

WOMEN'S COMMISSION
Notes of the 89th Meeting held on 15 December 2017

<u>Present:</u>	Mrs Stella LAU	(Chairperson)
	Ms CHANG King-yiu	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Vice-Chairperson)
	Ms Leona LAM	
	Mr Philip TSAI	
	Ms Juan LEUNG	
	Ms Rabi YIM	
	Ms Angelina KWAN	
	Ms Yolanda NG	
	Ms WONG Siu-wah	
	Professor Cecilia CHAN	
	Ms Aruna GURUNG	
	Professor Shirley HUNG	
	Ms Scarlett PONG	
	Ms CHAN Yuen-han	
	Dr Kevin LAU	
	Ms Carol YIP	Director of Social Welfare
<u>Absent with Apologies:</u>	Mrs Miranda LEUNG	
	Ms WONG Shu-ming	
	Ms Yvonne YEUNG	
	Dr Loletta SO	
	Ms Elaine LO	
	Mrs Emily LAM HO	
	Ms Susanna CHIU	
	Mr CHEUNG Doi-ching	Principal Assistant Secretary (Constitutional & Mainland Affairs)5, Constitutional & Mainland Affairs Bureau
<u>In attendance</u>	Miss Leonia TAI	Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (1)
	Miss Agnes CHEUNG	Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 2

	Mr Huggin TANG	Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 2A (Secretary)
	Mr Edwin CHAU	Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 2C
	Mrs Annie CHAN	Chief Executive Officer (Welfare)2
For Agenda Item 1	Dr Regina CHING	Head of Surveillance and Epidemiology Branch, Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health
For Agenda Item 3	Mr Kenneth CHENG	Principal Assistant Secretary (Welfare) 1

Item 1: Community Care Fund Pilot Scheme on Subsidised Cervical Cancer Screening and Preventive Education for Eligible Low-income Women (WoC 11/17)

1.1 With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Dr Regina CHING, Head of Surveillance and Epidemiology Branch, Centre for Health Protection, Department of Health, briefed Members on a Community Care Fund Pilot Scheme on Subsidised Cervical Cancer Screening and Preventive Education for Eligible Low-income Women (the Pilot Scheme). The Pilot Scheme aimed at reducing the risk of developing cervical cancer among low-income women by reaching out and encouraging them to receive cervical cancer screening and increasing their awareness towards cervical cancer.

1.2 In response to the Chairperson's enquiry, Dr CHING shared that many women were reluctant to receive cervical cancer screening because of their ignorance of the procedures of the screening and the medical treatments of cervical cancer. In this regard, the service providers of the Pilot Scheme would reach out to eligible low-income women to disseminate the relevant information. A short reader-friendly video clip on cervical cancer and the screening procedures had also been produced for the purpose of public education.

1.3 Several Members were of the view that more effort should be put into publicity on prevention of cervical cancer, for instance through social media. In response to Members' suggestions, Dr CHING responded that a TV and Radio announcement of public interest (API) on cervical cancer starring Teresa Mo Shun Kwan (毛舜筠) had recently been launched to tie in with the publicity plan of the Pilot Scheme. Dr CHING also shared that pamphlets of the Pilot Scheme were provided to the district offices of Social Welfare Department for distribution. A Member suggested that the pamphlets should be published in multiple languages to facilitate reaching out to ethnic minorities.

1.4 A Member raised the concern about whether women who were not eligible under the Pilot Scheme could receive the screening at affordable price. Dr CHING replied that the 31 Maternal and Child Health Centres of Department of Health across the territory provided the screening service to Hong Kong Identification Card holders for \$100 per attendance. Making reference to the practice of other places, a Member suggested providing subsidy to women who received the screening.

