

ARTICLE 5  
STEREOTYPING AND PREJUDICES

*“States Parties should take all appropriate measures:*

*a. To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;*

*b. To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.”*

**Extent of Gender Stereotyping in Hong Kong**

42. To identify the level of community awareness of the Commission’s work and community perceptions of gender-related issues, the Women’s Commission conducted an effectiveness survey on the publicity and public education campaign in 2002. The findings revealed that the majority acknowledged the existence of gender stereotyping in Hong Kong, though the extent of gender stereotyping was not very serious, and that most considered women could fully realise their potentials. It was also observed that gender stereotyping was less evident in academic setting. About one-fifth of the respondents had gender stereotyping in private and home settings and gender stereotyping was the most obvious in political setting (e.g. men were considered more knowledgeable about politics than women).

43. Another survey commissioned by the Women’s Commission shows that on the whole, there is an overall balance in terms of gender participation in the employment field in the private and non-governmental sectors in Hong Kong. However, a certain degree of difference exists between women and men in terms of industry sectors and disciplines they engage in, and the level of positions taken up by them. Women in general are less likely to be employed in disciplines that require scientific and technical knowledge or skills. Only about a quarter of top / senior positions are taken up by women, which is on par

with a number of other Western developed countries.

### **Public Education Efforts**

44. In promoting CEDAW, the Administration has produced and distributed leaflets and various souvenirs such as mousepads and paperbags to the public to arouse the public awareness of the Convention. The text of the Convention and the concluding comments on the Initial Report made by the CEDAW Committee is also uploaded onto the internet for public access.

### Equal Opportunities Commission

45. The EOC continues to promote sex equality through various public education programmes and initiatives. These programmes and initiatives include:

- (a) publications of guidelines and references which are disseminated via seminars, training workshops and etc.;
- (b) development of the EOC's homepage to become a bi-lingual (Chinese and English) on-line resource centre in March 2002. The website provides information on equal opportunities and anti-discrimination laws and is fully accessible to persons with disabilities;
- (c) seminars and conferences to promote public understanding of sex and family status discrimination. For example, the Seminar on the FSDO in November 2000 and the Conference on "Boys and Girls in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: Gender Differences in Learning" in November 2001;
- (d) 945 introductory talks on anti-discrimination legislation delivered to government departments, schools, businesses, community groups and other interested organisations from 1999 to September 2002;

- (e) 18 community road shows held in popular shopping centres and playgrounds since 1999, and the annual month-long Equal Opportunities Expo featuring different community events;
- (f) the Community Participation Funding Programme which supports and encourages community organisations to develop projects that promote equal opportunities. From 1999 to end October 2002, more than HK\$1.3 million (US\$166,700) was approved for 103 community projects to promote gender equality and the understanding of SDO and FSDO;
- (g) public education targeted at youths:
  - sponsored drama performances and puppet shows in schools;
  - a special Education Television programme on equal opportunities was produced for junior forms students. The programme ran on Education Television since 1999 on a continuous basis;
  - summer camps held in 1999, 2000 and 2001;
  - a youth mentorship programme in 2002 entitled “The Career Challenge”. It aimed at eliminating gender stereotypes in respect of occupation;
  - two Scout Instructors Development Programmes in 2001 and 2002;
  - other outreach programmes such as slogan, drama and debate competitions.
- (h) advertising campaigns:
  - advertising campaigns on prevention of pregnancy discrimination, family status discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace, which featured large, eye-catching posters on rail transit platform on Hong Kong’s mass transit railway system;
  - bus advertisements conveying the equal opportunities message;
  - televised campaigns: three Announcements in the Public Interest (APIs), a nine-episode docu-drama in 2000, and a 20-episode drama series on Cable TV’s Children Channel in

July 2001;

- radio campaigns: an eight-segment programme in 2000 entitled “Teens Park”, and a 10-episode docu-drama in 2002 entitled “The Equal Opportunities Files”; and
- exhibition booths at different expos, such as the annual Education and Career Expo and other conference events.

### Women’s Commission

46. The Women’s Commission has launched public education and publicity programmes to address gender stereotyping as continuous efforts are needed to tackle society’s preconceived notions, roles, and stereotypes of women. Hence, the Women’s Commission has rolled out the following public education programmes:

- (a) two series of APIs on TV, radio and buses;
- (b) essay-writing competition to stimulate public concern and interest on the theme of “capacity building”;
- (c) a ten-episode TV drama series relating to the theme of “capacity building” and “empowerment of women”;
- (d) a thirteen-episode radio programme on gender-related issues;
- (e) the Women’s Commission Conference 2002 with the theme of “Women for a Better Tomorrow”;
- (f) public fora and seminars on different specific women topics;
- (g) annual celebration of International Women’s Day; and
- (h) printing and distribution of posters.

## Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education

47. The Committee on the Promotion of Civic Education (CPCE) is an advisory body formed under the auspices of the Home Affairs Bureau to promote civic education and to enhance general public's civic awareness. Promoting equal opportunity and understanding of and respect for human rights has been one of the Committee's major themes in the past three years. A list of the Committee's activities in this area is as below :

- (a) sponsorship for projects organised by voluntary agencies and community organisations. Between 1999/2000 and 2002/03, the CPCE sponsored 52 projects on equal opportunities, rights of the child and of the woman, and elimination of discrimination;
- (b) production of a comic booklet on human rights for adolescents incorporating the concept of gender equality (released in early 1999) ;
- (c) publication of a pictorial booklet on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in early 1999 to illustrate the concepts advocated in the Declaration, including the concept of gender equality ;
- (d) production of a short story book for teachers in late 1999 to promote human rights. Some of the stories focused on the concept of gender equality ;
- (e) production of a parents' handbook in 2002 to encourage parents and children to practise human rights concepts, including equal opportunity and gender equality, in daily life ;
- (f) production and distribution of civic education newsletters for junior primary school students since mid-2000. The concept on equal opportunity is also covered in the newsletter; and
- (g) Publication of newspaper comic series on civic education in 2002. Some of the comics promoted equal opportunity and the elimination of discrimination.

## Women Festival

48. To portray the changing roles of women in our society, the Hong Kong Heritage Museum has made the year 2002/03 the Women Festival. It examines the gender implications of our society from various angles, to celebrate women's contributions and to explore the needs of women in the new century. A series of exhibitions and educational activities such as talks and workshops have been held on women's changing identities, women and art and contemporary women issues.

## **Control of Pornography and Sex Discriminatory Elements in the Media**

49. Publication of articles that contain obscene or indecent materials (i.e. materials that are violent, depraved or repulsive) are controlled under the Control of Obscene and Indecent Articles Ordinance (COIAO). Obscene articles are prohibited from publication. Indecent articles must not be published to persons below 18. Publication of indecent articles must comply with certain statutory requirements, including the sealing of such articles in wrappers (opaque wrappers if the covers are indecent) and the display of a warning notice as prescribed by the COIAO. The Obscene Articles Tribunal set up under the COIAO is responsible for and has exclusive jurisdiction in determining whether an article is obscene, indecent or neither. For the purpose of deciding whether a film should be approved for exhibition and the appropriate classification that should be given, the censor is required by the Film Censorship Ordinance to consider the following matters:

- (a) whether the film portrays, depicts or treat cruelty, torture, violence, crime, horror, disability, sexuality or indecent or offensive language or behaviour; and
- (b) whether the film denigrates or insults any particular class of the public by reference to the colour, race, religious beliefs or ethnic or national origins or the sex of the members of that class.

50. The existing regulatory framework for broadcasting already provides sufficient measures to regulate the broadcast of pornography and sex discriminatory elements on television or radio in Hong Kong. The respective conditions in television programme service licences and the sound broadcasting

licences require that the licensees must ensure strict compliance with the relevant codes of practice on programme standards and advertising standards. Licensees are not allowed to broadcast any material which is likely to encourage hatred against or fear of, and / or considered to be denigrating or insulting to any persons or groups on the basis of, *inter alia*, race, gender, sexual preference, age, or social status. The licensees are also required to exercise due care in their treatment of sex and nudity so that they can avoid shocking or offending the viewing public. The Broadcasting Authority receives complaints from the public, investigate into any suspected contravention of the codes of practice and may impose on the licensees appropriate sanctions which include financial penalty or suspension of licence.

51. In January 2002, the Government introduced the Prevention of Child Pornography Bill into the Legislative Council. The Bill seeks to offer better protection to boys and girls by prohibiting the production, possession and publication of child pornography depicting children under the age of 16; to amend the Crimes Ordinance to prohibit the use, procurement or offer of persons under the age of 18 for making pornography or for live pornographic performances. The Bill is now being scrutinized by a Bills Committee of the Legislative Council. The enactment of the Bill will enable HKSAR to comply with the International Labour Convention No. 182 on Elimination of Worst Forms of Child Labour.

