

**Minutes of the 53rd Meeting of
RTHK Board of Advisors
held at 9:15 am, 27 March 2020
by Video Conference**

Present

Dr Eugene CHAN Kin-keung, BBS, JP (Chairman)
Ms Dilys CHAU Suet-fung
Mr Mohan DATWANI
Professor Anthony FUNG Ying-him
Ms Helen KWAN Po-jen
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
Ms Dawn TSANG, Head/Radio Administration, Development and Programming
(Agenda Item 5)
Ms Mayella CHEUNG (Board Secretariat)

Absent with Apologies

Mr Walter CHAN Kar-lok, SBS, JP
Ms Linda CHOY Siu-min
Ms Shirley LOO Marie Therese, BBS, MH, JP

Secretary

Ms Yvonne WU (Board Secretariat)

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

1. Mr Walter CHAN Kar-lok, Ms Linda CHOY Siu-min and Ms Shirley LOO Marie Therese sent their apologies for not being able to join this meeting.
2. The Chairman said that the Secretariat had circulated the draft minutes of the two parts of the 52nd meeting held on 17 January 2020 and 13 March 2020 to Members for perusal, and no comments were received for the minutes of Part 1 of the meeting. The minutes of Part 1 of the last meeting were confirmed.
3. A Member said that she needed more time to read the minutes of Part 2 of the last meeting in detail. The Chairman expressed respect and would confirm them in the next meeting.

Agenda Item 2: Matters Arising

4. Regarding the forming of working groups mentioned in paragraph 25 of the minutes of Part 2 of the last meeting, a Member suggested that the Board should follow up on the arrangement of the operational details. The Chairman said that he would discuss the operational details of the working groups with Mr LEUNG Ka-wing.
5. The Chairman stated that the Board had provided three pieces of advice to the Director of Broadcasting in Part 2 of the last meeting. He hoped that Mr LEUNG Ka-wing would follow up on the relevant issues. He said that Mr LEUNG Ka-wing could contact the Board anytime if he had any views. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing stated that he had drafted responses to the three pieces of advice provided by the Board, and would pass it to the Secretariat after the meeting. *[Post-meeting note: The Secretariat forwarded the relevant responses for Members' perusal on 27 March 2020.]*

Agenda Item 3: RTHK Controlling Officer's Report

6. Ms CHAN Man-kuen briefed the Board on the RTHK Controlling Officer's Report 2020-21.
7. A Member asked if RTHK would, according to the direction of programme production for the coming year, invest more resources in the production of various

types of programmes, such as arts and culture, and youth and children. Furthermore, the Member asked, given that the Communications Authority (“CA”) had revoked the direction issued to Television Broadcasts Limited (“TVB”) to broadcast programmes of RTHK, and the average ratings of RTHK programmes broadcast on TVB were higher than that of RTHK, how RTHK would promote its programmes. Ms CHAN Man-kuen responded that the TV Division had allocated around half of its resources to the two sections specifically responsible for the production of arts and culture programmes and youth and children programmes, i.e. Infotainment and Variety Section and Education and Recreation Section, which was already a high proportion. She said that RTHK understood that it had to attract youngsters to watch its programmes in order to broaden the audience base of different age groups. Therefore, RTHK aimed to provide a platform for youngsters to participate in programme production via various types of programmes. Although the ratings of RTHK programmes had not yet achieved a breakthrough without the broadcasting platform of TVB, RTHK strived to develop and explore new media platforms other than traditional TV, such that the public could watch programmes anytime and anywhere, and at the same time, meeting their new modes of watching TV programmes. She added that RTHK originally planned to carry out the “Digital Terrestrial Television Channel Penetration Survey” in January 2020 to collect information and data on the penetration and take-up pattern of the digital terrestrial TV channels, viewing habits and preferences of the audience, etc. However, due to the outbreak of novel coronavirus, the survey had to be postponed. She said that RTHK would analyse the information and data collected to work out improvement measures. Another Member suggested that RTHK should consider strategically its promotion strategies in the medium and long term in the absence of the broadcasting platform on TVB.

