizing events, such as sports tournaments, to enable joint participation of both persons with and without disabilities to demonstrate their sports talents in a level-playing field;

- (h) arranging persons with disabilities, e.g. tetraplegics, to share their life experience to other people, particularly the youths to encourage positive thinking; and
- (i) making use of radios to promote the Convention to a wider audience, such as taxi drivers.

18. **The Administration** supplemented that the Education Bureau (EDB) was also in parallel implementing a series of measures to promote inclusion and understanding of students with different special educational needs. For example, EDB, in collaboration with the Department of Health and RTHK, was producing a series of ten TV episodes on special educational needs, which would be broadcast from May onwards. These initiatives would complement RAC's public education efforts.

19. **A member** said that Hong Kong Council of Social Service (HKCSS), in collaboration with the Equal Opportunities Commission, would arrange drama performances at schools to promote the Convention to students. In addition, the HKCSS was also formulating a public education plan to promote the Convention.

20. **Vice-Chairperson** invited Members to put forward any further suggestions to himself or **the Administration** for consideration.

V. **Progress Report on 2007 Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan – Pre-school Training for Children with Disabilities [RAC Paper 3/2009]**

21. **The Administration** briefly introduced the paper highlighting the additional resources secured in recent years to create 526 new places in pre-school services to facilitate early intervention for children with disabilities. **The Administration** also introduced the adoption of mixed-mode operation for Special Child Care Centre cum Early Education and Training Centre to enhance the flexibility in service delivery, and the provision of continuous on-the-job training for staff in pre-school rehabilitation services to upgrade the service quality.

22. **The Administration** introduced the measures EDB had taken to strengthen parent education to encourage parents to agree to pass on the information on the special educational needs of their children to the primary or secondary schools they were admitted as soon as possible, so that their new schools could identify the children's special educational needs and provide them with appropriate support as early as possible.

23. **The Administration** briefed Members on the promotional activities organized by the Department of Health (DH) to enhance the public awareness of childhood developmental disabilities.

24. **Two members** requested SWD to provide additional information on the demand and waiting time for the pre-school rehabilitation services at

the next meeting. **One of them** added that the list of courses recognized by SWD for reimbursement of tuition fees by staff of pre-school rehabilitation services did not cover courses on special training for children with special educational needs, and suggested that the list be expanded to allow more flexibility.

25. In response to enquiry on the manpower planning for and training of speech therapists, **the Administration** said that SWD would regularly reflect the views of the sector on the demand for speech therapists to EDB for consideration by the University Grant Committee.

VI. Progress report on 2007 Hong Kong Rehabilitation Programme Plan – Education [RAC Paper 4/2009]

26. **The Administration** highlighted a series of measures undertaken by EDB in addressing the six key recommendations in the area of education as set out in the RPP. These measures included:

- (a) providing a series of training on how to support students with special educational needs, particularly those with Specific Learning Difficulties, Autism Spectrum Disorders, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorders, for teachers of all schools;
- (b) promoting professional sharings among schools located in the same district through establishing school networks;

- (c) enhancing the mechanism of transferring the information of students with special educational needs from kindergarten to primary schools and from primary to secondary schools;
- (d) increasing the training provision for educational psychologists to meet the service needs;
- (e) providing a wide range of teaching resources and professional support for schools;
- (f) raising the ceiling of funding applications by each primary schools for enhancing their professional support for students with special educational needs to \$1 million;
- (g) organizing activities at schools to enhance the understanding and acceptance of students with special educational needs, so as to inculcate an inclusive culture;
- (h) promoting parent education and soliciting parents' support and involvement in the implementation of integrated education; and
- (i) implementing the new senior secondary curriculum in special schools.

27. In response to the enquiries of **four members, the**

Administration replied that:

- (a) EDB's incentives for school principals and teachers to attend the training courses under the 5-year Teacher Professional Development Framework on Integrated Education (the Framework) included the provision of substitute teachers to enable teachers to attend training courses during school hours and designing the training programmes in such a way to ensure that teachers would be able to acquire substantial practical knowledge and skills from the courses;
- (b) the objectives and outcomes of the Framework would be reviewed and the training needs of teachers in special schools would be taken into account;
- (c) EDB recognized the importance of parenting and therefore had put in place a number of measures on parent education, which included the television series mentioned earlier. RAC Members' further suggestions in this regard were welcome;
- (d) on the implementation of the new senior secondary curriculum in special schools and related issues, EDB would discuss with relevant special schools in suitable forums;
- (e) EDB regularly received views from teachers and parents through regular school visits and a range of other forums. EDB could

offer advice and assistance to rehabilitation NGOs in collecting views from teachers and parents on their services; and

- (f) EDB encouraged all students, including those with special educational needs, to actively participate in extra-curricular activities outside classrooms. The new senior secondary curriculum had included the requirement for 'other learning experience' for all students.

VII. Any Other Business

28. The **Secretary** informed Members that the RAC would conduct four meetings this year, and the remaining three meetings would be scheduled in May, September and December. The Secretariat would contact Members on the exact dates of these meetings nearer the time.

29. 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

March 2009