

TO: MS. CAROL YIP, THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL WELFARE DEPARTMENT  
9/F, WU CHUNG HOUSE  
213 QUEEN'S ROAD EAST  
WANCHAI HONG KONG SAR  
DATE: 20 JUNE 2018

**REF: ALARMING IMPROVEMENT OF BASIC NEEDS FOR ASYLUM  
SEEKERS/REFUGEES IN HONG KONG**

Dear Ms. YIP,

The Refugee Union Hong Kong is greatly privileged to celebrate the World Refugee's Day on 20 June 2018 (Wednesday) today in Hong Kong. As member of the above Union, we have honoured this day by expressing the needs of asylum seekers/refugees via a unified voice to present our concern and demand for positive improvement in the following services rendered to us below:

**HOUSE RENT:**

All asylum seekers/refugees are categorised as minority group who is vulnerable and living strictly under the official poverty line. They are willing to work but prohibited by the Hong Kong government. Also, they are worried and overstressed by the increment of house rent yearly. However, the housing subsidy provided monthly for each individual (adult: 1,500 HKD and child: 750 HKD) is still the same since 2014 and up to date.

**FOOD COUPON:**

We request for more increment on amount allocated for food octopus in order to suit three meals per day, which is supposed to be consumed by a normal person, instead of one meal of 40 HKD each day.

**TRANSPORT SUBSIDY:**

There is always a gap left for asylum seekers/refugees to cover up the transportation fees, which is given by the International Social Service Hong Kong Branch (ISSHK), on regular official appointments. For instance, frequent reporting to the Immigration Department, contract renewal per month, school bus for kids and travelling to hospital. These are financial burden to asylum seekers/refugees who are not allowed to work. This amount of 230 HKD always used up before the mid of each month.

**TOILETRIES:**

We find it hard to maintain the basic level of hygiene by ourselves, also for those who have kids, they receive only one toilet tissue per month. Imagine epidemics like the flu, cold, cough and also the current season, summer, which effects everybody. This demands a lot of tissues to maintain a general cleanliness.

- (i) Shampoo: Asylum seekers/refugees should be permitted to have personal choice, whereby everyone deserves to purchase from ParknShop to suit the type of hair they have naturally.
- (ii) Body soap: We request for free choice to purchase from ParknShop.
- (iii) Laundry detergent: The amount of laundry detergent for asylum seekers/refugees is always used up before the monthly renewal. It would be good if larger quantity is provided to sustain users throughout the month, rather than the current quantity issued.
- (iv) Dish washing detergent: It is a general need for all asylum seekers/refugees in their daily lives, for example, one finished meal like fish and oily food. Nonetheless, dish washing detergent is not provided at all.
- (v) Babies' items: Babies are human beings who need to be considered by providing them with diapers, yet, mothers find it hard to purchase these necessities without any source of income or saving. This had forced some parents who are in urgent demand to commit crimes and get imprisoned. Others turn into beggars and lose their human dignity.
- (vi) Nutrition for babies: Babies still need more nourishment as the existing amount of baby food coupon allocated to them is found to be insufficient to sustain them for the whole month.
- (vii) Purchase of babies' food: Mothers need to be trusted with their babies' food coupons, in most cases, it inconveniences them to carry or bring kids always with them to ParknShop when kids are supposed to be at the time to school or rest at home, and this may result into a lack of time management.
- (viii) Meals at school: Children of asylum seekers/refugees should have the right to eat healthy nutritious meals at school like any other students. However, their parents cannot afford to purchase school meals. Also, parents cannot help their kids with pocket money for necessary items at school, such as snacks and fruits.

#### **SUGGESTIONS:**

- (i) House rent: The minimum amount for an individual asylum seeker/refugee to be 3,000 HKD for adult and 1,500 HKD for child to rent a sub-divided unit.
- (ii) Food octopus: The minimum amount to be 1,500 HKD for each asylum seeker/refugee.

- (iii) Transport subsidy: The minimum amount to be 350 HKD for each asylum seeker/refugee.
- (iv) Toiletries: All asylum seekers/refugees to be given freedom of choice to purchase from ParknShop or to be granted an amount of 200 HKD in cash to purchase outside ParknShop.
- (v) Gas purchase: All asylum seekers/refugees to be given freedom of choice to purchase from any store of his/her locality with receipt.
- (vi) Right to work: Having an opportunity to self-sustain is a human right. We hope for a reasonable improvement of living condition for all asylum seekers/refugees. Or else, they should be allowed to sustain themselves.

**CONCLUSION:**

All asylum seekers/refugees are human beings who deserve their basic needs to be fulfilled as stated in the Declaration of Human Rights. Their well-being should be actualised like the ordinary residents in Hong Kong.

We shall be grateful if our requests are considered.

Hope to hear from you soon!  
Yours sincerely,



Namagembe Adella  
Chairperson  
Refugee Union Hong Kong

