

WOMEN'S COMMISSION
Secretary's Report

INTRODUCTION

This paper presents for Members' information:-

- (a) the activities undertaken by the Women's Commission since its fourth meeting;
- (b) the Chairperson, Women's Commission and PAS(Women)'s attendance at the fourth meeting of the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration (AGGI) held from 20 to 21 August 2001;
- (c) the Women Leaders' Network Meeting held from 22 to 24 August 2001;
- (d) the publication of the gender statistics report, "Women and Men in Hong Kong – Key Statistics" by Census and Statistics Department (C&SD);
- (e) the Thematic Household Survey to be conducted by C&SD;
- (f) the Global Summit of Women to be held from 13-15 September 2001;
- (g) the meeting to be held with Housing Department on 5 October 2001 regarding public housing issues that are related to women; and
- (h) the progress made in organising the large scale convention on women to be held in May 2002.

ACTIVITIES HELD SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Work of the Task Forces

2. Members will wish to note that since the last meeting, the Gender Mainstreaming Task Force has held three meetings, and both the Empowerment Task Force and the Public Education Task Force have met twice. Co-conveners of the three Task Forces will give verbal reports on the progress of work at the coming meeting.

Visits to Local Women Organisations

3. Since the fourth meeting of the Women's Commission held on 10 July 2001, visits to three local women groups / service agencies had been organised for Members in July and August 2001. On 28 July 2001 (Saturday), seven Members visited the Tsing Yi Lady's Forum and eight Members visited the Yan Oi Tong. At the former, Members were briefed about its mutual help and volunteer activities in the district. At the latter, Members exchanged views on women unemployment issues, homemakers, women health and problems faced by new arrival women.

4. On 18 August 2001, five Members visited the Association of Women with Disabilities Hong Kong. Members discussed issues faced by women with disabilities including discrimination, inadequate public health information and access facilities, and insufficient statistics on people with disabilities. In this relation, Members may wish to note that recently C&SD has published a Special Topics Report on "Persons with Disabilities and Chronic Diseases" which contains sex-disaggregated data about people with disabilities and chronic diseases in Hong Kong in 2000.

Meeting with Representatives from the All-China Women Federation and the National Working Committee for Women and Children under the State Council

5. On 19 July 2001, five Members of the Women's Commission and DS(Women) met with the representatives from the All-China Women Federation and the National Working Committee for Women and Children under the State Council arranged by the Hong Kong Chinese Manufacturers' Association. Members were briefed on the work of the National Working

Committee for Women and Children under the State Council and its role in the promulgation of the “Development Frameworks of Women in China 2001-2010”. The meeting also discussed the major objectives and priorities of work for development of women in the Mainland for the future.

Open Forum of the Women’s Commission held on 21 July 2001

6. The Open Forum of the Women’s Commission was held from 9:00 am to 12:30 pm on 21 July 2001 (Saturday) at the Lecture Hall of the Hong Kong Science Museum. The response was very enthusiastic. About 240 persons from 80 women’s organisations, service agencies, higher education institutions, community groups and Government bureaux / departments attended the Forum to discuss the future direction of work of the Women’s Commission. Presentations were given by Mr Alvin Li, Assistant Commissioner of C&SD; the Chairperson, Women’s Commission; Dr Agnes Yeung, Co-convener of the Gender Mainstreaming Task Force; Ms Sophia Kao, Co-convener of the Empowerment Task Force; and Mrs Peggy Lam, Co-convener of the Public Education Task Force.

7. Participants had been active in the subsequent discussion. Issues including women employment, gender mainstreaming, women and health, assistance to women with marriage problems, etc. were raised. A transcript of the proceedings of the Open Forum is under preparation and will be made available to Members for information once it is ready.

FOURTH MEETING OF ASIA PACIFIC ECONOMIC COOPERATION (APEC) AD HOC ADVISORY GROUP ON GENDER INTEGRATION (AGGI) (20-21 AUGUST 2001)

8. The Chairperson, Women’s Commission and PAS(Women) attended the fourth meeting of APEC AGGI on 20-21 August 2001. The main objective of the meeting was to continue the discussion on how to integrate gender perspectives into APEC processes and activities. A summary of the work of AGGI is set out in detail in the Chair, AGGI’s report to SOM.

9. The book “Gender Mainstreaming: Good Practice from the Asia Pacific Region” has been published incorporating examples of gender mainstreaming in different sectors in some economies, e.g. SMEs, science,

technology and telecommunication sectors.

10. Members will also wish to note that the second APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women would be held in August / September 2002 in Mexico. It has been suggested that the main theme should cover “women doing business”, “new economy and trade” and “investment facilitation”. Sub-themes suggested included “human capacity building”, “small and medium enterprises”, “micro-enterprises”, “family business” and “information technologies”. Members will be kept informed of further developments.

WOMEN LEADERS’ NETWORK (WLN) MEETING

11. The Chairperson, Women’s Commission and five Members of the Women’s Commission joined the Hong Kong delegation (a total of 17 members) and participated in the APEC WLN Meeting held on 22-24 August 2001 in Beijing. The theme of the meeting was “Challenges and Opportunities for APEC Women in the Process of Economic Globalisation”, and the following topics were covered:-

- (a) women entrepreneurs and world markets;
- (b) partnership with women-managed small and medium enterprises (SMEs);
- (c) women’s role in science, technology and sustainable development; and
- (d) gender mainstreaming with APEC process and activities.