8. A Member asked about the impact of the novel coronavirus epidemic on RTHK. Moreover, the Member asked whether RTHK would provide support to the education sector on online teaching, especially during the epidemic, despite having ceased production of school education television (“ETV”) programmes. Ms CHAN Man-kuen responded that RTHK did not have data on ratings during the epidemic yet, but the hit rate on new media platform recorded an increase during that period. She considered that the increase was due to members of the public staying at home during the epidemic. Regarding online teaching, RTHK had launched the programme “Tutor Online” earlier, but the production work in studio was suspended due to the epidemic. As such, the production team made

use of information technology to collect questions from students online for teachers to answer. She said that the epidemic in fact had a big impact on RTHK's production work, therefore the management had formulated contingency plans from different aspects according to the situation, in order to ensure that RTHK could maintain its service while reducing the transmission risk.

9. Another Member suggested that RTHK should review the established mechanism to improve risk management during epidemics or social incidents. RTHK should also review its arrangement during the epidemic afterwards. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing said that the management had adjusted its contingency plan from time to time according to the latest situation of the epidemic, so as to ensure that its broadcasting service was not affected.

10. A Member considered that RTHK should more proactively react to the changing lifestyle of the public during the epidemic, for example, providing assistance to parents on their children's online learning, or considering co-operation with organisations serving the elderly to introduce TV programmes suitable for them. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing responded that RTHK had long been promoting TV programmes to the elderly, and had continuously provided information on fighting the virus through Radio 5. Besides, TV programme "830 Magazine" provided the public with the latest information for daily life during the epidemic. Ms Jace AU added that as for TV, "City Forum" had changed its mode of discussion in order to maintain social distance. Members of the public could participate in the programme via online platforms or telephone. Furthermore, to enhance people's understanding of public health, RTHK had particularly produced a special episode of "Doctor and You", inviting experts to discuss the epidemic. RTHK had also produced a series of short videos "Curing" for broadcast on RTHK TV 31 and 32, in hopes that the public could keep calm during the epidemic. As for radio, Mr Albert CHEUNG said that "Healthpedia", "Talkabout", "Open Line Open View" and a number of features related to the epidemic produced by the Newsroom had provided the public with anti-epidemic information in many aspects. In addition, many elderly homes and elderly centres tuned in to programmes of Radio 5. Ms CHAN Man-kuen said that RTHK had maintained close liaison with the Social Welfare Department. She thanked the Member for the suggestion and said that RTHK would publicise to elderly homes suitable TV programmes.

11. A Member pointed out that there was not much change in the estimated expenditure for RTHK in 2020-21, and asked whether the change in manpower

was about the same. Ms CHAN Man-kuen responded that since the production of school ETV programmes by RTHK would cease, there would be a reduction of six posts in the establishment in 2020-21, while 12 non-civil service contract (“NCSC”) posts would be converted to civil service posts.

12. A Member noted that most of the key performance indicators of RTHK were related to transmission hours or audience ratings / viewership ratings. She asked if RTHK would consider adding other indicators, such as the impact on the society. Ms CHAN Man-kuen said that RTHK would study the feasibility and make reference to the practice of non-government organisations, and add other types of indicators if appropriate. Meanwhile, RTHK would also study how to present more clearly the data on online archive access. Another Member echoed that RTHK could consider adding the impact on the society as a key performance indicator, and suggested that RTHK could first use a certain type of programme on a trial basis, for example, devising a suitable performance assessment checklist for the Community Involvement Broadcasting Service (“CIBS”).
13. A Member asked in what ways RTHK promoted its work on culture and education at schools. Ms CHAN Man-kuen gave examples and said that apart from promoting the programme “Audio Book” in campus, RTHK also invited students to take part in the production through narrating content of books in Cantonese. Furthermore, the Putonghua radio channel collaborated with schools from time to time by organising events in campus, so as to promote Putonghua programmes.
14. A Member noted that a provision was granted to CIBS under “Subhead 000” in 2020-21 for the first time. She asked whether the estimated expenditure on CIBS was included under other subheads in 2019-20. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing and Ms CHAN Man-kuen explained respectively that CIBS was originally a pilot project, and its expenditure was paid by a one-off provision from the Community Involvement Broadcasting Fund (“CIBF”). After operating for several years, the Government would regularise CIBS from 2020-21 onwards. Therefore, with effect from 2020-21, the provision from CIBF would be included under “Subhead 000 Operational expenses”. The provision would all be spent on the production costs and administrative costs of CIBS, and could not be spent on other expenditure of RTHK.
15. A Member stated that the estimated expenditure on “Personal emoluments” for 2020-21 increased as compared with 2019-20, while the estimate for “General

