

WOMEN'S COMMISSION

Work Direction of the Current Term and Re-organisation of Working Groups

Introduction

An internal meeting was held on 6 April 2018 between the Chairperson of Women's Commission (WoC) and convenors of various working groups/steering committee, former convenors/Chairperson were also invited to attend, to discuss the work direction of the current-term WoC and the re-organisation of relevant working groups. This paper invites Members to note the gist of the discussion, and comment on the work direction and re-organisation of working groups proposed at the internal meeting.

Work Direction

2. At the internal meeting, Members opined that the current-term WoC should, on the basis of its on-going work, step up efforts in the following areas -

- (i) undertaking researches and surveys on women-related issues;
- (ii) enhancing liaison and collaboration with local women's groups, District Councils and schools;
- (iii) enhancing collaboration with other public bodies and government bureaux/departments; and
- (iv) enhancing the Funding Scheme for Women's Development.

(i) Researches and surveys

3. Initiating and undertaking surveys and researches on women's issues is part of the terms of reference of WoC. The Census and Statistics Department was commissioned to conduct WoC's last survey on the time use patterns and women's employment, of which the findings were released in July 2015. At the internal meeting, a Member opined that the current-term WoC should conduct researches on women-related issues. According to the discussion by Members at WoC Retreat 2017, possible topics include:

- reasons for professional women to leave the workforce after starting a family;
- income disparity between genders;
- needs for different support services and facilities (e.g. childcare services and facilities) of women in each of the 18 Districts; and
- roles of Hong Kong women amid the opportunities brought by the Belt and Road Initiative.

(ii) Enhancing liaison and collaboration with local women's groups, District Councils and schools

4. WoC consulted the 18 District Councils and, in collaboration with the Labour and Welfare Bureau, held two public consultation sessions between March and May 2018 on the outline of the fourth report to be submitted by the Government under the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. At the internal meeting, a Member opined that consultation activities of this nature were conducive to the promotion of WoC's profile and work as well as extensive collection of opinions, and suggested that liaison and collaboration with local women's groups and District Councils should be strengthened. Other Members considered that liaison and collaboration with schools should also be strengthened to promote awareness of women's issues among students.

(iii) Enhancing collaboration with other public bodies and government bureaux/departments

5. At the internal meeting, Members opined that efforts of WoC alone would not suffice for promoting women's development and that in relation to various issues, especially measures involving training and employment support, closer collaboration with other public bodies (such as the Employees Retraining Board) could create synergy and compliment each others' efforts. For example, the Capacity Building Mileage Programme, which provides training programmes with flexible options of time and venues and without admission requirement on academic qualifications, could complement the vocational courses of other training organisations. WoC could explore the strengthening of collaboration with other organisations in the publicity and mutual recognition of training programmes, and enhanced dissemination of information of other training avenues, such as the Continuing Education Fund.

6. In this connection, specifics about survey and research topics and modes, types of research organisations to be engaged, partner organisations to be identified, liaison, collaboration scope and modes, timetables etc., could be further discussed and followed up by relevant working groups.

(iv) Enhancing the Funding Scheme for Women's Development

7. At the internal meeting, a number of Members suggested increasing the funding allocated under the Funding Scheme for Women's Development, and reviewing the current application vetting procedures and guidelines to ascertain any room for streamlining. Proposed enhancements to the Funding Scheme for Women's Development are detailed in the paper WoC 04/18.

Re-organisation of Working Groups

8. In view of the above work direction, it was suggested at the internal meeting that the existing four working groups and one steering committee under WoC should be re-organised into four working groups, as follows:

<u>Original</u> <u>working group/</u> <u>steering committee</u>	<u>Working group</u> <u>after</u> <u>re-organisation</u>	<u>Working group's areas of work</u> <u>after re-organisation</u>
Working Group on Enabling Environment	Working Group on Enabling Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economy-related topics (e.g. unleashing women labour force) • Gender mainstreaming • Engaging men for women's rights ("He for She") • Women's participation
Working Group on Collaboration	Working Group on Collaboration and Promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public education and publicity • Funding Scheme for Women's Development • Collaboration with public and private organisations
Working Group on Public Education		
Working Group on Empowerment	Working Group on Empowerment and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional training • Capacity Building Mileage Programme • Researches and surveys
Steering Committee on Capacity Building Mileage Programme		

(Nil)	Working Group on Health and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and mental health of women • Women with disabilities • Prevention of sexual harassment • Adversity in marriage
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9. WoC could also set up task forces as and when necessary to advise and follow up on specific topics.

Resources, Manpower and Positioning

10. At the internal meeting, Members opined that re-positioning and re-structuring of WoC would be necessary in the long run, including the options of bringing WoC under the purview of the Chief Secretary for Administration or turning it into a statutory body, seeking additional resources and the establishment of an independent secretariat.

Advice Sought

11. Members are invited to note the above gist of the discussion at the internal meeting and comment on the work direction of WoC and re-organisation of the working groups. Subject to Members' comments, the Secretariat will issue the invitation to all Members to join the working groups after the re-organisation according to the established mechanism.

Women's Commission Secretariat
May 2018