

主旨: Views from The Department of Social Work and Social Administration of HKU  
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Please find our submission as attached.

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**The University of Hong Kong,**

Mrs. Carrie Lam,

Chief Secretary

Chairperson, Task Force on Population Policy, HKSAR Government.

Dear Carrie,

Let me congratulate you for your great effort in putting the population policy consultation and to seek comments from the public. We hope that this population review can produce some tangible and pragmatic measures that can create positive impact for the betterment of the Hong Kong community.

As a social work department, we certainly support the idea of having a solid policy review based on sound population projections. Please find enclosed a few thoughts that might be relevant to the discussion.

- i. A reliable and scientific population projection into the future will be vital to the long term strategic planning of social and public policy. In order to translate policy goals into programs, effective structural procedures in terms of long term strategy planning of housing, education and manpower, health, social insurance and social welfare will be essential. Revitalization of the previous "Green Papers" and "White Papers" on policy areas can be one of the mechanisms of effective public engagement and planning. "Evolving Five Year Plans and Program Plans" in respective social programs with manpower and facilities planning will help in the professional training that is necessary for Hong Kong as we are moving into a crisis of retirement of the Second World War Baby Boomers in the coming 5 to 10 years. Planning of infrastructures such as hospitals, schools, public and private housing, shopping facilities, old age homes, tourist attractions, finance and commerce centres cannot be left to market mechanism alone. Both manpower planning and infrastructural planning have to use decades to see program impact. Leadership from the Government will be most crucial.
- ii. The population policy is not just an economic or labor policy, it is a policy which should address the overall wellbeing of the community including, socially, culturally, physically and economically. Hong Kong being a migrant city, large fluctuation of new-borns in the past few years with rights of abode judgments will bear significant implication on the planning of schools, from kindergarten, primary, secondary and post-secondary education. Flexi 12 year school campus may be an option so as to allow for dynamic adjustment to fluctuations in student numbers.
- iii. It is unfortunate that the population policy cannot be effectively linked up with a number of existing committee to address the concern of the population, for example, housing, long-term care and financial sustainability committee etc. As all these are related to the population and population policy per se. It is indeed important to have an overhaul of the

- existing committees such that every committee can be better connected to avoid duplication and miss or dis communication among the committees.
- iv. The effort of women staying as home-makers need to be properly addressed and recognized. There is a general feeling that domestic work and contributions of home-makers, usually women, are not being valued. Retirement pension of these home-makers are non existent. Trying to push home-makers to join the workforce may NOT necessarily be a good thing for the wellbeing of the family. Job sharing, home office, fractional appointment might be more suitable for home-makers in the community. Rights of persons with different sexual orientations and ethnic minorities should also be protected by legislation and support services.
  - v. Active recruitment of young persons with special talents and skills into the workforce should be encouraged. Singapore as in many other countries which are experiencing population aging are very actively attracting quality migrants. Although the recent hostility against migrants caused by rapidly rising housing costs need to be stated, Hong Kong need a Population Policy that can enlarge our talent pool in the community. The talent to be attracted into Hong Kong should be in line with the economic strategy of Hong Kong remaining a world city with a vibrant creative industry and supportive to social entrepreneurship. As in the case of Australia, expansion of University Education is one of the effective strategies of economic development and talent development.
  - vi. The rapidly aging of the population brings multi-dimensional needs and dynamics. In twenty years time, the Hong Kong population distribution will become a reverse pyramid with a large population above the age of 60. Policy incentives to facilitate establishment of mechanism of retirement engagement, for instance, development of paid or voluntary opportunities for active community involvement, should be designed. A multi-modal intervention including gradual prolonging of retirement age or re-employment of older adults plus large scale volunteering schemes and community businesses may be helpful. Health education and active living through exercises and evidence-based life-styles should be widely promoted to enhance quality of life for older adults and to reduce medical dependency.
  - vii. With population aging, the number of persons who will experience ill health and death will increase rapidly. Policy issues of health service delivery, hospital versus community care, institutional care versus home care, hospice and palliative care policy will have to be worked out carefully. Hong Kong lags behind Taiwan and Singapore in the overall quality of death study because of the lack of explicit government policy on end-of-life care. The exceptionally high taboo on death in the population has deterred older adults to prepare for their departure adequately. Without effective death preparation and advanced directives, the quality of dying and death is lowered. Bereavement issues among loved ones will become more acute. The related policies and programs on cremation, handling of dead bodies and storage of ashes have become a critical public policy issue that requires timely response and government leadership in planning. The death anxiety among the general public can also elicit strong oppositions to the construction of public facilities, such as public mortuaries, cremation facilities and columbarium, that need to be upgraded urgently. The poor

