

**Minutes of the 55th Meeting of
RTHK Board of Advisors
held at 9:15 am, 31 July 2020
by Video Conference**

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 (Special Support)

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

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

Mr Brian CHOW, Acting Assistant Director (Radio & Corporate Programming)

Ms Natalie CHAN, Controller (TV)

Mr David HO, Acting Controller (Radio)

Ms Amen NG, Head/Corporate Communications & Standards

Ms Amy KWONG, Head/Acquisition and Corporate Development (Agenda Item 7)

Ms Mayella CHEUNG (Board Secretariat)

Ms Sara FONG (Board Secretariat)

Secretary

Mr Enoc IP (Board Secretariat)

1. The Chairman welcomed Mr Brian CHOW, Acting Assistant Director (Radio & Corporate Programming) and Mr David HO, Acting Controller (Radio), to the meeting in their new capacities, and welcomed Mr Enoc IP, new member of the Secretariat. He also thanked Ms Yvonne WU, former member of the Secretariat, for her contributions in the past.
2. This was the last meeting attended by Ms CHAN Man-kuen, Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Programmes), before she left office. The Chairman thanked Ms CHAN on behalf of the Board for her contributions to the Board and RTHK.

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

3. The Chairman said that Members had comments on the draft minutes of the 52nd meeting (Part 2) held on 13 March 2020 during the meetings on 27 March and 29 May 2020. The revised draft minutes had been circulated afterwards to Members for perusal, and no comments were received. The minutes of the 52nd meeting (Part 2) were therefore confirmed.
4. In addition, the Secretariat had circulated the draft minutes of the 54th meeting held on 29 May 2020 to Members for perusal and no comments were received. The Chairman announced that the minutes of the 54th meeting were confirmed.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

5. A Member enquired about the progress of the internal review by RTHK on the programme “Headliner” and whether the review concerned complied with the Charter of RTHK (“Charter”) regarding paragraph 25 of the minutes of the last meeting. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing responded that the review on “Headliner” had commenced, but since there was a shortage of manpower due to the handling of contingency of programmes because of issues such as the recent pandemic and the covering of the Legislative Council Election, the review was put to a temporary halt. He stated that after the review was resumed, its scope would not change and it would definitely comply with the Charter, the Producers’ Guidelines (“Guidelines”) and the codes of practice for the industry. The production of “Headliner” would be suspended until the completion of the review. Ms CHAN Man-kuen added that the review work was expected to resume in September the earliest. The Chairman said that the Board would be glad to give advice on the review work when needed.

6. The Chairman asked for Mr LEUNG Ka-wing's responses with regard to paragraph 29 of the minutes of the last meeting, in which the Board provided four pieces of advice to the Director of Broadcasting ("DB") concerning the serious warning given to "Pentaprisism" and the warning given to "Headliner" by the Communications Authority ("CA"). Mr LEUNG stated that, as DB, he attached great importance to the four pieces of advice provided by the Board, namely (i) internal monitoring, (ii) reputational risk management, (iii) leader's management and (iv) the facilitation of communication with the Board, and DB would attach the same level of importance to all four pieces of advice. Advice (i) to (iii) had always been the vital issues that the management must deal with on a daily basis and review from time to time. With the changes in social atmosphere and political situation, colleagues of RTHK had already been extra prudent and adhered to the Charter when handling matters. They had also made improvements on the daily operation constantly and carried out their responsibilities as the gatekeeper. The fourth advice concerned about the Board's advisory role. Provided that the situation did not involve daily operation and programme content, it would be natural to have more mutual communication.

Agenda Item 4: RTHK Board of Advisors Working Groups Updates

7. The Chairman reported that the 1st meeting of the "Working Group on Editorial Principles, Programming Standards and Quality of RTHK Programming" had been held on 10 June 2020, and he briefed Members about the content of discussion in the meeting.
8. The Secretariat had circulated the related draft minutes to Members for perusal and no comments were received. The Chairman announced that the minutes of the 1st meeting of the "Working Group on Editorial Principles, Programming Standards and Quality of RTHK Programming" were confirmed. The said minutes were set out at **Appendix 1**.
9. The Chairman invited Mr LEUNG Ka-wing to share his views on the four pieces of advice provided by the Board at the working group meeting, namely (i) internal monitoring, (ii) reputational risk management, (iii) leaders' management, and (iv) facilitation of communication with the Board. Mr LEUNG responded that advice (i) to (iii) were aspects the management had to face and would review from time to time in the day-to-day operation. There would always be different issues

which were inseparable from the pulses of the society. Colleagues of RTHK reported on and analysed various types of social incidents, and they would be extra prudent in times of social turmoil. Many of the RTHK colleagues were experienced and were familiar with the requirements stated in the Charter and the Guidelines. Among them, Executive Producers, who had considerable power and heavy responsibilities, usually acted as gatekeepers and needed to make split-second decisions. RTHK would have reviews whenever a problem existed or it was considered that a problem existed, and that was the normal operation of all media. For the fourth advice which was related to the advisory role of the Board, he agreed that both parties should strengthen mutual communication and understanding.