52. Concerns are sometimes expressed over advertisements and the media portraying women in a biased manner, such as portraying women as sex objects or as subordinate to men. But it should be noted that ideas, concepts and messages conveyed in the advertisements and the media fall within the highly sensitive area of freedom of expression and press freedom, which the Government is committed to upholding. Any attempt to address this issue must be done with great care and preferably by public education.

### **Protection of Women against Violence**

53. During the hearing of the Initial Report, the CEDAW Committee had made various recommendations to the Government relating to the protection of women against domestic and sexual violence, including to offer counselling and treatment of offenders, enhance services for survivors of domestic violence with a view to their empowerment and rehabilitation, and provide information

on sexual crimes in the second report. Some local non-governmental organisations are also concerned about provision of preventive and support services for victims of domestic violence. Hence, we have included our progress in protecting women against domestic and sexual violence since 1999 in the following paragraphs.

### International Instruments

54. The Government is committed to adhering to the principles of CEDAW, including protecting women against violence. Various policies and measures have been taken in fulfilling its commitment in eliminating all forms of violence against women under the Convention. Among other things, Article 28 of the Basic Law states that “torture of any resident or arbitrary or unlawful deprivation of the life of any resident shall be prohibited.” Article 3 of the BOR gives direct effect in domestic law to Article 7 of the ICCPR in regard to torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. The Convention against Torture (CAT) applies to the HKSAR. The Crimes (Torture) Ordinance (Chapter 427 of the Laws of the HKSAR) gives direct effect to the CAT provisions on torture. The Fugitive Offenders Ordinance (Chapter 503) gives effect to the provisions on extradition. The Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) also applies to Hong Kong. Numerous statutory and administrative measures give effect to the individual provisions of the CRC. These will be explained in details in HKSAR’s Initial Report under the Convention.

### Legislation protecting Women against Violence

55. The Crimes Ordinance, Offences Against the Person Ordinance and the Domestic Violence Ordinance continue to apply to protect women against violence<sup>3</sup>.

56. In 2002, the Government has proposed amendments to the Crimes Ordinance which seek to extend the application of certain sexual offence provisions to acts committed against children outside Hong Kong. The proposed amendments to the Crimes Ordinance are incorporated in the Prevention of Child Pornography Bill (detail see paragraph 51). Protection against sexual abuse is provided to boys and girls below the age of 16.

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<sup>3</sup> Please refer to paragraphs 28 – 30 of the Initial Report for details of the ordinances.

24 sexual offence provisions of the Crimes Ordinance will be given extra-territorial effect in respect of acts committed to children where the perpetrator or the victim has a nexus with Hong Kong.

57. As mentioned in Article 2, the Evidence Ordinance was amended in June 2002 to abrogate the corroboration rules in sexual offences so that offenders in sexual offence cases could now be brought to justice more easily. The CEDAW Committee had raised concern that marital rape was not considered a criminal offence in the Hong Kong during its hearing on the Initial Report submitted by Hong Kong. To offer greater protection to women against violence, the Crimes Ordinance was amended in July 2002 to make it clear that marital rape is a criminal offence. In the past, a person was not competent or compellable to give evidence for or against his or her spouse except in very limited circumstances. The Evidence (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill was also introduced in 2002 to amend the deficiencies in the rules relating to husbands and wives giving evidence for and against each other in criminal proceedings. Furthermore, following a study by the Law Reform Commission on stalking, the Government is also considering the proposal of legislating against harassment behaviour, such as stalking.

58. Regarding the suggestion to review the Domestic Violence Ordinance regarding the scope of application of the Ordinance and the definition of domestic violence, the Administration notes the views and proposals received, and will take them into consideration.

#### Preventive Measures on Domestic Violence

59. The Government supports the principle of “zero tolerance on domestic violence”, and has made continuous efforts to review related policies and the provision of various services. In recent years, a three-pronged approach is adopted to strengthen support for families. Under this approach, existing services are reviewed, re-engineered and re-focused while new initiatives are introduced to fill service gaps identified so that preventive, supportive and specialised services are available for the prevention and handling of domestic violence, with most victims being women.

60. As prevention is always better than cure, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) has strengthened the preventive and supportive services to enable individuals and families to prevent domestic violence.

61. Since April 2002, SWD has implemented 15 pilot projects to set up integrated family service centres which are operated under a new service delivery model with the aim of improving the accessibility of services and promoting early identification of needy families for intervention. The integrated family service centres, comprising three major components, viz. family resource, family support and family counselling, integrate family welfare services with community-based services to provide a continuum of preventive, supportive and remedial services to meet the changing needs of families in a holistic manner.

