

WOMEN'S COMMISSION
Notes of the Meeting held on 9 June 2021

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| <u>Present:</u> | Ms CHAN Yuen-han | (Chairperson) |
| | Ms CHANG King-yiu | Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare |
| | | (Vice-Chairperson) |
| | Ms Susanna CHIU | |
| | Ms LAM Wai-ling | |
| | Mrs Emily LAM HO | |
| | Dr Kevin LAU | |
| | Ms Melaine LEE | |
| | Ms Elaine LO | |
| | Ms Winnie NG | |
| | Mrs Katherine NGAN | |
| | Ms Melissa PANG | |
| | Ms Scarlett PONG | |
| | Ms Cindy PUN | |
| | Professor SHAM Mai-har | |
| | Miss Sherry TSAI | |
| | Mrs Viola WONG HO | |
| | Dr Kitty WU | |
| | Miss Cathy LI | Principal Assistant Secretary (Constitutional & Mainland Affairs)5, Constitutional & Mainland Affairs Bureau |
| | Mr Gordon LEUNG | Director of Social Welfare |
| <u>Absent with Apologies:</u> | Ms Mary HUEN | |
| | Professor LUI Yu-hon | |
| | Ms Rigam RAI | |
| | Dr Loletta SO | |
| | Mr Walter TSUI | |
| <u>In attendance:</u> | Mr David LEUNG | Deputy Secretary for Labour & Welfare (Welfare)1/Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB) |
| | Ms Veronica WONG | Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare)2/ LWB |
| | Mr Daniel FONG | Administrative Assistant to Secretary for Labour & Welfare |

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| | Mr Huggin TANG | Assistant Secretary (Welfare)2A/LWB (Secretary) |
| | Mr Anson WAN | Assistant Secretary (Welfare)2C/LWB |
| | Mrs Annie CHAN | Chief Executive Officer (Welfare)2/LWB |
| For Agenda Item 1: | Professor Alice CHONG | Senior Researcher (2), Research Unit, LWB |
| | Professor Hector TSANG | Chair Professor and Head of Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University |
| | Dr Angela LEUNG | Associate Professor and Deputy Director of WHO Collaborating Centre for Community Health Services, School of Nursing, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University |
| | Dr Stephen CHAN | Project Manager, Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University |
| For Agenda Item 2: | Mr Raymond WU | Deputy Director of Environmental Protection (2), Environmental Protection Department (EPD) |
| | Mr FONG Kin-wa | Assistant Director (Waste Reduction and Recycling)/EPD |
| | Mr WONG Chuen-fai | Assistant Director (Waste Recycling Community Programme Review)/EPD |

Confirmation of Notes of Last Meeting

1.1 The Chairperson and Members confirmed the draft notes of the last meeting held on 2 March 2021 without any amendment.

Item 1: Consultancy Study on Needs and Support Required of Carers of Elderly Persons and of Persons with Disabilities in Hong Kong (WoC 04/21)

1.2 With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Professor Alice CHONG, Senior Researcher, Research Unit, LWB and Professor Hector TSANG, Chair Professor and Head of Department of Rehabilitation Sciences, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University briefed Members on the background, objectives, key findings and recommendations of the Consultancy Study on Needs and Support Required of Carers of Elderly Persons and of Persons with Disabilities in Hong Kong (the Consultancy Study). The Consultancy Study

revealed that 70% of the carers were women and therefore carer support services had a significant bearing on women's welfare.

1.3 Members generally agreed to the principle of integrating and consolidating the existing support services as recommended in the Consultancy Study. They agreed that support for carers required multi-partite collaboration, and that providing a carer-friendly environment in the community and the workplace as well as making good use of technology (such as health monitoring bracelets) would help carers improve the quality of care provision. Several Members were concerned about the under-utilisation of existing support services and suggested improving the provision of information on related services to carers, increasing carers' awareness of and readiness to use the services (e.g. setting up a one-stop information platform and reaching out to hidden carers proactively through outreach services), and reviewing whether the existing services meet the needs of carers. Noting that very few carer respondents of the Consultancy Study had used emotional support services, a Member expressed concern about the psychological support currently received by carers. A Member suggested strengthening respite services to give carers a chance to unwind physically and mentally, thus reducing their burden of care. As building attendants might see carers quite often and notice their needs more easily, a Member suggested enhancing training for them (particularly those of old buildings) so that they could provide information on relevant support services for carers. A Member was concerned about the fact that carers who had been rehoused due to the redevelopment of old districts might lose their original community support networks. She therefore suggested stepping up efforts to provide them with more information on community services. A Member was concerned about carers waiting for public rental housing and suggested providing them with appropriate support according to their needs. A Member suggested creating more community platforms for former carers to share their experiences in order to enhance the community support network. As regards carer recognition, a Member suggested that professional bodies be engaged to organise certificate awarding courses for carers, during which experienced carers could be invited to share their knowledge and experiences.

