



Hong Kong Unison

香港融樂會

Hong Kong Unison's Response to 2010/11 Policy Address

13 October 2010

Hong Kong Unison (thereafter Unison) welcomes the Government's move to assign a dedicated team to monitor and step up support services provided to ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. We believe the new team; headed by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs; possess the expertise and experience in serving ethnic minorities. Hopefully, effectiveness and quality of such services would be enhanced.

Currently, support services provided to ethnic minorities are coordinated by the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau. Unison believes the Home Affairs Bureau is a more appropriate body to assume the duty. With its extensive network in different districts, it could help to facilitate the exchange between ethnic minorities and local communities.

Unison considers it is necessary for the Home Affairs Bureau, as well as the new dedicated team to look into the issue in a holistic approach. To put it more specifically, it should look into different policy areas, including education, healthcare, labour and social welfare to assess the needs of ethnic minority people, and to see if they were met. In addition, they should engage ethnic minorities, and other stakeholders, for instances, welfare agencies and human rights concern group, during the process. More importantly, it should always take into account of the principle of racial equality and eliminate any racial discriminatory practice existed in current policies and services, so as to ensure they are in line with the Race Discrimination Ordinance.

Unison is especially concerned about the fact that the dedicated team would look into support services provided to ethnic minorities and new arrivals simultaneously. Given that they are two unique groups, with their own culture and difficulties, we sincerely wish the Government should treat them separately, so that their needs would be met.

This has been the second time that the Hong Kong SAR Government has mentioned ethnic minorities in its Chief Executive's Policy Address (the last time was in 2005/06's Policy Address). It shows that our ethnic minorities are becoming more "visible". Unison always insists that ethnic minorities, being a part of Hong Kong, have the right to participate in the policy making process. The Government should strengthen its promotion on the Policy Address, as well as other important policy issues, among ethnic minority communities. Senior officials should outreach to the communities; to inform them about public policies and seek their feedback.