62. Together with the existing family services centres, there is an extensive network of 66 family service units operated by SWD and non-governmental organisations to serve people of all age groups, including women coming from different background and with various needs. The objectives of the family services centres and integrated family service centres are to preserve and strengthen the family as a unit, to enable individuals and families to prevent personal and family problems and to deal with them when they arise. With the strengthening of outreach and networking means, the family services centres / integrated family service centres will be more able to identify problems early and render timely intervention, hence contributing to preventing family tragedies, including domestic violence from happening.

63. Other preventive measures are launched in the form of talks, groups working sessions and programmes to enhance family functioning and strengthen family relationships. The provision of occasional child care service, after school care service and mutual help service can help alleviate the child care burden of women. Women's participation in mutual help groups and volunteering work enhance their self-esteem and widen their social network, which can, in return, empower them to eschew domestic violence. For those who are in emotional distress stemming from various problems such as marital discord, family relationship, parenting difficulty, financial hardship, etc., social workers from family services centres / integrated family service centres render intensive counselling to tackle their problems in a positive way, hence preventing the escalation of family problems to tragedies or domestic violence. In addition to the counselling service, specialised treatment offered by clinical psychologists, various community support services, financial aid, housing assistance, refuge centre for women and time-out facility in the Family Crisis Support Centre (FCSC) are also arranged according to individual needs.

64. Ongoing Family Life Education (FLE) programmes are organised throughout the year to enhance family functioning, strengthen family relationship by equipping individuals with the knowledge and skills required to cope with changing roles and demands in life, and to promote public awareness of the problem of child abuse and spouse battering. In addition, a two-year family education project has been implemented with additional resources since early 2001 to enable social workers to provide more timely assistance to families in crisis. Through counselling, supportive and mutual help programmes, at-risk families are provided with knowledge and skills on effective communication, parenting, etc. as well as other necessary professional assistance in solving family problems encountered. The experience of concerned family education service units will be shared in training programmes so that the effective approaches on prevention and targeted services to families at-risk can be adopted in family and community-based service units.

65. Among different types of family life education programmes, parent education serves as an effective measure to prevent child abuse arising from marital problem and inadequate child management skills of parents and parents-to-be. SWD and non-governmental organisations have been promoting parent education through co-operation with the Maternal and Child Health Centres, schools, the commercial sector and private firms. Besides, additional funding of HK\$50 million (US\$6.41 million) administered by the Education and Manpower Bureau has been provided to extend parent education in schools and the community through organisation of parent education activities, production of parent education reference materials, and organisation of training courses to train up more parent educators.

66. Since January 2002, SWD has set up 20 Family Support and Resource Centres (FSRCs) which provide resource and support to individuals and families, in particular those who are vulnerable. Counselling, supportive groups and programmes and other tangible resources are provided to assist the vulnerable in developing their personal growth and interpersonal relationships, meeting their welfare needs, enhancing their problem-solving skills, and assisting them to develop mutual help networks with the community. These preventive and supportive programmes help to prevent the onset and deterioration of family crisis and violence.

67. Also starting from January 2002, SWD has set up 14 Family Support Networking Teams (FSNTs) mainly at the FSRCs in each administrative district of SWD to provide outreach and networking services to vulnerable families for the early identification of problems and timely intervention. To strengthen outreaching efforts to the vulnerable, eight FSNTs operated by non-governmental organisations in old urban areas, were set up in January 2003. The FSNTs reach out to identify vulnerable families in need, assess problems and needs of the families, provide them with information on the resources available, refer them to suitable services for assistance and mutual support to prevent family breakdown and tragedies.

68. There have been some suggestions on the need to strengthen community education against domestic and sexual violence. In the past few years, there have been many public education and publicity campaigns to promote public awareness about the prevention of violence, especially domestic violence. In addition, publicity materials including television API and leaflets to enhance public awareness and encourage needy families to seek early professional assistance have been produced.

69. To create a greater impact on the public regarding messages on early identification and prevention of problems, including various forms of violence, SWD has strengthened its preventive work through large-scale public education in a centrally co-ordinated approach since 2001. The publicity campaign on “Empowering Families to Face Challenges” was launched from December 2001 to July 2002 to promote positive values towards life, strengthen families and enhance people’s resilience in coping with stress. The campaign included 10 radio programmes, eight TV docu-dramas with dedicated themes on domestic violence, two kick-off ceremonies, radio and television API, promotional leaflets and posters, as well as district programmes.