1.4 In response, Professor TSANG said that the Government currently provided a considerable amount of respite services in the community for carers to take a break, but the utilisation of these services needed to be improved. According to the Consultancy Study, the low usage rate was attributable to the carers' lack of knowledge or awareness of using

the services. The Consultancy Study therefore recommended raising carers' self-awareness to enhance their readiness to seek help from existing services, developing a one-stop information platform to provide a simple self-administered assessment tool for carers in order to identify high risk carers and their needs more effectively, as well as matching carers with appropriate service providers. To foster a carer-friendly environment in the workplace, reference had been made to the practices in other places, such as flexible working hours and carer's leave, but the applicability of these practices must be considered in the light of the actual circumstances in Hong Kong. In respect of community support, Professor CHONG supplemented that as recommended in the Consultancy Study, apart from professional support services, community activities (such as Carer Café programmes) enabling experience sharing and psychological support among carers should be strengthened to expand their community support network. The Support for Carers Project of the Social Welfare Department was introduced in 2018 with the participation of property management companies. The Project aimed to provide basic training to frontline property management personnel, so as to equip them with knowledge on how to identify and assist needy elderly persons and carers. They were also provided with information on welfare services in the community, so that they might make timely use of community resources to support ageing in place for elderly persons when necessary.

Item 2: Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035 (WoC 05/21)

2.1 With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Mr Raymond WU, Deputy Director of Environmental Protection briefed Members on the Waste Blueprint for Hong Kong 2035 (the Blueprint). The Blueprint set out the vision of “Waste Reduction·Resources Circulation·Zero Landfill”, outlining the strategies, targets and measures to tackle the challenge of waste management up to 2035.

2.2 Members generally recognised the urgency of waste reduction, resources circulation and zero landfill. A Member remarked that the tightening of waste import policies in neighbouring areas in recent years, coupled with the fact that Hong Kong was a small and densely populated place, had rendered the issues of waste reduction at source and recycling even more pressing for Hong Kong. Members noted in Chapter 3 (Targets and Actions) of the Blueprint that whether the targets set out therein could be achieved as scheduled would depend on a number of factors, including the participation and support of

members of the public and different sectors of our society; and the Government would review and even update the strategies and targets roughly every five years. They hoped that the Government could take additional decisive measures to ensure that the medium-term and long-term targets laid down in the Blueprint could be met. Several Members were concerned about the policy direction of reducing plastic waste (“plastic-free”). They opined that in addition to reinforcing “plastic-free” at source, the recycling of different waste plastics should be based on the principle of simplicity and public convenience in order to improve the recovery rate. Noting a decrease in the disposal of plastic shopping bags (PSBs) since the implementation of the PSB Charging Scheme, a Member suggested that the Government should also consider imposing a levy on products in plastic containers and packaging to discourage plastic use. With reference to the practice of some hotels, a Member suggested conducting an industry-wide promotion for the installation of drinking water taps in hotel rooms in replacement of plastic bottled water. Another Member suggested the Government to encourage and promote the good practices of different industries through a commendation scheme. A Member further suggested that the Government should support and encourage the recycling industry to give priority to the recycling of local plastic wastes (e.g. plastic bottles) in order to help build up an industry chain. In view of the epidemic, a Member advised the Government to step up publicity on how to observe good hygiene practices while raising environmental awareness (e.g. encouraging restaurants to allow customers to bring their own containers for takeaways). Pointing out that many people had no idea of the whereabouts of the recycled waste, a Member suggested that the Government should step up publicity on their uses (such as park facilities and merchandise made of recycled materials) so as to raise the public’s awareness and recognition of recycling. Several Members quoted the waste reduction experience of other places, including imposing a per-weight levy on product packaging to give manufacturers an incentive to reduce packaging; generating electricity by incinerating waste with zero pollution using advanced technology; collaborating with the commercial sector to encourage public participation in recycling by offering supermarket vouchers or daily necessities, etc. They suggested that the Government should learn from the experience of other places and strengthen cooperation with different sectors so as to adopt a more multi-faceted and innovative approach to achieving waste reduction, resources circulation and zero landfill.

