

WOMEN'S COMMISSION
Notes of the 83rd Meeting held on 13 April 2016

Present: Mrs Stella LAU (Chairperson)
Miss Annie TAM Permanent Secretary for
Labour and Welfare
(Vice-chairperson)

Professor Cecilia CHAN
Ms Aruna GURUNG
Dr. Maggie KOONG
Ms Leona LAM
Dr. Trisha LEAHY
Ms Yolanda NG
Ms Scarlett PONG
Dr Loletta SO
Ms Sandy WONG
Ms Catherine WONG
Ms WONG Shu-ming
Ms WONG Siu-wah
Mr. Robert WONG
Ms Rabi YIM
Ms Carol YIP Director of Social Welfare

Absent with Ms Angelina KWAN
Apologies: Professor Shirley HUNG
Ms Juan LEUNG
Mrs Miranda LEUNG
Mr. Philip TSAI
Ms Yvonne YEUNG
Mr. Michael YAU

Assistant Secretary
(Constitutional & Mainland
Affairs)5, Constitutional &
Mainland Affairs Bureau

<u>In</u>	Mr. David LEUNG	DS(Welfare)1 (Ag.)
<u>attendance:</u>	Miss Fiona LI	PAS(Welfare)2
	Ms Winnie CHAN	AS(Welfare)2A (Secretary)
	Mr. Syrus TSUI	AS(Welfare)2C
	Mrs Annie CHAN	CEO(SD)

For Agenda Prof. Sophia CHAN
Item 3

Dr. Rita HO

Under Secretary for Food
and Health
Principal Medical & Health
Officer, Family Health
Service, Department of
Health

**Item 1: WoC Progress Report 2015-16 and Work Plan
2016-17 (WoC 03/16 and WoC 04/16)**

1.1 AS(Welfare)2A introduced the progress reports 2015-16 of the working groups and the work plan 2016-17 of WoC. Some of the key activities of the work plan were highlighted below –

- (a) A gathering for the District Council Gender Focal Points (DC GFPs) would be arranged in the second quarter of 2016 which would be the first gathering with the DC GFPs since the start of the new DC term in January 2016;
- (b) The large-scale WoC Conference would be held in late 2016/early 2017, subject to the venue availability. Different activities would be organised to tie in with the WoC Conference;
- (c) A Pre-conference Activity Session would be held before the conference day, which aimed to showcase different aspects of Hong Kong women through lively performances and information presentations by women's groups and

non-governmental organisations (NGOs);

- (d) Three school competitions, namely handicraft competition for children with special educational needs and their parents, drawing competition for primary students and photo competition for secondary students, would be organised;
- (e) An award scheme would be introduced which aimed to give recognition to various organisations in the community who initiated projects that were conducive to women's economic empowerment; and
- (f) The WoC Report 2012-2015 would be published around mid-2016 to showcase the past achievements and activities of WoC from 2012 to 2015.

1.2 Members noted the progress being made and the work plan of WoC. A few Members said that for the works on the public education front done by WoC in 2015-16, the recent TV series "Working Women 2015" and the "Women with Dreams 5" had been well received by the public. The "Working Women 2015" identified how a woman pursued her career in a traditionally male-dominated industry in each episode; while the "Women with Dreams 5" covered a wide range of issues relating to women from an interesting perspective.

1.3 Regarding the gender benchmark of 35% for appointing women to Government Advisory and Statutory Bodies (ASBs) as announced in the 2015 Policy Address, the Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (PSLW) said that a few Legislative Council (LegCo) Members had expressed concerns over the slight drop of women participation at the Government ASBs. PSLW said that LWB was coordinating a response from Government Bureaux/Departments.

1.4 The Chairperson said that it was also a global trend, including those western countries, for not having enough women representation in the private sector. A Member said that the issue could be further deliberated at the Working Group on Empowerment.

1.5 The Chairperson said that the seminars for the Capacity Building Mileage Programme (CBMP) delivered by WoC Members earlier were very well attended by the CBMP students. Positive feedbacks had been received from the participants and Members were encouraged to sign up for delivering the upcoming seminars.

