

LCQ9: Human rights education

Following is a question by the Hon Albert Ho and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (January 9):

Question:

After the reorganisation of the policy bureaux of the Government Secretariat on 1 July 2007, the work on human rights, which was originally under the portfolio of the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), has been transferred to the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, while civic education remains the responsibility of HAB. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the policy bureau currently responsible for the work on human rights education;
- (b) of the policy bureau currently providing support services to the Human Rights Education Working Group (Working Group) under the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education, the reasons why the Working Group has not convened any meeting for over nine months since March 2007 and the date of its next meeting; and
- (c) given that the Working Group had commissioned the University of Hong Kong through HAB to conduct a survey on human rights awareness among the people of Hong Kong last year and the design of the survey questionnaire was completed as early as March 2007, of the policy bureau currently responsible for following up the survey, whether the Working Group will be advised of the contents of the questionnaire, and when the survey will be commenced and completed?

Reply:

Madam President,

My reply to the question raised by the Hon Albert Ho on the issue of human rights education is as follows:

- (a) The subject of human rights policy has been transferred from the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) to the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) with effect from 1 July 2007. Since human rights education forms part and parcel of civic education, the Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education (CPCE) will continue

to promote/publicise and undertake education work on human rights when it promotes/publicises civic education. In addition to the HAB, other relevant bureaux/departments including the Education Bureau (EDB) and the CMAB will also promote/educate and publicise human rights within their own policy portfolio as appropriate. Elements of human rights education are incorporated into the school curricula. EDB has also provided various learning and teaching materials to support schools in the promotion of human rights education.

(b) The HAB informed the CPCE in last September that due to the restructuring of the policy bureaux responsible for human rights policy, it would need to exchange views further with the relevant bureau on human rights so as to decide the way forward. At its meeting in last December, the CPCE, having regard to the restructuring of the Government bureaux and the need to streamline the CPCE's existing structure, decided to assign the work on human rights education and promotion to the CPCE Publicity Sub-committee which was responsible for the promotion of civic values, and to disband the human rights education working group under the CPCE with immediate effect.

(c) The CPCE noted that the public perception survey on human rights had not yet commenced, and that the policy portfolio on human rights had been transferred to CMAB. The CPCE decided to terminate the preparation work on the survey. The CPCE recommended that the secretariat should provide CMAB with the relevant information for reference as appropriate.

Ends/Wednesday, January 9, 2008