10. In general, Members considered that the working group had positive outcomes, not only strengthening communication between RTHK and the Board, but also promoting mutual trust and establishing sound foundations for co-operation. There were Members remarking that the current political environment was difficult, while the atmosphere in the society would possibly be more complicated in the future, and RTHK would probably become the eye of the storm. However, they considered that there were always more solutions than difficulties. The Board shared the same purposes with RTHK and was willing to continue to support RTHK. Members hoped that the communication and co-operation pattern could continue, that is to achieve mutual respect, strengthen communication beforehand and bring beneficial changes to RTHK, the communication between the Chairman and the Director of Broadcasting in particular was the most important.
11. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing said that he felt the Board's concern and support towards RTHK. He thanked Members for providing invaluable advice on various issues from different professional perspectives. The Chairman concluded that the Board had a clear starting point and was impersonal. He thanked Members for their professional and selfless support.
12. The Chairman informed Members that the 2nd meeting of the "Working Group on Complaints against Editorial Principles, Programming Standards and Quality of RTHK Programming", which was originally scheduled on 22 July 2020, was cancelled due to the pandemic. He hoped that the meeting could be held in early August, and would inform Members about the details later. *[Post-meeting note: The 2nd meeting of the "Working Group on Complaints against Editorial*

Principles, Programming Standards and Quality of RTHK Programming” was held on 10 August 2020.]

Agenda Item 3: Advice on Fundamental Legal Requirements Applicable to Editorial Principles, Programming Standards and Quality of RTHK Programmes

13. The Chairman and Members unanimously agreed to shelve this agenda item after discussion.

Agenda Item 9: RTHK Updates on National Security Law Programme Production

14. The Chairman stated that RTHK should fulfill the public purposes and mission stipulated in paragraph 4(a)(ii) of the Charter, to promote understanding of the concept of “One Country, Two Systems” and its implementation in Hong Kong. Regarding this, he suggested at the Working Group meeting held on 10 June that RTHK should produce a programme related to the Law of the People’s Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“National Security Law”), and he learned from the RTHK management that the relevant production was already in progress. He emphasised that the relevant suggestions were only directional, and he had no intention to participate in the daily work of RTHK. Subsequently, it was officially announced on 30 June that the National Security Law would be implemented. He noticed that public communication and education were mentioned in Articles 9 and 10 of Part 1 “Duties” in Chapter 2. He personally believed that as a public service broadcaster, RTHK had the responsibility and obligation to assist the SAR Government in the related work. He also hoped that as the Editor-in-chief of RTHK, DB could lead the team to pay attention during production of programmes and put in practice in the Guidelines.
15. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing responded that before the provisions of the National Security Law were announced, RTHK’s radio and television programmes had half to an hour of discussions on the topic every day, and different guests such as Mr TAM Yiu-chung, Ms Maria TAM and Ms Elsie LEUNG had been invited to explore the spirit of the National Security Law. After the announcement of the provisions, RTHK immediately discussed the content of the provisions in detail through different programmes, in order to increase the public’s understanding. RTHK also produced the “Hong Kong National Security Law Special” programme, inviting

two members of the legal profession to share different legal opinions on 10 topics of the National Security Law, and conduct in-depth discussion of the areas that were particularly noteworthy.

16. Ms CHAN Man-kuen said that RTHK had all along been working with the Government to disseminate and clarify information, and broadcast specific short videos on the development of the social events. Ms Natalie CHAN added that since November last year, RTHK had been working with the Information Services Department (“ISD”) and receiving clarification statements of about one minute every or every two days. The statements were broadcast daily on RTHK 32 TV, and a total of 73 statements had been broadcast to date. In addition, RTHK TV 31 and 32 also broadcast short videos of “睇真 D • 知多 D” produced by ISD after the broadcast of “Hong Kong Today” at 10 o’clock. Political Assistants would introduce or clarify the policies of relevant policy bureau.
17. The Chairman asked RTHK whether it would update the Guidelines in accordance with the National Security Law. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing responded that the Charter itself could already comply with the National Security Law, and there was no need to amend the Guidelines for the time being.
18. A Member said he noticed that there were other media organisations actively promoting the National Security Law. In comparison, RTHK seemed to have done less. He asked if there were any mechanisms for RTHK to work with those media organisations to broadcast their National Security Law programmes. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing responded that RTHK had been working with the Government more, for instance, ISD. If RTHK would want to work with private organisations, it would have to go through certain procedures. The Member asked whether the relevant administrative procedures could be relaxed. Ms CHAN Man-kuen responded that cooperation between RTHK and commercial organisations was governed by the Sponsorship Guidelines. For any relaxation or amendment, RTHK must discuss in detail with the Bureau. She pointed out that RTHK broadcast the National Security Law short videos produced by ISD and the frequency of broadcasting was quite high. In addition, “Hong Kong National Security Law Special” had already begun to broadcast on radio and would also be broadcast on TV. RTHK would make appropriate arrangements for the broadcast.
19. The Chairman stated that the message he had received at the working group meeting was that RTHK would produce 20 episodes of National Security Law programme.

