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*Education of Ethnic Minority Children*

**Meeting of Legislative Council Panel on Education  
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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Introduction**

The purpose of this paper is to provide Members with information regarding the legal obligations incumbent upon the government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) with regard to the provision of access to education for children from ethnic minority communities. The paper examines the administration's current approach to ethnic minority language education and details the likely impact and legal implications of the Education Bureau's proposed and / or recently implemented measures. The paper identifies the promise of deliberative forums for effective, better informed and reasoned decision-making and ends with a set of concrete recommendations for Members' consideration.

**Background**

2. The current policies and approaches towards the provision of Chinese-language learning opportunities catered to the needs of ethnic minority (EM) children in Hong Kong have implications for a range of legal obligations held by the HKSAR government under international treaties and domestic law.

3. While the government has introduced or proposed a variety of measures aimed at improving the situation for EM children, these fail to target all groups in need of specialised programmes that facilitate the attainment of an adequate level of Chinese language that would enable them to compete on an equal footing with their local counterparts in both the realm of higher education and the employment market.

4. As such, the current situation and these proposed or recently implemented measures represent the lack of a substantively equal education policy designed to lift marginalised minority groups out of the cycle of disadvantage.

5. This paper recommends the development of targeted measures and programmes to address the needs of different EM groups in Hong Kong, with a view to catering to the range of levels and requirements of EM children entering the HKSAR education system at various points and stages. These recommendations include:

- a) Well-developed allocation of monitoring and other resources to enable all schools to develop effective language teaching and learning approaches for EM children, regardless of their status as a 'designated' or 'non-designated' school.

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- b) Provide enhanced teacher training to build skills in teaching Chinese to children from EM backgrounds.
  - c) Learn from other jurisdictions that have successfully implemented official-language learning programmes for non-majority children.
  - d) Ensure adequate opportunities for meaningful engagement between local and EM communities to elevate the level of discourse surrounding the needs of these groups.

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