70. To sustain the momentum, another publicity campaign with specific themes on strengthening families and combating violence (i.e. spouse battering, child abuse, elder abuse and sexual violence) has been launched since August 2002 to encourage families, including victims of violence to seek early professional assistance and to promote services available. Programmes included slogan and poster competition, radio series, district programmes on enhancing family care and support, etc. were conducted. In addition, “Resilient Family Ambassador” Awards were given to persons who had successfully overcome issues and problems arising from child abuse, battered

spouse, elder abuse, sexual violence episodes and were ready to share their positive experience with the public. To promote greater awareness of the subjects on elder abuse and sexual violence, a TVAPI on each subject was produced with the aim to encourage victims to seek assistance. At the same time, TVAPIs on other issues like battered spouse and child abuse will continue to be shown. To ensure that these messages would be spread throughout the community, apart from production of usual publicity materials such as leaflets and posters, large roadside display boards or banners carrying the messages and images of the winning entries of the slogan and posters competitions were displayed in conspicuous sites in all districts. Information on help lines were also displayed in these boards.

71. The clinical psychologists of SWD are also mobilized to contribute to the prevention of domestic violence through the Operation Silver Lining project implemented since December 2001. The clinical psychologists provide professional advice / perspectives on various mental health issues including those relating to domestic violence, sexual violence and homicide-suicide incidents to educate the public through the mass media. The ultimate goal of the project is to build up the resilience of the public in coping with crises in life by providing them with proper information and helping them to develop the appropriate perspectives with which they can view problems in their lives.

72. The Departmental Hotline Service Unit (DHS) of SWD serves as an important contact point for the public to gain access to the welfare services provided throughout the territory. Its scope of service includes answering enquiries from the general public on welfare services, arranging follow-up service for the needy callers, and providing counselling and advice on problem solving. To better serve families in crisis, a Family Help-line was set up in April 2000 with the aim to provide immediate counselling and assistance to families and persons in need and a 24-hour hotline operated by a non-governmental organisation was set up in the FCSC in November 2001. For service enhancement, a call transfer system has been installed between DHS of SWD and the FCSC since 27 January 2003. With this system in place, callers dialling up DHS outside the duty hours of the social workers are provided with a choice to directly transfer their calls to the 24-hour hotline service of the FCSC. The FCSC, in collaboration with the Suicide Crisis Intervention Centre, which is operated by a non-governmental organization on a three-year pilot basis, and SWD's After Office Hours Outreaching Team for

Child Abuse and Battered Spouse Cases and After Office Hours Psychiatric Emergency Outreaching Team, will provide 24-hours outreach and crisis intervention service to those callers in need.

Services offered to Victims of Domestic Violence

73. The Central Information System on Battered Spouse Cases set up by the SWD in 1997 has facilitated the collection of statistics on battered spouse cases. The number of newly reported battered female spouses has increased in the past few years as shown in the following figures. Apart from the fact that the rapid demographic, social and economic changes have undermined family solidarity, it is also believed that the effort made by the Government and non-governmental organisations in promoting public awareness of the problem of domestic violence and encouraging the battered spouses to seek professional assistance has contributed to the increase in reporting of battered spouse cases.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>
1998	970
1999	1,558
2000	2,150
2001	2,254
2002	2,787

74. According to the Child Protection Registry administered by the SWD, the number of newly reported female child abuse cases in the past few years are as follows:

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Cases</u>
1998	242
1999	353
2000	276
2001	308
2002	331

75. Over the past few years, SWD and non-governmental organisations continued to provide victims of domestic violence including spouse battering with a wide range of assistance as mentioned in the Initial Report. Besides, various initiatives have been undertaken to strengthen the services provided by SWD and non-governmental organisations to families in crisis including those

suffering from domestic violence. These initiatives are reported in the paragraphs below.

76. Besides the preventive and supportive services delineated in the paragraphs under the item “ Preventive measures on domestic violence”, SWD has strengthened the provision of specialised services for families facing crisis caused by domestic violence.

77. In April 2000, the former three Child Protective Services Units of SWD have been expanded into five regional Family and Child Protective Services Units (FCPSUs) and have been restructured since March 2002 to further enhance efficiency and effectiveness in protecting battered spouses and children affected by problem of child abuse and child custody disputes. These FCPSUs are specialised units providing one-stop and integrated services to help the spouses and children of families with the problems of spouse battering, child abuse and child custody disputes. The services provided by these units include public education, outreaching, crisis intervention, casework and group work treatment, preparation of social investigation reports to courts, statutory protection of children, arrangement of other services e.g. financial assistance, legal aid, psychological assessment and treatment, housing assistance, etc.