He asked whether the number of episodes had been changed to 10. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing confirmed that there would be 10 episodes of the “Hong Kong National Security Law Special” programme.

20. Ms CHAN Man-kuen said that RTHK also had intensive discussions on the National Security Law in other different programmes. Mr Brian CHOW added that for radio programmes, the three main programmes produced by the Public and Current Affairs Section, namely “Talkabout”, “Accountability” and “Open Line Open View” had invited many guests on the topic of National Security Law. The guests, including Ms Teresa CHENG (Secretary for Justice), Mr John LEE (Secretary for Security), Ms Elsie LEUNG, Ms Maria TAM, Mr TAM Yiu-chung, Mr YIP Kwok-him, Ms Priscilla LEUNG and Mr SONG Sio-chong, explored and interpreted in detail the National Security Law every day before and after the announcement of its provisions. As for the “Hong Kong National Security Law Special” programme, each episode was about 7 minutes, and they were broadcast on radio and TV, twice a day on Radio 1 and once in “Morning Suite” on Radio 2, with TV version also available. In each episode, two guests were invited, namely Professor Albert CHEN, and a representative from the Hong Kong Bar Association – either Senior Counsel Anita YIP or Barrister LAW Man-chung, and they explained to the audience the provisions of the National Security Law or the areas that were not clear.
21. Ms Jace AU said that for TV programmes, “Talkabout” and “Accountability” were broadcast simultaneously on radio and TV, and the TV live broadcast of “Open Line Open View” had also started 2 days immediately after the announcement of the National Security Law. Since the announcement of the National Security Law, RTHK TV 32 had all along been broadcasting the most authoritative official information. So far, at least 20 episodes of programmes on the National Security Law had been live broadcast or premiered, and they were about the SAR Government, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the State Council Information Office, Committee for the Basic Law, members of the Executive Council, etc. In addition, RTHK live broadcast and rebroadcast the entire opening of the Central People’s Government Office on National Security in Hong Kong, and it had done its best in terms of the length of coverage and authority.
22. A Member pointed out that apart from abiding by the Charter, RTHK must also comply with the basic legal bottom line, the National Security Law and other laws of Hong Kong, and RTHK must avoid committing offences such as “malicious

falsehood” or “defamation”. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing thanked the Member for his kind reminder. He pointed out that for many years, legal knowledge was included in the basic courses of the school of communication. In addition, the RTHK management also attached great importance to the legal requirement on the media, and was quite familiar with the cases of CA and the verdict of the Court on the media. All in all, the RTHK colleagues had sufficient legal awareness and had been acting cautiously.

Agenda Item 7: TV Programme Commissioning

23. Ms KWONG Sze-yin informed Members that, according to the recommendations in the Audit Commission’s Report, RTHK had commissioned an independent survey company through open tender to collect audience views on commissioned dramas and documentaries, and analyse the future development of the commissioning of TV programmes. She briefed Members on the results of the survey.
24. A Member enquired if the survey had compared commissioned programmes with non-commissioned programmes. Ms KWONG Sze-yin responded that there were comments from the survey that commissioned programmes were more innovative and kept abreast of the times. However, as individual views varied, the views listed in the survey results might be contradictory. In short, audience had positive comments on commissioned programmes.
25. A Member considered it was great that commissioned programmes offered opportunities to young people and new producers. He hoped that RTHK could disseminate the message to more audience. He also suggested that RTHK should make good use of the “Online-To-Offline (O2O)” model to strengthen promotion of programme content through platforms such as YouTube and Instagram.
26. A Member said she had watched some commissioned programmes and admired their high quality. She enquired if there would be any subsequent actions regarding the programme ratings obtained from the survey, such as using them as reference in future assessment of applications. Another Member enquired whether ratings of the survey would be taken as reference to assess relevant producers. Ms KWONG Sze-yin responded that the survey results included the overall rating of commissioned programmes only, but not ratings for individual programmes. The ratings will be mainly used to analyse the direction for future

development of the commissioning of TV programmes. Ms KWONG also briefed on the assessment procedures for commissioned programmes.

