



# The India Association Hong Kong

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**The Hon. Mrs. Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor, GBM, GBS**

Chief Executive of the HKSAR  
Office of the Chief Executive  
The Government of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
Tamar, Hong Kong

**30 September, 2019**

**By post and e-mail**  
ceo@ceo.gov.hk

Dear Mrs. Lam

**2019 Chief Executive Policy Address**

On behalf of The India Association Hong Kong, we would like to thank the Government of the Hong Kong SAR for its commitment to addressing the needs of the non-ethnic Chinese communities of Hong Kong.

The present situation affecting all Hong Kong society is of dire concern to our community as we are sure it is with all Hongkongers.

First and foremost, our main wish is for the return of peace and harmony to our society as soon as it possibly can; only then will we be able to take steps in rebuilding our society and also our economy. We respectfully urge the Government to request the Chief Justice to appoint an independent mediator to bring all stakeholders to the table for dialogue. All stakeholder groups need to be identified and must be given the opportunity to express their concerns and suggestions for change.

We do hope that our ethnic minority community can assist in measures to restore peace and harmony and to our work with Government to ensure our community contributes towards this recovery.

In the interests of our community and our participation in Hong Kong's affairs, we have highlighted a few areas within the government which we believe will provide you with some insight as to what we feel needs to be addressed.

**Steering Committee on Ethnic Minorities Affairs:**

A steering committee was set up on the back of the HK\$500 million pledge by the Government to enhance support services for the benefit of the ethnic minorities.

There is little information available as to the function of this committee and the work they have been doing in the past year. We would like to see regular dissemination of information originating from this committee as their work affects our community.

In addition, since this committee is established to work on matters related to our ethnic minority community, we believe members from the ethnic minority community should be appointed to this steering committee.

## Education

Since our letter submitted to you for the 2018 Policy Address, we have seen little improvement in the matters we raised (see attached).

We have, however, in this past year become familiar with the charitable arm of the Hong Kong Jockey Club's project named "C-for-Chinese@JC", a 5-year pilot programme aimed at teaching kindergarten ethnic minority children Chinese. They have developed an in-house proprietary system to educate in conjunction with local educational institutions. The initial findings of this project are very promising.

As indicated this is a 5-year programme and will cease at the end of the 5 years.

The Equal Opportunities Commission ("EOC"), has also recently released a report<sup>1</sup> urging the Government to increase funding for the development of a curriculum designed specifically for the non-Chinese speakers to learn Chinese and to train teachers to teach them. Presently schools use mainstream Chinese teachers to teach ethnic minority children whose mother tongue is a language other than Chinese.

As a consequence of such inadequacies the EOC has found ethnic minority children to have limited access to higher education, employment and upward social mobility.

We respectfully urge the Government to review the interim success of the C-for-Chinese@JC pilot programme and take into account the findings of the EOC. We further submit that the Education Bureau becomes intimately familiar with these issues and use it as a basis from which the Education Bureau can deploy resources territory wide as well as develop corresponding primary and secondary level Chinese language programmes.

## Employment

Although we have seen some improvement over the past year in initiatives for gainful opportunities, however, the recent social unrest has adversely affected the livelihoods of several communities.

With a view of the unrest easing in the foreseeable future, we would suggest the following:

- Enhance the available resources at the Labour Department to assist those who are not fluent in Chinese.
- Design courses for youth not fluent in Chinese to help them enter other industries such as accounting, marketing, design, maintenance persons and engineering.
- We suggest efforts should also be taken to ensure the availability of vocational training courses in English as well as Chinese as many adults who are not fluent in Chinese are unable to access the existing vocational training courses.
- We would also like to see Chinese language courses for adult non-ethnic Chinese become more accessible, affordable and better publicized.
- We hope that the Government will lead by example and hire more non-ethnic Chinese Hong Kong people into the service.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.eoc.org.hk/eoc/GraphicsFolder/ShowContent.aspx?ItemID=16227>

## Integration and Racial Harmony

There is much yet to achieve to foster integration and racial harmony in society. Our specific recommendations are as follows:

- Students should not be segregated at schools with ethnic minority children attending schools just for them. This defeats the ideal goal of integration.
- The Government should amend the Race Discrimination Ordinance to make it unlawful for government services and functions to discriminate on the grounds of race.
- Publicity campaigns should be run showing pride in a diverse Hong Kong.
- Training courses among frontline staff in the civil service should be formulated to promote understanding of the various cultures of different ethnic minorities.
- Information about different cultures and religions should be incorporated into the education curriculum,

## Others

In addition to policy proposals that are specific to the non-ethnic Chinese communities, there are four other areas of broader relevance in which we are of the view that urgent action is required.

Firstly, establish the Commission of Inquiry as supported by a majority of Hongkongers as well as our community. The public have doubts on the impartiality of the IPCC notwithstanding the Government's views on its effectiveness. With a view assuaging public discontent, we urge the formation of a Commission of Inquiry.

Secondly, increase the supply of public housing as soon as practicable.

Thirdly, we think it is important that steps are taken to improve and maintain standards of English in Hong Kong. As explained above, we are very conscious of the importance of the Chinese language. It would be to Hong Kong's detriment if improved Chinese ability came at the expense of English levels. Now more than ever is English an important tool. As we expect to hit the road of recovery, we will need to promote ourselves on an international level and English being widely used around the globe, we will need to improve upon this particular skill set.

Fourthly, we see continued shortages of medical personnel in the public health care system. As highly regarded as our health service is considered, overworked and health care workers and abnormal waiting for health care is not. We urge the loosening up licensing regulations of health care professionals. We would suggest employment of professionals from renowned institutions such as found in commonwealth countries and the United States.

We would be pleased to elaborate on any of our proposals above should this be of assistance. In any event, we look forward to working with your Administration to improve the livelihood of Hong Kong society and to work towards the rebuilding of trust in Hong Kong.

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Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of several fluid, overlapping strokes that form a stylized, somewhat abstract shape.

The Executive Committee  
The India Association Hong Kong