

**Minutes of the 54th Meeting of  
RTHK Board of Advisors  
held at 9:15 am, 29 May 2020  
at Conference Room, G/F, Broadcasting House  
30 Broadcast Drive, Kowloon Tong, Kowloon**

**Present**

Dr Eugene CHAN Kin-keung, BBS, JP (Chairman)

Mr Walter CHAN Kar-lok, SBS, JP

Ms Dilys CHAU Suet-fung

Ms Linda CHOY Siu-min

Mr Mohan DATWANI

Professor Anthony FUNG Ying-him

Ms Helen KWAN Po-jen

Ms Shirley LOO Marie Therese, BBS, MH, JP

Dr TIK Chi-yuen, SBS, JP

Ms Eva WONG Ching-hung

Mr Augustine WONG Ho-ming, JP

Professor WONG Kam-fai, MH

Ms Elaine WU Siu-ling

Mr LEUNG Ka-wing, Director of Broadcasting

**In Attendance from RTHK**

Mr Eugene FUNG, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Review)

Ms CHAN Man-kuen, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Programmes)

Mr Albert CHEUNG, Assistant Director (Radio & Corporate Programming)

Ms Jace AU, Assistant Director (TV & Corporate Businesses)

Mr Brian CHOW, Controller (Radio)

Ms Natalie CHAN, Controller (TV)

Ms Amen NG, Head/Corporate Communications & Standards

Mr HO Chung Yan, David, Head/Chinese Programme Service (Agenda Item 7)

Ms Mayella CHEUNG (Board Secretariat)

Ms Sara FONG (Board Secretariat)

**Secretary**

Ms Yvonne WU (Board Secretariat)

## **Agenda Item 1: Confirmation of the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

1. The Chairman said that Members had comments on the draft minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2020 after the last meeting. The revised draft minutes had been circulated to Members for perusal. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing made a few comments on the revised draft minutes. A Member suggested deferring confirmation of the said minutes and other Members agreed. The Chairman expressed his understanding, and reiterated that the Board was quite concerned about the content of the minutes of the meeting held on 13 March 2020, and Members hoped to write their remarks more clearly, hence the Secretariat's draft version and the Board's revised version. He announced the deferral of the confirmation of the said minutes, and the follow-up of the revisions raised by Mr LEUNG Ka-wing with the Secretariat after the meeting. *[Post-meeting note: The Secretariat included the revisions raised by Mr LEUNG Ka-wing in the draft minutes on 5 June 2020, and circulated the revised version to Members for perusal.]*
2. The Board conducted discussion on the level of details to be included in minutes. In general, Members considered that minutes should give an account of the discussion content in sufficient detail, but a word-for-word record was not needed.
3. In addition, the Secretariat had circulated the draft minutes of the 53rd meeting held on 27 March 2020 to Members for perusal and no comments were received. The Chairman announced that the minutes of the 53rd meeting were confirmed.

## **Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising**

4. Members had not raised any item for discussion.

## **Agenda Item 3: RTHK Board of Advisors Working Groups Updates**

5. The Chairman said that the Board had proposed the formation of working groups in January 2020, in order to discharge its functions as stipulated in the Charter of RTHK ("Charter") more effectively. The Board hoped that through the working groups, it could strengthen communication with the RTHK management, have adequate understanding in the editorial principles, programming standards and quality of RTHK programming, receive reports on complaints against relevant matters and provide advice to the Director of Broadcasting ("DB"), so as to ensure that all programmes comply with the requirements stated in the Charter. After

receiving the complaint reports, one of the working groups would review the complaint handling mechanism of RTHK and provide suggestions for improvement. He reiterated that the working groups would not involve in the day-to-day operation of RTHK or handle complaints. To allay public and the RTHK Programme Staff Union's concerns about the number of members of the working groups, the Chairman stated that the quorum to call a working group meeting had been revised to a minimum of seven Members, which was the same as that to call a Board meeting. He hoped that the RTHK management would convey the Board's goodwill and explain the Board's work to its staff. He said that the Board would only call working group meetings when necessary. Upon completion of discussions on different topics by the working groups, they would report the relevant suggestions timely at the Board meetings.