departmental expenses” decreased year-on-year, he inquired whether the changes were related to resource allocation. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing explained that the main reason for the decrease in the estimate for “General departmental expenses” in 2020-21 was the cessation of the production of school ETV programmes by RTHK. Mr Eugene FUNG said that the increase in the expenditure on “Personal emoluments” was related to the salary adjustment and recruitment of civil servants. The Member continued to ask if the salaries of the outsourced staff were included in the expenditure on “Personal emoluments”. Mr Eugene FUNG replied that “Personal emoluments” only included the expenditure on civil servants and NCSC staff, whereas the expenditure on outsourced staff was covered by “General departmental expenses”.

16. A Member suggested RTHK to conduct surveys on the needs of the ethnic minorities, so as to understand their views on RTHK programmes. She also suggested that RTHK could consider setting up special webpages to make it convenient for the ethnic minorities to find programme information which could cope with their needs.
17. A Member commended the programme “Audio Book” for its benefits for students. The Member asked whether RTHK would put more resources on the production of programmes related to education after the cessation of its production of school ETV programmes in 2020-21, for instance, promoting STEM (Science, Technology and Mathematics) education. Besides, she suggested that RTHK should make good use of the opportunity of the class suspension to enhance the production of educational programmes with rich knowledge for students to watch at home. Ms CHAN Man-kuen said that although the production of school ETV programmes by RTHK would cease, RTHK would still reserve the TV timeslot of 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for the Education Bureau to broadcast educational programmes. She agreed that RTHK should launch educational programmes during the class suspension, and expressed that RTHK would further enhance the programme content of “Tutor Online” when the studio resumed normal work. Mr Brian CHOW added that, starting from several years ago, the Radio Division had produced STEM-related programmes every year, and the Culture and Education Unit organised events related to STEM for students to join during the summer holidays. During the epidemic, many student competitions of the Radio Division, such as “The Speaker” and the “Audio Book Best Voice Competition”, were organised online. In addition, the TV Division would keep track on the latest development of the “Robocon Hong Kong Contest”.

18. The Chairman noticed that “Mainland affairs” programmes accounted for 9% of the various programming genres. He inquired whether RTHK could increase the percentage of programmes of such nature. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing expressed that “Mainland affairs” programmes referred to programmes related to major Mainland events, such as the National Day. And other “soft” TV programmes related to Mainland current affairs, people’s livelihood, etc., were categorised under other programming genres of “current affairs”, “arts and culture” and so on. The Chairman said the most important thing was that the requirements stipulated in the “Charter of Radio Television Hong Kong” were being fulfilled.
19. The Chairman thanked Members for providing views on the Controlling Officer’s Report concerning different aspects. At the same time, he thanked the RTHK management for their responses. He suggested that RTHK could collaborate with other commercial broadcasters and strive to broadcast RTHK programmes on their channels, in order to boost the penetration rate of RTHK programmes. He suggested RTHK to step up the promotion of its different types of programmes and organise more outreach promotional events when the epidemic was over. A Member suggested that RTHK could produce short videos and promote its programmes through different media. Mr LEUNG Ka-wing and Ms CHAN Man-kuen agreed with the suggestions, and said that RTHK would continue enhancing its outreach promotion after the epidemic waned.

Agenda Item 4: Programmes on Culture and Heritage

20. Mr Brian CHOW of the Radio Division and Ms Natalie CHAN of the TV Division briefed Members on the programmes on culture and heritage produced by their respective divisions.
21. A Member expressed appreciation to the concept of the programme “Journey Through The Museums” and hoped that upon completion of the Hong Kong Palace Museum, RTHK could produce programmes to deepen the public’s understanding of the museum. The Member suggested that RTHK could collaborate with the West Kowloon Cultural District to promote other types of cultural activities such as performing arts, and to promote public awareness on culture through the production of short videos.
22. The Chairman expressed appreciation to the programmes on culture and heritage produced by RTHK. He suggested that RTHK should promote more on this type

of programmes. Ms CHAN Man-kuen said that RTHK would explore on how to strengthen the promotion through programming scheduling, such as arranging to broadcast the entire series of “Cultural Heritage” in one go, so as to achieve better publicity.

