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# Content

# Preface





## A New Chapter in Hong Kong Women's History

This is the first report of the Women's Commission since its inception in 2001 and it sets out to provide an overview of the Commission's work in promoting the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong in the past three years.

The Commission is a central mechanism with a mission "to enable women to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life". By pooling the wisdom and strengths of people from various sectors of the community, the Commission believes the obstacles obstructing and holding back women can be overcome and we encourage all non-governmental, commercial and social organisations and the community to work with us in building a society where both sexes work and live harmoniously.

In the past three years, the Commission has played a strategic role, developed a long-term vision and strategy, addressed women's needs, kept under review services and issues of women's concern, and presented proposals to the Government. We have also joined forces with government policy-making bureaux, non-governmental organisations, women's groups, tertiary institutions and the media to organise activities related to women in order to better understand the range of views at large and to broaden our own perspectives.

This report seeks to provide a deeper understanding of the different aspects of the Commission and its work. It includes the background and development of the Commission, its *modus operandi*, priority areas of action and related activities, initial results, experiences of Commission's collaborators, reflections by Members of the Commission and the way forward, with important information including findings of research work provided in the Annex. In recording the early days of the Commission and the support it has received from the community, the report opens a new chapter in the history of Hong Kong women.

Special effort has gone into the presentation and design to bring out the voices of Hong Kong women today and the goals of the Commission. We hope you find the following pages enlightening and look forward to your feedback. May you have a pleasant reading journey!



# Story of Women's Commission





## 1 How It All Began

The setting up of the Women’s Commission in the early days of the 21st century was a milestone for women’s development in Hong Kong, an important achievement after years of endeavour by generations of individuals and social organisations to promote women’s well-being and interests.

The table below traces this historical development, listing significant events related to women in Hong Kong from the 1920s to the establishment of the Women’s Commission in 2001 (given the scale of this report and the amount of historical data available, the list is not exhaustive).

**An Enduring Vision  
A Pioneering Spirit**

Year	Event <sup>1</sup>
1921	The University of Hong Kong admits first female student
1923	<i>Mui tsai</i> system (where girls were adopted or sold into domestic servitude) falls into disuse
1932	First Infant Welfare Clinic, later Maternal and Child Health Centre, established
1949	First woman police sub-inspector appointed
1966	First woman Legislative Councillor appointed
1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Marriage reform and related ordinances prohibit concubines and recognise women’s right to inheritance</li><li>• Six years’ free and universal basic education for girls and boys introduced</li><li>• Intestates’ Estate Ordinance gives both sons and daughters equal rights to their parents’ estates</li></ul>

<sup>1</sup> Main references:

- Tsang, G Y (1995): “Chronology of Women’s Achievements” in Pearson, V & Leung, B (eds) *Women in Hong Kong, Hong Kong: OUP*
- Cheung, F (2002): *Women’s Commission and Equal Opportunities Commission*

1972	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Married Person Status Ordinance enables married women to hold property, sue and be sued</li> <li>• Matrimonial Causes Ordinance allows both husband and wife to petition for divorce on the grounds of an irretrievable breakdown of marriage</li> <li>• Offences Against the Person (Amendment) Ordinance makes abortion legal if two doctors agree that continuation of a pregnancy will cause greater physical or psychological harm to a woman</li> </ul>
1975	Women civil servants receive equal pay as men
1976	First woman Executive Councillor appointed
1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nine years' free and universal basic education introduced</li> <li>• Crimes (Amendment) Ordinance preserves anonymity of complainants in rape cases</li> <li>• Legislation relating to prostitution prohibits solicitation but not the sex act per se</li> </ul>
1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anonymity for victims of indecent assault enforced</li> <li>• First woman appointed to head a Government department</li> </ul>
1981	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employment (Amendment) Ordinance introduces 10 weeks' two-thirds maternity leave pay to female employees</li> <li>• Women civil servants receive the same terms and conditions of service as men, even when married</li> </ul>
1982	Five women gain seats in first District Board elections
1984	Two women disabled athletes win Hong Kong's first Paralympic Games gold medals
1986	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Passage of Domestic Violence Ordinance gives victims the right to apply for an injunction to forbid molestation or to keep assailant away from the matrimonial home</li> <li>• First woman District Judge appointed</li> </ul>
1987	First woman appointed at Secretary level in the Government
1989	<b>New Territories women's groups meet the Office of the Members of the Executive and Legislative Councils to urge the government to set up a central committee to look after women's issues</b>
1990	Inland Revenue (Amendment) Ordinance introduces separate taxation for married women and removes clause in which definition of "individual" excludes a wife unless living apart from her husband

1991	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Woman candidate elected in first direct elections to the Legislative Council</li> <li>• Women's groups form a coalition to urge the government to set up a working party to develop policies for women</li> <li>• <b>Legislative Council forms <i>ad hoc</i> group to study need for women's commission</b></li> </ul>
1992	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Fourteen women's and community groups campaign for government to establish a women's commission, with a rally on March 8 (International Women's Day)</b></li> <li>• <b>Legislative Council recommends setting up a women's commission with advisory status</b></li> <li>• <b>Legislative Council passes motion for extension of United Nations (UN) Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) to Hong Kong</b></li> </ul>
1993	First woman Chief Secretary appointed
1994	New Territories Land (Exemption) Ordinance gives female indigenous residents the right to inherit land in the New Territories in the absence of a will
1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sex Discrimination Ordinance brought in making sexual harassment and discrimination based on sex, marital status and pregnancy an offence</li> <li>• <b>Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, with consensus of 189 countries</b></li> </ul>
1996	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Equal Opportunities Commission formed</li> <li>• <b>UN CEDAW extended to Hong Kong</b></li> <li>• Woman athlete wins Hong Kong's first Olympic gold medal</li> </ul>
1997	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family Status Discrimination Ordinance makes it unlawful to discriminate against a person who has family status (responsibility for the care of an immediate family member)</li> <li>• First female Secretary for Justice appointed</li> <li>• First female President of Provisional Legislative Council elected</li> </ul>
1998	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First female President of Legislative Council elected</li> <li>• <b>Submission of HKSAR's initial report to UN CEDAW Committee</b></li> </ul>
1999	<b>UN CEDAW Committee urges HKSAR Government to set up a central mechanism for women</b>
2000	<b>Chief Secretary for Administration announces the Government's intention to set up a women's commission</b>
2001	<b>Women's Commission formed</b>



## 2 Early Days

### Building the path Setting the direction

The Women's Commission's role within the Government is to be a high-level central mechanism to develop women's strategies in a holistic and systematic manner; advise the Administration on policies, legislation and services affecting women; and assist in implementing CEDAW and other international conventions relating to women, etc. It is also distinguished by being a government body that tackles issues which lie at the heart of discrimination but not unlawful, for example, sexism and stereotypes. It identifies and addresses the needs of women, and promotes women's development and empowerment.

Members of the Commission, comprised 18 non-official members and four ex-officio members, were selected for a three-year term and came from a variety of backgrounds and interests. They included women - and men - who had worked on women's health, development, violence against women and many other issues. Three days after Members were formally appointed, a meeting was held to discuss how the Commission should operate. We felt it was important to talk about the philosophy and broad direction of the Commission before setting out to develop a long-term direction and strategies for initiatives. The early days of the Commission were therefore spent identifying Hong Kong women's needs and concerns.

This involved widespread consultation with government, academia, women's groups, and the community in general. One example is the many visits to non-governmental organisations and service agencies. A typical Saturday might involve visits to at least two community organisations to hear their views and understand the services they provided for women. We consulted Mainland China and overseas experts, visited international organisations and collated the experiences and work of other central mechanisms for women.



There were also briefings by, and discussions with, government departments, including the Home Affairs Bureau, Social Welfare Department, Census and Statistics Department, Law Reform Commission, Planning Department, Department of Health and the then Education Department, on their perspectives and involvement in different women's issues. Despite the progress of the past decade, we were aware that women still faced many difficulties: economic pressure in middle age, those with dual roles burdened with family responsibilities, the threat of violence, and the need for capacity building and opportunities to realise their potential, etc.

Informal meetings, workshops and "soul-searching" sessions among Members then followed. There was a great deal of heartfelt talk and wisdom sharing. From these the Commission's vision, mission, values and priority areas of action arose. The mission we set for the Commission was: "to enable women to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life," with Members identifying three priority areas of action, namely Gender Mainstreaming, Empowerment of Women and Public Education, and agreeing that the Commission should focus on strategies rather than on organising or delivering services itself. It was felt this three-pronged approach would enable advancement of the status of women in Hong Kong in the short and long-term, tackle issues from a policy perspective and address community misconceptions.

In July 2001, we held an Open Forum on "The Future Direction of the Women's Commission" at the Hong Kong Science Museum Lecture Hall to discuss the Commission's intended future direction and its three priority action areas with local women's groups and other interested parties. The response was enthusiastic, with over 200 people from 80 women's organisations, service agencies, higher education institutions, community groups and representatives from government departments attending and generally endorsing our mission and work.

*See also, "Structure", "Members' Reflections" and "Terms of Reference and Membership" in "Annex."*



# Structure



## Executive Support

The Women's Commission receives secretariat support from the Women's Division of Health, Welfare and Food Bureau. The Division is led by a senior directorate officer and was set up in January 2001 to champion women's issues within the Government and provide overall co-ordination on women's issues. Administrative support for the Commission includes preparation of discussion papers, notes on meetings and follow-up action. The Division is also responsible for overseeing the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in Hong Kong.

The Division provides executive support for the Commission in project development, implementation and management, liaison, research and co-ordination. Some \$23 million recurrent funding was made available annually from 2001/02 to 2003/04 to finance the Commission's work.

**Activating change**  
**Achieving steady**  
**growth**

## Regular Meetings and Topical Workshops

The Commission meets regularly on a bi-monthly basis and special meetings are convened to discuss *ad hoc* or topical issues. 27 meetings were held between January 2001 and December 2003. In addition, the Commission organised workshops and meetings to discuss specific problems and issues with women's groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

*See also, "Local, Regional and International Liaison" in "Women's Commission at Work."*

## Priority Areas of Action Task Forces

Three Task Forces were formed to take forward the Commission's priority areas of action: Gender Mainstreaming, Empowerment of Women and Public Education. Most Members joined one or two. Task Forces were convened by two Member co-convenors and met frequently. Task Force members dedicated a great deal of their time and resources to deliberate issues and initiatives, tendered insightful advice and made practical suggestions, which were followed up by the Women's Division of Health, Welfare and Food Bureau. Task Forces also met government bureaux and departments, and NGOs, over a number of issues. The Commission maintained an overview of its Task Forces with co-convenors reporting on progress at every bi-monthly meeting.

*See also, "Three Priority Areas of Action" in "Women's Commission at Work" and "Terms of Reference and Membership" in "Annex".*

## Working Group on Planning

This group was set up to develop a plan of action and framework for the Commission and its Task Forces in order to facilitate co-ordination, streamline effort and achieve greater community impact. Members from each Task Force were nominated to join this group so that all views could be reflected.

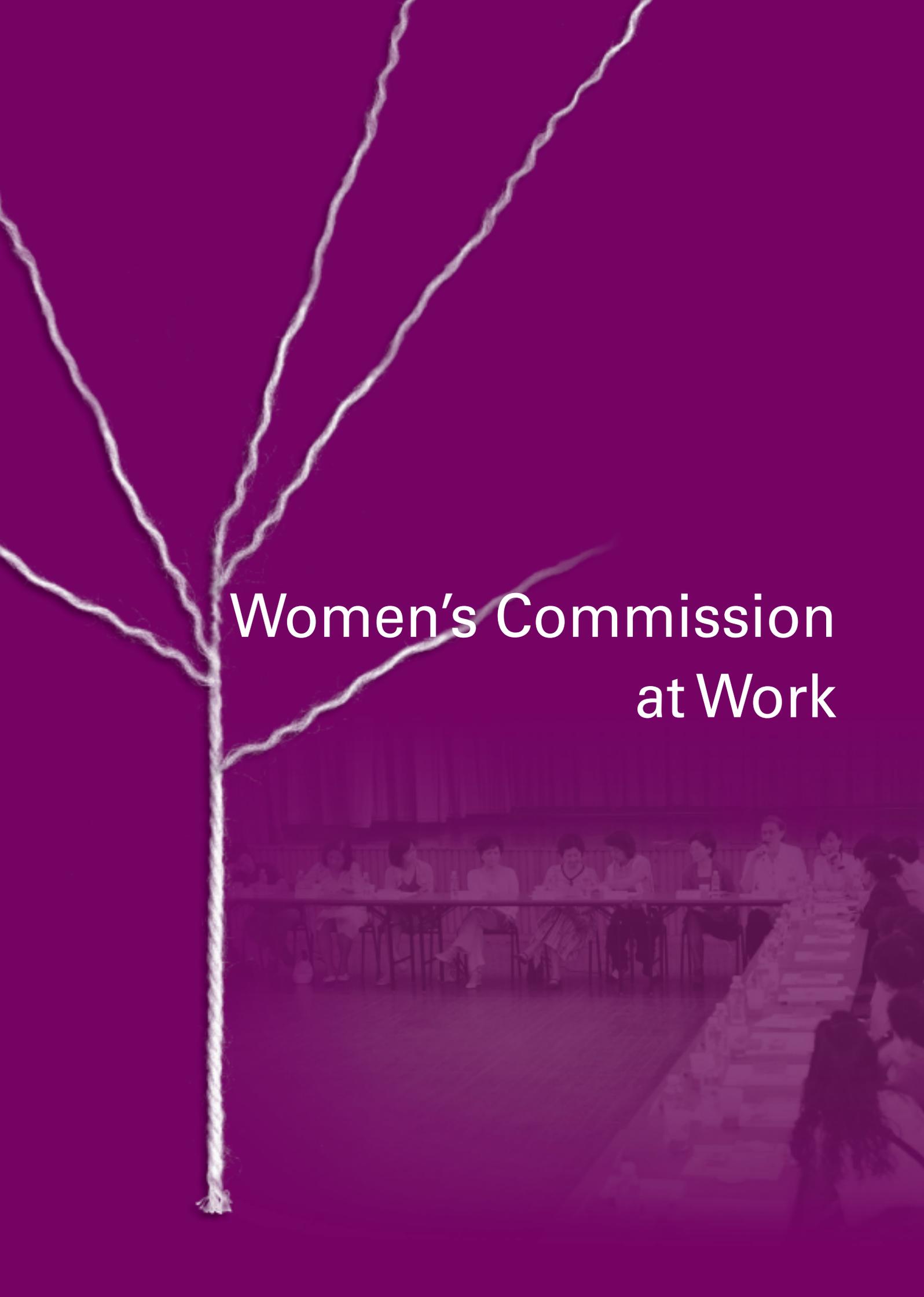
A planning workshop was held in June 2002 to review the Commission's strategic direction, short and long-term goals, priorities and plan of action, framework, and related management issues. Members looked at the Commission's work and experiences, identified improvements, explored its role and long-term goals, and identified topics for the Commission to focus on in the immediate term. With input from the Working Group on Planning, the three Task Forces were able to become more focused and co-ordinated in their work.



