



**It is the 1st time for F.S. to pay attention to Ethnic Minorities,  
but is still too mean**

**Hong Kong Unison's response to the Budget**

It is the first time for the HKSAR Government had mentioned the ethnics minorities in the Budget Speech since 1997, and the Financial Secretary John Tsang had proposed two measures to help the EMs in need. Hong Kong Unison appreciated that, but we think the measures only have little help.

**1. Increase the number of designated schools to 25 within two school years is not enough**

The F.S. announced that within 2 school years, the Government will increase the number of designated primary and secondary schools from 19 to 25. Those schools can get a recurrent annual allowance of \$300,000 to implement the School-based Support Scheme for non-Chinese speaking students.

Unison welcomes the expansion of the number of designated schools. However, nowadays in Hong Kong, there are 43 secondary and 141 primary schools admit non-Chinese speaking students. Only 25 out of 184 can become designated schools are obviously far from enough.

In fact, Unison had urged the Government to carry out a tailor-made Chinese curriculum to meet the standard and the needs of Non-Chinese Speaking students with appropriate teaching guidelines and material. We insisted that learning Chinese well is the key to help the EMs to be lifted out of poverty and backwardness, and facilitate them to contribute to Hong Kong society. Yet, the Government did not respond to our demand in the Budget.

**2. Setting up 4 support service centres on a trial basis can only provide instable services**

The F.S. proposed to earmark \$24 million to set up and run 4 support service centres for ethnic minorities and Unison welcomes this proposal. However, as the centres are run on trial basis, Unison is afraid that once the project and the funding ended, the service would be cut, centres closed and the experience could not be accumulated.

Therefore, Unison urged the Government to run the centres on a long-term basis. The Home Affairs Department should be the department in-charge and liaises with different departments to provide various services to the EMs in need.

**3. The HKSAR Government is still too mean to the ethnic minorities**

The F.S. forecasted a surplus of \$63.7 billion in the Operating Account for 2007-08. For the Consolidated Account, he forecasted a surplus of \$115.6 billion, which is an all-time high. This is four and a half times last year's forecast and is equivalent to 7.2 per cent of our GDP.

Yet, the measures for the ethnic minorities cost only \$37 million, 0.09% of the increase in the operating expenditure in 2008-09. Undoubtedly, the HKSAR Government still pay little attention to the 342, 198 ethnic minorities who are living in Hong Kong.

As the Legislative Council will pass the Racial Discrimination Bill soon, Unison expects the Government will promise to do more for the EMs in the Estimates for the year ending 31 March 2009, not only provides more services and assistances, but also carries out public education and advocacy work on promoting racial harmony and equity.