78. Since 2001, additional social workers have been provided for the existing three temporary shelters for women suffering from domestic and sexual violence. Besides, an additional (the 4<sup>th</sup>) temporary shelter for women which commenced operation in 2002, provides a total of 42 additional places for the women victims and their children, rendering the total number of women shelter places to 162. Same as the three other shelters, this shelter will also accommodate foreign domestic workers suffering from abuse. In addition, it has set up a men’s hotline and will provide treatment programme for male batterers.

79. The strength of clinical psychologists specialising in domestic violence cases was enhanced in 2001-02. Assessment and treatment are offered to victims and batterers of domestic violence cases. They work closely with the social workers of FCPSUs and they are developing assessment tools as well as other individual and group treatment packages.

80. In handling domestic violence incidents, the Police has introduced a new measure since September 2001 in which the Divisional Commander is

required to assess each domestic violence incident and decide whether or not follow-up visits to the victim / abuser are required, unless the case has been referred to the SWD for service or the victim and his / her children have moved to a safe place or a shelter to ensure their safety. To further strengthen our timely professional intervention to victims of domestic violence cases and their family members, SWD and the Police have implemented a new referral mechanism since 1 January 2003 such that domestic violence incidents may be referred to SWD for follow-up services even in the absence of the consent of victims / alleged offenders subject to certain conditions being met.

81. To strengthen support to families in crisis with the specific objective of preventing family tragedies and domestic violence, SWD has set up the first of its kind FCSC. The FCSC, which is operated by a non-governmental organisation, aims at providing time-out facilities to help people under stress or facing crisis (including women at risk of domestic violence) to manage their emotions and seek positive solution to family problems. Operating on a 24-hour basis, the FCSC provides an integrated package of services including a 24-hour hotline, outreach and prompt intervention, short-term overnight accommodation, skills training on stress and crisis management, mutual support groups, and public education programmes on positive problem solving, positive life value.

82. In assisting children in need of residential placements (e.g. child abuse victims, children witnessing domestic violence, children of inadequate parents, or new arrival families with adjustment problems), foster care is the preferred option because children are taken care of in a family setting in the community, instead of being placed into institutions. In view of the increase in service demand for foster care and emergency foster care services, additional resources of HK\$11.17 million (US\$1.43 million) have been secured to introduce 60 foster care and 30 emergency foster care places in 2002-03, and a further 60 foster care places in 2003-04 to cater for the vulnerable children in need of care or protection.

83. It has been suggested that services for children who have witnessed violence should be enhanced. Children witnessing spouse battering are one of the target groups served by the FCPSUs mentioned in paragraph 77. Apart from counselling rendered by the social workers of FCPSUs, other services such as residential care, psychological assessment and treatment will also be arranged to help them overcome the trauma they have encountered.

84. Apart from the initiatives undertaken with subsidy from the Government, pilot projects such as “the Women Crew and Hotline Services” and “the Crisis Intervention Team (Seeds of Hope)” in Tuen Mun Hospital, have been launched by non-governmental organisations to serve victims and families suffering from domestic violence with the support from the Lotteries Fund grant and funding from the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust.

#### Treatment and Counselling of Perpetrators of Domestic Violence

85. The FCPSUs and Clinical Psychology Units of SWD and non-governmental organisations handling domestic violence cases also provide individual and group treatment to the perpetrators with the aim of stopping their abusive behaviour and help their families restore normal functioning. Statutory supervision of perpetrators who are put under probation by courts is also provided by SWD.

86. To encourage men including perpetrators to seek professional assistance as early as possible and to provide them with immediate counselling or advice so as to prevent domestic violence, men’s hotlines have been set up by a number of non-governmental organisations, some of which are also operating temporary shelters for women.

#### Services offered to Victims of Sexual Violence

87. The first Rape Crisis Centre, RainLily, is a three-year pilot project funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust (HKJCT) since December 2000. It is operated by a non-governmental organisation, the Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women, to serve women victims of sexual violence. It provides one-stop services including hotline, 24-hour outreaching, crisis intervention, therapeutic group, counselling, arrangement of medical examination, legal services, etc. The need for the services will be reviewed by the end of the three-year period.

#### Cross-sector Collaboration

88. The Government recognises the importance of the joint efforts of different government departments, professionals and non-governmental organisations in preventing and tackling domestic violence and has made

improvement in the existing mechanisms for collaboration at different levels in the past few years.

