

**WOMEN'S COMMISSION**  
**Leisure Services for Women in Hong Kong**

**Purpose**

This paper outlines the current leisure services provided by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department (LCSD) in the community and sets out the way forward to enhance the participation of women in recreation and sports activities and facilities.

**Background**

2. To promote the policy objective of 'Sports for All', the LCSD provides a great variety of recreation and sports programmes and facilities for a wide cross section of the community. We encourage people of different genders, ages and abilities to participate in recreation and sports activities regularly to enhance the physical fitness of Hong Kong people and to foster a strong sporting culture in the community. In 2006, the LCSD has organized over 29,100 community recreation and sports programmes in 18 districts for more than 1,780,000 participants from all walks of life. In addition, the Department also manages over 1,400 leisure facilities for public use, including swimming pools, sports centres, sports grounds, parks, playgrounds, camps, water sports centres, etc.

**Current Situation**

**Leisure Programmes**

3. The community recreation and sports programmes organized by the Department include sports training classes, competitions and recreational activities. They are organized for both male and female and cater for the needs of all age groups. Among the 1,780,000 participants taking part in the community recreation and sports activities in 2006, 986,000 are women, representing 55.4% of the overall participation rate. This demonstrates that

our leisure activities are generally suitable for women and adequate opportunities are being offered to them. Because of their nature, duration and time, some of the programmes are particularly welcomed by women. They include Chinese dance, aerobic, yoga, jazz dance, hydro fitness, modern dance, etc, in which more than 90% of the participants are women.

4. To facilitate housewives' participation, we organize recreation and sports programmes at the time that is convenient for them. For example, all district leisure services offices are providing regular programmes during the period of 9:00am to 11:00am and 2:00pm to 4:00pm from Monday to Friday throughout the year. Housewives can join these activities when they are free from the housework and daily routines.

5. In consideration of the physical ability of different genders, most competitive events are divided into male and female groups so that participants of the same gender and similar age range will be grouped together for competition. Among the 363 competition events we held in 2006, 273 (75%) events of 11 types of sports are divided into male and female competition groups. These sports competitions include athletic meet, swimming gala, distance run, badminton, squash, table-tennis, tennis, canoeing, windsurfing, basketball and volleyball. For activities such as chess, dance and gateball which physical ability is not a significant determining factor, competitions have not been divided into different gender groups.

### Leisure Facilities

6. LCSD leisure facilities are designed and provided for the community at large. In view of the growing awareness of the benefits of breastfeeding and the demand for the provision of more breastfeeding places in public areas, we have included breastfeeding room as a standard provision in the planning of new major leisure facilities in order to meet the needs of women. Consideration will also be given to provide breastfeeding rooms wherever feasible when existing leisure facilities are renovated or upgraded.

7. For the provision of toilet facilities, we have also taken into account the different gender requirements and the longer time required by female as compared with male in using toilets. LCSD has followed the Handbook on Standard Features for Public Toilets devised by the Food and Environmental

Hygiene Department and adopted the ratio of 1 male to 2 female toilet compartments in the planning of new leisure venues. The provision of baby napkin changing area / bench will also be included in the toilets of leisure venues under planning. In addition, LCSD will consider increasing the toilet cubicles for female users when improvement works are carried out for existing leisure venues, if space permits.

### **Way Forward**

8. With the full implementation of District Councils (DCs) Review in 2008, the role of DCs will be enhanced and they will play a more participatory role in managing district leisure facilities and the adoption of district activities and programmes to better meet district needs. In this connection, more resources will be made available to DCs for expanding and improving district programmes. LCSD will continue to play an active role to liaise with DCs, District Sports Associations and local sports organizations to organize an even greater variety of recreation and sports activities to cater for the interests of different target groups including women.

9. On the facility side, LCSD will consciously address the needs of women in the provision of new leisure facilities as well in the upgrading of existing facilities wherever practicable.

**Leisure and Cultural Services Department**  
**September 2007**