## Working Group on Collaboration

The Commission believes it is important that all parties in the community - NGOs, government organisations, women's groups, academia, private sector, media, civil society and the Commission - work closely together. In this way, groups can complement each other by leveraging on their network and expertise, creating synergy in their work and bringing greater benefits to women and the community. The Commission therefore set up a Working Group on Collaboration to develop a Framework of Collaboration to draw together community efforts, establish a solid and transparent system on what, how and with whom to collaborate, and build up a network to enable and facilitate mutual exchange and support.

The Framework itself developed through a collaborative process involving women's groups and NGOs. An exchange session in February 2003 examined how collaborators viewed working with the Commission, the constraints they faced, how individuals could contribute and the lessons that could be learnt from previous collaborative efforts. A working session in June 2003 saw discussion of the practical issues involved in establishing a matrix network of interested parties; positioning the Commission as an information hub for issues and activities; encouraging collaboration with the Commission on planning; and a possible mechanism for recognition of services, good practice and the contribution of women's groups and individuals. A third round of talks in October 2003 focused on Framework details with a view to a written document building on the scope agreed at earlier meetings. The Framework of Collaboration was endorsed by the Commission in November 2003 and will subsequently disseminate to all women's groups and NGOs.



# Women's Commission at Work



# 1 Three Priority Areas of Action

## 1.1 Gender Mainstreaming

*Why are housing estate laundry poles invariably difficult for women to use?*

*Why is it there always a long queue in women's toilets?*

*Why are average salaries for women still lower than those for men in Hong Kong?*

*For people's behaviour to change, their thinking has to change first.*

*For social policies to change, policy-makers' thinking has to change first.*

### From Minority to Mainstream

"Gender Mainstreaming" is a helpful concept that refers to incorporating women's needs and perspectives in policy making in Government and other sectors. It is the elevation of the gender's point of view to the mainstream through its adoption by society and government.

The Women's Commission recognises women and men have different life experiences, roles, responsibilities and needs as a result of genetic and cultural factors, and that the concerns and needs of both women and men should be considered more systematically when making policies, legislation and programmes, ie gender mainstreaming. The ultimate aim of gender mainstreaming is to promote equality in the utilisation of social resources and opportunities through social policy.

Gender mainstreaming can thus assist government officials when considering important social indicators reflecting different socio-economic conditions of women and men, such as available jobs, earnings, labour force participation rate, among others. It means policy-makers are able to design and adjust policies to achieve targets more effectively and can implement new initiatives with greater efficiency.

### ACCORD

As we listen to each  
other

And share our dreams

As we build bridges

To overcome  
ignorance and  
apathy

We move towards  
harmony and  
accord

In the past three years, the Commission has underlined the importance of gender mainstreaming to the Administration and mapped out a comprehensive strategy for introducing it in different policy areas on an incremental basis.

As the Commission attaches great value to partnerships with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and academia, consultation sessions were held with government officials, NGOs and academics in December 2001 and February 2002 to collect suggestions regarding the gender mainstreaming strategy and ways to strengthen their role in gender mainstreaming.

We are pleased to report that our proposed strategy was endorsed by the highest levels of the Administration in June 2002. Progress made in gender mainstreaming initiatives is outlined below:

### *Gender Mainstreaming Checklist*

By referring to the experience of a number of overseas countries and the views of women's groups, the Commission has developed an analytical tool in the form of a "Gender Mainstreaming Checklist" to help government officials bring gender perspectives into mainstream policy-making.

The Checklist provides a set of "yes" or "no" questions to assist officers in conducting the exercise and evaluating the gender impact of public policy, programmes and legislation. There are questions with descriptive elaboration on gender data, consultation with women and women's specific needs. Advice and assistance is provided if gender impact has not been considered or assessed in any area. A set of guidance notes also helps familiarise officers with the concepts of gender mainstreaming.

To assess the effectiveness of the Checklist as a tool for incorporating gender perspectives in policy-making, the Commission conducted a pilot test (completed in March 2002) in five policy areas:

- Health Care Reform
- Family Education Programme
- Enhanced Home and Community Care Services for the Elderly
- Secondary School Places Allocation System
- District Council Review

All the participating bureaux and departments reported that the Checklist had been useful in raising sensitivity in relation to gender issues in their respective areas and in helping them realise the importance of taking gender perspectives into account. Based on feedback from pilot-test participants, as well as other parties, we finalised the Checklist and guidance notes in May 2003.

The Checklist has since been used in the following selected policy areas:

- **Home Affairs Bureau:** review on the role and functions of public sector advisory and statutory bodies as well as women's participation in these bodies
- **Information Technology Services Department:** information technology education and training for the community
- **Architectural Services Department:** design of facilities in public buildings

### *Gender-Sensitive Building Designs*

The following illustrates the need for public policy to take a gender-sensitive viewpoint and how the quality of life for women is thus improved. Members of the Commission met with Buildings Department and Architectural Services Department in March and April 2003 to express concern that the design of public buildings and facilities are not sensitive to the different needs of the two genders and have caused inconvenience to women. The provision of female toilets in public and private buildings was inadequate (because of the different gender usage pattern) and the design and fixtures in these facilities were sometimes not woman-friendly. Other concerns included the inadequate provision of crèches, baby-care and children's facilities, family changing rooms and women-friendly fittings (such as hangers and table tops for handbags) in public places, car park security and reflective and/or difficult-to-clean flooring materials.

Members discussed with the Administration the importance and benefits of incorporating gender considerations in building design through the collection of sex-disaggregated data and use of the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist. In light of this, the Government is considering the issue further, with a view to how best its internal guidelines can be revised to incorporate appropriate gender considerations.



### *Gender Focal Point Network*

Most government bureaux and departments (over 60) have designated senior officers to act as Gender Focal Points and liaise with the Commission. These people will in due course assist in raising awareness and understanding of gender-related issues and promote gender mainstreaming initiatives in their respective areas. The Commission will work collaboratively with the Gender Focal Point network in taking forward gender mainstreaming initiatives.

### *Gender-Sensitivity Training for Civil Servants*

On the advice of the Commission, gender-sensitivity training programmes were organised for civil servants to enhance understanding and awareness of gender-related issues and women’s concerns, improve skills in gender analysis and the collection of sex-disaggregated data, and facilitate the application of gender mainstreaming in their work. In collaboration with local tertiary institutions, an introductory seminar and a series of tailor-made, gender-related training workshops and materials were prepared to suit the operational needs of specific grades and departments. Lectures, group discussions, sharing with NGOs, exercises, reading materials and references were included.

Over 600 civil servants of different grades have now participated in the programme. Details are set out below:

Date	Gender-sensitivity Training Programmes
February 2001	Introductory Seminar on Women and Gender Issues with some 110 civil servants from various government departments and bureaux attending
September 2001	Two training workshops for more than 70 Social Welfare Department staff

December 2001	Training workshops for 15 newly promoted Police Superintendents as part of the Police Force's Senior Command Course and for more than 25 Administrative Officers as part of their induction training
January 2002	Re-run of training workshop for 30 Social Welfare Department staff
February 2002	Re-run of training workshops for more than 30 Social Welfare Department staff and 15 Chief Inspectors; training workshop for 25 Station Sergeants and Police Inspectors
April 2002	Training workshop for more than 45 professional staff of the then Education Department
June 2002	Re-run of training workshops for around 10 Police Superintendents, as part of the Police Senior Command Course, and 55 staff of the Social Welfare Department and NGOs
July 2002	Training workshop for some 30 newly recruited Administrative Officers
November 2002	Re-run of training workshop for more than 20 Police Inspectors and Sergeants
December 2002	Re-run of training workshop for nearly 30 Police Inspectors and Sergeants
January 2003	Re-run of training workshop for some 25 newly recruited Administrative Officers
July 2003	Re-run of training workshops for 80 social workers and social security officers of the Social Welfare Department and NGOs

Participants generally found the training workshops useful, the content interesting and relevant to their work, and the level of the course reasonable. Women's groups were invited to share their experiences with participants at some workshops. Some participants indicated an interest to pursue more advanced programmes to deepen their knowledge of gender issues.

### *Research and Survey on Women and Gender Mainstreaming*

Desktop research has been carried out on gender mainstreaming efforts by the United Kingdom, United States, New Zealand and Australia and we conducted a survey on the "Extent and Level of Positions taken up by Women in the Private and Non-governmental Sectors in Hong Kong" in 2002.

*See also, "Survey and Research" in "Women's Commission at Work" and "Survey and Research Findings" in "Annex."*

## CONVERGENCE

Taking initial steps

The road ahead

looms clear and

bright

There will come a day

When the fruits of

endeavour

See the many

streams converge

in a river

## Way Ahead

We are pleased to report that 13 bureaux and departments have identified a total of 20 programme areas where the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist could be adopted in the next two or three years. The Commission will work with these sections to do so. Plans are in hand to introduce the analytical tool in more policy areas on an incremental basis.

The Commission will conduct further evaluations and exchanges of ideas with various sectors on gender mainstreaming and the Checklist in the medium and long term, including meetings with NGOs and bureaux and departments adopting the Checklist. The guidance notes will also be updated from time to time to take the latest developments into account.

### *Public Support*

The Commission realises that public education can enhance support for gender mainstreaming initiatives, which in turn serves as a driving force. As it is the long-term objective of the Commission that gender mainstreaming be adopted by the whole community, including NGOs and the private sector, opportunities to introduce the analytical tool to the private sector are being explored and strategic partners identified to work with us in this respect.

### *Overseas Experience*

The Commission will look at overseas practices and consider how best to evaluate the gender mainstreaming initiatives implemented so far. We will also provide the necessary training and support for Gender Focal Points to function effectively in their bureaux and departments.

### *Reinforced Training*

Training will continue to be provided for civil servants, with a view to enhancing understanding and sensitivity towards gender-related issues. We are pleased to report that some 30 bureaux or departments have expressed interest in taking up such training. New, tailor-made workshops are being planned for departments that work closely with the community, such as Information Services Department, Leisure and Cultural Services Department and Home Affairs Department. We shall work collaboratively with Civil Service Bureau and local tertiary institutions in this regard.

## 1.2 Empowerment of Women

*As a woman today, we can realise our potential and take hold of the direction of our lives.*

*As a member of society, shouldn't we also have concern for our community and participate in the decisions it makes?*

*Women have long taken a back-seat in government consultation and decision-making and the ratio of women involved in this process is low.*

*Is this due to society's lack of recognition for women's abilities or insufficient channels allowing women to realise their potential?*

### Empowerment of Women – How to Bring it About

The Commission believes Hong Kong women should be able to make informed decisions, to develop and realise their potential and meet future challenges. Empowerment of women is therefore one of the Commission's priority areas of action. Through empowerment, we believe women will be better equipped to face life's challenges and become agents of change.

#### *Individual Level: Independence, Striving, Self-Realisation*

The Commission seeks at the individual level to increase Hong Kong women's self-reliance and inner strengths, and to utilise the power of good sense. Empowerment includes economic well-being, education, safety at home and in the public, health, and involvement in decision-making. It entails capacity building for women in the following areas:

- skills, such as education and training
- health and safety, including physical and mental health and safety
- personal/psychological and social/interpersonal aspects, such as leadership, networking, self-confidence, positive mindset and attitude

#### *Collective Level – Dismantling Obstacles, Creating Enabling Conditions*

The Commission works at the collective level to create an enabling environment that facilitates women's advancement and eliminates barriers to participation in the community in order to realise women's full potential. It comprises:

#### **PARTICIPATION**

Opportunities are  
windows of life

Through which we  
soar to reach new  
heights

- public education, such as the elimination of stereotyping
- gender-sensitive policies, programmes and legislation
- support services for women, for example, a women's services directory
- an environment that facilitates women's social, economic and political participation, such as participation in decision-making and co-operatives and mutual help services

### *Enhancing Participation in Decision-Making*

Government advisory and statutory bodies (ASBs) present recommendations to the Government on many areas and make decisions on other areas that directly influence the daily lives of Hong Kong citizens.

The Commission recognises the need for and potential of women to participate more fully in decision-making processes and we are aware of the concerns about the relatively low level of women's participation in ASBs. We have had a number of discussions with Home Affairs Bureau and District Offices to explore measures to enhance women's participation in ASBs both territory-wide and at district levels.

The Commission made a number of recommendations to the Government, including:

- taking gender ratio into account when making appointments to ASBs
- adopting a more proactive approach to reach out, identify and cultivate female candidates who are able and willing to contribute to the work of ASBs
- setting a working target for women's participation in ASBs

Efforts were also made to encourage women to indicate interest in the work of ASBs by submitting their curriculum vitae to Home Affairs Bureau for inclusion in the Central Personality Index, the database from which candidates for appointment are often drawn.

