

# Hong Kong Women's Development Goals



婦女事務委員會  
Women's Commission

December 2011





































































































































### 3.3.3 Battered New Arrival Women and Ethnic Minority Women

#### Current Status

---

- About 42,000 persons come to Hong Kong on one-way permits every year, of whom about 70% are women. Most of them are in their thirties, have received secondary education in the Mainland and are married to Hong Kong residents.
- At present, non-Chinese females account for about 8% of the total female population. They include Filipinos (106,000), Indonesians (86,000), Indians (10,000), Nepalese (8,000) and Pakistanis (4,700)<sup>26</sup>.
- The number of cross-boundary marriages between Mainlanders and Hong Kong residents is growing. Reports of domestic violence in these families are often heard.
- In addition to family support, crisis intervention and specialised services, the Government also provides measures and services to assist new arrival women to adapt to the local environment. In this regard, HAD has been collaborating with local organisations to provide adaptation courses and community activities for new arrivals. A Service Handbook for New Arrivals has also been compiled. In parallel, local women's groups provide district-based support networks by organising different activities targeting new arrival women from the Mainland.

## Analysis

New arrival and ethnic minority women face a number of problems including language barrier, the lack of community and family support network, inability to obtain information on community support and services, the imbalance of power relationship between the two genders, low employability and economic dependence on their husbands. They may easily become victims of domestic violence when family problems arise and they may not know how to seek timely assistance. Hence, WoC considers that particular attention should be paid to these groups in dealing with domestic violence.

### 3.3.4 Professional Training

#### Current Status

---

- The Government has applied the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist (the Checklist) in reviewing the policies, legislation and services relating to domestic violence, and has enhanced training on gender sensitivity at the same time.
- In respect of professional training in handling cases of domestic violence and sexual violence, SWD provides about 6,000 to 8,000 training places each year for frontline professionals such as social workers, psychologists, medical personnel, teachers and police officers, etc..
- After applying the Checklist, SWD has provided training to staff and volunteers of VSP in order to enhance their gender awareness when implementing the programme.

#### Analysis

We consider that SWD should enhance the gender sensitivity of social workers and be mindful of the power relationship between the two sexes in order to make the most appropriate welfare plan for victims. For example, social workers should be more proactive in providing information to victims, so that they will be aware of the option of applying to the court for testifying behind a screen to avoid direct contact with batterers, thus sparing them from any dreadful memories or fear. WoC also considers that social workers of SWD and NGOs, as well as other relevant professionals, should participate actively in training courses on domestic violence, sexual violence and gender awareness.

### 3.3.5 Sexual Harassment

#### Current Status

---

- Unlike physical violence in general, sexual harassment can be committed through offensive, insulting or threatening language, eye expression or pictures of a sexual nature that cause disturbance, uneasiness and even fear to victims (who are mostly females).
- SDO is an anti-discrimination law enacted in 1995. Pursuant to the Ordinance, discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status and pregnancy as well as sexual harassment are unlawful. In 2008, the Government amended SDO to extend unlawful sexual harassment to cover any act rendering the environment in which a person works, studies or undergoes training sexually hostile or intimidating.
- According to the WoC 2010 Survey, 27% of people considered that sexual harassment against female employees was very common in the workplace.
- According to EOC's statistics in terms of the number of complaints received concerning the administration of SDO, sexual harassment ranked second after pregnancy discrimination.
- Employees subjected to sexual harassment are usually reluctant to complain to their employers. Hence, absence of complaints does not necessarily mean non-existence of sexual harassment. Some victims may think that there is no point in complaining, or the complaint will be trivialised or the complainant subjected to ridicule. Others may fear reprisals. These may explain the difference between the number of sexual harassment complaints received by EOC and the result of the WoC 2010 Survey. That said, assistance to the victims may be provided by EOC through the conciliation mechanism as provided for under SDO.

Table 2: Sexual Harassment Cases Received by EOC (2000-2010)

	Female	Male	Not Applicable (Note)	<b>Total</b>
2000	79	5	9	<b>93</b>
2001	79	8	2	<b>99</b>
2002	75	4	1	<b>80</b>
2003	103	33	0	<b>136</b>
2004	78	1	1	<b>80</b>
2005	56	4	0	<b>60</b>
2006	83	2	0	<b>85</b>
2007	99	5	0	<b>104</b>
2008	87	1	1	<b>89</b>
2009	103	6	0	<b>109</b>
2010	79	4	0	<b>83</b>
			<b>Total</b>	<b>1,018</b>

Note: Complaints made by organisations or representatives of the aggrieved.

## Analysis

Sexual harassment is an act of insult and disrespect towards a person of either gender. It creates a hostile working or study environment, causes physical and mental harm to the one being harassed and affects his/her performance at work or school. Therefore, sexual harassment must not be overlooked. There is a general misconception that making sexual jokes is acceptable. To avoid such problem from deteriorating, gender education is the most fundamental solution.

Given the vast number of working women in Hong Kong, WoC believes that the figures above reveal only the tip of the iceberg of the sexual harassment problem. The low reporting figures may be due to victims' reluctance to report, or their lack of understanding of what constitutes sexual harassment. In this regard, EOC has put in strenuous efforts in organising various kinds of training seminars focusing on sexual harassment at work, devising code of employment practices, and arranging various types of publicity and educational activities in order to arouse public awareness of sexual harassment and encourage victims to report.

Employers are encouraged to put in place policies and measures relating to sexual harassment so as to safeguard employees' rights at work.

### 3.3.6 Women's Awareness of Their Rights and Violence Prevention

#### Current Status

---

- To ensure women's safety and protect them from any form of violence, the fundamental solution lies in fostering a culture of "zero-tolerance to violence" in our community, strengthening education on gender equality and raising the awareness of women, particularly the more vulnerable groups such as the new arrivals, ethnic minority and disabled women of their entitled rights.

#### Analysis

WoC is aware of the pervasive violent culture on the internet, in the mass media and society. Besides, violent incidents between persons in intimate relationship occur from time to time, and it appears that the parties involved are getting younger. In recent years, the numbers of young girls participating in prostitution through internet activities and compensated dating are also on the increase. While such behaviours should definitely not be encouraged, we are also concerned about the safety of the girls involved. We consider that parents, schools and the society should closely monitor the development of the situation, and the Government should strengthen inter-departmental collaboration to combat compensated dating. We understand that the Family Council has conducted a relevant study on the subject.

### 3.3.7 Proposed Goals and Strategies

#### Women's Development Goal 6: Strengthen support for victims of domestic and sexual violence

##### Proposed Strategies

- 6.1 Monitor the implementation of DCRVO, as well as the progress made by the Government in respect of legislating against stalking
- 6.2 Monitor the usage of women refuge centres, and increase the number of accommodation places in such centres when necessary
- 6.3 Strengthen the support for new arrival women in order to prevent family tragedies
- 6.4 Enhance training for front-line professionals

As regards strengthening support for new arrival women, we understand that HAD will conduct surveys to assess the service needs of new arrivals on a regular basis. WoC suggests that gender perspectives should be incorporated into the surveys to identify the different needs of male and female new arrivals. Furthermore, the survey results should be shared with NGOs and women's groups, such that the latter can design activities and measures which will better suit the needs of new arrival women, and assist them in obtaining the necessary information and strengthening their family relationship, with a view to preventing violent incidents from happening.

**Women's Development Goal 7:  
Strengthen education for women and raise their awareness of  
violence and safety, with a view to fostering a culture of "zero  
tolerance to violence"**

**Proposed Strategies**

- 7.1 Raise the awareness of working women on sexual harassment, and strengthen their ability in coping with / handling sexual harassment
- 7.2 Assist the new arrival, ethnic minority and disabled women in understanding their rights and the support services available to them
- 7.3 Raise women's awareness of their own rights
- 7.4 Enhance education on the prevention of sexual violence/dating violence in primary and secondary schools as well as tertiary institutions

Besides assisting new arrival women in understanding their rights and the services available to them, a more important way to assist them is through empowerment. To further assist them to adapt to and integrate into the local society with a view to minimising family disputes arising from cultural and environmental differences, the Government should render necessary assistance to prepare them well for living in Hong Kong before arrival. In this connection, WoC is pleased to note that HAD is planning on a series of support measures for new arrivals, which include setting up a dedicated team to enhance the support services for them and launching the following projects in 2011-12 —

- District-based Integration Programme – providing adaptation courses, family/women mutual help networks and home visits for the new arrivals in districts with higher service demands (e.g. Kwun Tong, Sham Shui Po, Kwai Tsing and Yuen Long, etc.);

- Expectation Management Programme – organising activities for prospective migrants to help them better understand the living environment in Hong Kong before they make an informed decision to relocate; and
- Ambassador Scheme – arranging people with similar background and experience to reach out to the new arrivals and provide them with neighbourhood support.

WoC believes that these measures would help provide appropriate assistance to most of the new arrival women. We encourage local women's groups to play an active part in providing support to new arrival women. For instance, new arrival women who have settled in Hong Kong for a certain period of time can become ambassadors under the ambassador programme. They can help build a mutual care network among women through participating in community service. Women's groups may also play a bridging role in guiding new arrival women to find appropriate assistance.