Agenda Item 5: Updates on Community Involvement Broadcasting Service (CIBS)

23. Ms Dawn TSANG briefed Members on the updates on CIBS.
24. The Chairman said that advising the Director on matters relating to community participation in broadcasting on radio channels was one of the Board’s functions. He agreed that CIBS could provide a platform for the public so that members of the community would have a chance to voice their opinions. He expressed support for RTHK’s continuous promotion of CIBS, which had made CIBS a regular service.

Agenda Item 6: Updates on RTHK’s Response to Audit Commission’s Report

25. Ms CHAN Man-kuen informed Members of RTHK’s progress on the implementation of the recommendations in the Report of the Audit Commission. Details were set out at **Appendix**. Members had no comments on the progress report.

Agenda Item 7(a): Updates on Programmes (BOA Paper 3/2020)

26. Ms CHAN Man-kuen briefed Members on the updates on programmes. Members had no comment on the paper.

Agenda Item 7(b): Updates on Complaints (BOA Paper 4/2020)

27. Ms Amen NG introduced the paper and a summary of direct feedback from the public. Members had no comment on both documents.
28. The Chairman inquired about the recent incident of the issuing of a strong advice from CA to RTHK. Ms Amen NG stated that the incident occurred in the programme “C Hing Temple”, in which the host used vulgar language in Cantonese twice. She said that RTHK could not accept vulgar language in its programmes, and had already punished the host concerned before the strong

advice was issued by CA. The host also knew that he had made a mistake and apologised.

Agenda Item 8: Any Other Business

29. The Chairman stated that he received a complaint letter from a member of the public regarding RTHK's coverage on the release of a political figure from prison and RTHK's response. Ms Amen NG reported that the complaint was about RTHK's coverage on the release of a political figure from prison at 9:30 a.m. on 14 March 2020, and she said that RTHK had reviewed the coverage mentioned. She pointed out that the selection of materials for RTHK's half-hour news brief mainly depended on what happened during the period, and the editorial staff would judge by the importance of the events and the degree of public attention. During the news brief session at 9:30 a.m. on 14 March 2020, the coverage on the release of the political figure from prison was based on the nature of the news and the consideration that the incident was the focus of public attention. She added that RTHK had covered similar events in the past. In addition, the important news on that day were accurately covered in other news brief sessions and "Hong Kong Today". As such, RTHK did not violate the principle of "observing accuracy, impartiality, objectivity and fairness."
30. A Member suggested that RTHK should set up online video conferencing equipment so that the Board could continue to hold video conference during the outbreak of the epidemic. Ms CHAN Man-kuen said that RTHK would consider setting up the said equipment.

Agenda Item 9: Date of Next Meeting

31. The next meeting was scheduled for 29 May 2020.
32. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:45 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 27.3.2020)**

Para. No.	Audit’s Recommendations	Progress
Part 2: Production of Programmes		
2.10	<p><u>Planning and Budgetary Control</u> 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 will be executed in April 2020. The annual planning exercises will take into account information for performance evaluation of individual radio and TV programmes.</p>
2.54	<p><u>Community Involvement Broadcasting Service (CIBS)</u> 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 (CIBF).</p>	<p>The focus group study was completed at the end of 2019. RTHK accepted the survey report in February 2020. In general, all of the participants agreed that CIBS was an excellent and unique platform for them to reach out to the community. On the other hand, they expected that the service could be improved by simplifying the application process, increasing the transparency of the selection process, providing more concrete guidelines and assistance, increasing the public awareness of CIBS, and improving the quality of the CIBS programmes. The CIBS team will devise the plan for follow-up actions.</p>

Part 3: Broadcasting of Programmes and New Media Services		
3.6	<p><u>Management of TV Broadcasting Hours</u></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 contents are no longer broadcast on TV 31.</p> <p>For TV 32, there would be more programme varieties, such as live coverage of local sports events, live relay of important Mainland and overseas events and short interview videos on various topics.</p>
Part 4: Evaluation of Programmes and Other Administrative Issues		
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 Penetration Survey" (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 that it is a face-to-face household survey and in view of the outbreak</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.	of the novel coronavirus, there will be a delay in the survey.
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	RTHK has reviewed and revised the Radio Audience Survey and plans to conduct the revised survey in 2020-21. 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.	