We are glad to report that our suggestions met with a positive response and the Government has since agreed to take gender composition into account when making appointments to ASBs. Efforts are being made to enhance women's participation in these bodies and a working target of at least 25% women for each ASB has been introduced. The Commission will continue to work with the Government, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and women from all sectors to raise the level of women's participation in social decision-making structures.

### *Community Investment and Inclusion Fund*

In his 2001 Policy Address, the Chief Executive announced the intention to establish a Community Investment and Inclusion Fund to support the collaborative efforts of community organisations and the private sector, to encourage mutual concern and aid, promote community participation at the local level, and support cross-sector programmes to develop social capital. The Commission found these objectives to be in line with its idea of promoting self-reliance and mutual help among women in Hong Kong. We therefore supported establishment of the Fund and organised a consultation session with local women's groups and service agencies in October 2001 to gauge their views.

Representatives from 55 women's group and service agencies attended the meeting. Participants generally welcomed the introduction of the Fund and felt it could enable women to participate locally through initiating worthwhile community projects. In the first two rounds of funding, five projects initiated by women's groups or services agencies, with a focus on women, received resources.

### *Promoting New Service Models*

To better meet the needs and concerns of women in Hong Kong, the Commission decided to play a catalytic role in promoting the development of new service models and encouraging initiatives to achieve independence and boost mutual help. We explored new ideas and worked with NGOs and governmental departments in pilot projects, including:

- **Mutual aid for self-help, enhancing self-development — setting up of mutual help childcare centres based on membership model:** in addition to acting as a support, the Commission believes that women participating in such services gain a sense of achievement and satisfaction, a process of self-development which can bring intrinsic change. To promote the idea of mutual help, Social Welfare Department and several NGOs started mutual help childcare centres in four districts on Hong Kong Island and in the New Territories using the membership model on a pilot basis, as proposed by the Commission. The Commission met representatives of these childcare centres to exchange views on the process;

- **Enhancing health consciousness, caring for self and family – setting up community-based healthcare centres:** Tung Wah Group of Hospitals accepted the Commission’s idea of community health centres and is setting up a centre in Wanchai. The Centre will provide integrated health services and health counselling or advice on preventive medical care. A steering committee, including a representative from the Commission, has been established to oversee the project; and
- **Education begins at home – parenting education:** we are aware that many local women’s groups and service agencies are interested in parenting education. Noting the Government’s attempt to promote multifaceted parenting education initiatives, the Commission jointly organised a briefing session with the then Education Department on parenting education for interested women’s groups and service agencies in November 2002. Service agencies that had organised related programmes were invited to share their experiences. Over 50 people attended the briefing session. Participating organisations were encouraged to make use of their established networks to convey positive parenting education messages to families. A women’s group is now promoting parenting education through local networking with government aid and resources.

The Commission is looking into other ways to enhance women’s employment opportunities, for example, the setting up of co-operatives. We have discussed with Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department the possibility of introducing the co-operative model and shall explore further with local women’s groups how best to take this forward.

### *Promoting Good Practices on Empowerment*

#### ***Snapshots of Good Practices on Empowerment of Women:***

- *The Education Institute for Senior Citizens, HKYWCA – provides study opportunities for women senior citizens who missed out on education, enabling them to broaden their horizons after retirement.*
- *Childminder Development Programme, Yan Oi Tong Community Centre – assists grassroots women, who are interested in becoming professional childminders, in developing the childminding business so that they might work with dignity and for reasonable economic return.*



To stimulate the development and adaptation of innovative and positive initiatives for women's advancement, the Commission sought examples of good empowerment programmes from government departments, NGOs, women service agencies and community groups. Response to this exercise in 2002 was enthusiastic with close to 100 submissions from different organisations and sectors. An independent selection panel selected a total of 33 good practices for inclusion in the Good Practices on Empowerment of Women booklet, published in March 2003.

### *Sharing Experience of Empowerment*

#### ***Snapshots of Good Practices on Empowerment of Women:***

- *Social Adjustment and Support Group for South Asian Ethnic Women, Yau Tsim and Mongkok Family Support and Resource Centre, Social Welfare Department – helps women from South Asia overcome obstacles, adapt to Hong Kong life and improve communication with local people.*
- *Women's Hotline, Lai Kok Centre, Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres – has trained over 400 volunteer peer telephone counsellors to help callers in the past 20 years. A number of women who received help contribute their services to assist other women in similar circumstances.*

With a view to encouraging and promoting good empowerment practices across all sectors of the community, in June 2003 the Commission organised a forum at which organisations whose practices appeared in the empowerment booklet, together with beneficiaries, shared their experiences and practices. Areas included education and training, economic well-being, self-help and mutual help, social participation and decision-making, safety at home and in the public, and health.

Practices ranged from literacy building to information technology, problem-solving skills to basic information on gynaecology, home care to legal rights, marketing to telephone counselling skills. Around 200 people from NGOs, service agencies, community groups and government departments attended the forum, finding it a useful occasion for experience sharing.

#### ***Snapshots of Good Practices on Empowerment of Women:***

- *Female Councillor Programme, Harmony House Hong Kong – helps abused women change from passive recipients into active volunteer ambassadors to other abused women, by enhancing skills and confidence in dealing with family violence.*
- *Peer Education Programme for Sex Workers, Action For Reach Out – the first local health education programme targeted at women sex workers and using a peer approach to strengthen knowledge and awareness of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.*

#### ***Development of a Capacity Building Framework***

A Capacity Building Framework was developed to assist women from different sectors acquire skills and gain recognition for the courses they take. As many existing education and training programmes are mainly vocational, the Commission initiated the Capacity Building Mileage Programme to promote positive life skills and continuous learning for women.

*See, also “Capacity Building Mileage Programme” in “Women’s Commission at Work.”*

#### **Way Forward**

The Commission aims to enable women to participate more fully in all aspects of community life. We will continue to appeal to women to come forward to serve on ASBs. We will encourage organisations to provide relevant capacity building programmes for women and invite employers to encourage and facilitate their employees to serve in ASBs. The Commission will work vigorously with the Administration on measures to enhance women’s participation in ASBs, and to monitor the gender composition on these bodies.

#### **GROWTH**

Leave behind worries  
and tears

To search for the new  
way

Let us find strength  
together

As we shape our own  
destiny one day

We shall continue to review women-related services and issues and make suggestions on improvements, where appropriate, to ensure suitability, adequacy and quality. We shall also promote and publicise innovative models and good practices that can empower women.

### 1.3 Public Education

*If the day should dawn when...*

*A children's story tells of a woman doctor assisted by a male nurse...*

*Packaging for toy cookery sets features girls and boys and that for toy cars shows boys and girls...*

Gender stereotypes and prejudices are still prevalent in Hong Kong despite legislation to protect women's rights and promote gender equality over the years. Efforts by the Government and the Commission to promote gender mainstreaming and empower women will not be effective unless commonly held misconceptions on roles, values, images and abilities of the two sexes are addressed.

To change these deeply-entrenched misconceptions, public education and publicity programmes were launched to promote gender sensitivity within the community, reduce stereotyping and raise general awareness of women-related issues. In addition, a major conference, "Women for a Better Tomorrow" was organised in May 2002 to stimulate public discussion on gender-related issues.

*See also, "Women's Commission Conference" in "Women's Commission at Work" and "Annex".*

#### *Public Education and Publicity Campaign*

The first large-scale programme got underway with a Public Education Launching Ceremony-cum-Reception to Celebrate International Women's Day at Hong Kong Central Library on 8 March 2002. Major activities of the campaign included:

- i. announcements of Public Interest on television, radio and buses:**
  - the first series, "Towards due recognition of women," launched in March 2002. This appealed for greater awareness of women's contributions and paid tribute to their remarkable efforts and achievements.

#### **BREAKING AWAY**

To think and reflect so  
prejudices might go  
To open dialogue so  
misunderstandings  
might end  
Dismantling internal  
barriers to live  
Freely and at ease



- a second series, emphasising the importance of capacity building, began in March 2003 based around the theme “Women, the gravity that gathers strength”.

ii. **essay competition to create public interest in “capacity building”:**

*“Grandma is no longer young and has more time to herself now. Yet she is busier than ever, having taken up computer, English and yoga courses and also doing voluntary work. She often says to me: ‘I did not have the opportunity before. Now I want to learn, and contribute more to society.’”*

*YUK Wing-ki “Two Unusual Women”*

***“The New Sky of Modern Women” Essay Competition  
Champion, Upper Primary Group***

the Commission jointly organised an essay competition, “The New Sky of Modern Women”, with Ming Pao Newspapers Limited in December 2002 to generate discussion on the life and development of women’s potential. Advertorials on empowered women were placed in the media to encourage different sectors of the community to participate and the response was good, with more than 1,800 entries received in the five categories - upper primary, lower secondary, higher secondary, tertiary and open. Writers focused on the experiences of women around them or their perception of a woman’s world. Winners attended a prize presentation ceremony during the International Women’s Day 2003 reception at Hong Kong Central Library and their essays published in a book to share the new sky of modern women with the community and further promote awareness of women’s inner strengths and potential.

iii. a 10-episode television drama series on “capacity building” and “empowerment of women”:

*“Women with Dreams” is a fresh, new social drama series. It looks through the eyes of women today and, encourages them to be aware of developments, to improve mind-set and skills, to meet challenges and to help themselves and others.*

the Commission together with Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) jointly produced a 10-episode television drama series “Women with Dreams”. The series featured 10 independent yet inter-related stories, portraying prejudices and barriers encountered by women at home, school, in the workplace or in the community. The series was shown on Tuesday evenings on TVB Jade from December 2002 to February 2003. With the assistance of non-governmental organisations, a telephone hotline was set up to respond to enquiries after each episode. A DVD and VCD were also produced and distributed among the community.

iv. a 13-episode radio programme on gender-related issues:

*Anecdotes from “Women with Dreams” radio talk show –*

- *LEE Se-kei, Artist: “Don’t look down on yourself, love yourself more and let other people love you more. Women have a lot of undeveloped potential. We can live extraordinary lives in ordinary circumstances.”*
- *Dr Simon CHAU, Head of Translation Programme, Hong Kong Baptist University: “Men and women shoulder the same family responsibilities. They can both be the CEO of their homes, both find joy in looking after family members and also make important contributions to the social economy. Society needs to give her/him more recognition.”*

this radio talk-show, also called “Women with Dreams”, was another joint project with RTHK. The 1½-hour show was broadcast live on RTHK Radio 1 and Radio 5 on Thursday evenings from February to May 2003. Each episode was in-charged by a member of the Commission and featured guests, street

interviews and phone-ins. The show focused on different capacity building-related issues each week including women's health, economic well-being, marriage, education and training, safety and violence, social participation and decision-making, and images of women. Audience response was good with topics regarded as interesting and thought-provoking. Guests came from all walks of life. They included Mrs Rita FAN HSU Lai-tai (Legislative Council President), Ms LEE Se-kei (artist), Ms LEE Wai-ling (writer), Ms LI Fai (*tai chi* master), as well as marriage counsellors, academics, entrepreneurs and community group volunteers.

**v. annual celebration of International Women's Day:**

- in response to the Commission's request, five mobile phone and paging companies sent out the following message to subscribers on 8 March 2002: "It's International Women's Day today! Show your appreciation for the ladies." A media briefing was held on the day to present the Commission's work and announce the findings of a survey on the "Extent of Satisfaction of Women in Hong Kong". A supplement was also published in five local newspapers.

*(see also, "Survey and Research" and "Survey and Research Findings" in "Women's Commission at Work" and "Annex").*

- at the International Women's Day reception in March 2003, prizes were presented to winners of "The New Sky of Modern Women" Essay Competition and the Commission's revamped web site was launched. To complement this, an advertisement appeared in the South China Morning Post on 8 March 2003 to publicise capacity building. A supplement on the work of the Commission, "The New Sky of Modern Women" Essay Competition and "Women with Dreams" radio talk-show was also published in four local newspapers.

**vi. printing and distribution of posters:**

these were placed on government poster sites including footbridges, public housing estates and in Leisure and Cultural Services Department facilities.



### *Media Liaison*

Briefings and media gatherings were held regularly to keep the media informed about the Commission's work and the latest developments in women issues. Topics discussed included gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women, public education programmes, formation of co-operatives, quality parenting, participation of women in government advisory and statutory bodies, training and re-training of women, participation in volunteer work, and issues pertaining to domestic and sexual violence.

Along with press conferences and press releases, the Commission also contributed articles on its work to newspapers and clarified issues of concern to women.

### **Way Forward**

Public education and publicity drives will continue in order to eliminate stereotyping and prejudices, enhance gender sensitivity within the community, and increase public awareness and understanding of gender-related issues.

A second television drama series related to "capacity building" and "empowerment of women" has already been broadcast on TVB Jade on Saturday evenings from January to March 2004 and the Commission will continue to explore different means of collaboration in its publicity and public education initiatives and activities.

### **RENEWAL**

Shedding the

shackles of history

A fresh mind

Sees new angles

And flies to higher

realms



## 2 Review of Services Concerning Women

### Reviewing Policies to Promote the Well-being of Women

#### RESPONSE

Listening to needs

Pooling resources

All is possible

For a better tomorrow

Part of the Women's Commission's work, among other things, is to keep under review services delivered within and outside the Government, identify priority areas for action and monitor the development of new or improved services with regard to women's needs. During the past three years, the Commission reviewed key services for women's empowerment and well-being, including welfare services, family services, services for victims of violence and violence prevention programmes, support for new immigrant women and single parents, adult and continuous education, employment services and job-related training, women's health programmes, information technology programmes, public housing, parent education and childcare facilities.