27. A Member noticed that the survey results showed that it was quite difficult for the audience to distinguish whether a programme was commissioned. He enquired whether RTHK considered it was necessary to help the audience distinguish. Ms KWONG Sze-yin responded that they would not draw attention to whether a programme was commissioned. In general, it would be mentioned in a commissioned programme that it was produced by a new producer, but not in any other ways which emphasised that the programme was commissioned.
28. A Member considered the survey results positive, despite some negative views on the commissioned programmes, such as the programmes were too lengthy or boring, the topics were serious and the pace was too slow, it did show that the style of commissioned programmes was different from that of RTHK productions, and it was the purpose of the commissioning to improve the diversity of programmes. He considered the survey model had failed to provide methods on improving the diversity of commissioned programmes, and thus suggested that RTHK should conduct internal review separately and consider adjusting the internal assessment criteria, in order to select more innovative and diversified commissioned programmes.
29. A Member commented that whether a programme was commissioned was not the major concern of the audience, as long as they knew the programme was presented by RTHK. She pointed out that the purposes of the commissioning was to diversify RTHK programmes, bring about external innovations and facilitate the development of the industry. Under such positioning, RTHK should connect high quality commissioned programmes with itself, such that the public would be aware that RTHK was actively promoting high quality productions as a public service broadcaster. She also considered that there should be a precise publicity orientation. Under the “O2O” model, audience could select information content of their choice. She suggested that RTHK should step up publicity in social media to increase hit rate and TV rating of programmes.
30. A Member was concerned about the subsequent actions on the survey results. He hoped that RTHK would inform Members of the future development of the commissioning of TV programmes timely.

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

31. The progress report had been issued to Members for reference. Details were set out at **Appendix 2**.
32. A Member asked whether RTHK had to respond to Audit Commission's Report or submit any progress report. Meanwhile, she noticed that regarding the setting of "Key Performance Indicators", the Audit Commission's Report mainly mentioned about TV ratings, but in the previous discussions, some Members mentioned that social influence should also be an important indicator. She enquired about the latest work progress of RTHK in this aspect.
33. Ms CHAN Man-kuen responded that, regarding TV programmes, a lot of audience would not watch the programmes during the broadcast time, but rather, they would watch them online afterwards. As a result, merely talking about TV ratings was not enough to assess the performance. RTHK gathered data of different areas, including TV ratings, number of online views, number of views on social media such as RTHK's YouTube channel and came up with different performance indicators. RTHK was still negotiating with the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau regarding the work of this aspect, and would report to the Board after it had got a clearer direction. As for radio programmes, RTHK had carried out the Radio Audience Survey through face-to-face questionnaire and telephone interview to understand how the general public used radio services. Currently, there were already fewer audience using radio sets, but using smart mobile devices more to listen to the radio online. Since the number of survey samples was large, RTHK considered the results as representative, and it would report to the Board after consolidating the results.
34. Ms CHAN Man-kuen added that RTHK was required to submit a progress report to the Public Accounts Committee of the Legislative Council every half year, with a government minute for record purpose. The progresses of the two were on the same pace.

Agenda Item 6: RTHK Programme Initiatives related to COVID-19

35. Mr David HO of the Radio Division and Ms Natalie CHAN of the TV Division briefed Members on the programme initiatives related to COVID-19.

36. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing added that RTHK TV 32 had all along provided simultaneous sign language interpretation service at live press conferences during the pandemic, and the service was provided only by RTHK. Besides, important press conferences would be re-run during prime time slots, so as to ensure that comprehensive information of the pandemic was provided to the general public.
37. A Member commended RTHK for broadcasting the live press conferences in the original English language, so that the audience could obtain the most authentic and comprehensive information. A Member appreciated RTHK's slogan "RTHK Cares" for bringing out the message of "walking together", and she also commended the programmes provided by RTHK for giving great encouragement to the healthcare professionals. Another Member appreciated RTHK for cheering up the society, and she considered that RTHK had a special role in maintaining the social spirit when the pandemic lingered. She suggested that RTHK could explore how to expand the audience reach of its programmes. It might consider collaborating with different organisations and make good use of other platforms to promote its messages to different communities.

Agenda Item 5: Letter from Dr Hon Junius HO

38. The Chairman informed Members that he had received a letter of complaint issued by Dr Hon Junius HO. The letter had been sent to Members for reference earlier on, and the content were mainly about Dr HO's dissatisfaction to the fact that the reporters of "Hong Kong Connection" had yet to conduct a comprehensive analysis on "the 721 Incident" after one year, but picked on him during the interview. The Chairman reiterated that he had no intention to handle complaints during the meeting. However, as a Legislative Council member had made some suggestions to RTHK regarding the standard and quality of a programme from the angle of the Charter, he hoped that the RTHK management could respond to avoid public misunderstanding. In case there were shortcomings, the situation could be improved.
39. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing first thanked Dr HO for his continuous support to RTHK programmes. He opined that the letter reflected that the society still had different views and different doubts about the "721 Incident". When encountering social divergence of opinion, RTHK would not give up any angle to follow up. However, as he had repeatedly reiterated in the Board meetings in the past, producing documentaries to explore the truth was not only about numerical balance. In the

case of having many angles, the media must be more cautious about how to strike a true balance. He welcomed Mr HO's comments.