WoC will continue to liaise with EOC in tackling sexual harassment in the workplace. As most of the big corporations have put in place policies or measures for handling sexual harassment, we suggest that efforts be focused on promoting the prevention of sexual harassment among employers and employees of small and medium enterprises. EOC may provide information and advice on the relevant legislation and procedures, etc., while WoC may assist in further disseminating relevant messages through the network of women's groups. In addition, WoC may conduct public education from the perspectives of women's empowerment and mutual respect for both genders. It may also collaborate with EOC to enrich the module on handling sexual harassment under the Capacity Building Mileage Programme (CBMP) in order to better educate women on how to deal with sexual harassment.

WoC will continue to step up its public education efforts with a view to reinforcing mutual respect for both genders, and discouraging any form of sexual harassment including those committed through language. Besides, we will continue to raise women's awareness of their rights and interests, and help disseminate information on services for the new arrivals, women's rights and prevention of sexual violence that are provided by Government departments and relevant organisations.

### 3.4 Education

Education is critical to women's development. In an era of knowledge-based economy, a woman's education level is directly relevant to her employability and financial autonomy. The possession of knowledge is also a crucial factor to a woman's ability in and aspiration for decision making. In this light, equal education opportunities are of utmost importance to the long-term development of women and the society.

In Hong Kong, women and men enjoy equal opportunities for education. Statistically, women's overall education level is lower than that of men, because elder women had fewer opportunities to receive education when they were young. As society progresses, significant improvements have been made in terms of education for women. In 2009, over 70% of Hong Kong women had received secondary or post-secondary education. In recent years, women are even getting ahead of men in education.

### 3.4.1 Mainstream Education

#### Current Status

---

- The Government had provided nine-year free education through public sector schools since 1978. As a result, the opportunities of receiving primary and junior secondary education for females of different social strata have greatly improved.
- With the implementation of the New Senior Secondary (NSS) Academic Structure from the 2008/09 academic year, free education has been extended to 12 years to cover also senior secondary education. Under the NSS academic structure, all male and female students need to study four core subjects, namely, Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies.
- Local schools at the secondary, post-secondary and higher education levels have upheld a gender non-discriminatory policy. Students, irrespective of gender, are admitted primarily on their academic achievements and hence boys and girls may compete for school places on a level playing field.
- According to the information provided by the University Grants Committee (UGC) (Table 3 below), female students studying in sub-degree, first degree, and taught postgraduate degree programmes have outnumbered male students. Females also outnumbered males continuously in the post-secondary programmes over the past ten years. In research postgraduate programmes, however, the proportion of female students (43%) is lower than that of male students (57%).

Table 3: Number of Students in University Grants Committee-Funded Programmes by Level of Study and Sex

Level of Study	Sex	Number of Students							
		1986/87	1991/92	1996/97	2001/02	2006/07	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
Sub-degree Programmes	F	8,949 (30.3%)	9,619 (36.3%)	13,896 (60.8%)	10,299 (66.0%)	6,346 (65.3%)	4,617 (65.0%)	4,519 (64.5%)	4,973 (64.0%)
	M	20,551 (69.7%)	16,877 (63.7%)	8,970 (39.2%)	5,316 (34.0%)	3,375 (34.7%)	2,490 (35.0%)	2,490 (35.5%)	2,794 (36.0%)
First-degree Programmes	F	5,373 (37.8%)	13,689 (43.5%)	24,052 (49.6%)	25,605 (53.3%)	27,831 (53.0%)	29,316 (53.3%)	30,110 (53.2%)	30,516 (53.0%)
	M	8,829 (62.2%)	17,797 (56.5%)	24,473 (50.4%)	22,449 (46.7%)	24,682 (47.0%)	25,734 (46.7%)	26,500 (46.8%)	27,049 (47.0%)
Taught Postgraduate Programmes	F	1,186 (37.1%)	1,775 (32.5%)	3,819 (36.2%)	5,321 (48.5%)	2,673 (57.3%)	2,343 (59.3%)	2,166 (60.0%)	2,204 (61.6%)
	M	2,012 (62.9%)	3,680 (67.5%)	6,720 (63.8%)	5,638 (51.5%)	1,995 (42.7%)	1,608 (40.7%)	1,445 (40.0%)	1,374 (38.4%)
Research Postgraduate Programmes	F	101 (20.0%)	369 (24.5%)	1,068 (29.5%)	1,686 (39.4%)	2,413 (42.2%)	2,525 (42.4%)	2,688 (42.5%)	2,796 (42.9%)
	M	403 (80.0%)	1,136 (75.5%)	2,552 (70.5%)	2,598 (60.6%)	3,303 (57.8%)	3,434 (57.6%)	3,634 (57.5%)	3,729 (57.1%)
Total	F	15,609 (32.9%)	25,452 (39.2%)	42,835 (50.1%)	42,911 (54.4%)	39,263 (54.1%)	38,801 (53.8%)	39,483 (53.7%)	40,490 (53.7%)
	M	31,795 (67.1%)	39,490 (60.8%)	42,715 (49.9%)	36,001 (45.6%)	33,355 (45.9%)	33,266 (46.2%)	34,069 (46.3%)	34,946 (46.3%)
Total		47,404	64,942	85,550	78,912	72,618	72,067	73,552	75,435

Remarks:

1. Figures in brackets are the percentages of male and female students taking the programmes in the academic year.
2. Figures may not add up to totals due to rounding.

## Analysis

Women are provided with equal opportunities in receiving local mainstream education. As the number of girls receiving senior secondary education increases, the demand for post-secondary and higher education also increases. WoC notes that the number of female students enrolling in sub-degree programmes is not small, yet publicly-funded degree places are limited and unable to meet the articulation demand of sub-degree graduates. From the perspective of women's development, WoC considers that more degree places should be provided for people who are capable of and willing to pursue further studies at university level.

### 3.4.2 Continuing Education and Vocational Training

#### Current Status

---

- At present, the Government provides continuing education and vocational training opportunities mainly through the Financial Assistance Scheme for Designated Evening Adult Education Courses (FAEAEC), Project Yi Jin (PYJ), Vocational Training Council (VTC), Employees Retraining Board (ERB) and Continuing Education Fund (CEF).
- The FAEAEC under the Education Bureau (EDB) provides financial assistance to adult students attending designated evening secondary courses run by the Approved Course Providers (ACPs) in designated centres. Graduates of these courses will be awarded a qualification equivalent to senior secondary level under the mainstream education. All students having fulfilled the attendance requirements as confirmed by ACPs will be reimbursed 30% of the tuition fees paid. Needy students having passed the means test administered by the Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA) will be reimbursed half or even full of the tuition fees. In the past five years, about half of the students attending evening secondary courses under FAEACE were women.
- Apart from evening adult education courses, PYJ is an alternative pathway to attain recognised qualifications. Launched in 2000, PYJ provides practical training for interested secondary school leavers and adults. It consists mainly of practical subjects and focuses on the enhancement of students' language proficiency and information technology application. Satisfactory completion of the PYJ programme will be regarded as comparable to five passes in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination (HKCEE). Although this academic qualification cannot be used for admission to Secondary 6, the member institutions of the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions have agreed to recognise PYJ qualification as meeting the entry requirements of their certificate, diploma, pre-associate degree programmes and other programmes offered by the institutions requiring an entry qualification of five passes in HKCEE. Students may move

up the continuing education ladder by pursuing further studies in higher diploma/associate degree and degree programmes.

- Although PYJ is a self-financing programme, students in need can be supported by the Government through various means such as fee reimbursement and the Non-means Tested Loan Scheme. With the implementation of the NSS academic structure, EDB and the Federation for Continuing Education in Tertiary Institutions are considering and designing a programme based on the PYJ model to provide a new programme for adult students, including women and students under the NSS academic structure. Students completing the new programme will obtain a qualification equivalent to Level 2 in five subjects in the Hong Kong Diploma in Secondary Education Examination (HKDSE).
- VTC offers a wide range of vocational education and training opportunities for students to receive appropriate vocational education and training according to their interests and strengths. Among its training programmes, the number of female students in child education and community service, business administration, hospitality and tourism courses is relatively high. VTC will offer financial assistance such as fees remission, deferred payment or payment by instalments to students with financial difficulties. Students may also apply for financial assistance under the subsidy schemes of SFAA.
- In the past, the major service targets of ERB were unemployed persons aged over 30 or above with an academic qualification below Secondary 3. In the light of the Government's decision to expand the scope of its service targets in October 2007, ERB's service targets now cover persons aged 15 or above and with education attainment at or below sub-degree level. ERB also addresses the training and employment needs of different disadvantaged groups, including ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, persons rehabilitated from work-related injuries, new arrivals and ex-offenders, etc..

- Since its establishment in 1992, ERB has provided about 1.6 million training places. About 1.4 million persons have completed the relevant courses, in which 75% were women. ERB offers courses in about 30 industry areas, many of which can assist students in obtaining recognised or professional qualifications. Among these courses, household services, beauty, healthcare, retail and hospitality are the most popular ones to women.
- ERB provides free full-time placement-tied courses and training for unemployed persons. Training institutions will provide students who have completed the courses with a three-month employment follow-up service and assist them in securing employment. The average employment rate of these students is about 81%. ERB also offers half-day or evening Generic Skills Training Courses and Skills Upgrading Scheme Plus Courses to enhance students' competitiveness. Unemployed and low-income persons can take these courses free of charge, while others may obtain fee remission from ERB subject to their income level.
- Established in 2002, the \$5 billion CEF has provided financial support to women from all walks of life to pursue further studies. All Hong Kong residents and holders of one-way permits from the Mainland aged between 18 and 65 are eligible to apply for financial assistance from CEF to enroll in courses provided by different designated institutions in subjects covering logistics, financial services, business services, tourism, language, creative industries, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills for the workplace, etc.. In July 2009, the Government further injected \$1.2 billion into CEF. As at 31 August 2011, there were over 570,000 successful applications for opening a CEF account, 60% of which were from women. This is a reflection of the strong demand from women for continuing education.