While noting the Government's delivery of such services, the Commission urged that women's perspectives be taken into account; and in particular, to consider women's specific circumstances and needs when delivering these services. The Commission's position and advice given are set out below:

#### *Women-Focused Welfare Services*

##### ***Discerning Eyes***

*"As citizens of Hong Kong, we are doing fine, considering the range of benefits that we can enjoy. Yet something is still amiss. Is it because of some oversight in our welfare policies, or that policy-makers still do not see things from a woman's point of view?"*

As the majority of those using welfare services are women, the Commission was concerned whether such services were designed and delivered with a women's focus. The Commission discussed this with Social Welfare Department in May 2001.

We stressed that women's perspectives should be considered when formulating welfare services and that some services, especially those related to women's development, might need to adopt a woman-centred approach.

### *Empowering Women in Crisis*

#### ***Every Family Has Stormy Times***

*"The company folded last year and since then my husband has been unemployed. He drinks to drown his sorrows and is often bad-tempered. My relationship with my mother-in-law hasn't been too good all along and I feel embarrassed to take my troubles to my own family..."*

The Commission regards women as the "gravitational force" in a family and community as they strengthen cohesion among family members and help build social networks for the family and social capital in the community. When reviewing family and welfare services in May and July 2001, the Commission found many women facing family crises were reluctant to seek assistance. We therefore suggested that the Government adopt an out-reach approach, with local women's groups and centres contacting women in need, and partnerships established with local community organisations to deliver family services in a proactive manner. Members agreed on the need to strengthen support for families with problems and recommended funding support to set up a multi-purpose Family Crisis Support Centre so that emergency intervention could be provided to individuals and families in need.

#### ***A Family Split Between Two Cities***

*"Who prefers her husband to work in Mainland China? It weakened our marriage and also made my husband less concerned about the kids. He has not been home for the past three weeks and has only called once in all that time. Perhaps he has a mistress there. But what can I do? I have no one else to depend on."*

The Commission was also concerned about the growing problems faced by "split families", for example, when one member works in Mainland China. Members were concerned about the fragmentation of, and difficulty in accessing, family services in such cases and that family service centres were not able to fully meet women's needs. We suggested restructuring these services so that they were

more easily available, integrated and free from stigma and that they support women's development rather than determining the role women should play. Members were supportive of the proposed Integrated Family Service Centre (offering preventive, empowering, supportive and remedial services) and recommended that a wider variety of services, including emotional support, volunteering, vocational and leadership training, be provided to meet women's needs, and enhance social relationships and participation of all users. Local women's groups should be involved to maximise informal or peer support.

The Commission further pointed out that family services had become case-work dominated and remedial. We thus recommended such services be re-oriented to become more proactive, diversified and community-based, and that more outreach and assistance could be provided to deal with potential problem families at an earlier stage. Improving men's utilisation of family services was another way of empowering women.

### *Zero Tolerance Towards Domestic Violence*

#### ***Lingering Shadows***

*"I could not take his ranting and beatings any longer. But I was in a dilemma. I was afraid my two children would suffer terrible psychological and physical harm. Yet I didn't want them to grow up in a single-parent family."*

Members were aware of the increase in domestic violence cases, the majority of which involved women victims. The Commission was of the view that violence against women should not be tolerated and we suggested that the Government adopt a holistic and preventive approach in handling domestic violence cases. The Commission noted that children in families who suffered from domestic violence were more at risk of becoming perpetrators when they grew up, creating a vicious cycle. We therefore also suggested that the Government look into perpetrators' problems and help children to become more resilient to challenges.

With a view to improving existing services, the Commission supported the setting up of a fourth refuge for battered women and recommended strengthening Social Welfare Department's Family and Child Protection Service Units' professional support. It was suggested that young people could be involved in planning family education and public education programmes, and the possibility of treatment or mandatory counselling for perpetrators looked at.

## *Integration of New Immigrants*

### ***Strangers in a City***

*"Sometimes, I am afraid to go into the urban areas by myself. Hong Kong changes so quickly and I have not yet overcome my fear of strange surroundings... My daughter is also facing difficulties at school. More than once she has come home in tears, saying she has been teased by her classmates for being a new immigrant."*

The Commission is aware that about 70% of new immigrants from Mainland China are women, and nearly half are aged between 25 and 44. Many are in disadvantageous situations and face difficulties, such as applying for public housing, looking for jobs, language barriers and family problems. In May 2001, the Commission discussed with Home Affairs Department the services provided for these new arrivals and suggested that counselling, parenting education, language classes, adult education, and vocational training or re-training programmes should continue to be provided to facilitate early integration. District-based groups could also organise community-building initiatives to help these women keep active socially, develop their own potential and independence, and contribute to the community.

## *Capacity Building Through Continuing Education*

### ***Give Me Wings So I Can Soar to the Heavens***

*"My eldest daughter recommended that I take some training courses. But I am already in my forties and only have a primary education. Will I be able to manage? I looked through the booklet she brought home but didn't find anything suitable. I also have to look after the family. Where will I find time to attend courses?"*

Empowerment is essential for the development of women's potential. Thus the Commission has adopted "capacity building" as a major theme. Members noted that while there are many adult education or training programmes, women's development needs are not fully catered for. We discussed this with the then Education Department in July 2001 and recommended that the Department use its additional financial provision in 2001/02 and 2002/03 to enhance adult education opportunities, especially day-time courses, so that the programmes offered could



reach more women. Programmes also needed to be more flexible and focus on basic literacy and generic skills.

Members suggested co-ordination between government bureaux and departments in the provision of adult education to avoid duplication and to ensure programmes meet women's needs. Members also advised the Government that relevant sex-disaggregated data should be collected and analysed when designing and offering such courses.

### *Empowering Women in Employment*

#### ***Working Towards Hope***

*"My youngest son is in secondary school now. I really hope to work again so I will not be so disconnected from society. I would also like to contribute to the family's finances and ease my husband's burden. But employment opportunities for a woman nearing 50 are thin..."*

Economic well-being is a key issue related to women's empowerment. The Commission found that many women, in particular middle-aged or less skilled women, faced difficulties in finding paid employment opportunities. By taking an overview of women's participation in the labour force and examining the employment-related services provided by Labour Department, Employees Retraining Board and Vocational Training Council, we observed that women's participation in the labour force had remained more or less the same over the years. Lower-paid work or elementary occupations were taken up mainly by women, while the number of women occupying managerial positions was considerably less than men. Middle-aged women, especially new immigrants and those who had stopped work to care for children, encountered difficulties in entering and re-entering the labour market.

The Commission considered training and re-training opportunities should be improved to facilitate women's participation in the employment market and other

aspects of community life. We suggested that the possible differential impact on women and men should be taken into account when formulating and implementing training and re-training policies and courses. Timing of courses and location of re-training centres should take women's needs into consideration. We also suggested that the Administration collect more sex-disaggregated statistics on the employment situation (especially women's income).

### ***Days of Independence***

*Although my daughter and I can subsist on comprehensive social security assistance, I have always hoped to be a strong single parent and to find a job so we can support ourselves."*

In December 2001, Members met Social Welfare Department to discuss the "Ending Exclusion" package which encouraged single parents on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) to seek employment. We noted the project was client-centred and integrated services (including the voluntary employment assistance programme, seminars, training and recreational programmes) were provided to address the needs of single parent families under CSSA. We believed the outreach and cross-sector co-operation approaches adopted by the project were useful in supporting single-parent families on CSSA at neighbourhood level.

We were impressed by the notion that single parents who had received services through the project would be recruited as volunteers to reach out to other single parents. We were of the view that the project could effectively empower single parents (the majority of them women). We suggested that the spirit of mutual help should be promoted among service recipients and the setting up of co-operative mutual help childcare centres encouraged to support single parents taking up paid jobs. Members also suggested that employment assistance and training be stepped up and longitudinal studies conducted to evaluate the project's effectiveness.

## ***Women's Health***

### ***Fit and Over Forty***

*"Mrs Wong, who lives next door, said that when a woman reaches 40, she should take good care of her health. I know that a woman should have an annual medical checkup but I have no regular ailments and it isn't cheap to go to a private clinic..."*

Women's health is another important aspect of empowerment as improving women's general state of health would enable them to participate more fully in society. The Commission looked into public health services and health promotion programmes provided for women (including new immigrants) by Department of Health.

While noting that comprehensive women's health services are provided at a very low cost by the public sector, we suggested that Department of Health take further steps to develop a territory-wide breast cancer screening programme, which was becoming a health issue for women. We suggested that the Department improve accessibility to its services through wider publicity and more woman-friendly service hours at Maternal and Child Health Centres and should collaborate closely with the subvented sector to optimise resources. Department of Health was also urged to collect more health data on patterns of disease and illness among women.

The Commission was particularly concerned that the cervical cancer screening programme should reach women at large, in particular high-risk women. The Department was invited to look into the possibility of setting up a central register for screening records to facilitate information tracing. In addition, the Commission offered to collaborate in promoting and publicising the programme among women's groups and organisations.

The Commission was concerned about women's mental health and specific health needs of disabled women and suggested the Department look into improvements. Members also suggested assistance for women and girls to combat sexually transmitted diseases, and the enhancement of health education related to teenage pregnancy. In promoting breastfeeding, the Department was invited to look into the provision of support facilities in public places and the workplace.

### *Bridging the Gender Digital Divide*

#### **Cyber Fun**

*"What for? To lessen the gap between me and my kids."*

*"To send e-mails to friends overseas."*

*"To understand the outside world."*

The Commission has been concerned about the possible existence of a "digital divide" in access to information technology, especially among middle-aged and

elderly women. The subject was discussed with Home Affairs Department and Information Technology Services Department in May 2001 and January 2002, and Members urged the Government to take up initiatives promoting IT usage among women, for example, training and provision of IT facilities.

The Commission suggested that the Government integrate gender mainstreaming in formulating IT policies and collect statistics to identify any gender difference in IT usage and barriers faced by women in accessing IT. Regarding IT training, we were of the opinion that it was important to address access difficulties for women who were illiterate or with a low level of education. To ensure IT courses would take into account the possible diversity in participants' educational attainment, the Commission suggested that the Government tailor IT training programmes to meet the diverse needs and skill levels of women, and to provide them in these women's neighbourhood.

We also suggested that the Government take women's viewpoints into account in promoting IT usage, for example, women are more motivated to learn about and use IT if it can help them in their daily lives. With regard to improving IT access among grassroots women, the Commission suggested that the Government provide more facilities by partnering with the private sector and encouraging community organisations to set up community cyber points and mobilise local women's groups in promoting IT usage.

### *Public Housing and Women*

#### ***A Modest Hope***

*"I hope to have my own identity. To rebuild my own home!"*

During our visits to women's groups and service organisations, we received feedback on the difficulties experienced by many new immigrant women, and women facing family crises or violence, in applying for public housing units. Many women felt their rights were not protected. If their husband was the registered tenant of the public housing unit, this meant the woman was usually the party that had to move out in cases of violence or family disputes. The Commission met with the then Housing Bureau and Housing Department in October 2001 to discuss public housing allocation policies, tenancy management issues and the problems faced by women in particular.

We suggested that Housing Department look into the possibility of allowing husband and wife to register as joint tenants of a public housing unit and to widen the eligibility of conditional tenancy to cover women who were legally separated from their spouse (pending divorce proceedings). We also suggested that Housing Department terminate a tenancy if it was evident the tenant had been violent towards or abused his/her family members and that the victim be offered housing assistance.

Noting that inconsistent advice had sometimes been given by different frontline staff on conditional tenancy matters, we suggested that the Department publicise its guidelines more widely. On the advice of the Commission, Housing Department has now revised the conditional tenancy policy so that a battered spouse who has petitioned for divorce but has no dependent children, or who does not have custody of dependent children, may now apply for conditional tenancy.

### *On Becoming Good Parents*

#### ***A Mother's Blues***

*"When I was small, I always felt that my parents could not understand me. But now I have become a parent, I find I cannot understand my children either."*

Since women play an important role in caring for family members, in particular the younger generation, the Commission discussed the work of the then Education Department on parenting education in January 2002, and took the opportunity provided by the July 2002 consultation exercise on harmonisation of kindergarten and childcare centres to advise the Government on pre-primary services.

In respect of parenting education, we recognised that women, especially homemakers and women with dual roles, experienced considerable stress in caring for children. Members were of the view that improving parenting skills could help reduce this stress, which would be beneficial to women's mental health and leave them with more energy to participate more fully in the community. The Commission considered parenting education programmes should be gender-sensitive and tailored to accommodate parents and children from different backgrounds with different needs. Members suggested the then Education Department should adopt gender mainstreaming in designing parenting education programmes, which should feature sex education, skills and knowledge to rise to life's challenges, learning outside the classroom and a culture of appreciation.

Members believed that parenting education required multi-sector co-operation. We noted that resources were provided specifically to support this type of work (for example, the production of parenting education material, training of parenting education workers and implementation of territory-wide promotional activities), and Social Welfare Department could partner with local Maternity and Child Care Centres in conducting parenting education. We stressed that women should be empowered and recommended that training be provided to parent volunteers who could then conduct parenting education for their peers. We also pointed out that carers included grandparents and domestic helpers who should be trained under these programmes.

We advised the Administration that parenting education conducted through Parent-Teacher Associations and schools would be more effective in mobilising parents, especially more passive and hard-to-reach parents, and that men should be encouraged to participate in parenting education programmes. The Administration was also encouraged to collaborate with women's groups in this respect. We believe that the latter with their well-established community networks can reach out to more parents.

Regarding harmonisation of pre-primary services, in view of the gradual decline of the birth rate, some under-subscribed childcare centres and kindergartens could either be relocated to new towns, closed down or turned into a new type of service (for example, mutual help childcare centres).

Members found the proposed system of three types of pre-primary care services (that is, childcare centres, kindergartens and kindergartens-cum-day nurseries) under different systems of supervision quite confusing. It was suggested that the kindergartens-cum-day nurseries for children aged between two to six should be brought under the then Education Department. Members did not consider it appropriate to introduce a through-train mode for childcare centres and kindergartens as they were distinct services. They were of the view that a joint Social Welfare Department/Education Department office to supervise kindergartens-cum-day nurseries' operations would streamline current procedures and be more convenient for parents and service operators. As local women's groups could reach out to parents through their networks more effectively, Members also suggested that the Government involve these groups in public education programmes.