40. The Chairman noticed that the letter asked why "Hong Kong Connection" could not review the "721 Incident" from a more macro angle. He pointed out that RTHK was a public service broadcaster, and the public also had expectations on "Hong Kong Connection". He asked for RTHK's opinion on this view. Mr. LEUNG Ka-wing responded that as a public broadcaster, RTHK would consider and refer to anyone's view. From the point of view of programme production, as the Editor-in-chief of RTHK, he believed that for the recent episode and the episode of "Hong Kong Connection" a year ago ("Hong Kong Connection: 721 Who Holds the Truth" and "Hong Kong Connection: 721 Yuen Long Nightmare") concerning the "721 Incident", no matter how you look at them, whether it was from a journalism, documentary, shooting angle, editing, investigation, or material selection point of view, the quality of production was high enough to be used as teaching materials and models of journalism. He said that this kind of truth-finding programme would sometimes inevitably make some people feel offensive, and thus drawing some fierce reactions.
41. A Member generally agreed with Mr LEUNG Ka-wing's views, and he suggested that RTHK should discuss more on the incident. He pointed out that the role of RTHK was not to draw conclusion on the incident, but to provide different perspectives through more programmes.
42. Another Member pointed out that it was very important to make the final check on the programmes, and the Executive Producers held a high responsibility in making decisions of choosing the programme content. She paid particular attention to the two follow-up scenes of "Hong Kong Connection: 721 Who Holds the Truth", and opined that it would be enough to express the interview process in the form of narration, and she asked whether it was necessary to broadcast the follow-up questioning shots. She also pointed out from the perspective of an education practitioner that if the interviewee had indicated that he / she could not respond on the spot, he / she should be respected. She agreed that the filming of that episode of "Hong Kong Connection" was detailed and the truth was reflected. However, the other key figure of the incident was not mentioned. She hoped that the programme would explore the other side of the incident and show multiple perspectives.

43. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing responded that he believed that in the two follow-up questioning shots, the reporters were polite and their emotions were under control. They did not deliberately create any collision. Moreover, explanations and follow-up were provided after the broadcast of the follow-up questioning shots. Ms AMEN NG added that showing “reaction shots” was a technique of asking follow-up questions in Communication and Journalism. The purpose was to enable the audience to grasp the real situation of finding the truth. Ms CHAN Man-kuen pointed out that when reporters were unable to obtain answers through ordinary channels, they sometimes would take the initiative to follow up with the interviewees. It was called the “door-stepping strategy” in Journalism, which was a common technique used in news coverage. Mr LEUNG added that the requirement for using these techniques was to broadcast the real situation truthfully and not to deface the interviewees.
44. Ms CHAN Man-kuen added that the topics of “Hong Kong Connection” were diversified. For instance, in a recent episode of “Hong Kong Connection: Patriotism and Education”, the topic patriotic education was explored. The programme interviewed how secondary schools, elementary schools and kindergartens treated patriotic education, focusing on a child who was happy to be the flag-raiser, and interviewed the principal, teachers, and parents on their views on the topic. The programme handled the topic in a simple and matter-of-fact manner.
45. A Member suggested that this item should only be discussed in detail in the “Working Group on Complaints against Editorial Principles, Programming Standards and Quality of RTHK Programming”. The Chairman responded that the working group would not handle complaints, and it would only have directional discussion on the (complaint handling) mechanism. However, he agreed that the incident could be discussed as an example by then.
46. A Member said that RTHK had its own complaint handling mechanism. Unless the complaint was particularly urgent or serious, the Board might not need to discuss general complaints. As for the subject complaint, she considered that the content itself was quite controversial, for the society had been enthusiastically discussing the “721 Incident”, and the differences and changes in descriptions from the beginning to now itself was already worth exploring. She suggested that RTHK should seriously follow up on whether the allegations in the letter were true, including not macro enough, biased, and programme of poor quality. And after

the investigation, RTHK should check whether the overall description provided by it on the “721 Incident” was balanced. She opined that a half-hour programme might only be showing one of the perspectives of the overall situation, and it would be important for RTHK to bring out all different perspectives in different programmes. Regarding this, she inquired about RTHK’s policy of handling (complaints) and hoped that RTHK could inform Members of the investigation results.

47. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing responded that as “Hong Kong Connection” was a half-hour unit programme, the topics might not be produced continuously in the form of a series. On the other hand, RTHK had close and diversified discussions on the “721 Incident” in both TV and radio programmes. The said programmes included intensive news reports and phone-in programmes, so that all audiences could express different views and voice different opinions, analyse current affairs, and so on. He said that the “721 Incident” was similar to some important incidents that happened in Hong Kong or other places in the past, and yet to find out the truth after decades.