## Analysis

WoC considers that continuing education and vocational training are more significant and relevant than mainstream education in enhancing the capabilities of women to achieve women empowerment. The needs for continuing education and vocational training are particularly strong among people with low educational attainment, new arrival women and homemakers, who were unable to complete or attend mainstream education for various reasons.

WoC believes that education is an effective means to alleviate the problem of women in poverty. Enhancement of educational qualifications and skills can help low-income women secure employment, improve their economic situation, as well as enhance their confidence and sense of belonging to the community. We consider that it is of utmost importance to assist those vulnerable women to pursue continuing education to ensure that they will not be deprived of the opportunities for self-empowerment and advancement due to lack of means.

Apart from financial considerations, flexibility and recognition of the continuing education programmes are also major factors that affect women's pursuit of continuous learning. As most of the new arrival women and homemakers are responsible for taking care of their families and children, they may not be able to take evening secondary courses and obtain a secondary education qualification. Nevertheless, these women need to obtain recognised qualifications in Hong Kong for the purpose of seeking employment.

In this connection, WoC is pleased to note that ERB has provided full-time half-day and evening courses for persons including women who are interested in pursuing further studies. In 2010, ERB introduced a pilot course known as "Certificate

in Foundation Skills for Employment” in Sham Shui Po, Tuen Mun, Tung Chung, Tin Shui Wai and Eastern Hong Kong Island to provide comprehensive basic skills training for new arrivals (women in particular), and assist them in self-enhancement and improve their employability. Taking into account that the new arrivals enrolling in the said course come mainly from grassroots families, and they may be in financial difficulty and require community support, free childcare service from existing operators of the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project (NSCCP) under SWD are provided to trainees through referrals by ERB during the training period as necessary. To benefit more new arrivals, ERB has expanded the course and service to other districts in 2011-12. This measure has fully responded to the needs of women and is truly commendable. It should be further promoted for others to follow suit.

### 3.4.3 Qualifications Framework (QF)

#### Current Status

---

- Established in 2008, QF is a seven-level hierarchy, covering qualifications in the academic, vocational and continuing education sectors, thereby facilitating the interface between academic and vocational sectors.
- The qualifications commonly acquired are classified into various levels under QF: doctoral degree (level 7), master degree (level 6), bachelor degree (level 5), sub-degree (level 4) and HKDSE (level 3), etc..
- Each level of QF is differentiated by its generic level descriptors which describes the common features of qualifications at the same level. Industries may draw up competency requirements at various QF levels, known as “Specification of Competency Standards”, according to the generic level descriptions. These competency standards represent the industry benchmarks for the skills, knowledge and attributes required to perform a job at certain level, and enable employers, employees and those with learning aspirations to better understand the industry benchmarks.
- The Qualifications Register (QR) established under QF is a database providing information on whole or modular qualifications at various levels, learning programmes and details of education and training providers for free access by the general public. All qualifications put on QR are quality-assured.
- As at September 2011, 17 industries (including beauty, banking, Chinese catering and property management which employ significant numbers of females) have formed their Industry Training Advisory Committees to gradually develop competency standards and implement the Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) mechanism to recognise existing workers’ skills, knowledge

and work experience, thereby sparing them from pursuing continuing education from scratch.

- ERB is committed to strengthening the quality assurance mechanism of its courses. Most of the courses offered by ERB have been included under QF and uploaded onto QR.

### **Analysis**

Although there are a number of adult education or vocational training courses available in the market, not many women can fully understand the qualifications awarded by these courses, or how the qualifications obtained may help them in employment. As such, they are unable to make considered choices in selecting suitable training courses to meet their learning or occupational needs. Some working women who have accumulated considerable experience encounter the same problem as they are not aware of their level of qualifications in their own industry.

We consider that there is a need to enhance women's understanding of QF in order to facilitate their study and training arrangements. We believe that a better understanding of QR and the competency standards of the relevant industries will help women make an informed decision in pursuing further studies for the purpose of seeking employment or career advancement.

### 3.4.4 Capacity Building Mileage Programme

#### Current Status

---

- Launched in March 2004, CBMP is a key initiative of WoC in empowering women. CBMP is implemented by the Open University of Hong Kong, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Commercial Radio as well as about 70 women's groups and NGOs.
- CBMP is a flexible learning programme tailored to the needs and interests of women. It is delivered through radio broadcasting, face-to-face courses and online courses offered on the internet, supplemented by optional learning activities. CBMP courses cover various subjects such as managing interpersonal relationships, personal finance, health and other practical issues in daily life. Since its launch, it has encouraged women of different backgrounds and educational levels to pursue lifelong learning and self-development.
- CBMP has recorded a cumulative enrollment of over 50,000 since 2004. In addition, according to a survey conducted in 2011, about 1.4 million audiences had listened to the radio programme in the preceding year of the survey. Feedback from students was that they had benefited from the programme in terms of increased interests in learning, enhanced confidence and knowledge in problem solving in daily life, and a positive change in their thinking and attitudes towards life.
- CBMP was operated initially on a pilot basis. With its proven success in encouraging women's lifelong learning, starting from 2007 the Government provided funding to continue the operation of CBMP as a means of providing low-cost learning opportunities for women. In 2009-10, the Government allocated \$20 million to expand CBMP and provide fee remissions to women with financial difficulty. As a result, the CBMP bursary scheme has

been expanded such that in addition to CSSA recipients, women from low-income families can also benefit from the scheme. As at July 2011, about 1,600 bursary applications had been approved since the introduction of the new bursary scheme in November 2009.

### **Analysis**

CBMP has been remarkably successful in empowering women and assisting them to pursue life-long learning. The existing funding for CBMP will be exhausted by the end of the 2011-12 financial year. In view of the proven success of the programme and its achievements in empowering women, the Government has, on the advice of WoC, agreed to provide recurrent funding for CBMP from 2012-13.

### 3.4.5 Gender Education

#### Current Status

---

- At present, gender education is incorporated into different modules of the mainstream curriculum.
- Students are educated on values such as respect for others, gender equality and anti-discrimination through various subjects or courses starting from primary education. The General Studies in primary schools, and Moral, Civic and National Education in secondary schools are some of the examples. In addition, the Revised Moral and Civic Education Curriculum Framework 2008 promotes seven priority values of students. The two priority values, namely “Respect for Others” and “Care for Others”, aim to cultivate among students mutual respect between both genders.
- As students grow, more discussions on gender issues will be provided to them under the topic of “personal development and interpersonal relationship” under the Liberal Studies subject of the NSS academic structure. This will help enhance their gender perspectives and awareness.
- ERB organises training courses for teachers on sex education. They include gender-related topics such as “Understanding Sex Identity” and “Stay Along with Persons of Same or Opposite Sex with Respect”, etc.. Relevant teaching materials are provided for use and reference by teachers.
- Some higher education institutions offer gender-related general studies and specialised programmes in their university degree programmes including gender research programmes at postgraduate level.

- WoC has maintained liaison with EDB to eliminate gender stereotype in textbooks. In this regard, improvements have been made and gender stereotype in the content of textbooks, particularly in the pictures and examples contained therein, has been reduced substantially.

## Analysis

Education plays a pivotal role in promoting gender equality. In today's open society, it is not uncommon to see media reports exaggerating the body shape of females or indirectly encouraging violence against women. These reflect not only the problem in the morality and values of our society, but also disrespect to women. In order to change this, WoC considers it essential to strengthen gender education. The most effective way is to cultivate an awareness of mutual respect between genders among our citizens since their childhood.

Sole reliance on the existing formal curriculum may not be adequate in effectively instilling the concept of gender equality into the young minds. Schools should also promote gender equality in informal learning activities with a view to creating an environment conducive to gender equality. WoC has been advocating the inclusion of modules on gender equality and gender awareness education in the Liberal Studies subject under the NSS academic structure. In addition, professional training of teachers should be strengthened to enhance their gender concepts so as to help students eliminate gender stereotyping and prejudice.

Higher education institution is the cradle of talents and a platform for the young generation to reflect on the social situation of our society. We encourage more tertiary institutions to provide general and specialised programmes on gender issues, so as to provide students with more opportunities for in-depth discussion of and reflection on gender issues.

### 3.4.6 Parent Education

#### Current Status

---

- To many housewives, parenting is one of the most stressful duties.
- WoC has conducted a study on quality parenting and implemented the Quality Parenting Pilot Scheme through DCs in the past few years to promote the concept of quality parenting at district level.

#### Analysis

In promoting quality parent education, WoC has placed special emphasis on gender perspectives and reinforced the message that both father and mother should play an equally important role in educating their children. Besides, men should be encouraged to participate more in family education. In so doing, WoC seeks not only to eliminate gender stereotyping, but also to encourage both men and women to fully perform their parental duties. For men, they would have more opportunities to develop an intimate relationship with their family members and enjoy spending time with them. From the perspective of maintaining family harmony, men's continual commitment would result in better family relationship and a more even distribution of power among members, thereby reducing the risk of family problems. For women, their husbands' participation in parenting would help relieve their stress, which may arise from managing their work and family duties at the same time, thereby providing greater room for them in developing their career, social network and personal interests. All in all, the obligations and responsibilities of parenting should be jointly shared by both parents.