**METAMORPHOSIS**  
Prejudices wither  
Hearts open  
Now there is pride  
In deciding what lies  
ahead



### 3 Issues Concerning Women

#### Working Towards Change

**Overcoming  
obstacles  
To live out one's  
potential**

As a central mechanism to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong, the Women's Commission advises the Government on policies and initiatives of concern to women. The Commission has examined a number of key issues during the past three years. In general, the Administration has been asked to involve women's community groups and consider women's specific needs in policy formulation, and to collate and make use of sex-disaggregated data. Specifically, the Commission has advised on the possible policy implications of new measures and made many suggestions that addressed women's concerns.

Issues included women's participation in advisory and statutory bodies; legislation on marital rape, stalking, maintenance payments and anti-smoking; healthcare reform; urban renewal strategies; sports development policy; population policy and gender stereotyping. The Commission's position and advice given are set out below:

#### *Participation in Public Bodies*

##### ***Who Will Support Me?***

*"Mrs Wong and Mrs Cheung both wanted to nominate me as a delegate. But my husband said I was only a woman and should not take part in community affairs to avoid talk and being in the public eye."*

The Commission considers women's participation in community affairs a key step towards empowerment. To ensure women's voices would be heard at different stages of policy formulation and decision-making, we maintained that the many women able and willing to undertake public service should be encouraged to participate in government advisory and statutory bodies (ASBs). We were aware



that the proportion of women in ASBs remained relatively low and discussed the matter with Home Affairs Bureau in March 2001, April and November 2003.

We urged the Administration to consider giving more opportunities to women to take part in ASBs. We suggested that positive measures be taken to enhance women's participation in public life and action taken with the relevant party where women's participation was particularly low. We made recommendations on training for members appointed to ASBs; measures to reach women interested in ASBs; setting attainable targets over a specified timeframe; raising awareness within the Government; making better use of the Central Personality Index and giving more opportunities to women who had not served on ASBs before; encouraging the private sector to nominate staff to participate in ASBs; and studying core competencies required to serve in these bodies with a view to better matching nominations and appointments.

We suggested that more opportunities be made available to women at district level by expanding membership of some committees; and that District Office staff could reach out to non-traditional community organisations and local women's groups to identify possible candidates. Members also suggested that travelling allowances be provided to help the less well-off participate in ASBs.

The Administration accepted the Commission's advice on the need to enhance women's participation. It endorsed the principle that gender composition be a consideration in appointing members to ASBs and that bureaux and departments should identify suitable women for appointment. An initial 25% working target was set for women's participation. In addition, the Government approached some 300 women's groups, service agencies, chambers of commerce and professional bodies to invite women members to express interest in serving on ASBs. The 18 District Offices of Home Affairs Department were also alerted to the need to appoint more women to area committees. To complement the Administration's efforts, the Commission followed up with a letter to these bodies and urged them to respond positively to the Government's call by completing the curriculum vitae form and

returning it to Home Affairs Department. In Policy Address delivered on January 2004, the Chief Executive pledged to enhance the participation of women in the work of ASBs.

### *Protecting Women against Violence*

#### ***The Danger Zone***

*“In the past year, his temperament has changed a great deal. He often flies into rages and sometimes behaves violently. Not only has he hurt me physically, he has also inflicted grave damage on my self-esteem...”*

The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Committee had raised concern that marital rape was not considered a criminal offence in Hong Kong during its hearing on the Initial Report submitted by Hong Kong in 1999. The matter was subsequently brought to the attention of the Commission and we discussed the issue with Department of Justice in May 2002.

In the Commission’s view, marital rape was rape. As such, it was a crime and amendments should be made to the law to clarify this. We pointed out that it was important to undertake public education to inform the community, women in particular, about their legal rights. The Crimes Ordinance was subsequently amended in July 2002 to make it clear that marital rape was a criminal offence.

#### ***Silent Anger***

*“I was very embarrassed by their provocative behaviour and lewd smiles. Why is it that I am picked on like this so often?”*

The Commission also took an interest in the Law Reform Commission (LRC) Report on stalking. We were concerned that the existing civil and criminal laws were inadequate, and that most stalking victims were women. As part of our efforts to promote empowerment of women and to protect their safety, in March 2001 the Commission discussed recommendations made in the LRC Report with the Administration.

The Commission considered stalking to be a serious matter and that victims should be protected against injury or distress. Criminalising stalking behaviour would provide timely protection to victims and prevent such behaviour escalating into violence. Hence it could reduce the harm that might be caused to victims. In view

of the seriousness and long-term psychological (and sometimes physical) effect that stalking has on victims, our view was legislation should be enacted against stalking as soon as possible.

To further protect women from harassment and harm, Members advised the Government to conduct a more comprehensive review on sexual offences without delay. To complement legislation, we also pointed out that treatment, training and counselling for perpetrators were important. A multidisciplinary approach should be adopted in handling cases of violence, in particular those involving family members. We suggested to the Administration the possibility of including mandatory counselling as a sentencing option when drafting the legislation on stalking and reviewing other legislation related to violence against women. Perpetrators should be psychologically assessed and treatment programmes devised to cater for their needs.

### *Matrimonial Proceedings and Collection of Maintenance*

#### ***Double Damage***

*“The breakdown of my marriage did double damage. I never imagined the legal proceedings would take so long and that it would be so tortuous physically and psychologically.”*

The Commission reckoned many women in divorce cases found the cost and lengthy time involved in ancillary relief proceedings to be a burden. Thus we supported the Judiciary’s proposal to introduce a pilot scheme to enhance clarity and make the process quicker, cheaper and more conducive to a culture of settlement when we discussed the subject in April 2003. We believed the case management approach adopted in the pilot scheme would do this.

We raised the possibility of a more definitive rule, or guideline, in handling financial disputes in divorce cases and suggested it would be helpful if the law made clear an applicant’s entitlement to his/her spouse’s assets so as to avoid legal disputes and ensure an early settlement. However, the Administration pointed out that a more definitive system was difficult to establish because there would always be arguments over which assets to take into account. Pre-marital agreements reached between the parties would complicate the matter. The court also had the responsibility to protect the interests of children and to balance all relevant factors.

We were also aware that divorcees had problems collecting maintenance payments. The Commission was very concerned about this and believed the rights of separated and divorced women had to be protected in this regard. We had meetings with Home Affairs Bureau to discuss the current maintenance system and attended the Legislative Council Home Affairs Panel on the same matter in February 2002.

The Commission was aware that more than 70% of separated or divorced women had not, and have no intention of, applying for maintenance. We were concerned about the well-being of these women as well as those unable to collect maintenance payments. We urged the Administration to address the problem and consider whether there was a need to implement comprehensive improvements. The Commission asked the Administration to review existing measures, with a view to ensuring that the mechanism for application and enforcement of maintenance payments was effective, procedures were user-friendly and efficient, and the cost involved affordable.

The Commission reckoned that women who failed to receive maintenance payments had their due claims and rights jeopardised, and the economic difficulties and mental stress these women faced would adversely affect their ability to participate in all aspects of life. Although the Administration had either put in place, or proposed, a number of improvements, such as relaxing the circumstances under which the court could issue attachment of income orders (AIOs), streamlining procedures for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and legal aid applications, and providing counselling and psychological support to divorcees, there were also areas that had not yet been addressed. For example, an AIO might not be effective in cases involving self-employed maintenance payers or when the main source of income was outside Hong Kong. We therefore suggested that the Administration look into possible ways to improve enforcement in these circumstances.

To review the effectiveness of the proposed measures and to facilitate consideration of other improvements in future, we suggested the Administration collect more detailed data, for example, the reasons why the majority of divorcees do not apply for maintenance, the number of CSSA applications from divorced, single-parent families after implementation of the new procedures, the number of AIO applications and related successful cases.

The Commission considered public education an essential tool. It should be brought to the community's attention that it is a person's responsibility to provide for his/

her ex-spouse and children. This would involve a fundamental change in outlook. The Commission encouraged the Administration to step up its efforts in this regard to achieve more fruitful and long-term results.

The Commission took the suggestion of a maintenance board seriously and kept an open mind on the matter. We were aware that applying for maintenance payments and collection of arrears involved many factors, including legal and personal responsibilities. We therefore considered a maintenance board one of many possible solutions to the problem. We invited the Administration to review the effectiveness of the improvements it was implementing and should results be unsatisfactory, the Commission would urge it to seriously consider setting up a maintenance board. The Commission will follow up this issue until effective measures are in place.

### *Healthcare Reform for Women and Anti-smoking Measures*

#### ***Menopausal Mum***

*“Sister, in the past few months, Mum has been agitated and easily annoyed. Sometimes she loses her temper without reason. Sometimes she is weeping in her room. Is this what is called ‘menopause’?”*

Women and men’s health needs are different. Women as the family carers need support in this role. The Commission discussed with the then Health and Welfare Bureau in May 2001 the consultation document on healthcare reform entitled “Lifelong Investment in Health,” and policy and efforts related to tobacco control by Department of Health in September 2001.

We believe a community-based service delivery model would be conducive to women leading a healthy life and we attached great importance to the need to enhance women’s preventive health services in the community. We supported the strengthening of primary healthcare services and the preventive care system in Hong Kong. We were aware that women were usually the family carer and suggested that the Government be mindful of this so adequate support would be provided. We also recommended the Government pay particular attention to women’s perspectives and needs in the reform of the healthcare system (such as the longer life expectancy of women, sex and reproductive health-related issues), consider the possibility of setting up Health Protection Accounts, and that the interests of homemakers and divorced or separated women be taken into account.

In addition, we suggested that health-related publicity and public education activities should be devised with a gender perspective.

### **Lighting up**

*“Modern women are bold and daring. Yet does one have to smoke to be ‘cool’?”*

Members expressed concern over the increase in women smokers, especially young girls, and the targeting of women by tobacco industry marketing. The Commission considered smoking a women’s issue and urged the Government to step up action on anti-smoking and provide more facilities to help smokers quit (for example, identify reasons for the increase in women smokers, deliver more messages to smokers).

We endorsed proposed legislative amendments in respect of a smoking ban in indoor public premises to help protect non-smokers (many of whom are women and children) against passive smoking. We also invited the Administration to look carefully at enforcement for the proposed legislative amendments and to collaborate with the Commission in organising educational and publicity programmes to discourage smoking, especially among women.

### **Sex-Disaggregated Data**

#### **The Invisible Housewife**

*“I often tell other people that I don’t have a job, but in actual fact my work calls for round-the-clock concentration and effort.”*

Gender is an important element in statistics compiled by Census and Statistics Department. Sex-disaggregated data are currently collected from various sources (for example, major organisations and companies and in many statistical surveys of Government departments) as it is useful in reflecting the socio-economic position of women in Hong Kong. The Commission met with Census and Statistics Department a number of times and made specific suggestions to improve the “Report on Gender Statistics”, “Women and Men in Hong Kong - Key Statistics” (2002 and 2003 editions), and the collection and compilation of sex-disaggregated data in general by using a gender-sensitive approach (for example, in the 2006 by-census).

## Planning and Urban Renewal

### **A Daughter-in-law's Dilemma**

*"Having moved to Tseung Kwan O, I have to commute to work in Shau Kei Wan. It is not easy to adapt to my new environment and I wish I could find work closer to home. But my most pressing concern right now is to find a suitable old people's service for my mother-in-law, who has Parkinson's disease."*

To facilitate women's full participation in the community, the Commission considers it important that their specific needs be taken into account at the territorial/town planning stage and when urban renewal proposals are studied. The Commission took the opportunity to reflect women's concerns when we were consulted on "Hong Kong 2030: Planning Vision and Strategy" in February 2002 and when we discussed urban renewal in November 2001.

On territorial planning, Members suggested that the overall approach should be people-oriented and take into account women's needs for supporting infrastructure (including the anticipated increase in demand for family, childcare and health facilities for single-parent families and elderly women). To address women's concerns and constraints, the Commission suggested that women's groups be consulted and sex-disaggregated data collected and analysed.

Members pointed out that support services and infrastructure should be in place in new development areas before the population builds up to enable women to settle in quickly. We suggested that the private sector should be given incentives to locate businesses closer to new residential areas to facilitate women who work and take care of family members. It was also proposed that consideration be given to enhance recreational facilities; improved harmonisation of old and new developments; the impact of information technology on planning; co-ordination with Mainland China authorities on planning matters; and developing housing and support facilities along the border to enable cross-border workers to spend more time with their families.

In the case of urban renewal projects, we were aware that about 20% of affected heads of household are female, with more than 30% of women over the age of 60 and about 15% single parents. We therefore requested that Urban Renewal Authority identify measures to address women's needs, especially those in vulnerable positions, and suggested that compassionate re-housing and fast-track

compensation be considered. With cash compensation, we suggested that the Authority takes into account the circumstances of individual households and that such compensation should not necessarily be paid to the male member of the household. The spouse's needs should also be considered.

In addition, we pointed out that the employment needs of residents should be looked into and employment counselling or support strengthened. We were aware that women (as the main family carers) would require services such as childcare support if they were to find paid employment when relocated to other districts. Some new immigrants might also need to rebuild their social network. The Administration was asked to help affected residents to relocate and adjust to their new environment. It was also suggested that the Government collect sex-disaggregated data related to urban renewal projects and that women's views be considered when conducting social impact assessment studies.