2.3 In response, Deputy Director WU said that a multi-pronged approach encompassing publicity, education and incentives to change behavioral patterns was necessary for

realizing the vision of waste reduction, resources circulation and zero landfill. To this end, the Government had introduced a PSB Charging Scheme and various Producer Responsibility Schemes in the past and was planning to implement a municipal solid waste (MSW) charging scheme. A number of large-scale waste management infrastructures had already been put into operation with more to come, which would help enhance the transformation of waste into resources. The Government also launched a Recycling Fund to help the recycling industry, particularly small and medium enterprises, in enhancing its operational capabilities and efficiency as well as coping with the latest needs of both the local and non-local markets. Regarding the “plastic-free” policy, the Government would promote the practice of “plastic-free” at source while finding suitable alternatives at the same time, and gradually regulate the use of single-use plastics. Mr FONG Kin-wa, Assistant Director of EPD supplemented that plastic packaging materials were usually mixed with other materials, thus rendering a regulatory challenge. Therefore, the Government would mainly rely on publicity, education and clean recycling to achieve the target of “plastic-free”. To process waste plastics more cost-effectively and raise public confidence in the waste separation and recycling system, EPD had rolled out the Plastic Recycling Pilot Scheme in three districts to provide free collection service for waste plastics from premises such as housing estates, schools and government facilities. Under the scheme, a wide range of recyclables would be collected so as to encourage and facilitate recycling by the public. To ensure that the recovered waste plastics were handled properly, the contractors would process the collected waste plastics into plastic raw materials or recycled plastic products for export or supply to the local market. In addition to collecting waste plastics, they would also organise promotional and publicity activities in collaboration with non-profit-making organisations to instill a habit of recycling plastics properly in citizens. Last year, EPD launched the “Reduce and Recycle 2.0” Campaign with the aim of encouraging the public to “Use Less, Waste Less” and promoting their awareness of waste reduction at source. He hoped that upon the launch of MSW charging scheme, the community would be further incentivized for waste reduction (including waste plastics).

Item 3: Funding Scheme for Women’s Development (WoC 06/21)

3.1 The Working Group on Collaboration and Promotion (WGCP) of the Women’s Commission (WoC) was responsible for the vetting and approval of funding applications made under the Funding Scheme for Women’s Development (Funding Scheme).

Referring to the discussion paper WoC 06/21, the WGCP Co-convenor reported on the latest status of the Funding Scheme and consulted Members on the proposal stated therein. As the funds under the Funding Scheme should be used effectively and the proposed arrangement would enhance the utilisation of funds, Members unanimously endorsed the proposal set out in paragraphs 5 and 6 of the discussion paper WoC 06/21, which included entrusting the WoC to invite applications from local women's groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and allocate the \$1 million under the "Funding Scheme (District Council Stream)" directly in order to better utilise the funds. Taking into account the fact that the groups/organisations currently applying for the "Funding Scheme (District Council Stream)" are generally smaller in scale and locally based, Members agreed that the WoC could use the funding to establish a "Funding Scheme District Stream". Priority under this category of application should be given to district-based organisations (not limited to women's groups) for organising one-off short-term events (which could be completed in a few days or weeks) so as to avoid overlapping with the scope of the "Funding Scheme WoC Stream". In other words, applicant organisations could apply to organise projects with less than one year's duration in a single district. When one district had been given funding support, priority should be given to applications from other districts, so that the \$1 million funding could be evenly distributed among the 18 districts where possible to meet the overall objective of supporting women's development at the district level. The arrangement for the "Funding Scheme WoC Stream" would remain unchanged, i.e. it would continue to operate on a regional and/or cross-year basis to support larger-scale activities organised by women's groups with stronger organisational capacity to promote women's development in the long run.

Item 4: Progress Report by Working Groups of Women's Commission (WoC 07/21)

4.1 The report by the co-convenors of the four working groups under the WoC on the work progress is given below:

(1) Working Group on Enabling Environment (WGEE)

- i. The WoC Secretariat engaged a service provider to assist WGEE in promoting the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) in a vibrant and interesting way by producing animated short films under

the four themes of “family”, “labour and employment”, “education” and “social participation”. Regarding the animated short film on “family”, WoC endorsed its uploading to the dedicated CEDAW website at the previous meeting. For the animated short film on “labour and employment”, WoC endorsed the motion board at the last meeting. The final cut was endorsed by WGEE at its meeting in May. Members endorsed the animated short film after its final cut had been played at the WoC meeting. As regards the animated short film on “education”, the draft cut was endorsed by WGEE at its meeting in May and the service provider had already completed the post-production work, i.e. adding subtitles and real-person voice-over to the film. Members endorsed the animated short film on “education” after it had been played at the WoC meeting. The WoC Secretariat would arrange for the two animated short films approved by WoC to be uploaded to the dedicated CEDAW website. The service provider had started producing the animated short film on “social participation”. The WoC Secretariat would circulate the draft cut of the animation for WGEE Members’ comments in due course with a view to completing the production of the final version before the next WGEE meeting.

