

Immediate Release

“Creating Harmony for Families of Ethnic Minorities” Enhancing Parent-child Relationship and Social Integration with Local Community

(Hong Kong, March 17, 2012) - Against Child Abuse (“ACA”) is thankful to receive the sponsorship of Melco International Development Limited (“Melco” or the “Group”), a dynamic leisure and entertainment company in Asia, to implement the **“Creating Harmony for Families of Ethnic Minority”** Project (“The Project”) from July 2011 to February 2012 benefited over 300 ethnic minority parents and children.

The Project aims at enhancing self-protection awareness of the children and positive parenting of the parents through an array of diverse activities, including parenting talks, children groups, outing, etc. Its ultimate goal is to facilitate their well-adjustment and social inclusion in Hong Kong.

During the project implementation, the ethnic minority parents were educated about the danger of leaving children unattended. They also learnt of various community resources they could well use to adjust their life and integrate with the local community.

In February, a survey on the parenting of ethnic minority families was conducted with 126 project participants (parents) of different nationalities: Nepalese (86, 68.8%), Pakistani (27, 21.6%), Indian (11, 8.8%) and others (2, 1.6%). The survey showed that the ethnic minority parents lack the knowledge of child protection, which brings about different family problems and threats to child safety.

Over 90% responded that the project has helped them to improve their parent-child relationship and obtain more information on child safety. Generally, the parents expressed that they learned about positive parenting while their children gained knowledge on body safety to prevent occurrence of child sexual abuse.

The survey showed that 109 (86.5%) parents perceived that they have very good (63, 50%) or good (46, 36.5%) relationship with their children. 103 (81.7%) have praised their children. 70 (67.9%) of them used verbal encouragement, 46 (44.7%) used material encouragement and 47 (45.6%) allowed special rights or activities.

However, corporal punishment and verbal aggression are common ways to discipline children. 75 (59.5%) had used various ways to punish their children: 56 (74.7%) shouted at them, 33 (44%) hit by hands, 17 (22.7%) took away their rights (e.g. pocket money),

11 (14.7%) asked them to stand, and 7 (9%) hit with objects.

To explore the reasons of using corporal punishment and verbal aggression, 62 (82.6%) of the 75 parents who had punished their children explained that it was because of the children's poor living patterns, such as watching TV and playing computer games too often and using pocket money improperly.

After participating in the Project, many were aware of the negative impacts of corporal punishment: 64 (50.8%) parents understand that corporal punishment would cause emotional problems, 48 (38.1%) physical injuries, and 43 (34.1%) worse parent-child relationship.

Nevertheless, the survey results also indicated that the situation of leaving children unattended was quite serious. 47 (37.3%) of them did leave their children unattended. Of the 47 parents, majority of them (38, 80.9%) left their children unattended at home. 8 (17%) parents left children unattended for over 8 hours. 29 (61.7%) of 47 parents leaving children unattended explained that they have to work, which is also the main reason.

Dr. Jessica Ho, Director of ACA, said, “We believe one-time neglect can be fatal. Parents need education on child safety issues so that the problems of leaving children unattended could be minimized. Therefore, the Project stresses positive parenting education for the ethnic minority parents in order to prevent child abuse and promote family harmony. We are grateful to have Melco’s support for promoting harmonious parent-child relationship in ethnic minorities families through a series of skill enhancement workshops targeted at helping them integrate with the local community. The Project was a resounding success and has benefited over 300 ethnic minorities family members”

A Nepalese mother of two sons (aged 4 and 5) shared her feelings towards the Project, “I could not adjust my life here because I didn’t speak any Cantonese and lacked of friends. However, since I started to learn Cantonese and know some friends through the Project, I have got used to the life here. In the past, I shouted at my sons sometimes. After attending the talks on positive parenting, and some outdoor activities, I have learnt more about rearing children and expanded my social circle.”

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About Against Child Abuse:

Against Child Abuse (ACA) was established in 1979 as a non-governmental organization specialized in child protection. We strive to eliminate all forms of child abuse and to cultivate a nurturing, caring and non-violent environment for the optimal growth of children. We believe that children's survival, protection and development should be given priority, their views should be heard and given due weight. Our vision is to equip and establish ourselves as one of the leading non-governmental organizations in the East Asia Region providing quality child protection programs of both remedial and prevention in nature. Our aims and objectives are to strive for the removal of all forms of child abuse and/or child neglect in Hong Kong, to establish, maintain and support a professional service for the assistance of abused or neglected children or parents having problems with their children, to promote the awareness of the general public in Hong Kong towards prevention of child abuse and to take all lawful and necessary actions which are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objectives. ACA website: www.aca.org.hk.

About Melco International:

Founded in 1910 and listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (HKEx) in 1927, Melco International Development Limited ("Melco International") is one of the first 100 corporations in Hong Kong. Today, under the leadership of Chairman and CEO Mr. Lawrence Ho, Melco International has found new energy and direction as a dynamic company that leads the field in the leisure and entertainment sector in Asia, and regards corporate social responsibility (CSR) as a core value of the Group. Last year, the Group received the "5 Years Plus Caring" mark from the Hong Kong Council of Social Service, and was chosen by FinanceAsia as one of the "Best CSR" organisations. For the CSR achievements of Melco International and our detailed CSR objectives in 2011, see CSR Report on our website www.melco-group.com.

Media Enquiries:

Dr. Jessica Ho, Director, Against Child Abuse

Tel: (852) 3542 5722

Fax: (852) 3542 5709

Email: aca@aca.org.hk