### *Women and Sports*

#### **Better Still Than Active?**

*"The subject I have least interest in? Physical Education, of course! I am so bad at ball games that I often make a fool of myself in front of classmates. Besides, what benefit is there even if I do gain good results? Girls who do well at sport in school are all Amazon-like tomboys."*

In July 2002, Home Affairs Bureau consulted the Commission on strategic policy for sports development. The Commission was interested in women's access to sports. Members pointed out the need to conduct more research and develop criteria when identifying sport activities to be introduced and promoted in Hong Kong. The Commission suggested that the Government collect sex-disaggregated data to examine women's participation in sport, see how resources were used in sports engaged in by women and men, and understand women's preferences.

To cultivate and sustain young girls' and women's interest in sport, we suggested that the then Education Department should be involved in creating an enabling environment. Sports facilities and physical education lessons in schools should be designed to address the physiological and psychological needs of female students (for example, problems arising from puberty) and emotional development and character-building elements built in (for example, cultivating team spirit rather than simply emphasising results). In encouraging sports participation, Members

suggested that the Administration should look into the possibility of introducing concessionary rates for single-parent households and CSSA recipients, and improve sports facilities to address women's needs (for example, providing family changing rooms).

In relation to long-term institutional change, Members asked the Administration to take into account the gender ratio of ASBs, enhance women's participation in sports development decision-making and collaborate with Mainland China sports bodies in sports science and research.

### *Population Policy*

#### **Dreams and Reality**

*"I did not want to bury my abilities, nor be so cut off from society. But my two sons needed my care. If Hong Kong had been as ready to accept working from home as some overseas countries, then maybe I wouldn't have had to stop using my skills."*

Noting the frequent movement of people across the border and how this might impact on the family (for example, residence and education), the Commission suggested that the Government develop a "population policy" to facilitate planning and co-ordination. The Commission discussed this with the Administration in May 2003, after the Task Force on Population Policy released its report. Members held the view that the Government should have a vision of how Hong Kong should be developed as a society and the quality of its population. The gender angle should be factored in when drawing up population policy. Sex-disaggregated data should also be compiled to facilitate analysis of men's and women's characteristics and how the various socio-economic variables differ.

Members were doubtful about the sustainability of an increasing and aging population and the need to maintain the current workforce. We were aware that improvements in technology might reduce future demand for labour. The fertility rate of spouses of Hong Kong people in Mainland China also needed to be taken into account. Members suggested that instead of importing skills and talents, Hong Kong should make better use of its existing population. The quality of people could be upgraded and the retirement age extended. More women could be mobilised to enter employment by promoting part-time work arrangements, family-friendly practices and home offices.



We also suggested that no restriction be imposed on the importation of foreign domestic helpers as they enabled many women (particularly those with higher education) to participate in the labour market. Members suggested that the Government consider measures to facilitate women returning to their job after childbirth or re-entering the labour market after raising children.

### *Gender Bias in the Media*

#### ***Image Building***

*“Frankly, what woman likes to be called ‘fat wife’. Thirty days to a slim figure and self-confidence? How tempting!”*

The Commission has made public education a priority area for action with the aim of ultimately eliminating gender stereotyping and prejudices, and promoting greater gender sensitivity within the community. Members were concerned about misleading or negative portrayals of women in the media and were aware that it was not uncommon for media programmes, advertisements or news stories to portray women in a biased or sexist manner.

When a nude photo of an actress (allegedly taken against her will) was published in October 2002, the Commission issued a statement to the press and lodged a complaint with Hong Kong Press Council and Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority, condemning the publication, which not only insulted the victim but also severely infringed the dignity of women.

The Commission believed that a strategy and a systematic approach should be adopted to address gender-biased messages (male or female) and messages insulting or demeaning to women in the media. A forum “A Close-up on the Media Through Gender Perspectives” was organised in December 2003 at which 50 participants discussed the need and ways to tackle the issue.

## Tackling SARS

### **Combating SARS**

*"We did not know when the epidemic would end... yet the situation seemed to draw the community together and make it more cohesive. Medical personnel and members of the public all knew their responsibilities during this struggle."*

With the SARS outbreak in March 2003, the Commission appealed to women in Hong Kong to support one another in combating the disease. We called on all women to step up efforts to keep their homes and public areas clean, and to participate in voluntary activities organised by local community groups (such as clean-up campaigns, and care and support for healthcare workers or SARS patients and their families).

Lists of "Frequently Asked Questions" and "Useful Tips for Women as the Carer for the Family" were compiled on what women should do to prevent the spread of the disease and/or reduce chances of infection (with input from Department of Health), and telephone hotlines, web-based learning and homework counselling information made available to women's groups and service agencies.

## CEDAW Comprehensive Report

### **Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**

*The Convention has come up with a common definition of "discrimination against women" and laid down the principle of protecting the rights of women in the domains of politics, law, employment, education, medical services, commercial activities and family relationships.*

The Commission was consulted on the CEDAW report a number of times during the drafting process and suggestions made on improving content and presentation. We suggested, *inter alia*, that the work of non-governmental organisations in addressing women-related issues be set out and that the economic activity of foreign domestic helpers and women with disabilities, rights of rural women and public housing tenancies for women be covered. Our comments were appropriately incorporated in the report which has been submitted to the Central People's Government for incorporation into Mainland China's report.

**Apathy Dispelled  
Through persuasion  
and education**



## 4 Women's Commission Conference

### Conference Overview

#### **INSPIRATION**

Building an idea

Sharpening a

viewpoint

Thoughts fly ahead

On the spring breeze

The Commission hosted its first major conference, "Women for a Better Tomorrow," on 10-11 May 2002 at Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre. The conference comprised informal networking, plenary and breakout sessions.

Its objectives were:

- to generate discussion and explore ideas on the Commission's three priority areas of work: gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women and public education
- to create opportunities for an exchange of experience, expertise, knowledge and opinions between local women's organisations and international gender experts
- to encourage collaboration among local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), government, community groups and businesses with a view to developing a co-operative model to further address women's concerns
- to broaden community members' perspectives on issues concerning their own and others' lives

More than 500 participants attended the conference, which was opened by the Chief Executive. Experts on gender and women-related issues from Mainland China and overseas, and local professionals, shared their ideas and experiences in promoting women's well-being and more than 30 NGOs took part in the conference's "Marketplace", which showcased their work. Women's groups, service organisations and government departments organised over 70 community activities with a women's focus around the time of the conference. There was no fee for conference participants and a crèche with educational programmes for children was provided to help mothers attend.



## Conference At a Glance

*“Women perform equally well with men on both educational attainment and intelligence if they are given a fair chance and an equal opportunity. We must make full use of the opportunity of the advent of the community, men and women alike, to collaborate with the Commission in the quest for a better tomorrow for women.”*

*Excerpt from Opening Remarks by the Chief Executive*

### *Opening Ceremony*

The Honourable TUNG Chee-hwa (Chief Executive) officiated at the opening ceremony. Ms HUA Fuzhou (Vice-President of All-China Women’s Federation (ACWF)) gave an address on behalf of Ms GU Xiulian (then Vice-President of ACWF) on advances made in promoting women’s interests and well-being in Mainland China and Dr Linda MIRANDA (Regional Programme Director, East and Southeast Asia Regional Office of United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM)) delivered a keynote speech on “The Challenges of Transformation – Women’s Role For a Better Tomorrow”.

### *Informal Networking Sessions*

- **Gender Mainstreaming:** Prof Vivienne WEE facilitated the discussion on “Gender Mainstreaming Experience Across Sectors”. Panellists Ms Helene DWYER-RENAUD (Director of Gender-Based Analysis, Status of Women Canada), Ms CHAN May-ling (Programme Director, Oxfam Hong Kong) and Ms Alice CHIN (Managing Director, Merck Sharp and Dohme (Asia) Ltd) shared their experiences in adopting gender mainstreaming or gender-sensitive measures.
- **Empowerment of Women:** Panellists Dr LEUNG Tung-yeung (Tung Wah Group of Hospitals Well Women Clinic), Ms Irene NG (Association Concerning Sexual

Violence Against Women), Ms CHAN Yu (Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres), Ms WU Mei-lin (Hong Kong Women Workers' Association) and Ms IP Shun-hing (Hong Kong Women Development Association) spoke on "Women's Health", "Women's Safety at Home and in Public", "Women's Education", "Women's Economic Well-Being" and "Women's Political and Social Participation" respectively. They gave examples of empowerment practices or shared personal experiences.

- **Public Education:** Panellists Ms Theresa CHAN (Principal, Ng Wah College), Ms Maggie KOONG (Principal, Causeway Bay Victoria Kindergarten), Ir Dr HUI Ming-fong (Parent-Teacher Association, Victoria English Primary School), Mrs Mary LEUNG (Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service) and Miss Jolie CHOW (St Paul's Convent School) shared their experiences in "Gender Roles in School Education". Topics included gender roles and the removal of gender stereotyping in education, for example, gender equality in early childhood programmes.

### *Plenary Sessions*

- **Gender Mainstreaming:** Ms Helene DWYER-RENAUD (Director of Gender-Based Analysis, Status of Women Canada) talked about "Gender-Based Analysis in Government Processes" with reference to Canada. She elaborated on the key building blocks and players that facilitate integration of successful gender-based analysis within government.
- **Empowerment of Women:** Dr Patricia LICUANAN (former Chair of United Nations Commission on the Status of Women) gave a speech on "Monitoring Women's Empowerment". Ms ZOU Xiaoqiao (Deputy Director-General of the International Liaison Department, ACWF) spoke on "Women's Empowerment and Enhancement of Women's Competence in All Aspects of Life" and set out the action undertaken by ACWF.
- **Public Education:** Ms XU Xi (renowned writer) spoke on "Between the Lines of Images of Gender", reviewing images that represented various concepts of women from a global perspective.

### *Breakout Sessions*

Some 20 panellists from NGOs, professional groups, academia, the media and the government spoke at three breakout sessions on gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women and public education. In the gender mainstreaming



session, views on the proposed “Gender Mainstreaming Strategy in Hong Kong” were exchanged. With regard to empowerment of women, issues in relation to “Women’s Health”, “Women’s Safety at Home and in Public”, “Women’s Education”, “Women’s Economic Well-being” and “Women’s Political and Social Participation” were discussed along with possible ways to address them. On public education, panellists Ms Sylvia CHANG (film director), Ms Eileen CHA (radio programme host), Mr Rex WONG (film critic) and Prof Eric MA (School of Journalism and Communication, Chinese University of Hong Kong) discussed the “Portrayal of Women in Popular Culture”. Ms Ann HUI (film director) and Ms Lydia SHUM (artiste) shared their views on changes in conceptions, and misconceptions, about women. “Images of Women in Hong Kong Films”, a short film narrated by Mr Leslie CHEUNG (singer), was also shown, reflecting the portrayal of women in local films from the 1950s to the 1990s.

### *Luncheon and Closing Reception*

*“The establishment of the Women’s Commission is a further demonstration of our commitment to enhancing the status of women in Hong Kong. While the Commission has only a year’s history, its work is starting to have an impact.”*

***Excerpt from Closing Address by the Chief Secretary for Administration***

The Honourable Elsie LEUNG (Secretary for Justice) delivered a luncheon speech on the institutional mechanisms for women’s advancement and approaches for promotion of women’s rights. The Guest of Honour at the closing ceremony at Government House was the Honourable Donald TSANG (Chief Secretary for Administration). He pointed out that promotion of gender equality and women’s advancement had been achieved through the combined efforts of the government and civil society.

### *“Marketplace”*

The conference’s “Marketplace” showcased NGOs’ work in serving women in the community. Around the time of the Conference, women’s groups, service organisations and government departments organised women-focused programmes, including health checks for women, talks, seminars and courses, exhibitions and arts programmes.

### **Experts’ Meeting Point**

The conference, which was also part of the HKSAR’s 5th anniversary celebrations, provided a good opportunity for the Commission to establish partnerships with women’s groups and other interested parties. It successfully brought together foreign and local experts on gender studies and practitioners from both the public sector and NGOs to share views and experience on the advancement of women in Hong Kong.

*See also, “Women’s Commission Conference” in the “Annex.”*

#### **REFLECTION**

Is this a passing  
moment

Or a timeless truth

A traditional myth

Or a contemporary  
illusion

A new life is born

When chains are cast  
aside



## 5 Local, Regional and International Liaison

### Interaction with local and overseas organisations

An important aspect of the Commission's work is close liaison with local women's groups, services agencies and non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Since its establishment, the Commission has sought active interaction with a wide spectrum of community groups. We have participated in, and organised forums and seminars related to women issues. We have also paid visits to, and held discussions with, local women's groups, service agencies and professional organisations. Such activities have yielded positive results by improving communication, building up trust and collaborative relationships between the Commission and community groups, and facilitating the sharing of experiences and views.

These meetings provided the opportunity to introduce the Commission's vision, work and plans. Issues discussed included the direction of the Commission's work, women's participation in the local community, adult and continuing education, employment, training and re-training opportunities, parenting education, new services models, women's health, violence and safety issues, and provision of welfare services to women in need.

The Commission also networked with relevant regional and international bodies. Members participated in a number of regional and international conferences, which provided good opportunities for dialogue with overseas experts. This helped bring outside perspectives to the Commission's work and enabled Members to keep abreast of the key issues in regional and international arenas. Such exposure enriched the Commission's work and planning. In addition, it helped raise Hong Kong's profile with regard to its promotion of women's development.

**Broadening horizons**

**Building links**



Local, regional and international visits and meetings undertaken by the Commission are listed below:

Year 2001	
February	Visits to <b>Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women, Hong Kong Women Workers' Association, Hong Kong Women Christian Council, Hong Kong Women Development Association, Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres, Hong Kong Association for Survivors of Women Abuse, Harmony House and Action for Reach Out.</b> Issues discussed include new immigrant women, middle-aged women, efforts to tackle sexual and domestic violence (including public housing assistance for battered women) and difficulties faced by women with little education. Poverty, women on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA), the digital divide, continuous education and family issues, along with problems faced by homemakers, single parents and sex workers, also covered.
March	Visits to <b>Zi Teng, Hong Kong Single Parents' Association, Joint Action to Fight for Retirement Protection for Women and Association for the Advancement of Feminism.</b> Views exchanged on the situation for sex workers, childcare needs, housing support and maintenance payment problems experienced by single parents.  Chairperson of the Commission attends the <b>45th Session Meeting of the United Nations Committee on the Status of Women.</b>
April	Visits to <b>Hong Kong Federation of Women and Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions.</b> Views exchanged on women's employment, training and re-training, adult education, women's involvement in voluntary work, health, needs of homemakers and problems faced by local domestic helpers.