1.6 PSLW said that promoting women employment was one of the key initiatives as announced in the Population Policy in 2015. The Government had been working on various initiatives. For example, the Labour Department (LD) had been promoting family-friendly employment measures while the Social Welfare Department (SWD) had been working on a number of supporting measures including the pilot scheme on “Living Allowance for Carers of the Elderly Persons from Low Income Families”, the pilot project on “Child Care Training for Grandparents” and enhancing child care services. To further support women employment, the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) had also offered on a pilot basis the “Modular Certificates Accumulation Scheme” in 2015-16 to allow trainees to make flexible arrangements for further studies and acquire recognised qualifications. ERB had also introduced a pilot “First-Hire-Then-Train Scheme” to assist unemployed persons aged 40 or above (mostly home-makers) in securing employment as care workers for residential care homes for the elderly. To support new arrivals (mostly women) who wish to work part-time, ERB would launch a pilot part-time job referral platform known as “Smart Starter” to provide vacancy referral

for non-domestic service part-time jobs. PSLW noted that WoC's Funding Scheme on Women's Development had adopted "women employment" as its theme since 2014. This would help attract some innovative ideas which could help facilitate women employment.

1.7 A Member suggested that WoC should keep in view the progress of various policies concerning women and deliberate on how WoC could complement the Government's efforts in supporting women employment.

1.8 The Chairperson thanked Members for their views. She appealed to Members' support for the WoC Conference and said that WoC would continue to offer advice to the Government on issues concerning women and supporting women employment in the coming year.

Item 2: Progress Report of Women's Development Goals (WoC 05/16)

2.1 AS(Welfare)2A introduced the progress in the implementation of Women's Development Goals (WDG) in the

past year. She said that all short-term goals had been completed as reported in an earlier report in 2014, while relevant Bureaux and Departments had continued to follow up the long-term issues and ongoing tasks. Some of the latest follow-up actions were highlighted below –

- (a) For item 2.1 “Enhance public awareness of and interest in ASBs”, the Chief Executive accepted in the 2015 Policy Address the recommendation of WoC that the appointment rate of women to Government ASBs should be raised from 30% to 35%;
- (b) For item 6 “Strengthen support for victims of domestic and sexual violence”, to provide better support to victims of domestic violence and families in need, SWD would provide in 2016-17 additional 40 places in refuge centre for women and Family Crisis Support Centre; and provide additional manpower for refuge centres for women and Multi-purpose Crisis Intervention and Support Centre to enhance child care support service for residents;
- (c) For item 8.5 “Study the needs of homemakers in pursuing

life-long learning and in re-entering the labour market”, in 2014-15, ERB launched the “Training and Employment Programme for Homemakers” on a pilot basis. In 2016-17, ERB would launch the “Smart Starter” pilot scheme to establish a referral platform for part-time jobs;

- (d) For Item 10 “Enhance the promotion of Family-Friendly Employment Policies and Practice”, the statutory paternity leave came into operation on 27 February 2015. To tie in with the implementation of statutory paternity leave, LD had launched extensive publicity and promotional activities to assist employers, employees and the public in understanding this statutory benefit. LD would continue to encourage wider adoption of family-friendly employment practices at workplaces and disseminate relevant information to the general public through its employer networks as well as various educational and promotional activities; and

- (e) For item 14.1 “Monitor the implementation of Gender Mainstreaming (GM)” and item 1 of Long-term issues “To institutionalise GM in all policy areas in the Government”, in

the 2015 Policy Address, the Chief Executive accepted WoC's recommendations that all bureaux and departments should refer to the GM Checklist (Checklist) and apply GM when formulating major government policies and initiatives starting from 1 April 2015. The Chief Executive further announced in his 2016 Policy Address to implement a pilot scheme to encourage NGOs in the social welfare sector to refer to the GM Checklist and apply GM when formulating policies and programmes.

2.2 Members noted the progress of the implementation of WDG made by the relevant Bureaux and Departments. The Chairperson said that WoC would continue to monitor the work undertaken by relevant Bureaux and Departments.

Item 3: Latest Work on Promotion of Breastfeeding (WoC 06/16)

3.1 The Chairperson welcomed Professor Sophia CHAN and Dr. Rita HO to the meeting. Dr. HO gave a powerpoint presentation on the latest work implemented by the Food and Health Bureau (FHB) and the Department of Health (DH) on the

promotion of breastfeeding.