In addition to emphasising gender perspectives in parent education, we consider that parent education is not only about parenting skills but also instillation of core life values and role

modelling by parents. It is important to establish a platform in the community to promote exchanges and mutual support among parents. In 2010, WoC prepared a conclusion paper to sum up the relevant experiences obtained in this respect. It has submitted the paper to the Family Council for reference.

### 3.4.7 Proposed Goals and Strategies

**Women's Development Goal 8:**  
Promote and facilitate all-round and lifelong learning of women, and enhance their leadership skills

#### Proposed Strategies

- 8.1 Provide more publicly-funded degree places or facilitate the development of self-financing degree programmes in order to address the articulation needs of sub-degree graduates
- 8.2 Continue to provide financial assistance as appropriate to help women in need pursue continuing education
- 8.3 Continue to provide flexible courses and further enhance their flexibilities to cater for the needs of homemakers and new immigrant women, with a view to providing them with more channels of learning and acquiring accredited qualifications
- 8.4 Strengthen the Capacity Building Mileage Programme
- 8.5 Study the needs of homemakers in pursuing life-long learning and in re-entering the labour market

Regarding the articulation needs of sub-degree graduates, we understand that the Government has allocated several pieces of land for the development of self-financing degree programmes. It is estimated that the percentage of sub-degree holders progressing to degree programmes will increase from the current 27% to about 33% in the 2015/16 academic year. By then, more female students will benefit from the increased opportunities for higher education.

On strengthening CBMP, WoC is pleased to note from the Chief Executive's 2011 Policy Address that the Government has taken on

board WoC's suggestion and made a long-term financial commitment to fund the continuation of CBMP. We will continue to further strengthen the programme in order to benefit more women.

Besides, WoC may conduct a study on homemakers' needs for continuous learning and re-enter the labour market for the purpose of assisting relevant government departments, organisations and agencies in understanding homemakers' needs and organising training courses suitable for them.

### Women's Development Goal 9: Strengthen gender and parent education

#### Proposed Strategies

- 9.1 Strengthen gender education within and outside schools
- 9.2 Allocate additional resources to strengthen parent education

On strengthening gender education within and outside schools, we recommend strengthening the context of gender education in the curriculum guide or the curriculum itself. We also suggest that relevant academics in gender studies should help develop supplementary teaching materials<sup>27</sup> to provide primary and secondary school teachers with more in-depth and complete teaching materials on gender education. Besides gender education for students, WoC also recommends that enhanced gender training be provided to teachers. We understand that EDB organises gender-related seminars for teachers from time to time, such as the Forum on the Implication of Gender Equality Education in School Curriculum in early 2011. We suggest that more gender experts should be invited to provide training for serving teachers. WoC is willing to assist the authorities concerned in finding the right personnel in this field as necessary.

---

<sup>27</sup> The academics concerned can apply to the EDB for a one-off grant under the Quality Education Development Fund if necessary.

To promote gender equality effectively, students should have the opportunity to learn the subject in a relaxed environment outside classrooms. Over the past few years, WoC has worked emphatically on publicity and public education in schools, organising various activities such as essay competition, design competition, debate competition and short video filming competition, targeting at primary, secondary and tertiary students. These publicity efforts serve to publicise CEDAW on the one hand, and promote the awareness and respect of women's rights on the other. Looking forward, WoC will consider making use of the multimedia to further strengthen gender education outside schools.

On strengthening parent education, we recommend that the Government should consider allocating additional resources for further promotion of parent education, as well as conducting a study on the current situation of parent education and identifying areas for improvement. Moreover, the networks of DCs and NGOs should be leveraged to promote the concept of quality parenting at the district level, and encourage males to be more involved in sharing parenting responsibilities.

We strongly believe that by intensifying and promoting the above measures, women can enjoy a smoother pathway for their whole development and life-long learning and to fully develop their potential.

### 3.5 Economics

Building women's economic autonomy is key to the enhancement of their status. Apart from the perceived supremacy of men, the lack of economic independence of women in the early days also contributed to the traditional thinking that women need to depend on men. Apart from empowering women with knowledge and skills to facilitate their participation in the labour force, an institutional set up and social system and environment conducive to women's economic development is also very important for the improvement of women's economic status. In a highly developed economy like Hong Kong where the number of talented women is booming, "glass ceiling" remains a barrier for many working women. How to enable women to fully exercise their capabilities in economic activities is an issue that must be looked into by those who are concerned about women's interests.

Greater economic participation of women is beneficial to the development of a more robust economy with level playing field. It helps create greater business opportunities and enhance the competitiveness of enterprises and the economy through innovative thinking and better use of resources. Therefore, women's economic participation helps promote economic prosperity, and is indeed an important investment for the future of Hong Kong. Women's participation at various economic segments, including the decision making and management level, is beneficial to the sustainable development of our economy.

## 3.5.1 Labour Force Participation

### Current Status

---

- The participation rate of female labour force in Hong Kong increased gradually from 45.6% in 1998 to 48.4%<sup>28</sup> in 2010. In comparison with other developed countries, Hong Kong stood at the same level as Japan<sup>29</sup>, but the percentage was lower than that of the United States (59%)<sup>30</sup> and Singapore (57%)<sup>31</sup>.
- In 2010, the majority of the female labour force was aged between 20 and 49<sup>32</sup>. Women aged 20 to 29 had the highest labour force participation rate (71.5%) while that of women aged 30 to 39 was 70.8%<sup>33</sup>.
- In the past decade, there was a steady increase in the labour force of women aged 30 to 49 and aged 60 or above<sup>34</sup>.
- On the whole, the unemployment rate of women was lower than that of men.
- Generally speaking, the median income of women was lower than that of men. In 2010, the median income of women stood at \$10,000, which was lower than that of men at \$12,000<sup>35</sup>. This difference was attributable to many factors including the gender difference in terms of industrial and occupational distribution, educational attainment, working experience, job nature, etc.. Analysed by the educational attainment and sex, the median monthly employment earnings of women at all levels of educational attainment were lower than that of men.

---

28 Excluding foreign domestic helpers

29 Statistics Bureau, Japan, 2010

30 U.S. Bureau of Labour Statistics, 2008

31 Excluding foreign domestic helpers

32 Excluding foreign domestic helpers

33 Excluding foreign domestic helpers

34 Excluding foreign domestic helpers

35 Excluding foreign domestic helpers

- According to C&SD's statistics for 2010, women accounted for 45% of the approximately 1.58 million employed persons<sup>36</sup> in Hong Kong working 40 to 49 hours a week<sup>37</sup>; 40% of the approximately 570,000 employed persons working 50 to 59 hours a week; and 32% of the approximately 500,000 employed persons working 60 hours or more a week.
- According to C&SD's statistics for 2010, 780,000 economically active women in the labour force were married, with about 570,000 never married, and 130,000 widowed/divorced/separated<sup>38</sup>.
- Many Hong Kong women are engaged in part-time jobs. According to a survey conducted by C&SD in 2009<sup>39</sup>, about 580,000 part-time employees cited taking care of housework or children, elderly, disabled or sick members at home as the main reasons for not working longer hours. They accounted for 56.5% of the total number of female part-time employees. Only 1,600 males (2.8%) cited the same reason for not working longer hours. Other major reasons for not working longer hours cited by Hong Kong women were educational pursuit (8.3%), failure to find jobs of longer working hours (8.3%), and custom of trade or arrangement of the companies (7.1%), etc..

---

36 *Excluding foreign domestic helpers*

37 *Hours of work in all jobs during the seven days before enumeration*

38 *Excluding foreign domestic helpers*

39 *Special Topics Report No. 52*

## Analysis

While there has been improvement in women participation rate in the labour force, more can be done. Women are generally promoted at a slower pace than men, partly due to inherent discrimination against them in the workplace, and partly due to their role as family carers as they may leave their work for family duties, particularly after giving birth. This may have an undue influence on their career. Moreover, the lack of comprehensive and affordable childcare and elderly services may also constitute an obstacle to the career advancement of women.

In conducting statistics or surveys, married women taking up the role of family carers are simply regarded as full-time carers, irrespective of whether they wish or have tried but fail to seek employment. In conducting future surveys related to women's employment, these respondents should be asked whether they are willing to accept job offers in order to reflect whether they become full-time family carers because of failure to secure employment.

### 3.5.2 Family-friendly Employment Policies and Practices

#### Current Status

---

- Family-friendly Employment Policies and Practices (FEPP) refer to policies and practices provided by employers to help employees balance work and family responsibilities by offering more choices of flexible and varied work arrangements and other forms of support, such as flexible working hours, family leave and employee support schemes (e.g. childcare support services), etc..
- WoC started to show concern to this subject as early as in 2006, and at that time, it announced the results of a research study entitled “Family-friendly Employment Policies and Practices in Hong Kong” jointly conducted with EOC. The study revealed a low awareness of FEPP among employers and a low prevalence of FEPP in Hong Kong. On the other hand, responses from employees clearly demonstrated support for the wider adoption of FEPP. To further promote this concept, WoC produced and widely distributed promotional materials on FEPP to human resources professionals and the business sector in 2007. The concept was also promoted to these two groups at conferences and other occasions.
- The Government has been actively promoting FEPP in recent years. As the largest employer in Hong Kong, the Government has implemented five-day week by phases since July 2006 to alleviate work pressure of employees and improve the quality of their family life while maintaining the overall quality and efficiency of public services.
- The Labour Department (LD) is one of the facilitators of FEPP. By means of briefing sessions, sharing sessions, roving exhibitions, seminars, promotional publications and DVDs, it encourages employers to adopt FEPP such as special leave and flexible working arrangements, having regard to the circumstances of individual employees as well as the operational needs of their organisations.