1.5 A Member shared her experience of cooperation with the Jockey Club School of Public Health and Primary Care of the Chinese University of Hong Kong in self-sampling of human papillomavirus (HPV) which was an alternative screening tool for cervical cancer. It enabled women to take a self-collected cervico-vaginal sample at home for HPV testing. It was easy to perform, convenient and reliable, and could potentially help improve screening participation rate.

1.6 The Chairperson thanked Dr CHING for her briefing and Members for their views.

Item 2: The Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address – Policy Initiatives Relating to Women's Development (WoC 12/17)

2.1 With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, Ms Leonia TAI, Deputy Secretary for Labour and Welfare (1) (the Deputy Secretary), briefed Members on the initiatives pertaining to the welfare portfolio in the Chief Executive's 2017 Policy Address. The Deputy Secretary also added that the review on the statutory paternity leave had been completed. The initial proposal was to increase paternity leave from the current three to five days. The Government would also commence a study on the enhancement of the current 10-week statutory maternity leave.

2.2. In response to a Member's enquiry, Ms Carol YIP, Director of Social Welfare (DSW), explained that \$1 billion had been earmarked by the Government for setting up a fund to subsidise elderly and rehabilitation service units to trial use and procure technological products. There would be a reference list of the subsidised products but the elderly and rehabilitation service units might also apply for subsidy for products that were not on the reference list but suited their operation needs. The application would be vetted by a

Committee comprised of representatives from various sectors.

2.3. A Member welcomed the setting up of a “special needs trust” which would provide affordable trust services for parents of children with special needs. In response to a Member’s enquiry, DSW explained that a working group on special needs trust was formed under the Labour and Welfare Bureau to examine the trust under the management of the Director of Social Welfare Incorporated. The Government had engaged various stakeholders, including the parents, to examine the details of the trust, such as the entry thresholds, etc., with a view to confirming the details by end of 2018.

2.4. A Member raised concern about the relatively low percentage of women on the board of directors of Hong Kong's Hang Seng Index companies which now stood at about 13%. To enable women to pursue their career, she urged the Government to promote equal share of carer’s responsibility between women and men, and to increase the statutory maternity leave to 16 weeks.

2.5. The Vice-Chairperson remarked that the Government

was committed to facilitating women to pursue employment and careers of their choice by providing carer support. The statutory provision of three days of paternity leave was one of the supporting measures. Though the statutory paternity leave was just launched in 2015, it had been put under a review for extension. So far both the employer and the employee sides had agreed on the proposal of extending the leave to five days, and the proposal had been accepted in principle by the Labour Advisory Board. It was expected that the extension would come into effect very soon subject to approval by the Legislative Council. The review of the extension of statutory maternity leave was a more complicated issue as it might involve financial commitment from Government. The Government would keep Women's Commission (WoC) updated of the progress of the review on maternity leave, and would consult WoC as and when appropriate.

2.6 In response to a Member's enquiry, the Vice-Chairperson explained that the Government had collected public views on the Pilot Project on Children Contact Service, and would provide more details on the proposal of strengthening support services for divorced/separated parents as soon as possible.

2.7 In response to a Member's enquiry on the proposal of subsidising Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) households living in rented private housing and paying rents exceeding the maximum rent allowance under the CSSA Scheme, DSW replied that the Community Care Fund (CCF) Task Force had reviewed and enhanced the programme arrangements so that the actual rent paid by eligible CSSA households is taken into account in calculating the amount of subsidy, which is 50% of the actual amount that exceeds the maximum rent allowance (MRA) under the CSSA Scheme or 15% of the entitled MRA, whichever is lower.

2.8 A Member opined that the Government might put more effort and resources on promoting healthy lifestyle. She cited an extreme overseas example of taxation policy which penalised those commercial enterprises which failed to encourage their male employees to tackle central obesity. She also suggested that to better utilise public housing resources, the Government might increase the amount of additional rent to be paid by the well-off tenants by setting the rent at 10% of their actual income. She also suggested the Government to enhance supporting

services for carers of persons with disabilities, such as providing allowance to the elderly who had to take care of their family members with disabilities.