3.2 Professor CHAN said that the Committee on Promotion of Breastfeeding, comprising representatives from various sectors (e.g. academia, healthcare professional bodies, community leaders, advisory bodies to Government and NGOs), was set up to provide advice on and coordinate the efforts in promoting breastfeeding in Hong Kong. She highlighted that relevant Government Bureaux/Departments had also assisted in promoting breastfeeding. For example, the Education Bureau (EDB) issued a letter to all kindergartens to solicit their cooperation in declining in-school promotional activities of formula milk products. Also, the Family Council launched a new award under the 2015/16 “Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme”, namely the “Awards for Breastfeeding Support”, for application by private sector, NGOs and public sector since December 2015. Professor CHAN also thanked individual WoC members for their contributions on various fronts.

3.3 Professor CHAN added that at policy level, the Secretary for Food and Health had issued letters to over 450 NGOs and private sector in May 2015 to further promulgate the

“Breastfeeding Friendly Workplace Policy”. FHB was planning to meet the Chairperson and Vice-chairperson of District Councils to solicit their support on promoting breastfeeding in the community.

3.4 A Member said that the publicity works by FHB/DH were well received by the public. She suggested that considerations could be given to improving the facilities in and design of the breastfeeding room (e.g. whether safety belt was installed for the diaper changing table, whether the room was large enough to accommodate the baby trolley).

3.5 A Member said that at the community level, the awareness and understanding of breastfeeding had been raising in recent years. Considerations could be given to engaging the Gender Focal Point Network of the District Councils in promoting breastfeeding. Moreover, for the mobile app developed by DH, she suggested that apart from Government premises, DH might consider providing more information on the breastfeeding facilities in other public places (such as NGO buildings), and provide the relevant map for easy navigation.

3.6 A Member said that given many of the school teachers were female, EDB might incorporate the element of breastfeeding facilities in their design of new school premises. As regards the publicity work, DH might also need to take care of the feelings of the mothers who might not be able to breastfeed their babies.

3.7 A Member said that as many of the breastfeeding mothers would give up breastfeeding easily, it would be essential to create an environment favourable to breastfeeding by securing the support and acceptance from family members and at the workplace. Another Member echoed that it was important to have the support and appreciation from the fathers and men to help enhance the acceptance from the community at large on breastfeeding.

3.8 PSLW said that the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) and the Departments thereunder would wish to help promoting breastfeeding. The Director of Social Welfare would coordinate efforts within the LWB family, and revert to FHB.

3.9 Professor CHAN thanked Members for their advice and

would continue to follow up with relevant parties in promoting breastfeeding.

Item 4: Report of the 60th Session of the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women (WoC 07/16)

4.1 PAS(W)2 reported that the 60th Session of CSW was held from 14 to 24 March 2016 in New York. The priority theme and review theme of the Session were women's empowerment and the link to sustainable development, and the elimination and prevention of all forms of violence against women and girls respectively. The Chairperson and PAS(W)2 attended the first two days of the meeting as part of the China delegation, which was led by Madam MENG Xiaosi, Vice-Chairperson of the All-China Women's Federation.

4.2 PAS(W)2 reported that to establish contact with representatives from women's groups in New York City, as well as individuals who were dedicated to advancing women's well-being, a breakfast meeting was hosted by the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office in New York on 15 March 2016 at which WoC Chairperson met with participants coming from different backgrounds, including representatives of women's

groups, senior female executives in the business and professional sectors, academics, and students. The Chairperson spoke on the latest development of women in Hong Kong and shared with the participants the new initiatives announced by the Chief Executive in his 2016 Policy Address to implement a pilot scheme to encourage the social welfare sector to refer to the GM Checklist developed by WoC and apply GM when formulating policies and programmes.

Item 5: Confirmation of Minutes of the 82nd Meeting (WoC 08/16)

5.1 The minutes of the 82nd Meeting was confirmed without amendments.

Item 6: Verbal Report by Working Groups

6.1 The Meeting noted the verbal reports made by the co-convenors of respective working groups.

Item 7: Secretary's Report (WoC 09/16)

7.1 The Meeting noted the Secretary's Report.

Item 8: Any Other Business

8.1 There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

**Women's Commission Secretariat
May 2016**