

ARTICLE 6
EXPLOITATION OF WOMEN

“States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.”

Prostitution and Traffic in Women

105. The Crimes Ordinance provides for several offences which are designed to prevent the exploitation of persons for sexual purposes. These include trafficking in people, causing prostitution, and exercising control over prostitutes. The Ordinance renders it unlawful to take an unmarried girl under the age of 16 years out of the possession of her parent or guardian. More details have been set out paragraphs 40 – 41 of the Initial Report.

Measures Against Trafficking of Women and Girl Child Prostitution

106. The HKSAR government takes a serious view on the problem of illegal immigrants or visitors involving in vice-activities in Hong Kong. To prevent visitors from entering Hong Kong to engage in prostitution or illegal activities, immigration officers at control points always exercise a high degree of vigilance on doubtful visitors and conduct in-depth examination on them whenever necessary.

107. The Hong Kong Police Force and the Immigration Department also conduct joint operations to combat prostitution by illegal immigrants or visitors. In addition, depending on the nature of the vice-activities and whether or not those activities are syndicated, or have a triad involvement, financial enquiries may also take place under the Organised and Serious Crime Ordinance in order to restrain assets or recover the proceeds of crime.

108. While there have been women coming to Hong Kong illegally or under the disguise of visitors to practise prostitution, debriefings from those arrested revealed that almost all of them came here voluntarily. To combat sex tourism and child prostitution, the Government has introduced the Prevention of Child Pornography Bill to provide extra-territorial effect to a list of sexual offences under the Crimes Ordinance if the victim is under the 16

years of age and to criminalize the arranging and advertising of child sex tours as mentioned in Article 5.

Assistance Available and Protection Rendered to Sex Workers

109. Sex workers in need of welfare services and who are willing to accept external intervention may receive counselling and welfare assistance provided by the 66 family services centres / integrated family service centres run by the SWD and non-governmental organisations. Assistance such as financial relief, psychological service, vocational training, employment service and housing assistance can be arranged to help them tide over the hardship they may encounter upon giving up prostitution. Social workers of SWD will render statutory supervision to sex workers below the age of 18 by way of initiating Care or Protection proceedings pursuant to the Protection of Children and Juveniles Ordinance, Chapter 213. Residential care may be arranged as appropriate to ensure the provision of adequate care to prevent them from being exploited.

Services and support rendered by Government and non-governmental organisations to ensure health and safety of sex workers

110. Eight female Social Hygiene Clinics under the Department of Health provide free consultation, investigation, treatment, counselling and education to all female sex workers who suffer from sexually transmitted infections. Other free investigations include Paps smear every six months, annual X-ray Chest, Hepatitis B screening and voluntary HIV tests. Voluntary HIV tests are offered to all attendees of the service. The clinics have close liaison with other non-governmental organisations e.g. Action for Reach Out to receive their referrals of female sex workers for check-up. Sex workers with social problems will be referred to appropriate non-governmental organisations or the SWD for follow-up actions.

111. To encourage sex workers to protect themselves from sexually transmitted diseases, oral sex condoms, health education pamphlets in different language versions, and souvenirs with health messages are provided free of charge. A new education focus programme for safety in oral sex for all female sex workers will be implemented after the pilot study in year 2002.

112. Hospital Authority also provides a comprehensive range of medical treatment and rehabilitation services through hospitals and specialist clinics to the general public, including sex workers. The services provided depend on patients' clinical conditions, and Hospital Authority does not differentiate the services on the basis of patients' occupation.

Application of Laws against Violence to Prostitutes

113. Existing laws relating to violence against women, for example, rape, buggery, indecent assault and other assaults, apply equally to sex workers as any other women in society. Protection is rendered to all women irrespective of whether they are sex workers or not.

Note: Protection of imported workers and foreign domestic helpers is detailed in Article 11.