

主旨: Fw: Comments to Public Engagement Exercise on Population Policy
附件: Comments to the Population Policy-20140223.docx

Attached is my view for your consideration.

Thanks,
Mrs. Amy Chan

Comments to Public Engagement Exercise on Population Policy

I cannot see that constructive ideas can be collected through this exercise as there are key issues not being addressed in the document, namely:

Lack of consideration on the future positioning of Hong Kong in its economic development

1. Running a government could be similar to running a business – there must be clear strategies, targets and roadmaps before you can plan on your budgets and manpower resources. There is only brief mentioning of the four traditional industry clusters but are these the clusters we intend to keep? e.g. Manufacturing is shrinking, are we planning to still produce a lot of industry workers? Are there new clusters to be considered, such as high value product design, medical services etc. Without concrete plans on these, there bound to be population mismatch both in terms of quality and quantity. Say if we opt to develop Hong Kong as a medical service hub (we already have a hospital in Shenzhen), we need doctors – are the female homemakers and the early retirees going to meet this demand? On the education aspect, are we training sufficient doctors and other medical health workers? This is just an illustration of how the population policy is affected by government strategies.
2. Location of work – if we opt for IT and creative work, depending on the nature of business, many of the work can now be done at home. Is it necessary to physically free up the ‘moms’ to let them work outside? Again, the policy depends on the economic strategy.
3. Quantity and quality of the work force – some high-value added economic disciplines do not require massive labour force but demand for highly specialized or trained personnel. Many countries, e.g. Finland, Estonia have relatively small population, but their high value products, e.g. mobile phones, Skype software are contributing much to the GDP. If Hong Kong is going into these directions, we should not just blindly go after a population increase, e.g. boosting birth rate or increase immigration, but consider how to keep a small population of highly skilled / specialist skilled workers. The generated revenue may still be sufficient to support the growing aging population.

All of the above required planning and concrete figures and roadmaps to make any population forecast and needs realistic.

Education as a supportive element for population policy and quality of our people

4. Depending on the type of people we need, we need to strengthen the education for our population. What type of training, vocational or professional, is necessary to facilitate Hong Kong's future strategies? Education is not a separate policy but should be integrated with the population policy.
5. Many immigrants and minority ethnic population are hard-working and have great drive for upward mobility. However, their children may be much deprived of the enabling factors to groom them into future contributors, e.g. they may have small homes, parents that are working and lack time to look after them, lack of tutorial services in case they have difficulties with their homework etc. If we hope to tap on their manpower resources, the Government needs to work much harder on improving the learning conditions of the children in this sector and considering special concession, such as mandatory Chinese academic achievements for minority ethnic population.
6. Hong Kong's education is very skew. Areas related to physical education and ethics are lacking. Youngsters only know how to make money and lack the sense of social responsibility. A quality population embraces human aspects of life and not just academic achievements.

Quality of life

7. Lack of discussion on targets for 'better quality living' (mentioned in P.2 Foreword) – If it is the Government's intention to improve the quality of living, monitoring of population growth is important as the document already mentioned that population growth put pressure on infrastructure, housing, public services. (para 1.20). Hong Kong is already very densely populated. Should we still ask for a growing population (in terms of numbers) to sustain an aging society or should be asked for a highly skilled population generating sufficient revenue for the growing expense of an aging population. Blinding increase the number of people will only contribute more problems to housing, water supply, pollution etc.

Mrs. Amy CHAN