Agenda Item 11(a): Updates on Programmes (BOA Paper 7/2020)

48. The paper had been issued to Members for reference. Members had no comment on it.

Agenda Item 11(b): Updates on Complaints (BOA Paper 8/2020)

49. The paper had been issued to Members for reference. Members had no comment on it.

Agenda Item 10: RTHK Board of Advisors End of Term Remarks

50. The Chairman said that this meeting was the last Board meeting in this term of office. Looking back to the past year, Hong Kong was facing changes in the political environment and the sudden pandemic outbreak, and those were major challenges that Hong Kong people had never taken up. And as the only public service broadcaster, RTHK also had to deal with these unprecedented arduous challenges. Being the Chairman of the Board, he was very grateful that the Board could still adhere to the Charter in such a turbulent environment, fulfil the responsibility delegated to the Board by the Charter, and sincerely worked with Mr

LEUNG Ka-wing. He hoped that RTHK would continue to adhere to the Charter in the future, and its staff would understand the spirit and purposes behind the Charter and provide quality programmes. From his personal point of view, he had always wished RTHK to become the most credible medium in China. He hoped that RTHK would keep in mind that editorial independence could not be without a bottom line. In addition to adhering to the Charter and providing accurate and balanced information, RTHK must also adhere to the laws of Hong Kong, including the latest National Security Law. As RTHK was the only public service broadcaster, many Hong Kong people had high expectations on the public purposes and mission stipulated in the Charter. He sincerely hoped that RTHK could continue to follow up public complaints quickly and handle them in a serious manner, and bear in mind that the number of appreciations and complaints could not offset each other.

Agenda Item 12: Any Other Business

51. Members did not bring up any other matter for discussion.
52. This meeting was the last Board meeting in this term of office. The Chairman thanked Members for their contributions.
53. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:30 p.m.

Secretariat

RTHK Board of Advisors

**Minutes of the 1st Meeting of
Working Group of RTHK Board of Advisors
held at 9:00 am, 10 June 2020
at Conference Room 5, G/F, West Wing, Central Government Offices,
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong**

Present

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

Ms Linda CHOY Siu-min

Mr Mohan DATWANI

Professor Anthony FUNG Ying-him

Dr TIK Chi-yuen, SBS, JP

Ms Eva WONG Ching-hung

Mr Augustine WONG Ho-ming, JP

Ms Elaine WU Siu-ling

Mr LEUNG Ka-wing, Director of Broadcasting

In Attendance from RTHK

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

Ms Mayella CHEUNG (Board Secretariat)

Absent with Apologies

Mr Walter CHAN Kar-lok, SBS, JP

Ms Dilys CHAU Suet-fung

Ms Helen KWAN Po-jen

Ms Shirley LOO Marie Therese, BBS, MH, JP

Professor WONG Kam-fai, MH

Secretary

Ms Yvonne WU (Board Secretariat)

Agenda Item 1: Advice on Matters Pertaining on Editorial Principles (RTHK Charter 13(a))

1. The Chairman quoted the Charter of RTHK (“the Charter”) and said that, as a public service broadcaster, RTHK shall provide accurate and impartial news, information, perspectives and analyses. He understood that the media might prefer carrying out work such as reporting and commentating with fewer restrictions, and with regard to this, he asked whether RTHK had encountered difficulties when implementing the Charter.
2. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing said that RTHK had not encountered difficulties when implementing the Charter. He pointed out that the types of programmes produced by RTHK were diversified while there were different standards for different types of programmes. He emphasised that the required standards for RTHK’s news and public affairs programmes regarding accuracy and impartiality had been very high. However, those standards could not be directly applied to other non-news and public affairs programmes, such as culture and art programmes.
3. Ms CHAN Man-kuen explained that paragraph 4(a) of the Charter mainly regulated news, current affairs and information programmes, and RTHK had followed the principle regarding accuracy and impartiality stated therein. She pointed out that news, current affairs and information radio programmes (including “Talkabout”, “Open Line Open View”, “Accountability”, “World in a Nutshell”, “Letter to Hong Kong”); and television (TV) programmes (including “Hong Kong Connection”, “This Week”, “City Forum”), must adhere to the relevant principles regarding fairness, impartiality and accuracy. She stated that there were also demarcations among the news, current affairs and information programmes, which could be further divided into various types, for instance, political commentary programmes or investigative and thematic programmes. Political commentary programmes, such as “City Forum”, had to invite guests with different views at the same time to have discussions, such that it was easier to see whether the points of views included in the programmes were “balanced”. If a party of guests refused to discuss, the programme host would have to explain in the programme why the views of a certain party were not included. As for investigative and thematic programmes such as “Hong Kong Connection”, since this type of programmes chose specific topics for in-depth discussion based on journalistic professionalism, they only needed to strike a suitable balance between the topics concerned. She pointed out that “impartiality” did not mean to require programmes to be balanced mechanically,