6. Ms Amen NG said that RTHK had prevailing mechanism and procedures to handle complaints. She was worried that forming a working group related to complaints might mislead the public that the Board would participate in handling complaints. The Chairman responded that the working group would not handle complaints, but it would review the complaint handling mechanism of RTHK. A Member added that the approach of the working group to review how RTHK handled complaints would be similar to that of internal audit in the business sector. Review of the company's mechanisms and procedures would be conducted to understand the company's governance. During the process, individual cases might be chosen for in-depth studies, such that practical suggestions for improvement could be rendered afterwards.
7. Ms CHAN Man-kuen enquired about the work direction of the "Working Group on Editorial Principles, Programming Standards and Quality of RTHK Programming". The Chairman responded that through the working group, the Board could understand the editorial principles of RTHK and review RTHK's mechanism for ensuring that its programming comply with the editorial principles, so as to support DB in fulfilling RTHK's public purposes and mission as set out in the Charter.
8. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing pointed out that the questions from Ms Amen NG and Ms CHAN Man-kuen somewhat reflected the worries of RTHK staff about the working groups. He suggested that the Board could explain the work of the working groups to RTHK staff directly. A Member explained that, according to the functions entrusted to the Board by the Charter, the Board was advisory in nature, and it had no executive power. The Chairman reiterated that the Board

formed the working groups to execute responsibilities entrusted by the Charter, which included providing advice to DB. He expected that whether or not DB would follow the advice provided by the Board, he should report or explain to the Board. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing stated that RTHK had been receiving the Board's advice in accordance with the Charter. He reiterated that he had no objection to the Board's forming of the working groups, but he considered that the Board would need to face RTHK staff or external parties in order to allay their worries about the working groups' members, scope of work, etc. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing said that as DB, he could only quote open documents of Board meetings, but he could not explain to external parties on behalf of the Board.

9. A Member considered the remarks made by Mr LEUNG Ka-wing reasonable. External parties' queries about the working groups worth the Board's attention. He opined that the Board should reach consensus to make documents of the working groups' meetings public. He suggested that the Chairman could explain the details of the working groups to the public openly after the meeting. The Chairman agreed and said that the Board had a consensus to make public the documents of the working groups' meetings. Another Member considered that the Board should clarify the details of the working groups, such as their terms of reference, scope of work and operational mode, in order to give an account to the public. Another Member opined that the Board should pay attention to the public's impression of the formation of working groups. He thought that apart from giving an account of the duties of the working groups, the Board should also clearly list out the principle to explain the duties that would not be handled by the working groups, i.e. the working groups would not involve in RTHK's day-to-day operation, staff management or handle individual complaints of RTHK. Another Member stressed that the forming of working groups by the Board aimed to strengthen communication with the RTHK management, and to ride out the storm together with RTHK.
10. The Chairman concluded that the working groups meetings were ad hoc meetings, such that routine meetings would not be affected, and the Board could focus on handling issues related to editorial principles, programming standards and quality of RTHK programming, so as to support DB in implementing the Charter. Furthermore, he welcomed the Government to establish a dedicated team to review RTHK's governance and management.

**Agenda Item 4: Follow-up on Board of Advisors' Advice to Director of Broadcasting on 13 March 2020**

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11. The Chairman stated that the Board received a reply from Mr LEUNG Ka-wing on its three advice on 27 March 2020, and it had informed Mr LEUNG Ka-wing that his reply was received on 9 April 2020.
12. A Member said that Mr LEUNG Ka-wing's positive reply showed that RTHK and the Board were on the same page regarding the three advice provided by the latter. He hoped that RTHK would continue to work in accordance with the Charter in the future.
13. In his reply, Mr LEUNG Ka-wing stated, "Advice provided by each Member and all sectors of the society on RTHK programmes are equally important, and the RTHK management is taking them seriously". The Chairman responded that there was a difference between the Board's advice and other people's advice, and the Board was exercising its functions under the Charter when providing advice. DB should give due weight and consideration to all advice provided by the Board, and he should report and explain the reasons for not following them.
14. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing emphasised that the RTHK management had all along followed the requirements of the Charter and carefully listened to the advice provided by the Board.

**Agenda Item 5: Complaints Dealt with by the Communications Authority Released on 20 April 2020 – Television Programme "Pentaprism" by RTHK**

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15. The Chairman said he noticed that a serious warning was given to RTHK by the Communications Authority ("CA") on 20 April 2020 on the complaints against the television ("TV") programme "Pentaprism". The Chairman stated the content of CA's decision. He indicated that CA had considered the TV programme "Pentaprism" broadcast on RTHK TV 31 and 31A on 20 November 2019, and it took the view that the complaints in respect of accuracy, incitement of hatred, fairness and factual content of personal view programme were substantiated. CA decided that RTHK had breached the Generic Code of Practice on Television Programme Standards and gave a seriously warning to RTHK. The Chairman asked Mr LEUNG Ka-wing to report on the complaints concerned to the Board.

16. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing said that CA had made a decision on the complaints on the 5-minutes personal view programme “Pentaprism” broadcast on 20 November 2019, in which the presenter talked about the siege of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University by the Police (“the PolyU incident”) and his personal views on the incident. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing said that, after the programme was broadcast, RTHK received complaints against the presenter, which stated that the content he quoted did not match with the content released by the English and Chinese News and Current Affairs Sections of RTHK. As a result, he instructed the programme staff in the morning on 21 November 2019 to remove the episode from the RTHK online platforms, and immediately requested the responsible Assistant Director of Broadcasting and other programme staff concerned to carry out an investigation and review, including examining the production process, conducting disciplinary procedures and duty adjustment in accordance with the Producers’ Guidelines and the Civil Service Regulations. In addition, the programme staff of “Pentaprism” immediately invited another guest to express his views on the PolyU incident from other perspectives, and that episode was broadcast on 22 November 2019.
17. Ms Amen NG added that, CA was aware that in another episode broadcast on 22 November 2019, the confrontation between the Police and protestors at university campuses were shown from another perspective, and thus there was insufficient evidence to establish that RTHK had breached the requirement of broad range of views in personal view programmes.
18. The Chairman said that, after noting that CA had given RTHK a serious warning, the Board sent a letter to Mr LEUNG Ka-wing on 4 May 2020 to express its concern, and hoped to have a better understanding of the incident. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing replied to the Board on 11 May 2020.
19. A Member considered that the way Mr LEUNG Ka-wing handled the incident was appropriate, and the Member thought that the prevailing mechanism of RTHK could handle risks effectively. Another Member considered that RTHK’s handling after the incident was swift and precise, but he said that he did not understand why the presenter would be allowed to quote content which did not match with the information released by the English and Chinese News and Current Affairs Sections before the incident. Ms Jace AU responded that, the subsequent investigation found that, since the development of the PolyU incident was fast and its related information was quite confusing, while the presenter said he had inside information, the programme staff could not verify the concerned information at that time.

20. A Member quoted the Charter and pointed out that, as a public service broadcaster, RTHK shall provide accurate and impartial news, information, perspectives and analyses. He asked whether RTHK would conduct a review on its programmes according to CA's decision, including ensuring the aforesaid stipulations of the Charter covered all programmes of RTHK, and there should not be and would have no exceptions and exemptions. Ms Amen NG responded that all news and information programmes of RTHK adhered to the principle of accuracy of information. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing said that RTHK had always attached importance to the accuracy of information of news and information programmes, and reminded the programme staff concerned that unproven online information could not be readily quoted.
21. A Member considered that the role of executive producers was crucial, and they had an unshirkable responsibility when it came to programme quality control. RTHK should review its prevailing mechanism, so as to ensure that the programme content were verified by the relevant staff before broadcasting the programmes. She suggested that RTHK should enhance its gatekeeping work of the more complicated programmes by the supervisors of production team. Moreover, she suggested that RTHK could consider to clearly convey its professional stance on news reporting to the public when handling the incident concerned, so that they could understand the mechanism and standards of RTHK's programme production.
22. A Member considered that CA's decision reflected that there were problems in RTHK's prevailing mechanism. Another Member asked about the measures imposed by RTHK to enhance the prevailing mechanism. Ms Jace AU responded that since the day after the programme concerned was broadcast, the following enhancement measures had been imposed:
- (i) before the programme was broadcast, the supervisors of the programme staff would conduct a review, in order to strengthen the control of programme quality;
  - (ii) requested the presenter to submit the scripts to the programme staff one day before the shooting for detailed checking on the content;
  - (iii) requested the programme staff to prioritise considering the accuracy of written content instead of whether the visual content shown on TV was

impressive; and

(iv) provide on-going guidance and training to relevant programme staff.

23. The Chairman agreed that RTHK's handling after the incident was speedy, but he thought that RTHK should have prevented the incident from happening beforehand. He quoted the Producers' Guidelines and said that, personal view programmes had to respect the truth. Even if the views were unilateral, they must be based on facts.