- Private organisations have also adopted various FEPP in recent years, including five-day week, paternity leave, compassionate leave and flexible shift work, etc..
- The Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme, launched by the Family Council in 2011, aims to raise awareness in the business sector of the importance of family core values and enlist business support in fostering a pro-family culture and environment. The award scheme also gives recognition to companies and enterprises demonstrating a family-friendly spirit as a promotion of family-friendly employment policies and practices. Over 1,000 enterprises participated in the scheme in 2011.

## Analysis

On one hand, FEPP helps alleviate the dual pressure from work and family of working women while creating a win-win situation for both employers and employees on the other. For employees, a good work-family balance is conducive to personal as well as career development. For employers, FEPP will be a boost to the recruitment and retention of talents, staff morale and productivity, labour relations, and reputation of the corporation.

According to the WoC 2010 Survey, about 71% of people agreed that employers or supervisors were willing to approve leave or time-off applications for their staff to handle family matters. 69% of people agreed that employers would allow staff to work flexitime upon mutual agreement. However, the survey results also showed that these two situations “do not always happen” or only “happen occasionally”.

Paternity leave is one of the FEPP issues that has drawn heated public discussion and received close attention of WoC. Giving birth is important to both the mother-to-be and her family. While women need to cope with various changes in their body and their daily life, their husbands also need to assume a greater role and obligation in the family. Providing paternity leave and facilitating husbands to take care of their wives after delivery is a gesture of caring employers. It also encourages men to share the caring responsibilities towards their families and children.

### 3.5.3 Childcare Services

#### Current Status

---

- According to C&SD, the labour force participation rate of ever-married females was 45.7% in 2010, which was considerably lower than that of never-married females (66.5%). This reflects that many married women tend to leave the labour market temporarily or permanently.
- Various childcare services targeting different age groups are provided by the Government through NGOs. While the Government's policy is that it is the parents' responsibility to take care of their children, childcare services are provided to support those who are unable to fulfill this childcare duty temporarily because of work or other reasons.
- NGOs provide a wide range of day childcare services, including: Stand-alone Child Care Centres and Child Care Centres attached to Kindergartens for children aged under three; the Occasional Child Care Service and Extended Hours Service, Mutual Help Child Care Centres, and NSCCP for children aged under six; and After School Care Programme (ASCP) for children aged six to 12.
- Child Care Centres provide full-day childcare and education services for young children. The Occasional Child Care Service of Child Care Centres / Kindergarten-cum-child Care Centres provide full-day, half-day or two-hour sessions for young children whose carers are unable to take care of them for occasional short periods. Some Child Care Centres and Kindergarten-cum-child Care Centres provide Extended Hours Service to meet the special needs of working parents and families. Mutual Help Child Care Centres are established in local communities on a self-financing and non-profit-making basis. They operate in the mode of mutual help childcare groups with parent volunteers providing temporary childcare services.

- NSCCP, launched in 2008-09, provides needy parents with more flexible childcare services in addition to the regular childcare services. It fosters mutual help and care in the neighbourhood at the same time. NSCCP offers two service components: the home-based care service for children aged under six, and the centre-based care group for children aged between three and under six. Service operators recruit and train carers in the neighbourhood to take care of children in the service centres or the carers' homes.
- It is the policy of SWD to ensure access to childcare services for those in need. Low-income families with social needs may apply for fee remission for such services from service operators and relevant government agencies/service units.
- ASCP, a half-day support service provided by NGOs on a self-financing and fee-charging basis, provides proper care during after-school hours for children aged between six and 12, such that these children will be taken care of when their parents are unable to do so owing to work, employment-related training or other reasons. The services include homework guidance, education, skill learning and social activities. SWD provides Fee Waiving Subsidy Scheme under ASCP is set up by

Type of Services	Total capacity
Stand-alone Child Care Centre <sup>40</sup> (Aged under 3)	690
Extended Hours Service (Aged under 6)	1,230
Occasional Child Care Service (Aged under 6)	494
Mutual Help Child Care Centre (Aged under 3/6)	300
Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project (Aged under 6)	440*

\* minimum capacity

40 The utilisation rate of Stand-alone Child Care Centres was 98%. Child Care Centres attached to Kindergartens also provided around 22,000 places for children aged under three (overall utilisation rate was 72% in September 2010). These Child Care Centres attached to Kindergartens are subject to supervision by the Joint Office for Pre-primary Services under EDB. In addition, private Stand-alone Child Care Centres provided about 2,300 places as at March 2011.

SWD for low-income families. Under the Scheme, those families in need may apply directly to service operators for fee waiving subsidy in full or in half.

- Capacities of the above services between April 2010 and March 2011 are shown below –
- Overall speaking, there is spare capacity in Child Care Centres (including Stand-alone Child Care Centres and Child Care Centres attached to Kindergartens) for families in need of childcare services. Besides, various types of flexible childcare services for children aged under six are in place to meet the working or family needs of parents. Short-term or temporary childcare services are provided in different time slots. In the light of varied demands in different districts and with reference to the experiences of various kinds of childcare services in the community, SWD launched a more flexible district-based NSCCP in 2008-09.
- In view of the favourable outcome of NSCCP, the Government has decided to regularise the project in 2011-12 and extend its scope of services to cover all the 18 districts so as to benefit more families in need. Upon its territory-wide implementation, NSCCP will provide no less than 720 childcare places in total.

### **Analysis**

As unleashing the labour force of women is one of the major purposes of childcare support, the provision of diversified and flexible childcare services is therefore a step in the right direction. The demand of needy parents should be taken into account when devising service plans. The Government should provide women and parents with clearer and more comprehensive information about the childcare services available in districts, and strive to enhance their flexibility. At the same time, collaboration with NGOs and women's groups should be strengthened so as to leverage their strong local networks in delivering childcare services appropriate to the needs of different districts.

### 3.5.4 Promotion Opportunities

#### Current Status

---

- According to the WoC 2010 Survey, over 70% of people considered that men usually stood a better chance of promotion than women. They also considered that being women was an obstacle to their career development. The survey also revealed that over 70% of people agreed that discrimination against women in the workplace was still common. Besides, family responsibility was the major reason that kept women from work and career advancement. According to the survey, 26.6% of women did not wish to be very successful at work, reflecting the belief shared by some in our community that there were conflicts between commitments at work and at home.
- According to the same survey, less than one-third of the married/cohabiting women had tried to get back to work after leaving the job market for some time. Among those who resumed work, 36% stated that their new post/rank was less favourable, and 40% said that their salary was lower than before.
- According to C&SD's statistics, among the employed population in 2010, the male to female ratio of managers and executives was 7:3, and that of professionals was about 6:4. The proportions of female employees working as clerks, workers in elementary occupations and associate professionals were relatively higher at 72.6%, 64.2%, and 44.5% respectively.
- According to a report released by Community Business in November 2009<sup>41</sup>, only 8.9% of the total board positions in the listed companies of Hong Kong were taken up by women.

## Analysis

Despite vigorous promotion of equal opportunities by EOC and the Government, WoC finds that gender stereotyping is still common in the workplace, and “glass ceiling” remains an obstacle to women reaching more senior positions. This may be partly attributable to women’s role as family carers which prevents women from committing fully to work, or discourages employers from promoting female employees in full confidence.

Though comparable to Australia (8.3%), the female representation on the boards of listed companies in Hong Kong lags far behind the United Kingdom (11%), Finland and Norway (40%). Considering that women make up about half of the local labour force and that over half of the university graduates each year are women, the figure of 8.9% is certainly on the low side.

According to a study conducted by Catalyst Research, the Fortune 500 companies with the highest women representation on their boards of directors have markedly outperformed their competitors by 42% on sales profitability, 66% on invested capital returns and 53% on equity returns. WoC believes that eliminating prejudice against women’s working capability and gender stereotyping will enable more women to assume more prominent roles in economic activities.

### 3.5.5 Part-time Employees

#### Current Status

---

- According to the General Household Survey<sup>42</sup> conducted by C&SD between April and June 2009, about 159,000 serving employees worked part-time<sup>43</sup> during the survey period, which accounted for 5.1% of the total employees in Hong Kong.
- Except for employees aged 15 to 29, female employees in other age groups had higher participation rates in part-time employment than their male counterparts. The overall participation rate in part-time employment of female and male employees were 6.6% and 3.6% respectively.
- The majority of female part-time employees were aged 30 to 59. Among them, 17% were aged 30 to 39, 37% (40 to 49) and 26% (50 to 59).
- The majority of female part-time employees worked mainly in the following sectors: retail, accommodation and food services (32%); public administration, social and personal services (32%); and finance, insurance, real estate, professional and business services (13%). They included workers in elementary occupations (36%), service and shop sales (26%), clerks (22%) and professionals and associate professionals (13%).