(2) Working Group on Collaboration and Promotion (WGCP)

- ii. As Members had unanimously endorsed the proposal on the Funding Scheme under Agenda Item 3 above, WGCP would take follow-up actions accordingly. On 12 April 2021, WGCP held an online Q&A session for organisations interested in submitting applications in the first round of the “Funding Scheme WoC Stream” in 2021-22. The WoC Secretariat received a total of 57 applications in the first round application of the 2021-22 exercise which closed on 30 April 2021. A WGCP meeting would be held in July 2021 to vet the applications received.

(3) Working Group on Empowerment and Training (WGET)

- iii. The current contract for operating the Capacity Building Mileage Programme (CBMP) by the Open University of Hong Kong would end in October 2021. In preparing the tendering exercise of the new service contract, LWB had made reference to the comments endorsed by the WoC in July 2020, including restructuring and updating of the five learning domains of CBMP (i.e. Personal Skills, Care/Health, Technology Applications, Living Wisdom, and Art and Culture), catering for the

learning needs of women at different stages of their lives, enhancing e-learning courses for allowing greater flexibility in learning, encouraging ethnic minorities (EM) women to participate in CBMP, wider promotion on social media, etc. These comments had been incorporated in the tender documents for the new service contract. LWB had completed the open tender exercise for the new service contract for operation of CBMP for four programme years from the November 2021 Semester to the July 2025 Semester (a total of 12 semesters). Subject to the approval of the Central Tender Board under the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, it was expected that the new service contract would be awarded in June 2021. WGET would continue to provide strategic guidance for the CBMP, monitor its progress and evaluate its outcome.

- iv. On the advice of WGET, LWB had commissioned the University of Hong Kong (the Consultant) to conduct a consultancy study on “Considerations and Difficulties of Women in Choosing Whether or Not to Work” (the Study). As reported at the WoC meeting held in November 2020, the Study had commenced since 12 October 2020 and was expected to complete within 12 months by 12 October 2021. The Consultant gave a briefing on the inception report and the latest progress of the Study at the WGET meeting held on 17 May 2021. In sum, the overall progress of the Study fell behind schedule since the on-the-ground data collection work was hindered by the outbreak of the pandemic. WGET members requested the Consultant to revisit and resubmit the work plan for their consideration taking into account the latest progress of the Study. The Consultant had submitted the revised work plan under which the project completion date largely remained to be within October 2021. WGET members raised no objection to the revised work plan and would continue to closely monitor the progress of the Study.

(4) Working Group on Health and Support (WGHS)

- v. WGHS promulgated the “Guide to Women’s Health and Support Services in Hong Kong” (the Guide) in March 2021. The online version had been uploaded to the WoC website with a search function to facilitate access to information on women’s health care and screening services anytime and anywhere. Printed copies of the Guide had also been distributed to some 300 local women’s groups, as well as through the clinics of the Department of Health (DH), including Woman Health Centres and

Maternal and Child Health Centres.

- vi. At the meeting held on 28 May 2021, WGHS members endorsed the work plan of WGHS in 2021-22, which included: continuing to promote the Guide, including the production of a QR Code for the online version of the Guide, and distribution of posters and leaflets with the QR Code to DH clinics and women's groups to facilitate women's access to the online version of the Guide; promoting the Guide among EM women by translating it into seven EM languages, namely Hindi, Bahasa Indonesia, Nepali, Thai, Tagalog, Vietnamese and Urdu to help EM women understand and make use of the women's health care and screening services that were being offered by the DH, women's groups and NGOs for early medical examination and treatment; and subject to the development of the pandemic and related preventive measures, conducting visits in the fourth quarter of 2021 to offer comments and suggestions to help relevant facilities and services reach out to the wider women community.

Item 5: Secretary's Report (WoC 08/21)

- 5.1 Members noted the Secretary's report.

Item 6: Any Other Business

- 6.1 The next meeting was tentatively scheduled for September 2021. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:40 p.m.

Women's Commission Secretariat

September 2021