and it was not possible to gather people with different views to elaborate their points in equally divided timeslots in every programme. She quoted the case “Cho Man Kit v. Broadcasting Authority” and explained that in Mr Justice HARTMANN’s judgement of the case, he held that “impartiality” was a broad concept. While it encompassed the concept of being balanced, the word also meant “unprejudiced”, “unbiased”, and “fair”. As such, she considered that the producers of the programme concerned had handled the relevant topic in a fair manner. Ms CHAN also quoted the case “Tse Wai Chun Paul v. Albert Cheng and Another” to explain the principle of “fair comment”. In addition, she said that paragraphs 4(b) to (e) of the Charter also required RTHK, as the public service broadcaster, to promote diversified programmes, foster creativity, etc., for example, to produce programmes on classical music, ethnic minorities, health and medicine and local arts. As a result, apart from news, current affairs and information programmes, RTHK also produced programmes with diversity. These programmes were produced to fulfil public purposes which were different from those of the news, current affairs and information programmes, and more room for creativity was needed. Therefore, in general, the standards for news, current affairs and information programmes would not be applied to these programmes. No matter which type of programme it was, the most important thing was the accuracy of content. As for the complaints against certain content of the programmes, she stated that the Communications Authority (“CA”) had all along accepted the explanations by broadcasters, and agreed that broadcasters could achieve the principle of impartiality through a series of programmes.

4. A Member agreed that different requirements should be applied to different programmes. Regarding CA’s recent decisions on RTHK’s programmes “Pentaprisism” and “Headliner”, he inquired RTHK whether there were problems with the production standards of those two episodes of programmes, or the frontline staff encountered problems when implementing the relevant standards. The Chairman also inquired about the reason why the said episode of “Pentaprisism” could be broadcast. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing said that as the Editor-in-chief of RTHK, the Director of Broadcasting (“DB”) was accountable for all RTHK programmes, yet he believed that in fact no editor-in-chief of the media could review all content before programmes were broadcast. After the incident, he, as the Editor-in-chief, made the final decision. He stated that he speedily ordered the concerned episode of “Pentaprisism” to be removed after he received the complaints, and requested the enhancement of the gatekeeping work, as well as conducted a review. He had also reprimanded and counselled the colleagues concerned

according to the procedures. He said that RTHK's provision of broadcasting services on its six radio channels and two TV channels every day owed much to its effective mechanism and the gatekeeping work by the experienced colleagues.

5. A Member was concerned about how to prevent similar incidents of "Pentaprism" or "Headliner" from happening again. She understood that it was not possible for one single programme to fulfil all requirements of the Charter at the same time, but she considered that even though there were programmes which could not satisfy a single requirement, they could not breach any requirement as well. She quoted the episode of "Headliner" which received complaints to explain that RTHK should strike a balance between the room for imagining fictitious plots and the accuracy of content. She considered that programmes could present public and current affairs in a satirical way, but they could not fabricate facts and undermine "One Country, Two Systems", and should engender the sense of national identity. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing responded that, after CA promulgated its decisions, RTHK had decided to suspend the session which received the warning, and the production of "Headliner" after the current season ended, as well as to conduct a review on its programme content and mechanism. Ms CHAN Man-kuen admitted that there were insufficiencies in the content presented in the controversial session of "Headliner", and RTHK was strengthening its internal monitoring mechanism and conducting a comprehensive review.
6. A Member reminded RTHK that while enjoying freedom of speech, it should also abide by the laws of Hong Kong. He suggested that the RTHK management should familiarise itself with the concept of "malicious falsehood", so as to prevent its programmes from violating the relevant principles. He thought that as a public broadcaster, if RTHK failed to ensure the accuracy of its programme content, its reputation might be irreparably damaged. As such, he believed that RTHK should strengthen its reputational risk management system. He opined that if RTHK had stepped up its monitoring during the early stage of the social events, the above-mentioned incidents would have been avoided.
7. A Member stressed that internal supervision and reputational risk management were very important. She thought that the Board could understand the relevant systems of RTHK and put forward suggestions for improvement. As for the way of implementation, it would be RTHK's scope of work. She hoped that the RTHK management could continue to communicate openly with the Board while managing its reputational risks, so as to strengthen the mutual trust. Some

Members pointed out that if the Board could understand RTHK's perspectives sooner after the incident happened, it could help the Board understand RTHK's position and speak along the same line in front of the public. She said that CA's decisions on "Pentaprisism" and "Headliner" were clear, and she hoped that in the future, RTHK would strengthen its internal monitoring and reputation risk management in accordance with CA's decisions, so as to prevent similar incidents from happening. She understood that RTHK met the public purposes and mission set out in paragraph 4 of the Charter in a holistic manner. She also believed that RTHK had room to study and examine whether the principle of impartiality could be applicable to programmes other than news, current affairs and information programmes, for reference purposes.