- conditions of the public mortuary in Kennedy Town is a good example of delay in enhancement of essential public facilities due to public opposition.
- viii. The current low fertility of the population is far below replacement ratio warrens policy concern as well. Incentives for child bearing, such as tax incentives, cash subsidy, support for nurseries, pre-school education, longer maternity leave period, paternity leave, direct child subsidy, school meals program and the like may need to be put in place. Despite the strong public sentiment against further migrant population and migrant workers, the government should expand post-graduate research student quota to attract young talents to stay and to foster high productivity and innovation for Hong Kong. Long-term housing policy and land production must be in line with the projected population growth to ensure a reasonable level of living accommodation that is affordable to the public. Infrastructures to new towns and satellite towns, especially transportation and housing, need to be in line with such land use planning.
  - ix. To tackle the widening gap between the rich and the poor, more universal services should be provided to the population. The Social Protection Floor concept promoted by the ILO should be fully implemented in Hong Kong. Local initiatives and small businesses should be encouraged as well. The injection of funds to support social entrepreneurship is a desirable approach to facilitate grassroots innovations. The Government should take a more active role in coordinating and supporting economic activities locally in liaising with the NGOs and stakeholders in the district to participate in looking after younger children and older adults in the community such that the burden can be lessened and the resources in the community can be better utilized.
  - x. The current alienating and aggressive campaigns by some groups that burst out hostile and discriminatory statements on minorities and tourists reflects on the grassroots frustrations on low upward social mobility. In order to remain a world city, it is important for Hong Kong to maintain it's multi-ethnic, multi-culture population mix and creative diversity. Effort to promote inter-racial and ethnic harmony and diversity need to be put in place. Rights of minorities, including domestic workers need to be explicitly and positively affirmed. Singapore had measures to attract South-East Asian to move to Singapore for higher education, work, leisure and migration. Hong Kong should also actively promote our international attractions for talents from all other Continents.
  - xi. With more services moving to need-based remedial support with means tests for eligibility under the Community Care Fund, it is essential for the government to launch large scale universal services for all, grassroots community development projects to foster happiness and cohesion. Facilitation of self-help organizations, cooperatives, community art and cultural groups, through provision of meeting and activity space plus project funds through funding NGOs to foster collective community building should be encouraged. More support and training opportunities should be provided to our younger generation to sustain our vibrant socio-cultural-economic development.
  - xii. The government may be blamed for learning from the Singapore experience that is meritocratic in nature. It will be helpful for the government to foster such policy debates and options, in search of effective combinations of universal-remedial-merit based

- programs in public policy implementation, that will lead to a balanced and healthy development of Hong Kong. Education and training are two important driving forces for our socio-economic development. The 2014 policy address is a good start and much more needs to be done. It was a great pity that the piece of land reserved for private university was deployed for public housing. Investment in land production and accumulation of a healthy land bank will help the government in strategic development.
- xiii. With the Efficiency Unit taking over many of the policy implementation of new initiatives, it is easy to understand how the current bureaucracy may not be totally effective especially during the implementation of new initiatives. More research need to be done in monitoring the throughput and output in the new development, the explicit measurement of impact and evaluation on effectiveness of our investments into various programs. Our department is ready to participate in these evaluation and program development projects as applying Implementation Science for Evidence-Based Policy and Administration is the direction to go.

Here we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for your effort in leading the task force on population policy . We do hope with a co-ordinated effort, our society can become a better place for everyone.

With Best Regards,



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