89. The Committee on Child Abuse which is chaired by SWD and comprises representatives from different government departments and non-governmental organizations is in place to propose measures for prevention of child abuse through enhancing public awareness of the problem, promote early intervention and multi-disciplinary approach in handling child abuse cases, and strengthen investigation and treatment services. Besides, the Working Group on Combating Violence (WGCV) convened by SWD and attended by representatives from concerned government bureaux and departments, Hospital Authority and non-governmental organisations, etc. is responsible for advising on measures to prevent and tackle the problems of spouse battering and sexual violence.

90. Upon endorsement of the WGCV, “Procedural Guidelines for Handling Sexual Violence Cases” have been developed to enhance good practice and facilitate multi-disciplinary collaboration in the handling of sexual violence cases. The “Multi-disciplinary Guidelines on the Handling of Battered Spouse Cases” which were developed in 1996 are also under revision to better meet the needs of battered spouses and to improve the multi-disciplinary collaboration.

91. Concern has been expressed on housing needs of some of the victims of domestic violence. Currently, housing assistance (in the form of a public rental housing unit) may be provided to them upon the recommendation of social workers. Regular liaison meetings between SWD and Housing Department (HD) are conducted to exchange views on policy and operational issues with the aim to better meet the changing community needs. To address the concern over the need for prompt arrangement of housing assistance for victims of domestic violence, the criteria for Conditional Tenancy Scheme, one form of housing assistance for people undergoing divorce proceedings, has been relaxed since November 2001 to cover those who have no offspring or bring along no dependent children when leaving their matrimonial home. The relaxation of this housing policy has provided additional protection for women who have matrimonial problems. Besides, the referral mechanism between the two departments in handling various forms of housing assistance, such as transfer of public rental housing tenancy and splitting of public rental housing tenancy, has also been streamlined to speed up the application process.

92. All along the Administration has close collaboration with the non-governmental sector at different levels. Among members of the Working Group on Combating Violence, there are representatives from non-governmental organisations viz. Caritas-Hong Kong, the Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women, Harmony House, Christian Family Service Centre, Po Leung Kuk, the Hong Kong Association for the Survivors of Women Abuse (Kwan Fook) and the Hong Kong Council of Social Service. The 13 District Co-ordinating Committees on Family and Child Welfare which are chaired by the District Social Welfare Officers of SWD to plan and co-ordinate family and child welfare services including those relating to domestic violence to meet district needs are also attended by representatives from non-governmental organisations. At operational level, the non-governmental organisations and SWD jointly organise many publicity and community education activities. The social workers of FCPSUs and non-governmental organisations also work closely with each other on individual cases (e.g. FCPSUs refer cases to join the groups run by non-governmental organisations, provide follow-up services for residents of temporary shelter for women, etc.) and joint projects (e.g. parallel groups for parents and children witnessing domestic violence, publicity programmes on prevention of domestic violence, etc.)

### Information System

93. In order to collect essential data on battered spouse cases handled by different organisations and government departments to gauge the size the spouse battering problem, as well as the profile of the battered spouses and batterers, the Central Information System on Battered Spouse Cases was set up in 1997. This system is being enhanced and developed into the Central Information System on Battered Spouse and Sexual Violence Cases to include the data of sexual violence cases. In respect of information on sexual crimes, such information is currently confined to those reported to the Hong Kong Police Force and relevant statistics on sexual crimes are as follows:

Year	No. of rape cases reported to the Police	No. of indecent assault cases reported to the Police
1998	90	1,214
1999	91	1,047
2000	104	1,124
2001	95	1,007
2002	95	991

As some women victims may be unwilling to report to the Police on their painful experience of being sexually abused, it is difficult to grasp the full picture of the problem in Hong Kong. More complete information will be captured in the future central information system, which is being developed and will be ready in 2003/04.

#### Special Training of Professionals

94. Some non-governmental organisations have commented that special training should be provided to various professionals involved in violence cases. The training available to them is elaborated in the following paragraphs.

#### Police

95. The SWD and non-governmental organisations concerned have been invited by the Police to attend the training days to share their experience in the handling of domestic violence cases with the frontline police officers since August 1997.

96. A new training package on domestic violence aiming to enhance frontline police officers' understanding of the problem and their knowledge and skills in handling domestic violence cases was delivered to all frontline police officers in the first half of 2001. The topic of handling domestic violence is included in the next cycle of Force-wide training days commencing 2003. All frontline officers will be updated on new developments in procedures and guidelines relating to handling domestic violence.