---

42 *Special Topics Report No.52: Part-time employment*

43 *Part-time employees referred to employees with their main employment at the time of enumeration fulfilling the following criteria: (a) the number of usual days of work per week was less than 5 (for a person with a fixed number of working days per week); or (b) the number of usual hours of work per working day was less than 6 (for a person with a fixed number of working days per week); or (c) the number of usual hours of work per week was less than 30 (for a person without a fixed number of working days per week). However, persons who usually worked 24 hours per shift were excluded, regardless of the number of usual days of work per week. Moreover, full-time students being on summer vacation and taking up a summer job at the time of enumeration were also excluded.*

- About 68% of female part-time employees were married. In terms of education, most of these female employees had attained secondary/matriculation (51%) or primary (25%) education, while 23% of them had attained post-secondary qualification.
- Overall speaking, part-time employees of both sexes had relatively lower educational attainment as compared with all employees. Among employees at different levels of education, those with no-schooling or pre-primary education had the highest rate of taking up part-time employment (12%), followed by employees with primary education (10.7%).
- All employees covered by the Employment Ordinance (EO) (Chapter 57) are entitled to protection provided for under the Ordinance, irrespective of their sex, duration of employment and hours of work per week in items such as payment of wages, restrictions on wage deductions, granting of statutory holidays, and protection against anti-union discrimination, etc.. Employees engaged under a continuous contract, irrespective of whether they work full-time or part-time, are further entitled to other employment benefits, such as rest days, paid statutory holidays, annual leave, sickness allowance, severance payment and long service payment, etc., subject to their meeting the relevant eligibility criteria under EO. According to EO, an employee engaged under a continuous contract is defined as one who has been employed continuously by the same employer for four weeks or more, with at least 18 hours worked in each week.
- Of the 159,000 part-time employees, 31.8% usually worked less than 18 hours per week. 16.4% of part-time employees had been working in their present job for four weeks or less<sup>44</sup>. The above figures covered both male and female employees.

---

<sup>44</sup> Including part-time employees who were employed for a fixed period of four weeks or less according to the terms of employment, as well as those who newly joined a job for at most four weeks at the time of enumeration.

## Analysis

According to C&SD, while most of the part-time employees worked 18 hours to less than 30 hours per week, 31.8% of part-time employees (about 50,000) worked less than 18 hours per week. They included both male and female employees. Because of their relatively short working hours per week, employees who worked less than 18 hours per week were probably unable to meet the definition of continuous contract under EO and not entitled to the protection of sickness allowance, severance payment, long service payment, etc. provided for under the Ordinance.

WoC notes that these female part-time employees are generally middle aged with low educational attainment, and unable or unwilling to take up full-time job probably because of family commitments. Owing to a combination of these factors, they have limited choice in employment as well as bargaining power on the terms of employment benefits. As such, statutory protection is an important way for them to be entitled to a certain level of employment benefits. The current requirements for an employee to be provided with statutory employment benefits by his/her employer upon the fulfilment of a continuous contract is less commonly adopted in other jurisdictions. The Government should explore different options for enhancing labour benefits of part-time employment, including providing part-time employees with pro-rata entitlement of the benefits and protection as offered under a continuous contract.

### 3.5.6 Proposed Goals and Strategies

**Women's Development Goal 10:**  
Step up measures which are conducive to enhancing women's economic status

#### **Proposed Strategies**

- 10.1 Enhance the promotion of Family-Friendly Employment Policies and Practices
- 10.2 Strengthen diversified and flexible childcare services

In addition to further promoting the merits of FEPP to employers and the community, we also suggest that the Government should carefully consider the possibility of introducing statutory paternity leave. WoC understands that a topical study on paternity leave in Hong Kong which looks into the overseas practices and experiences, local prevalence, and the possible social and labour implications involved is being conducted by LD. Legislation for paternity leave should be pursued after the completion of the study and collecting views from the community as appropriate. In the meantime, more efforts should be made to promote family-friendly employment initiative. The Government should, in particular, educate employers that implementation of FEPP will help enhance the sense of belonging of employees and retain talents while incurring only a minimal share of the overall operating cost of the enterprises.

**Women's Development Goal 11:  
Eliminate discrimination against the working ability of women**

**Proposed Strategy**

- 11.1 Encourage greater promotion opportunities for women in private organisations

We should promote pluralism among corporations to enhance, at the management level, recognition of the benefits of gender diversity to corporate competitiveness and business growth. It is also imperative for our community to encourage corporations to increase female representation at the senior management level (including in boardrooms).

In response to the public consultation on corporate governance reform of listed companies, WoC wrote to the Hong Kong Exchanges and Clearing Limited (HKEx) on 18 March 2011 and suggested formulating guidelines for listed companies to set the minimum female representation in boardrooms at 25% initially, subject to subsequent incremental reviews. WoC also suggested that HKEx should consider formulating code of practices, requiring listed companies to introduce gender diversity policies and disclose the information on gender ratios of the management and staff.

## Women's Development Goal 12: Strengthen protection for part-time employees

### Proposed Strategy

- 12.1 Review the employment situation of and protection for employees not engaged under a continuous contract under the Employment Ordinance

Recently, there are calls for the review of the definition of continuous contract under EO and improving the protection and benefits for employees not engaged under a continuous contract. WoC also recommends that the Government should examine and analyse the data collected for the purpose of a review on the continuous contract requirements. Considerations should be given as to whether protection and benefits for employees not engaged under a continuous contract should be strengthened, making reference to the situation of employees engaged under a continuous contract under EO. In view of its complexity and far-reaching implications, the review should give due regard to opinions from across the community, and the Government should maintain close communication with both employees and employers, with a view to striking an appropriate balance between the interests of employees and the affordability of employers.

In parallel with the review, WoC recommends that the Government should step up publicity on the employment rights of employees not engaged under a continuous contract. For instance, relevant promotional materials should be translated into different languages progressively to enable ethnic minority women to understand their rights and benefits under EO.

### 3.6 System for Women's Development

Prior to the establishment of WoC, local women's groups have played a pivotal role in promoting women's development and gender equality, and contributed significantly to advancing women's rights and interests in the early days. Since its establishment in 2001, WoC has been playing a bridging role and maintaining close liaison and collaboration with women's groups, relaying their views and providing advice on various women-related issues to the Government. It has also assisted the Government in developing long-term strategies to promote the interests and well-being of women, as well as monitored the progress of relevant policies and practices.

Gender equality forms a cornerstone in the pursuit of freedom, human rights, progress and harmony. In this connection, in considering the enhancement of women's status, we must not overlook the need to review the effectiveness of the existing mechanism in promoting women's development.

### 3.6.1 Women's Commission, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and Beijing Platform for Action

#### Current Status

---

- WoC was established by the Government in January 2001 as a high-level central mechanism in response to the recommendations of the CEDAW Committee. Appointed by the Chief Executive, WoC comprises official and non-official members from different sectors. It is tasked to take an overview over women's issues and develop a long-term vision and strategy for the development and advancement of women. It receives secretariat support from the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB).
- One of WoC's major tasks is to monitor the development of all women-related policies, and assist the Government in implementing CEDAW and BPFA.
- Since the establishment of WoC, the Government would consult it on the implementation of CEDAW in Hong Kong whenever periodic reports are prepared. WoC has also provided assistance in collecting views from women's groups on the report outlines. After submission of the reports to UN, WoC attends UN hearings with Government officials to help reflect the progress of implementation of CEDAW in Hong Kong.
- WoC has also closely followed up on the implementation of BPFA in Hong Kong and taken part in relevant international conferences and activities.

- WoC also helps publicise CEDAW and BPFA through various public education activities so as to enhance public awareness of their contents and promote public concern about women's issues.

### **Analysis**

WoC has maintained close liaison with the Government and provided advice on women-related issues. As a central mechanism, WoC plays a proactive role through keeping abreast of the international trends and directions in women's development and giving advice to the Government on women's advancement.

## 3.6.2 Women's Commission and Women's Groups

### Current Status

---

- WoC adopts a three-pronged strategy, namely the provision of an enabling environment for women's advancement, empowerment of women through capacity building and public education, to promote the interests and well-being of women.
- WoC has been offering advice to the Government on strategies, policies and initiatives concerning women. This helps ensure the integration of women's needs and perspectives into the policy-making process, so as to provide an enabling environment for women.
- WoC is committed to empowering women by encouraging them to pursue life-long learning, protecting women's safety, and increasing women's participation in decision-making. It has also made unsparing efforts in educating the public, in particular the youngsters, on gender awareness and respecting women's interests through different channels such as forums, newspapers, radios, televisions and school activities.
- WoC also attaches great importance to collaboration with different sectors of the community. It maintains communication with local women's groups, and acts as a bridge to relay the concerns of the women's sector to the Government as appropriate.
- To keep abreast of the latest development of women's issues beyond Hong Kong, WoC participates in regional and international conferences every year, including the session of CSW and the APEC Women Leaders Network Meeting. It also meets with women's organisations from the Mainland and overseas, with a view to drawing on international experiences, new concepts, initiatives and development trends for reference.

## Analysis

WoC has been playing an active and effective role as a central mechanism to advise the Government on women-related matters from a macro perspective. Since its establishment, WoC has advised the Government on a wide range of policy issues covering areas such as welfare, education, public decision making, safety, employment, sustainable development and health.