At the WLN Meeting, the Chairperson, Women’s Commission made a presentation on “Economic Empowerment of Women: Setting up Cooperatives”. The WLN agreed that a “Statement and Recommendations” to the APEC Leaders and Ministers should be presented to the APEC SME Ministerial Meeting held later that month and the APEC Economic Leaders Meeting to be held in October 2001.

GENDER STATISTICS REPORT – “WOMEN AND MEN IN HONG KONG - KEY STATISTICS”

12. At the meeting of the Women's Commission held on 30 March 2001, Members commented on the proposed charts and tables to be included in the proposed gender statistics report to be published by C&SD in the middle of this year. The gender statistics report, "Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics" was published on 13 August 2001. Copies of the report were circulated to Members on 14 August 2001. Many of the comments by Members have been incorporated. Other comments would be followed up in future issues of the report. The Secretariat has written to the C&SD requesting them to take follow up action.

THEMATIC HOUSEHOLD SURVEY IN THE FOURTH QUARTER OF 2001 – TIME USE SURVEY AND FACTORS HINDERING WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN SOCIETY

13. Members were informed at the last meeting that the C&SD had been invited to commission a Thematic Household Survey in the fourth quarter of 2001 on what people do with their time (i.e. time-use survey) and factors hindering women's participation in society. A proposal setting out the objectives, design and work schedule of the survey was circulated to Members for comments.

14. Members' comments had been consolidated and forwarded to C&SD for consideration. Most of the comments made by Members had been taken on board by C&SD in its revised proposal. Invitations were sent to contractors on 21 August 2001 to bid for the conducting of the survey. Members may wish to note that:-

- (a) invitation to tender will now also be extended to tertiary institutions;
- (b) it would be made clear in the tender document that preference will be given to contractors who have included gender experts in their teams;
- (c) the Secretariat would be represented in the selection panel to ensure that a suitable contractor would be appointed;

- (d) four weeks (now scheduled for the third week of September to third week of October 2001) would be allowed for Members to comment on the questionnaire design; and
- (e) the Women's Commission would be consulted on the draft report in end January 2002 before it is finalized.

According to the current schedule, the proposed Thematic Household Survey would be completed by end February 2002.

GLOBAL SUMMIT OF WOMEN

15. Members have discussed at the last meeting whether the women's Commission should sponsor the Closing Reception of the Global Summit of Women and were not in favour of the proposal. The organiser of the Global Summit has been informed of Members' views. It was suggested that a visit cum meeting with the participants of the Summit to discuss women's issues should be organised. However, a mutually convenient time could not be identified. Members of the Women's Commission are, instead, invited to the Opening and Closing Receptions of the Summit to be held on 13 and 15 September 2001 respectively. The latter reception will be co-hosted by Health and Welfare Bureau and Home Affairs Bureau. Meanwhile, an information leaflet on the Women's Commission will be printed for distribution at the Closing Reception of the Summit.

MEETING WITH HOUSING DEPARTMENT

16. Members will recall that housing related issues had been brought up during some of the Commission's earlier visits to women's groups and agencies. To have a better understanding on these issues, a meeting has now been arranged for the Women's Commission to meet with officials of the Housing Department in the afternoon of 5 October 2001. The meeting would tentatively cover:-

- (a) an overview of the public housing programme;
- (b) the allocation policy and arrangements for families in distress (which would cover issues such as compassionate rehousing and

new arrivals); and

- (c) tenancy management (including tenancy splitting, conditional tenancy, etc.).

PROGRESS IN ORGANISING A LARGE SCALE CONVENTION ON WOMEN TO BE HELD IN MAY 2002

17. Members were informed at the last meeting that a large scale convention should be organized in 2002. Given the lead time required for organising the convention, it was felt that the convention should be rescheduled tentatively to 10-12 May 2002. The Secretariat is liaising with the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre to reserve the venue. Meanwhile, nine Members (three from each of the three Task Forces of the Women's Commission) have agreed to participate in the organizing committee.

ADVICE SOUGHT

18. Members are invited to note:-

- (a) the activities undertaken by the Women's Commission since its fourth meeting (paragraphs 2 - 7);
- (b) the fourth meeting of APEC AGGI held from 20-21 August 2001 (paragraphs 8 - 10);
- (c) the WLN Meeting held from 22 to 24 August 2001 (para 11);
- (d) the publication of the gender statistics report "Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics" by C&SD (para 12);
- (e) the Thematic Household Survey to be conducted in the fourth quarter of 2001 by C&SD (paragraphs 13 - 14);
- (f) the Global Summit of Women to be held from 13 to 15 September 2001 (para 15);
- (g) the meeting to be held with Housing Department on

5 October 2001 regarding public housing issues that are related to women (paragraph 16); and

- (h) the progress made in organizing the large scale convention on women to be held in May 2002 (para 17).

Women' s Commission Secretariat
September 2001