May	<p>Visits to <b>New Immigrants Mutual Aid Association of the Society for Community Organisations (SOCO)</b>, <b>Christian Action</b> and <b>Hong Kong Young Women’s Christian Association (Choi Wan Retraining and Employment Service Centre)</b>. Issues discussed include new immigrant women, employment difficulties of re-trainees, services and assistance for foreign domestic helpers and support for women in crisis. Members also meet some of the new immigrant families in Shamshuipo District during the visit to SOCO.</p>
	<p>Chairperson of the Commission attends the <b>3rd meeting of the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Advisory Group on Gender Integration (AGGI)</b> and the <b>Joint Meeting of AGGI and Women Leaders’ Network co-ordinating committees</b> in Shenzhen. The meeting identifies ways for APEC to incorporate gender perspectives easily and permanently into its work as everyday practice.</p>
June	<p>Visits to <b>Kowloon Women’s Organisations Federation</b>, <b>Caritas Hong Kong</b>, <b>Po Leung Kuk</b> and <b>Christian Family Service Centre</b>. Issues discussed include training for local women leaders, promotion of women’s participation in volunteer and community activities, problems faced by single parents and new immigrant women, IT training for women, women’s employment and marital problems. Views also exchanged on support for women victims of sexual and domestic violence, and gender-biased messages in the media.</p>
July	<p>Commission organises an Open Forum on <b>“The Future Direction of the Women’s Commission”</b> at the Hong Kong Science Museum. The event provides a good opportunity for establishing partnerships and exchanging views on the Commission’s work with women’s organisations, services agencies, higher education institutions, community groups and representatives from government departments.</p>
	<p>Visits to <b>Tsing Yi Lady’s Forum</b> and <b>Yan Oi Tong</b>. Issues discussed include mutual help and volunteer activities in the district, employment, women’s health, needs of homemakers, old age protection and problems faced by new immigrant women.</p>
	<p>Commission receives a delegation from <b>All-China Women Federation</b> and <b>National Working Committee for Women and Children under the State Council</b>. Members are given information on the major objectives and priorities for the development of women in Mainland China, and the work of the National Working Committee for Women and Children. In turn, the delegation is briefed on the Women’s Commission’s work.</p>

August	<p>Visit to <b>Association of Women with Disabilities Hong Kong</b>. Views exchanged on issues faced by women with disabilities, including “double” discrimination, inadequate public health information and access in public facilities, training needs, lack of access to IT and sexual abuse.</p>
	<p>Commission Chairperson, five Members and eight women leaders from professional and business sectors attend the <b>6th APEC Women Leaders’ Network Meeting</b> in Beijing. The theme is “Challenges and Opportunities for APEC Women in the Process of Economic Globalisation.” The Commission Chairperson gives a presentation on “Economic Empowerment of Women: Setting up Co-operatives” at the meeting.</p>
September	<p>Visits to <b>Agency for Volunteer Service, Helena May, Mother’s Choice and Family Planning Association of Hong Kong</b>. Views exchanged on how to promote women’s participation in voluntary work, support for unmarried mothers, women’s health, collection of maintenance payments, women’s employment, training and re-training, support for disadvantaged women and parenting education. Members put forward the idea of collaboration between expatriate and grassroots women’s groups to promote cross-cultural exchange.</p>
October	<p>Visits to <b>Hong Kong Council of Social Service, Tung Wah Group of Hospitals, St James’ Settlement and Baptist Oi Kwun Social Services</b>. Views exchanged on difficulties and support for divorced women, capacity building for grassroots women, how to improve childcare and parenting support, and women’s health (including mental health). Members suggest using a women-centred approach in service design and promotion of a gender-sensitive funding culture.</p>
November	<p>Visits to <b>Breakthrough and Hong Kong Women’s Foundation</b>. Views exchanged on women’s health, gender-biased messages in the media, education, employment, childcare support and support for men to help them adjust to their changing role in the family and society. NGOs give suggestions on setting up Community Investment and Inclusion Fund.</p>
	<p>Visits to <b>Tung Wah Group of Hospitals and Professor SH Lee of the Chinese University of Hong Kong</b>. Views exchanged on the possibility of establishing a community-based health centre.</p>
	<p>Study visit to <b>Canada</b> to learn about gender mainstreaming practices, empowerment programmes and public education strategies, and research work in Canada.</p>



December Visits to **Oxfam Hong Kong, Hong Kong Christian Council, Internet Professionals Association and Haven of Hope Christian Service.** Issues discussed include poverty among women, parenting education, adaptation difficulties for new immigrant women, lack of recognition for homemakers, developmental needs of women and IT training among marginal groups. Views also exchanged on gender mainstreaming and the setting up of community-based healthcare centres.

Year 2002

January Visits to **Po Lam Community Health Development Centre of Haven of Hope Christian Service.** Views exchanged on the objectives and operations of the Centre and how volunteers are involved in the provision of services.

March Visits to women's groups and local women figures in **Sai Kung District** to discuss issues facing women in the area and women's participation in the local community. Views exchanged on women's health, education, family difficulties, integration problems faced by new arrival women and public education to promote gender equality.

April Visits to women's groups and local women figures in **Wanchai District.** Members discuss issues concerning the needs and support for disadvantaged women (for example, grassroots women, new arrival women), employment and support for single parents.

Visits to **Tin Shui Wai Integrated Family Service Centre.** Views exchanged on the mutual help approach and formation of co-operatives among grassroots women as a means of self-empowerment.

May **Women's Commission Conference: "Women for a Better Tomorrow"** at the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre provides a good opportunity for the Commission to establish partnerships with women's groups and other interested parties. International experts and representatives of local NGOs and government speak at the conference. NGOs also invited to participate in the "Marketplace" and "Community Activities".

Commission receives a **delegation from Women's Leadership Project** in Linqu County, Shandong Province, Mainland China, initiated by United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) in 2000 to develop governance at the grassroots level. Members brief the delegation on the Commission's work and three priority areas of action.

June	Visits to women's groups at <b>Caritas Community Centre, Ngau Tau Kok</b> . Issues discussed include the difficulties faced by women seeking employment, protection for divorced women, training or re-training needs of women, parenting support and capacity building.
July	Visits to women's groups and local women figures in <b>Shatin District</b> . Views exchanged on the importance of promoting mutual help in the community and need for cross-sector collaboration, promotion of women's participation in voluntary work and the need for a more balanced gender mix in appointments to advisory and statutory bodies.  Commission hosts a lunch for Ms Gu Xiulian of the <b>All-China Women's Federation</b> . Views exchanged on the work of the Federation and Commission.
September	Chairperson of the Commission attends the <b>2nd APEC Ministerial Meeting on Women</b> in Mexico. The theme is "Advancing Women's Economic Interests and Opportunities in the New Economy".
October	Visits to women's groups and local women figures in <b>Central and Western District</b> . Issues discussed include parenting education and childcare support, closer collaboration and networking between the Commission and local women's groups, promotion of the Commission's work at district level and problems faced by new arrival women.
November	Commission holds <b>briefing session on parenting education</b> and related initiatives for women's groups and service agencies in collaboration with the then Education Department.
December	Visits to women's groups and local women figures in <b>Kwun Tong District</b> . Views exchanged on continuous education, training, support for foreign domestic helpers, single parents' problems, maintenance payment issues and promotion of women's participation in statutory and advisory bodies.
Year 2003	
January	Visits to women's groups and local women figures in <b>Tsuen Wan District</b> . Views exchanged on women's employment, quality parenting, women's participation in the community, domestic violence and problems faced by new arrival women.
February	Commission organises an <b>Exchange Session on Collaboration</b> to examine how collaborators view working with the Commission, the constraints they faced, how individuals could contribute and the lessons that could be learnt from previous collaborative efforts.



June	<p>Visits to women's groups and local women figures in <b>Eastern District</b>. Suggestions made on how to recognise women's contribution to society, encourage women to participate in the community and capacity building.</p> <p>Organises an <b>Exchange Session on Collaboration</b> to discuss issues involved in establishing a matrix network of interested parties, positioning the Commission as an information hub for issues and activities, encouraging collaboration with the Commission on planning, and a possible mechanism for recognition of services, good practice and the contribution of women's groups and individuals.</p>
July	<p>Commission Chairperson, five Members and 10 women leaders from professional and business sectors attend the <b>8th APEC Women Leaders' Network Meeting</b> in Thailand. The theme is "Women Make a World of Difference: Partnerships for Gender and Development".</p>
August	<p>Visits to women's groups and local women's group and women figures in <b>Yau Tsim Mong District</b>. Issues discussed include capacity building for women, continuous learning and the formation of women's co-operatives.</p>
September	<p>Visits to women's groups and local women figures in <b>Kwai Tsing District</b>. Members introduce concept of the "Capacity Building Mileage Programme" initiated by the Commission.</p>
October	<p>Organises an <b>Exchange Session on Collaboration</b> with a view to a written document building on the scope agreed at earlier exchange sessions on collaboration.</p>
December	<p>Commission organises "<b>A Close-up on the Media Through Gender Perspectives</b>" forum to discuss the need and ways to tackle gender-biased messages and messages insulting or demeaning to women in the media.</p>



## 6 Web Site

### Online Launch

#### CONNECTION

Soaring free

Yet ever linked

Women's lives

interwoven

On a continuous

journey

In January 2001, the Commission launched a web site (<http://www.women.gov.hk>) to widen communication with the community, facilitate access to information about our work, operations and latest developments, and to enhance transparency.

### First Revamp: Look "n" Feel

The web site was revamped in March 2003 to provide more user-friendly navigation, a fresh outlook and lively presentation.

The web site contains:

- the Commission's structure, operation and membership
- recent programmes initiated by the Commission
- highlights and updates of work
- survey and research findings
- meeting and discussion papers
- hyperlinks to government department web sites, and local and international organisations promoting women's well-being
- local and international documents important to women
- "Contact Us" enabling the public to communicate with the Commission by e-mail

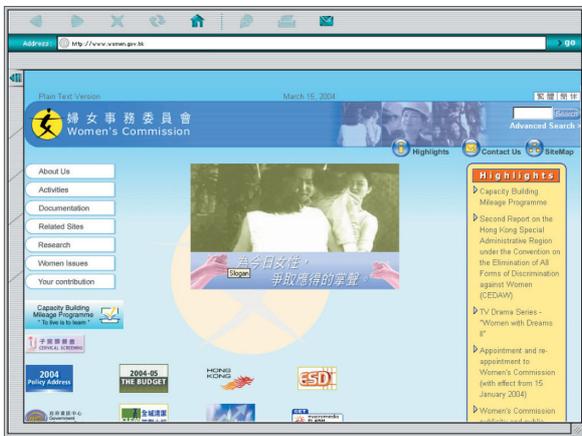
We believe our web site can enhance the community's understanding of the Commission's mission and work and, in the long-term, we have plans to make the site a portal for all pertinent homepages on women in Hong Kong.



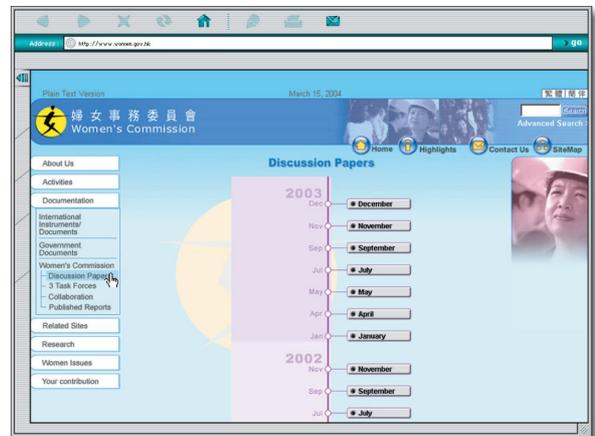
- Multimedia opening with lively soundtrack



- Commission's activities and progress



- Text-only index and web pages for easy access by the visually impaired
- Simple, direct navigation
- Choice of languages: English, Traditional or Simplified Chinese
- What's New at the Commission



- Local and international documents related to women's well-being and interests, including Commission discussion papers and notes on meetings



- Background information including the Commission's structure, operation and membership



- Local and international web sites related to women's well-being and interests
- Information on other women-related issues, including survey and research findings and women's social participation

## Second Revamp: Extending Interactivity

The first stage of the second revamp of the Commission's web site is currently underway. This features more interactive elements and further information about community groups and service agencies, including:

- **Women's Services Directory:** a database containing information on non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and services agencies together with details of the women-related services provided for the ease of access
- **News Exchange Forum:** where signed-up NGOs and services agencies can post news of recent events, training opportunities for women and enrolment

NGOs have been involved at the design stage to ensure the revamped site is user-friendly. In the second stage of the latest revamp, we plan to build the site a place for exchanging views, information and ideas. Innovations include the following:

- **Network Forum:** a database for NGOs, women's groups and interested parties to seek and identify possible partners and participants for activities, resources and volunteers for women and gender-related issues
- **Issues Forum:** where NGOs, women's groups and interested parties contribute and exchange views on specific topics, and current and emerging developments

We shall continue to seek the views of interested parties on these new features.