8. A Member hoped that the RTHK management would understand the goodwill of the Board, whose primary consideration was to help RTHK play the role of public broadcaster in a positive manner. He stated that even if the RTHK management could clearly explain to the Board the impartial and accurate production guidelines for different types of programmes, in the face of the current politicisation in the society, the RTHK management must accurately grasp and manage the public perception of RTHK. He emphasised that the leaders' management was of great importance, and believed that the RTHK management should help the frontline colleagues grasp RTHK's public purposes and mission accurately in the current political environment, foster an organisational culture, such that the whole organisation could have common understanding and ideas. Another Member considered that RTHK should ensure that new recruits should understand the principles of the Charter. Ms CHAN Man-kuen responded that RTHK had arranged induction training courses, which included introducing the new recruits to the Charter and the Producers' Guidelines. Some Members said that they hoped RTHK could provide to them the content of the induction training courses for the Board's reference.
9. A Member suggested that RTHK should set out specifically the requirements for different types of programmes under the Charter and how to implement them, in order to explain to the public and let them understand the overall concept, thereby enabling RTHK to gain a firm foothold. At the same time, RTHK should also ensure that there was a system to monitor whether the content of all programmes met the Charter's requirements. Another Member hoped that RTHK would conduct regular reviews to see whether the system's requirements were met upon implementation.

10. The Chairman pointed out that there were views from the public that RTHK should fulfil the public purposes and mission set out in paragraph 4(a) of the Charter, reflecting that the public understood that as a public broadcaster, RTHK was different from commercial organisations. In addition, he suggested that RTHK should produce programmes related to the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("National Security Law"), National Anthem Law, and civil servants' loyalty to our country, in order to help the public understand the original intention and background of the enactment of the National Security Law for the HKSAR, engender a sense of citizenship and national identity, thereby reducing social conflicts. A Member stated that RTHK could adopt a soft-sell approach to promote the relevant information to the public.
11. Ms CHAN Man-kuen responded that RTHK would produce a programme relating to the National Security Law. Moreover, in commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the promulgation of the Basic Law, RTHK would produce programmes to enhance public understanding of the Basic Law. Ms CHAN Man-kuen also explained to the Board the role of the media in society, and stressed the importance for the media to provide platforms for expressing different views and voicing different opinions.
12. In conclusion, the Chairman thanked Members for their advice on matters pertaining on editorial principles. He hoped that DB could respond to the Board's advice at the next meeting, and explain to the Board the feasibility of the four advice, namely the enhancement of internal monitoring, reputational risk management, leaders' management, and the facilitation of communication with the Board.

Agenda Item 2: Advice on Matters Pertaining to RTHK Programming Standards

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

Agenda Item 3: Advice on Matters Pertaining to RTHK Programming Quality

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

Agenda Item 4: Any Other Business

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

16. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 10:40 a.m.

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 31.7.2020)

Para. No.	Audit's Recommendations	Progress
Part 2: Production of Programmes		
2.10	<p><i>Planning and Budgetary Control</i></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 in effect 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>
Part 3: Broadcasting of Programmes and New Media Services		
3.6	<p><i>Management of TV Broadcasting Hours</i></p> <p>Audit has recommended that the DB should endeavour to enrich the TV programmes, including –</p>	

	<p>explore ways to enrich the miscellaneous contents of TV 31 and TV 32 with a view to enhancing the channels' attractiveness.</p>	<p>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 was no longer broadcast on TV 31.</p> <p>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”, “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”).</p> <p>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 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”), “Aaron Kwok Cheer Up & Dance Online Charity Concert 2020” (“郭富城鼓舞·動起來網上慈善演唱會”) and “Eason</p>
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		Chan Live is so much better with Music Charity Concert” (“陳奕迅 Live is so much better with Music 慈善音樂會”) to cheer up Hong Kong people under guarding against COVID-19.
Part 4: Evaluation of Programmes and Other Administrative Issues		
4.33	<u>Evaluation of TV Programmes</u> Audit has recommended that the DB should –	
	(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 (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.	Due to the outbreak of the third wave of COVID-19, there are difficulties in conducting survey in person. Thus RTHK has sought the Census and Statistics Department’s (C&SD) advice that if the survey house uses the household sample selected from the frame of quarters maintained by C&SD, the choice of data collection by telephone or online will not affect the nature of the sample, and the survey is still a household-based survey. The questionnaire is being finalised.
4.44	<u>Evaluation of Radio Programmes</u> Audit has recommended that the DB should –	

	<p>(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</p>	<p>The fieldwork of the Radio Audience Survey was completed in early July 2020. The draft report of the Survey is expected to be ready in August 2020. Information on the number of listeners for each channel, the appreciation index and awareness level of radio channels, as well as the appreciation index of selected radio programmes by sampling was collected, so as to facilitate the monitoring of the performances of radio channels and programmes.</p>
	<p>(b) take measures to improve the appreciation index and awareness level of RTHK's radio channels.</p>	