**Agenda Item 6: Complaints Dealt with by the Communications Authority Released on 19 May 2020 – Television Programme “Headliner” by RTHK**

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24. The Chairman said he noticed that a warning was given to RTHK on 19 May 2020 on the complaints against the TV programme “Headliner”. The Chairman stated the content of CA's decision. He indicated that CA had considered the TV programme “Headliner” broadcast on RTHK TV 31 and 31A, and TVB Jade of Television Broadcasts Limited on 14 February 2020, and it took the view that the complaints in respect of accuracy of factual contents, denigration of and insult to the Police, and expression of a sufficiently broad range of views in personal view programmes were substantiated. CA decided that RTHK should be warned. He asked Mr LEUNG Ka-wing to report on the complaints concerned to the Board.

25. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing said that CA announced its decision on RTHK regarding the episode of “Headliner” broadcast on 14 February 2020. He stated that RTHK accepted the decision and immediately decided to suspend the production of “Headliner” after the current season ended, and the segment involved in the decision would no longer appear in this season's “Headliner”. In addition, RTHK also instantaneously launched a review of “Headliner”, including the content, presentation, production procedure, and the manpower arrangement of the programme. He emphasised that the RTHK management had attached great importance to CA's decision.

26. The Chairman noticed that on the day when CA gave its decision on RTHK, there were reports about that RTHK would suspend the production of “Headliner”, and subsequently there were reports that the production of “Headliner” would be suspended after the current season ended. Ms Amen NG clarified that RTHK would suspend the production of “Headliner” after the current season ended.



27. Regarding RTHK's implementation of the review of "Headliner", the Chairman stated that he looked forward to RTHK seeking advice from the Board on matters pertaining to editorial principles, programming standards and quality of the programme in accordance with the Charter.
28. The Chairman declared that the meeting be adjourned to let the Board have a closed-door discussion for 20 minutes, in order that it could provide its concrete advice on the above-mentioned serious warning and warning to RTHK.
29. When the meeting resumed, the Chairman stated that the Board noticed RTHK's responses to the serious warning given to "Pentaprism" on 20 April 2020 and the warning given to "Headliner" on 19 May 2020. The Board provided the following four advice to DB regarding the incident:
- (i) The Board expressed great distress and disappointment at the above two decisions. The Board reiterated that all RTHK programmes must meet the requirements of the Charter and there should be no exceptions or exemptions. According to the Producers' Guidelines, RTHK must ensure that the factual contents of its programmes are accurate;
  - (ii) The Board agreed to CA's allegation that the programme concerned was inciting hatred, and opined that RTHK could not allow similar incidents to happen again;
  - (iii) The Board noticed that there was a serious gap in DB's implementation of the Charter, and it hoped that DB would strictly follow up the issue. In particular, clear guidelines must be issued to RTHK staff, in order that the public purposes and missions of RTHK could be fulfilled; and
  - (iv) The Board would set up working groups to fulfil the obligations under the Charter, and work together with DB with a view to seeking a workable mechanism, so as to monitor the programmes to achieve the public purposes and mission of RTHK.
30. The Chairman stated that the Board understood that RTHK had took timely follow-up and remedial actions on the incident.
31. A Member added that he personally accepted RTHK's explanation and agreed to

its remedial measures. He believed that RTHK should work towards the target of improvement.

#### **Agenda Item 7: RTHK Programme Initiatives Related to COVID-19**

32. In view of the time constraint, this item was not discussed in the meeting.

#### **Agenda Item 8: Updates on RTHK's Response to Audit Commission's Report**

33. The progress report had been issued to Members for reference. Details were set out at **Appendix**. Members had no comments on the progress report.

#### **Agenda Item 9(a): Updates on Programmes (BOA Paper 5/2020)**

34. The paper had been issued to Members for reference. Members had no comments on it.

#### **Agenda Item 9(b): Updates on Complaints (BOA Paper 6/2020)**

35. The paper had been issued to Members for reference. Members had no comments on it.

#### **Agenda Item 10: Any Other Business**

36. Members did not bring up any other matter for discussion.

#### **Agenda Item 11: Date of Meeting**

37. The next meeting was scheduled for 31 July 2020.

38. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:00 noon.