2.9 Another Member opined that as suggested in the WoC Retreat held in November 2017, the Government should consider upgrading the Secretariat of WoC by placing it under the Chief Executive. The Vice-Chairperson replied that the suggestion should be considered by the senior echelon of the Government.

2.10 The Chairperson asked the Government to consider Members' suggestions.

Item 3: Establishment of a Commission on Children

3.1 With the aid of a powerpoint presentation, the Deputy Secretary briefed Members on the preparatory work of the establishment of a Commission on Children (the Commission). The Vice-Chairperson added that the Commission would be a high-level advisory body to be chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration. As to whether the Commission would attain a

statutory status, this would have to be considered by the Commission after it had operated for some time taking into account the operational experience and actual circumstances.

3.2 Noting that the primary target group of the Commission was children under the age of 14, a Member pointed out that the age limit of the children protected from ill-treatment or neglect under the law (section 27 of the Offences against the Person Ordinance (CAP 212)) was 16. The Commission might need to look into various children-related laws and see if the differences of the age limits should be reconciled.

3.3 A Member said that many researches showed that age 0-3 was crucial to the life-long development of a child's intelligence and personality. She hoped that the Commission could look into matters that were closely related to the well-being of an infant, such as the duration of maternity leave and supportive measures for parents, especially for the first-time mothers. The Chairperson added that despite the importance of early-age (0-3) education, the current level of remuneration offered in the market might not be attractive enough to employ the best teaching personnel.

3.4 A Member emphasised the importance of vigorous physical exercise to the development of children. She hoped that the Commission could pay attention to the developmental needs of children.

3.5 The Vice-Chairperson welcomed Members' comments which would be forwarded to the Preparatory Committee of the Commission for consideration.

Item 4: Secretary's Report (WoC 13/17)

4.1 The Secretary briefed Members on the content of the Secretary's Report.

Item 5: Any Other Business

5.1 A Member made reference to a private consultancy report on how diversity would enhance the profitability and performances of companies, expected in January 2018, and asked whether arrangements could be made for the consultant to brief WoC Members and Government departments on the

report findings. The Vice-Chairperson said that it would help if the Secretariat could have sight of the report first, before the Chairperson and Members would be consulted on the possible briefing. Whether WoC would propose the same briefing for individual Government departments might be considered afterwards. Another Member reported some latest development of the Capacity Building Mileage Programme (CBMP). To provide progression pathways for continuous learning, the Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) had identified two CBMP courses for accreditation as level 2 courses under the Qualifications Framework. After completion of these two CBMP courses, participants were eligible to apply for exemption of two common modules of Employees Retraining Board placement-tied programmes.

5.2 Noting that the Government was going to submit its fourth report under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), a Member suggested to discuss the various areas of focus of CEDAW in the coming meetings. The Vice-Chairperson replied that the Government would consult WoC on the outline of the fourth report under CEDAW as and when appropriate.

[Post-meeting note: The outline of the fourth report under CEDAW would be discussed in the 90th WoC Meeting.]

5.3 Ms Leona LAM, Mrs Miranda LEUNG and Ms WONG Shu-ming would retire from WoC upon the expiry of their current terms on 14 January 2018. The Chairperson thanked the outgoing Members for their contribution to the work of WoC throughout the past six years.

5.4 The Chairperson, Mrs Stella LAU, would also retire from WoC on the same date. The Vice-Chairperson gave a vote of thanks to the Chairperson for her contribution as WoC member from 2006 to 2012 and as WoC Chairperson from 2012 to 2018.

5.5 To bid farewell to the outgoing Chairperson and Members and to welcome new Members, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare would host a lunch for WoC in mid-January 2018.

[Post-meeting note: The lunch was subsequently rescheduled for 5 February 2018.]

5.6 There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m

**Women's Commission Secretariat
February 2018**