97. A Family Support Service Information Card with useful contact numbers of available services for both victims and abusers of domestic violence incidents was produced in September 2001. "Consent of Referral" is also included in the card to allow Police officers to refer cases promptly to the

SWD for further assistance. Easy-to-carry Aide-memoire Cards on Handling Domestic Violence were produced and distributed to frontline police officers for ease of reference in January 2002. Relevant training was provided to relevant frontline police officers prior to implementation of intervention services, e.g. before implementation of “Seeds of Hope” Crisis Intervention Team mentioned in paragraph 84.

98. During the period, officers of the Child Protection Policy Unit of the Hong Kong Police Force (HKPF), which is responsible for issues of domestic violence, continued to provide regular training / briefing sessions concerning the subject to the officers of SWD as well as the non-governmental organisations upon request. On the other hand, police officers responsible for the policing and investigation of domestic violence cases also attended the relevant training so as to enhance their knowledge in the field. Relevant training attended by the police officers include:

- (a) three three-day training courses on equal opportunities for the police trainers of various police formations delivered by professional trainers of the EOC between September and December 2001, with a package of training materials provided to trainers’ own training reference;
- (b) two one-day training workshops on gender awareness commissioned by the Women’s Commission, were held by the gender experts of the Gender Research Centre of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in February 2002. Further workshops, which will be designed in the light of the experience with this pilot workshop, are envisaged to be held in 2002/03;
- (c) a two-day conference entitled “Women for a Better Tomorrow” organised by the Women’s Commission in May 2002. A Woman Superintendent of Police was also invited to be one of the panelists at the break-out session on "Women's Safety at Home and in Public";
- (d) a half-day seminar on “Women and Law” organised by Legal Education Trust Fund in August 2002; and
- (e) “Sharing Forum on the Role of Contemporary Women in The Prevention of Child Abuse and Family Tragedies” organised by the Against Child Abuse Ltd. at the end of October 2002.

### Social workers

99. Training is important for equipping social workers with knowledge and skills to facilitate them in early identification of the cases at risk of domestic violence and rendering treatment to the victims of domestic and sexual violence, and perpetrators. SWD has organised over 10 different training programmes for more than 400 social workers from both the Department and non-governmental organisations from 1999-2000 to 2001-02. Apart from training on assessment and intervention skills, the programmes included gender sensitivity training to raise awareness of gender issues in service delivery. Seminars / workshops on handling sexual issues relating to mentally handicapped persons have also been organised. In 2002-03, another six programmes were conducted for 400 social workers.

### Health Care Professionals

100. Continuing professional development (CPD) for health care professionals is advocated. Individual professions are encouraged to devise CPD requirements and implementation schemes that best suit their circumstances. In the public sector, training for doctors, nurses and other health professionals in the Department of Health and the Hospital Authority on special topics such as family education, gender and health, family violence, battered spouse and child abuse, etc. is provided in collaboration with tertiary educational institutions.

### Multi-disciplinary training

101. SWD also organised a series of cross-sector training programmes in the past few years to tackle the issue of protection of women against violence, and to further strengthen the awareness, co-operation and skills of case management of all related professionals. Besides local trainers, overseas experts were invited to conduct training to address the training needs in the areas of multi-disciplinary collaboration, legal and practice issues on domestic and sexual violence in 2000-01 and 2001-02. These training programmes were attended by more than 600 participants including social workers, clinical psychologists, medical professionals, education personnel and law enforcement agents. SWD will continue to provide multi-disciplinary training conducted by local and overseas experts in 2002-03 and 2003-04.

## Research

102. There have been homicide-suicide incidents arising from family disputes / conflicts in which some individuals committed homicide and shortly thereafter committed suicide, resulting in the death of women and / or children in the family. To enhance understanding of the problem and to strengthen measures in the prevention of homicide-suicide and policy formulations, funding has been allocated to the Centre for Criminology of the University of Hong Kong for conducting a study on homicide-suicide in Hong Kong which includes the development of an assessment tool for frontline staff to identify high risk cases, and training for 150 frontline social workers on the use of the assessment tool and enhancing their knowledge and skills in handling cases with potential risks of homicide-suicide.

103. SWD will commission research on spouse battering and child abuse in order to gain in-depth understanding of the problems in Hong Kong and identify the elements contributing to effective prevention and intervention. The feasibility of adopting mandatory counselling will also be examined in the study. The research team will also be required to develop assessment tool(s) to facilitate early identification of cases at risk for rendering timely intervention and provide training for frontline professionals on the use of the assessment tool(s).

## **Other Measures to eliminate stereotyping and prejudices**

104. Measures adopted on the educational front to eliminate gender stereotypes are referred to under Article 10 below.