**Secretariat**

**RTHK Board of Advisors**

**Radio Television Hong Kong: Provision of Programmes**  
**Progress in Implementing the Audit's and Public Accounts Committee's Recommendations**  
**(as at 29.5.2020)**

Para. No.	Audit's Recommendations	Progress
<b>Part 2: Production of Programmes</b>		
2.10	<p><u>Planning and Budgetary Control</u></p> <p>Audit has recommended that the Director of Broadcasting (DB) should –</p>	
	<p>take into account information for performance evaluation of individual radio and TV programmes, in order to facilitate the making of more meaningful planning decision for the programmes.</p>	<p>The new Annual Plan cycle has been executed since April 2020. The annual planning exercises will take into account information for performance evaluation of individual radio and TV programmes. RTHK continues to follow the cycle and will report details in the Senior Staff Meeting and Management Meeting.</p>
2.54	<p><u>Community Involvement Broadcasting Service (CIBS)</u></p> <p>Audit has recommended that the DB should –</p>	
	<p>(c) regularly conduct focus group studies to assess the cost-effectiveness of the projects funded by the Community Involvement Broadcasting Fund.</p>	<p>The CIBS focus group study will be conducted on a biennial basis.</p> <p>As the recommendation has been implemented and will be carried out on an on-going basis, we recommend that this part be deleted from the next report.</p>

### Part 3: Broadcasting of Programmes and New Media Services

3.6

Management of TV Broadcasting Hours

Audit has recommended that the DB should endeavour to enrich the TV programmes, including –

explore ways to enrich the miscellaneous contents of TV 31 and TV 32 with a view to enhancing the channels' attractiveness.

For TV 31, programmes were scheduled round-the-clock (i.e. 24-hour a day) according to programming strategy from 1 April 2019. Miscellaneous content are no longer broadcast on TV 31.

In response to COVID-19, the TV Division prepared a series of public engagement videos (“我們在乎你·同心抗疫·為香港打氣”), including “830 Magazine” (“日常 8 點半” – “隔離飯香”, “疫情下的香港” and “香港演藝界齊集氣”), “Arts on Air · Music Platform” (“演藝盛薈 · 音樂到會”), “We are Good Neighbours Live Chat” (“Harry 哥哥好鄰居 · 即時放送”), “My Birthday” (“生日快樂”), “Guard Against the Novel Coronavirus” (“醫生與你 同行抗疫 – 醫護人員的心聲”), “Sports Unlimited” (“體壇無極限 抗疫同行篇 – 香港運動員家居運動大挑戰”) and “Tutor Online” (“上網問功課 – 學生老師的抗疫日常”).

For TV 32, there are more programme variety, such as live broadcast of government press conferences (e.g. press conferences held by the Chief Executive, Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, Hospital Authority and other government departments), live relay of important Mainland and overseas events, clarification messages from the Information Services Department, other positive messages and short interview videos on various topics, live

		<p>coverage of local sports events and fillers.</p> <p>TV 31 and 32 also live broadcast “Sam Hui Online Concert 2020” (2020 許冠傑同舟共濟 Online Concert) and “Aaron Kwok Cheer Up &amp; Dance Online Charity Concert 2020” (郭富城鼓舞·動起來網上慈善演唱會) to cheer up Hong Kong people under the guarding against COVID-19.</p>
<b>Part 4: Evaluation of Programmes and Other Administrative Issues</b>		
4.33	<p><u>Evaluation of TV Programmes</u></p> <p>Audit has recommended that the DB should –</p>	
	<p>(d) ascertain the reasons for low ratings of RTHK’s programmes and take measures to enhance the popularity of its TV programmes, especially for those which are intended to be popular programmes; and</p>	<p>A working group has been set up to take forward the “Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT) Penetration Survey”, which commenced in January 2020, to collect information and data on the penetration / take-up pattern of the DTT channels, viewing habits and preference of the audience. Given it is a face-to-face household survey and in view of the outbreak of COVID-19, there will be delay in the survey.</p>
	<p>(e) take measures to address the issue of lower TV ratings of RTHK TV programmes broadcast on RTHK channels than the ratings of the same programmes broadcast on a commercial channel.</p>	

4.44	<u>Evaluation of Radio Programmes</u> Audit has recommended that the DB should –		
	(a)	keep in view the number of listeners for each of the seven radio channels and take appropriate action to boost the number of listeners for radio channels with decreasing number of listeners; and	The Radio Audience Survey is scheduled for June 2020 tentatively. Information on the appreciation index of selected radio programmes by sampling will also be collected, so as to monitor the quality of radio programmes.
	(b)	take measures to improve the appreciation index and awareness level of RTHK's radio channels.	