

Celebration of the 70th Anniversary of The Founding of the People's Republic of China and International Women's Day 2019 and Other Major Events in the First-half of 2019

Introduction

This paper informs Members of the reception to celebrate the 70th Anniversary of The Founding of the People's Republic of China and International Women's Day 2019 and other major events in the first half of 2019, and the progress of the preparatory work.

Reception to Celebrate the 70th Anniversary of The Founding of the People's Republic of China and International Women's Day 2019

2. Each year Women's Commission (WoC) organises a reception in March to celebrate International Women's Day (IWD)¹ with guests from different sectors in the community. In previous years, as WoC's flagship event, the receptions were attended by hundreds of representatives from local women's groups, non-governmental organisations, the business sector and WoC's Gender Focal Point (GFP) Network. In 2018, the event was well-attended with close to 600 guests.

3. 2019 will mark the 70th Anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China (hereafter "70A"). To celebrate the special occasion, we suggest that we take the opportunity to celebrate 70A in conjunction with IWD 2019.²

4. The preparatory work for IWD 2019 is well on track. The reception is scheduled for 8 March 2019 at the Central Government Offices' Conference Hall which has a capacity of accommodating about 800 persons. We have invited the Chief Executive, Chief Secretary for Administration, representatives from the

¹ IWD is celebrated annually on March 8.

² The WoC Conference in 2017 was also one of the events for the celebration of the 20th Anniversary of the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Liaison Office of the Central People's Government and the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Secretary for Labour and Welfare (SLW) and Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare as officiating guests, to be joined by WoC Chairperson. We shall also explore the feasibility of inviting other heavy weight guests to join the event.

United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (UNCSW)

5. Set up in 1946, UNCSW is a functional commission of the UN Economics and Social Council under UN Charter Article 68, with the mandate to promote gender equality and the empowerment of women. UNCSW is also the drafter of the Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (1967) and later the legally binding Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in 1979. Forty-five Member States of the UN serve as members of UNCSW at any one time. China is currently one of the members of UNCSW. UNCSW normally meets in March every year at the UN Headquarters in New York.

6. Since 2004, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has been attending the first week meetings of UNCSW as part of the Chinese delegation every year. With a few special cases, the HKSAR delegation should comprise the incumbent WoC Chairperson with one or two subject officers from Labour and Welfare Bureau. Unfortunately, the Chairperson could not attend the meetings of UNCSW in 2018 and 2019 due to other commitments. As a result, SLW headed the HKSAR delegation in 2018 and, whilst in New York, took the opportunity to make a few courtesy visits to, inter alia, the Hong Kong Association of New York, the Asian Women in Business, the International Women's Entrepreneurial Challenge Foundation, etc. This year, we will invite the Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare to lead the HKSAR delegation to attend the 63rd session UNCSW which will take place at the UN Headquarters in New York from 11 to 22 March 2019. According to the information available at the UN website³, the two themes for this year's session are as follows:

Priority theme: Social protection systems, access to public services and sustainable infrastructure for gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls; and

³ Available at UNCSW's website: <http://www.unwomen.org/en/csw/csw63-2019/official-meetings>.

Review theme: Women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development.

7. UNCSW provides an invaluable forum for the HKSAR and WoC to establish contacts and exchange views with, in addition to the All-China Women's Federation, also representatives from overseas governments, non-government organisations and women's group at the international arena.

Luncheon with Business Community to Promote Gender Diversity

8. The Working Group on Enabling Environment (WGEE) agreed at its meeting in August 2018 that one of the work priorities of the WGEE would be the promotion of gender diversity in the corporate sector, in particular women on boards, by enhancing collaboration with leaders in the business community.

9. In this regard, the Secretariat has been planning to organise a luncheon for the business sector, as well as our network of GFPs of listed companies in accordance with the approved work plan. The event is expected to take place in the 2nd quarter of 2019.

10. Similar to the WoC lunch time talk held in September 2017 which featured Ms Mary HUEN, Chief Executive Officer of Standard Chartered Bank (Hong Kong) Limited, as the keynote speaker on the topic of "Unleashing Women's Potential in a People-Oriented Working Environment", we shall invite WoC Chairperson to deliver the opening remark, to be followed by a keynote speech by a prominent female leader in the corporate sector on the topic of gender diversity.

Advice Sought

11. Members are invited to note the latest development of the above events.

**Women's Commission Secretariat
February 2019**