Collaboration between WoC and women's groups is necessary for the effective performance of the bridging role of WoC. In Hong Kong, there are hundreds of women's groups. They are different in scales, operating focuses and modes, and are located in different districts over the territory, forming a huge and complex network. Because of the wide diversity of their work and experience, a positive and strong synergy will be created for the promotion of women's development if the network is put to effective use.

Over the years, WoC has been collaborating closely with women's groups to enhance women's status in Hong Kong. Apart from regular exchanges, WoC has also engaged them in a wide array of activities. For example, WoC produced a series of 5-minute TV programmes in 2007 to showcase and give due recognition to the contributions of women's groups in empowering women. In August 2009, WoC organised a large-scale conference entitled "Beyond Limits – Women in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century". Over 25 women's groups and NGOs took part in the pre-conference activity in which presentations on different facets of Hong Kong women in the 21<sup>st</sup> century were given. We also invite representatives of women's groups to participate in forums and exchange visits to the Mainland or overseas organised by WoC from time to time.

We consider that there is still room for closer collaboration between WoC and women's groups. Given the diverse backgrounds and characteristics of local women's groups, the kind and level of support they need understandably varies. On the other hand, WoC, as a high-

level central mechanism, needs the assistance of women's groups in taking forward its visions and tasks at the district level. Against such backdrop, we envisage a need to examine how to strengthen the mode of collaboration between WoC and women's groups. We expect that greater synergy will be achieved if WoC is able to provide resources for women's groups to undertake projects conducive to promoting women's interests, and empowerment and development of women. Meanwhile, more attention and support from the Government and different sectors of the community for the development of women's groups will also help cultivate an enabling environment for their greater involvement in building a harmonious society and fostering gender equality.

### 3.6.3 Resources for Women's Development

#### Current Status

---

- The Government earmarks a recurrent funding of about \$20 million every year to support the activities of WoC for the advancement of women's interests and well-being, including the funding for CBMP which is designed to empower women. The above provision also includes the Secretariat's expenditure.
- Relevant Government departments also collaborate with and provide funds for women's groups and NGOs to launch different kinds of activities or women-related services as appropriate. For example, LWB provided funding to women's groups to organise public education activities about CEDAW. Also, SWD provides funding support to the CEASE Crisis Centre, which aims to provide support and intervention services to victims of domestic violence and sexual violence.
- A number of funding mechanisms are already in place in the community for NGOs and women's groups to apply for resources for their activities. For instance, with the support of the \$300 million Community Investment and Inclusion Fund established by the Government, a women's group has set up a mutual support network for single parents to mobilise women's resources to provide after-school care services. Other funding resources include the Community Chest, the Lotteries Fund, the Sir Robert Ho Tung Charitable Fund, the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust, etc..

## Analysis

Women of Hong Kong are taking on more diversified roles nowadays. WoC considers that to help them meet the challenges in society, more resources should be provided to them to facilitate their development and empowerment. While WoC appreciates that considerable resources have been committed by the Government and relevant organisations to provide services and assistance to people in need (including women) in different areas, resources designated for women's development in Hong Kong are still inadequate, making it difficult for WoC and women's groups to advance their work in this regard.

### 3.6.4 Gender Studies

#### Current Status

---

- Researches and studies on gender issues provide valuable reference for the formulation of public policies. In this light, WoC conducts researches and studies from time to time to gauge the changes of the needs and status of women in Hong Kong.
- Major surveys and studies conducted by WoC over the past few years include—
  - ◆ Thematic Household Survey – Time Use Survey and Factors Hindering Women’s Participation in Society (published in September 2003);
  - ◆ Survey on the Effectiveness of Publicity and Public Education (findings published in December 2003);
  - ◆ Survey on Family-friendly Employment Policies and Practices (jointly conducted with EOC in June 2006);
  - ◆ A study on women’s development in Hong Kong, covering a review on major milestones, Hong Kong female forerunners in the past century, progress of women in Hong Kong over the past two decades, and the development of women’s groups in Hong Kong (findings released at the Exhibition on Women of Hong Kong – A Century of Contribution and Development in 2007);
  - ◆ A telephone survey on community perception of gender issues, covering gender stereotyping, gender mainstreaming, empowerment and contribution of women, and major concerns of Hong Kong women in the coming five to ten years (findings released in March 2009) ; and
  - ◆ A large-scale household survey showing what women and men thought about the status of Hong Kong at home, in the workplace

and in social environment (findings released between late 2010 and early 2011).

- WoC also maintains close liaison with C&SD in the collection and analysis of gender statistics, and assists the latter in compiling the “Women and Men in Hong Kong – Key Statistics”.
- EOC, as the statutory body responsible for the implementation of SDO and FSDO, also conducts researches and surveys on gender equality and gender issues. Examples include the “Study on Public Perception of Portrayal of Female Gender in the Hong Kong Media”, the “Telephone Survey on Women’s Knowledge of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women”, a report entitled “A Baseline Survey of Equal Opportunities on the Basis of Gender”, and the “Survey on Public Attitudes towards Sex as a Genuine Occupational Qualification”.
- Scholars interested in gender issues conduct research and analysis on the subject from time to time. In particular, the Chinese University of Hong Kong and HKU have each set up a gender research centre. Individual academics of other tertiary institutions also examine gender issues within their expertise.
- Over the years, women’s groups have actively conducted multi-faceted and in-depth researches and surveys on women-related issues to enhance public concern about gender issues.

## Analysis

Gender researches and surveys are important as they can reflect the underlying social attitudes and concepts of society, raise public awareness of gender stereotyping, and examine the changes in public perception of gender issues. Such information is instrumental to the work on women-related issues. Therefore, WoC has actively worked on researches and surveys over the years and shared the results with all sectors of the community, so as to facilitate public understanding and discussion of gender issues. We consider that such efforts should be continued and strengthened. The information and data collected should be consolidated and analysed systematically with a view to providing useful reference for the formulation of public policies.

### 3.6.5 Gender Mainstreaming

#### Current Status

---

- Gender mainstreaming is a global strategy advocated by UN for the promotion of women's advancement and gender equality. It was firmly established in BPFA adopted at the UN Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995. Many countries have adopted gender mainstreaming in their policy making processes since then.
- Gender mainstreaming is the integration of gender perspectives and needs in legislation, policies and programmes in any area. It makes women's as well as men's concerns and experiences an integral dimension in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of all legislation, policies and programmes. Through such processes, gender mainstreaming seeks to ensure that women and men have equitable access to, and benefit from, society's resources and opportunities, with the aim of achieving women's advancement and gender equality.
- On WoC's recommendation, the Government has progressively implemented gender mainstreaming in different areas since 2002. WoC has developed a Gender Mainstreaming Checklist (the Checklist), which comprises a series of simple questions to assist government officers in applying gender mainstreaming in a more systematic way.
- So far, the Checklist has been applied to more than 40 policy and programme areas related to women, covering welfare, public building design, rehabilitation services, participation in public policy making, statistics, healthcare, publicity and education, village representative election, etc.. In addition to the application of the Checklist, government officers have also applied the gender mainstreaming concept in various areas.

- Based on the Government's practical experience in applying gender mainstreaming, WoC revised and enhanced the Checklist in 2009 in consultation with academics specialised in gender issues.
- A Gender Focal Point (GFP) network has been set up at each Government bureau and department since 2003. Most of the GFPs are directorate officers, who serve as the resource persons and contact points within their respective organisations for the implementation of gender mainstreaming. GFPs meet from time to time to discuss how to further promote gender mainstreaming and gender awareness in the Government.
- WoC is an important partner of the Government in promoting gender mainstreaming. A WoC pamphlet entitled "Gender Mainstreaming – Hong Kong Experience" was published in 2006 to reinforce and promote the Government's experience in applying gender mainstreaming. Also, WoC maintains exchanges with bureaux and departments to review their application of gender mainstreaming and provide advice as appropriate.
- Another major role of WoC is to promote gender mainstreaming beyond the Government to other organisations and the community. Since 2008, WoC has established a network of GFPs in DCs. Each of the 18 DCs has now designed a GFP to facilitate communication and collaboration between DC and WoC. In addition, briefings and discussions will be conducted during WoC's regular visits to DCs on the implementation of gender mainstreaming and programmes for women's development and well-being.
- WoC has recently extended the promotion of gender mainstreaming to ASBs.

## Analysis

Women and men have different life phases, needs and experience. Because of such differences, policies and measures which apply universally to women and men may create different impacts to them. Therefore, we need to make gender an independent consideration so as to prevent any unfair treatment between women and men. This is the spirit of gender mainstreaming. WoC believes that gender mainstreaming should not be confined to the Government. It should be understood and implemented across the community so as to create an environment where men and women live in equal terms. WoC will, on one hand, monitor the implementation of gender mainstreaming within the Government and, on the other, actively promote this important concept to all in the community through public education.

### 3.6.6 Gender Training

#### Current Status

---

- Over 5,200 civil servants of various ranks and grades have attended classroom training on gender issues. Apart from the mass seminars organised by the Civil Service Training and Development Institute which are open to all grades and ranks in the civil service, tailor-made programmes are also arranged by LWB in collaboration with bureaux and departments for their staff. In addition to introducing the gender-related concepts, the programmes are also tailor-made to meet the needs of staff according to their respective working environment and job nature, aiming to enhance staff's gender sensitivity in the workplace and facilitate the application of gender mainstreaming in their daily work. Some departments and grades have also incorporated training on gender-related issues into their regular training programmes.
- The Government has also developed a web-portal on gender mainstreaming for reference by all civil servants and the general public. The web-portal serves as a resource and experience-sharing platform to help civil servants to intensify their understanding of gender mainstreaming. It provides information on the concept and application of gender mainstreaming as well as hyperlinks to useful websites, and sets out examples of different policy or programme areas that have applied gender mainstreaming.
- To strengthen understanding of gender concepts among civil servants, the Government has promulgated an online training programme since 2010 to provide a more flexible mode of training on gender awareness.

