



# Chairperson's Message



## The Way Forward

In my capacity as Chairperson of the Commission, I have had the opportunity to get in touch with women from different walks of life and in different circumstances in the past three years. I have come into contact with a great number who are struggling valiantly in adverse situations, yet many are not only persevering but also managing to contribute to the well-being of other people. These women have given me both fresh insight and inspiration.

I have long felt that it will only be when the obstacles and misunderstandings arising from gender stereotyping are really demolished, gender-based labelling restricting personal choice and abilities can be dismantled. We can really talk of equal development opportunities and for women and men to pursue their dreams, contribute to society and open up new horizons.

Undoubtedly, this will be a long, winding road. However, I believe that as we affirm the value and abilities of women, as we catalyse change, as we break down existing social and ideological barriers that hold women back, we are not only assisting women, but helping to build a society that fosters growth, mutual aid and fellowship. But I am convinced that once you take that first step towards fundamental change, it will have a snowball effect with the impact felt by everyone. As a society, we are all interlinked. What we do influences other people. By changing values and norms slowly but surely, we could create more room for development, adopt new modes of thinking and a new lifestyle.

### **Transformation**

A seedling

Full of the energy of  
new life

Bursting from the  
ground

Growing up strong  
amid wind and rain



Thus, in the past three years, members of the Commission and I exchanged views extensively with government policy-making departments, local women's groups and service agencies, and individuals concerned with women's affairs, on both policy-making and community levels. We tried to understand their views and expectations regarding gender roles and examined public policy and initiatives affecting women. We also offered the government our views on a long-term vision and strategy for women's development. The Commission adopted the principle of striving to address fundamental problems and finding practical solutions rather than tackling issues superficially. In the days ahead, we intend to further build on this foundation, focusing on three priority areas of action to advocate and spur change: "Gender Mainstreaming", "Empowerment of Women" and "Public Education".

The Commission will continue to promote the use of the "Gender Mainstreaming Checklist" in order to encourage the government to consider women's needs and perspectives in its policy-making process. By urging government departments to adopt this checklist, we hope to heighten officials' awareness of different gender issues to inspire positive change, especially in the areas of social welfare and human resource planning. In this way, we seek to generate a ripple effect through society as a whole, enabling currently neglected gender perspectives to become mainstream views in the future.

Regarding empowerment of women, we believe that the social environment must become more conducive to women's development if they are to break out of the straitjacket imposed by traditional norms and mores, realise their potential, and develop their talents. So we are now discussing with local tertiary educational institutions and the media the development of a "Capacity Building Mileage Programme" to enable women to empower themselves through flexible means, encourage continuous education and create a favourable environment for lifelong learning.





To step up public education on gender issues, develop social collaboration and promote sharing of resources, we are working hard to build an interactive, online information centre involving different disciplines, sectors, districts and levels of society. The public will be able to access information on women and gender-related matters from this platform. It will also serve as a forum where people from different social groups can exchange views on women's and gender-related issues. We have great hopes for this. We envisage that the platform will help break down the barriers in existing channels of communication, and create greater momentum and synergy on women's issues to the betterment of all.

I would like to thank all the individuals, government bureaux and departments, women's groups and community organisations that have given valuable assistance and encouragement to the Commission. My heartfelt thanks also go to the members of the Commission who have contributed so much and worked so purposefully and responsibly on its behalf. Their dedication and support has been both moving and motivating.

I know that the people of Hong Kong have high expectations of the Commission and its work. Members of the Commission also have high expectations and are confident of meeting the challenges of the future. We will determinedly press on with our heartfelt work to create harmony between the sexes and look forward to your continuing support and advice!