#### Analysis

It is essential to enhance the gender awareness and sensitivity of public officers in order to ensure the smooth and extensive implementation of gender mainstreaming in various policy areas. For this purpose, gender training is a crucial and on-going task. We consider that more efforts are required to enhance training for public officers, and we encourage more departments to incorporate gender training into their regular training programmes.

### 3.6.7 Proposed Goals and Strategies

**Women's Development Goal 13:**  
Study the needs and strategies in further promoting women's development

#### Proposed Strategies

- 13.1 Study ways to enhance the collaboration model between WoC and women's groups
- 13.2 Strengthen research on gender-related issues

Regarding collaboration with women's groups, WoC will, on a pilot basis, provide funds for women's groups to carry out specific projects to promote women's interest. Further development of the mode of collaboration between WOC and women's groups will be examined.

**Women's Development Goal 14:**  
Further the implementation of gender mainstreaming within and outside the Government

#### Proposed Strategies

- 14.1 Monitor the implementation of gender mainstreaming
- 14.2 Raise gender awareness and sensitivity of public officers through strengthening relevant training
- 14.3 Strengthen public education and promote gender mainstreaming outside the Government

## Chapter 4. Conclusion

After extensive discussion with various stakeholders and thorough consideration, WoC has put forward 14 women's development goals and 36 recommended strategies in Chapter 3 of this report. These collective wisdoms, translated into common directions and objectives, represent the consensus reached with the stakeholders involved. As discussed in Chapter 1 of this report, it is our objective to set attainable goals in a pragmatic manner, so that all relevant parties, with respect to their different roles, can help take forward these goals and strategies to further women's development.

### Other Long-term Goals

Promoting women's development is no easy task and relevant work needs to be done by stages. While the recommendations proposed in Chapter 3 are goals and strategies for the short to medium term, there are other issues that should not be overlooked for the long-term development of women, notwithstanding that the society has yet to reach a general consensus on them.

### **Gender Mainstreaming**

Apart from monitoring the progressive application of gender mainstreaming to various policy areas within the Government, our ultimate goal should be the institutionalisation of gender mainstreaming in all policy areas. We believe that gender equality constitutes not only a core value but also a cornerstone in the society's development. As our society progresses, gender equality should be manifested in major policies and initiatives.

### **Gender Budgeting**

A number of women's groups have called for the introduction of gender budgeting in the Government. It aims to, by drawing up budget and policies from a gender perspective, ensure that women will have equal

access to resources and development opportunities in the society, and that sufficient resources will be allocated for programmes and initiatives promoting gender equality and women empowerment. Although the concept is still at a developmental stage, WoC considers that the Government should keep in view development in other countries and regions and study the progress of its implementation, with a view to exploring whether to implement the concept and how to adopt it to suit the circumstances of Hong Kong.

### **Specialised Domestic Violence Court**

There are calls in the community for a specialised domestic violence court. We support this view and believe that the proposed set up can speed up the handling of domestic violence cases. We suggest that the Government should keep an open mind on this, and look into the feasibility of introducing an appropriate model for Hong Kong having regard to the latest development in other jurisdictions.

### **Reviewing the Sex Discrimination Ordinance**

We consider that the Government should review SDO to strengthen the protection for victims of sexual harassment, including protection for service providers against sexual harassment by customers.

### **Carers in Households**

Most of the carers in families are women who provide care for both their children and seniors at home. These females have made valuable contribution to our society as they have played an important role in nurturing caring families and facilitating the stable development of our society. However, social support to them is inadequate and their contributions are seldom discussed or recognised. Moreover, the existing employment protection and the Mandatory Provident

Fund Scheme are not applicable to them as they are relatives / families to whom they take care of.

We consider that community support network should be provided for carers who are primarily engaged in family caring duties. More support in caring for family members should also be provided. To ease the burden of these women, we suggest that, apart from the childcare services discussed in Chapter 3, additional resources should be given to strengthen home-based caring services for the elderly. Collaboration between Integrated Family Service Centres and NGOs should be stepped up so as to provide suitable support services for these carers. We take note of the view of women's groups that support and recognition for these carers are inadequate, and agree that these carers should be given due recognition. In the long run, we should consider how to provide retirement protection for those women who are fully engaged in family caring duties.

### **Women Health Centres**

Women health services are currently provided by the three WHCs and ten MCHCs in Hong Kong. WHCs can be found at Chai Wan, Lam Tin and Tuen Mun respectively, while the MCHCs are located across the territory. Although the latter also provides women health services, we consider that the existing three WHCs are far from adequate in meeting the needs of women, in particular the low-income ones, which altogether constitute half of the total population in Hong Kong. We therefore consider it necessary to review the need for more WHCs in the future, so as to provide more accessible service to women living in different districts.

## **Positioning of WoC and Resources for Women's Development**

---

All along, WoC has assumed a proactive and advisory role as a central mechanism on issues pertaining to the promotion of interests and well-being of women. Ten years after its establishment, we believe that it is time to revisit the positioning of WoC as well as its mode of operation within the Government system, so as to enable it to further promote women's development and provide better assistance to bureaux and departments in formulating women-related policies. Moreover, to enable women, including the disadvantaged women, to realise their potential and fully participate in society, economic activities and decision making, we see a need to invest more in women's development through women empowerment and leadership training programmes.

The long-term goals stated above require more thorough discussion or detailed study in order to reach a consensus. While they are not included in our current exercise of formulating specific women's development goals, they are good references for the study of women's development in the long-run. As such, these views are documented in this Chapter to facilitate public discussion in the future.

## **Conclusion**

It is an important and challenging mission to promote gender equality and the advancement of women's interests. The women's development goals exercise is a new attempt of WoC. WoC will continue to listen to the views from different sectors carefully, and work in collaboration with the Government, women's groups and NGOs in advancing women's interests and well-being in Hong Kong.

## Chapter 5. Membership of the Task Force on Women's Development Goals

### Convener

Ms Sophia KAO

### Task Force Members (surname in alphabetical order)

Ms Teresa AU

Dr Miranda CHAN (until 14 January 2011)

Ms CHAU Chuen-heung

Ms Jacqueline CHENG

Ms FONG Man-ying

Ms KO Po-ling

Dr Maggie KOONG

Mrs Ayesha M LAU

Ms LAU Ka-shi

Ms Joanna LAU (until 14 January 2011)

Dr LEUNG Lai-ching



## Chapter 6. Acknowledgement

### Organisations and Persons Participated in the Corresponding Meetings (in alphabetical order)

All-China Women's Federation Hong Kong Delegates Association  
Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau  
Education Bureau  
Elderly Commission  
Equal Opportunities Commission  
Home Affairs Bureau  
Home Affairs Department  
Hong Kong Coalition on Equal Opportunities  
Hong Kong Federation of Women  
Hong Kong Island Women's Association  
Hong Kong Outlying Islands Women's Association  
Hong Kong Women Development Association Limited  
Hong Kong Young Women's Christian Association  
Kowloon Women's Organisations Federation  
Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Labour Department  
Social Welfare Department  
The Chinese General Chamber of Commerce—Ladies' Committee  
The Women's Foundation  
Tung Wah Group of Hospitals

Ms AU Mei-po  
Dr CHIU Pok-kwan  
Ms Elsie LEUNG  
Dr LEUNG Tung-yeung  
Dr NG Chun-hung  
Ms Bell WONG  
Mr YIU Tze-leung



## Chapter 7. Appendices

### Annex 1. Terms of Reference of the Task Force

The Task Force is set up by the Women's Commission (WoC) and tasked to –

- (a) consider women's development goals, specifically—
  - (i) to identify priority areas where women's development goals are needed;
  - (ii) to propose appropriate goals for the areas identified; and
  - (iii) to suggest ways to achieve the goals set;
- (b) consult stakeholders in respect of (a) above; and
- (c) advise WoC on the recommendations on the results of (b) above.

## Annex 2. Terms of Reference of the Women's Commission

The Women's Commission is tasked to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong. As such, it will—

- advise the Government on the development of a long term vision and strategies related to the development and advancement of women;
- advise the Government on the integration of policies and initiatives which are of concern to women, which fall under the purview of different Policy Bureaux;
- keeps under review, in the light of women's needs, services delivered within and outside the Government and to identify priority areas for action, and monitor the development of new or improved services;
- initiate and undertake independent surveys and research studies on women's issues and organise educational and promotional activities; and
- develop and maintain contact with local and international women's groups and service agencies with a view to sharing experience and improving communication and understanding.





婦女事務委員會  
Women's Commission

Women's Commission Secretariat  
Labour and Welfare Bureau  
10/F, West Wing  
Central Government Offices  
2 Tim Mei Avenue  
Tamar, Hong Kong

Tel No. : (852) 2810 3827  
Fax No. : (852) 2501 0475  
Email : [women@twb.gov.hk](mailto:women@twb.gov.hk)