### TRANSCENDENCE

Inspiration flows

Energy surges

Lives are transformed

All because of you



## 7 Capacity Building Mileage Programme

### Opening Up Wider Horizons

Empowerment is part of the three-pronged strategy adopted by the Commission to promote women's well-being. We believe that capacity building is an important process leading to empowerment and that an essential aspect of capacity building lies in adequate and relevant education and training programmes. The Commission reckoned that many existing programmes offered by public, private and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) were vocational and we were concerned that they may not fully address women's needs or interests in timing of classes, location, academic prerequisites and choice of subjects. We thus initiated the development of a Capacity Building Mileage Programme (CBMP) to enhance individual women's all-round abilities.

#### EXPLORATION

The way is far and  
wide

I will search high and  
low

I will explore

– **Qu Yuan**, ancient  
Chinese poet

### Equipped for Challenges

The CBMP has been created to encourage women to widen their perspectives and develop or realise their potential; to develop learning interest and boost their skills in studying; to remove environmental barriers; and to provide opportunities to build up their capacities. The Programme is designed to equip women with a positive mindset and enhance their inner strength so that they can cope with different challenges. It differs from existing vocational training courses in that it seeks to help participants, women in particular, to change their perceptions and attitudes about themselves and the environment. It sets out to enhance participants' creativity, curiosity, personal judgement, self-reliance, self-confidence and a sense of humour or optimism.

The CBMP is the first, large-scale, tailor-made learning programme with a women's focus and, in place of a classroom-based approach, it will use the radio to disseminate information and include self-evaluation. The Commission has played



a catalytic role in taking the CBMP forward, mobilising The Open University of Hong Kong (OUHK) and Commercial Radio to prepare a three-year pilot programme that builds on the different strengths of the parties involved. The OUHK's Li Ka Shing Institute of Professional and Continuing Education (LiPACE) is responsible for course development, administration and quality assurance while Commercial Radio will look after production and broadcasting.

## New Routes to Learning

Key features of the CBMP include:

- **flexibility:** participants can take up courses at any time (“multiple entry points”) and accumulate “points”, which enable them to proceed to more advanced courses (hence “mileage”); or exit the programme at any time (“multiple exit points”);
- **convenience:** face-to-face classes are minimised with courses mainly broadcast via radio and supplemented by optional activities; supplementary activities, tutorials or peer-sharing sessions may be provided by NGOs;
- **relevance:** courses are tailor-made to meet women’s needs; course content is relevant to women’s daily lives, especially grassroots women, but men are welcome to enrol;
- **choice of assessment:** unlike conventional programmes where course providers employ one method of assessment, a combination of assessment tools, such as tests, coursework, reflective writing, is allowed;
- **mileage:** participants gain “points” from their studies and advance to the next level when sufficient “points” are accumulated;
- **optional enrolment:** registration is not required unless participants intend to undertake assessment and obtain “points”; and
- **affordable:** the fee is set to cover the cost of registering participants and production of course materials. Scholarships and financial assistance can be granted to those who excel and those in need.

The Programme has provided a good opportunity for collaboration with community groups, and women's organisations and NGOs have been invited to participate in the CBMP's design (through focus groups and by responding to a consultation document), publicise the Programme, mobilise women to enrol, and conduct supplementary learning activities and some face-to-face courses.

At the vigorous support of the Commission, the Lotteries Fund Advisory Committee agreed that a sum not exceeding some \$12 million should be granted from the Lotteries Fund to the OUHK for the implementation of the CBMP on a three-year pilot basis. A Steering Committee was established under the Commission to provide strategic guidance on the Programme's development, to monitor progress and evaluate the outcome. The CBMP is set to launch in March 2004 with courses including interpersonal relationships, finance management, health and practical issues in daily lives (such as basic legal knowledge and problem-solving skills). Academics, professionals and experts on women's issues, women's groups and NGOs will be involved in course development.

## PROGRESS

Where there had  
been no pathway

A pathway was  
formed

As many people took  
that way

– **Lu Xun**, modern  
Chinese writer



## 8 Survey and Research

### A Deeper View

#### UNDERSTANDING

What would make  
you happy

What would make  
you sad

Who cares about the  
way I live

And listens to my  
thoughts

In addition to community visits and interviews, surveys and detailed data analysis are crucial for understanding women's situation in Hong Kong. In the past three years, the Commission conducted several surveys and research and the results helped us to understand women's needs, review women-related policies from macro perspectives and shed light on the future development of the Commission's work and strategy.

### 8.1 Extent of Women's Satisfaction in Hong Kong

In February 2002, we conducted a telephone survey investigating Hong Kong women's satisfaction with their lives with a view to:

- collecting information on the extent of women's satisfaction with their current existence
- gaining a better understanding of the issues that most concern women and the factors affecting women's level of satisfaction
- becoming more aware of women's major wishes

A total of 1,518 women aged 18 and above participated in interviews. Survey findings helped the Commission plan work and strategy and served as a benchmark for similar studies tracking changes in different aspects of women's lives.

The Commission will continue to work closely with the Administration and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) on women's concerns, including healthcare, continuous education and employment.

*See also, "Survey and Research Findings" in "Annex."*

## 8.2 Extent and Level of Women's Participation in the Workplace

The Commission initiated a postal survey in 2002 investigating women's employment in Hong Kong's private and non-government sectors. The survey's objectives included:

- finding the number and proportion of women working in different industries and different fields in Hong Kong's private and non-governmental sectors, and their positions
- identifying the extent of women's employment in companies of different size, background and industry
- gauging the extent of major gender-related employment practices in the private and non-governmental sectors

A total of 1,516 questionnaires were completed and returned in April and May 2002. The survey was the first conducted by the Commission on this issue covering the private and non-governmental sectors, with results creating a benchmark against which future survey findings could be compared.

With this survey, we sought to identify more precisely the underlying reasons contributing to gender job segregation and the relatively small proportion of women in senior or management positions. The Commission would like to call on the private and non-governmental sectors to be sensitive to gender needs and to consider adopting family-friendly work practices where possible. Academics may also want to conduct more research and contribute ideas on how to enable women to participate more fully in all fields and at all levels in the two sectors.

*See also, "Survey and Research Findings" in "Annex."*

### 8.3 Effectiveness of Publicity and Public Education Campaign

The Commission organised a large-scale public education and publicity campaign from March 2002 to mid-2003 to enhance awareness of gender-related issues and conducted a three-round household survey to assess the campaign's effectiveness. The survey also aimed to gauge the community's views and perceptions on gender-related issues, including the need to incorporate women's needs and perspectives in policy-making (ie gender mainstreaming); collecting information on factors that deterred women from realising their potential; and measuring the extent of gender stereotyping in society.

The survey was carried out at three separate times: before, during and after the Commission's public education and publicity activities. In all, over 1,200 households were successfully sampled. Findings will serve as a baseline for similar studies tracking the effectiveness of the Commission's work in the future. They can also show how concepts of gender mainstreaming and stereotyping have changed.

Survey results have given the Commission better insight and understanding of women's needs and concerns and we will bear them in mind in future initiatives to empower women. In addition, we will further engage and educate the public with regard to the concept of gender mainstreaming and continue to carry out public education to reduce stereotyping.

*See also "Survey and Research Findings" in "Annex".*



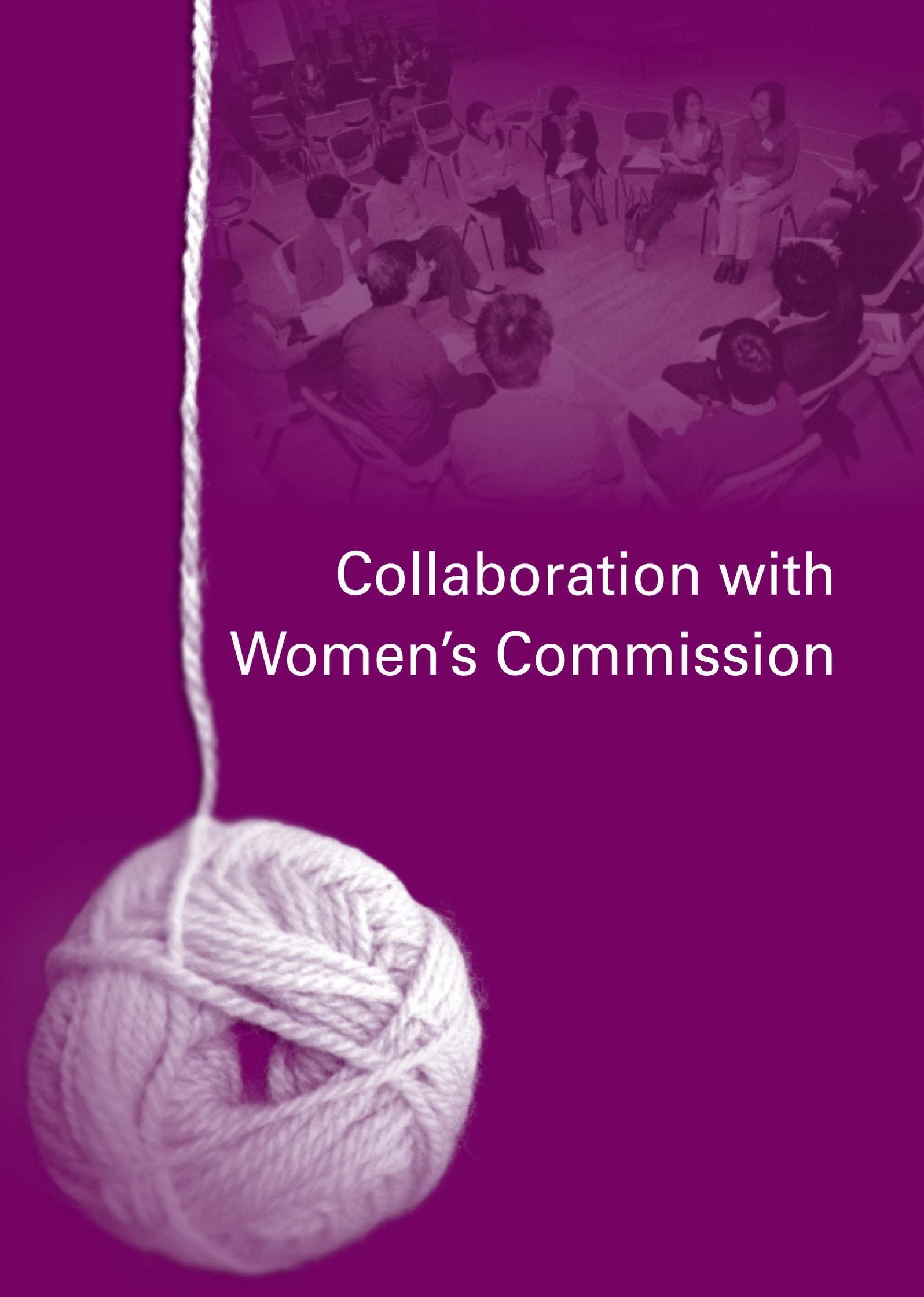
## 8.4 Time Use and Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Society

We are aware that both women and men contribute to the community through paid and unpaid activities and know that some members, especially women, face barriers that hinder them from participating fully in the community. Women's contribution to the well-being of the community should be duly recognised.

At the request of Health, Welfare and Food Bureau, and on the advice of the Commission, a thematic household survey was commissioned by Census and Statistics Department to a private research company at the end of 2001. The survey looked into the average amount of time spent daily by different people on different activities and their participation in various aspects of life, such as housework, voluntary work, unpaid work for relatives and friends, cultural, recreational and social activities. Emphasis was placed on the differences displayed between women and men, the importance of the contribution made by homemakers and factors which might have affected their participation in society.

Fieldwork was carried out from the end of 2001 to early 2002. Over 6,100 households comprising some 16,000 respondents were successfully surveyed. This was a ground-breaking exercise as it was the first time the time-use pattern of women and men in Hong Kong had been examined. The information collected from the survey would enable the Commission and policy-makers to better understand the factors that hinder women's full participation in different aspects of community life. The data collected would also be useful for analysis in different areas and could serve as a baseline for similar studies in the future.

*See also "Survey and Research Findings" in "Annex."*

A group of people are seated in a circle in a meeting room, engaged in a discussion. The scene is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple filter. In the foreground, a large ball of white rope is visible, with a single strand of the rope extending upwards from the ball and passing through the top edge of the frame. The text "Collaboration with Women's Commission" is centered in the middle of the image in a white, sans-serif font.

# Collaboration with Women's Commission



## Working together

The Commission faces a daunting task in carrying out its work. In the past three years, we have been able to roll out plan and programmes, and gain recognition for the efforts in promoting women’s development due to the participation and active support of people from many sectors of society. Through such collaboration and exchanges of views, we could pool experience and create a unified force. The Commission also received much valuable advice, which encouraged and enabled us to overcome difficulties and actualise our mission “to enable women to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life.” The following records the reflections of some of the Commission’s collaborators.

**Shoulder to  
shoulder  
Supporting each  
other**

### Hong Kong Federation of Women

#### *From a Woman’s Perspective*

The Commission has made numerous contributions to the promotion of women’s rights and participation in community affairs. It frequently reminds and urges government departments when formulating policies and allocating resources to consider issues from women’s perspectives and to assess the impact on women. The Commission listens and actively responds to the views of non-governmental organisations (NGOs). It also carries out significant research.

We sincerely hope the Commission can leverage on its role and functions, collaborate with all women NGOs and receive more recognition from women and every other sector of Hong Kong.

## Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centre

### *Participation of Community Representatives*

The Commission is the only body in the present government that has promotion of women's well-being as its main aim. It should thus take on a consultation and co-ordination role between various government departments to promote women's well-being at the policy-making level in the political, economic, social and education domains.

The Commission has in the past three years made known its work and message of empowerment to the public. Besides raising the community and government departments' awareness of women's needs and situation, we suggest that the Commission also takes on the role of monitoring the Government's decision-making process and long-term policies as related to women. For instance, it could utilise the data from the "Thematic Household Survey on Time Use" to review and improve government statistics and to encourage the departments concerned to follow up on the needs of women engaged in unpaid labour.

We also hope the Commission will invite representatives from community organisations to take part in its planning and review processes so as to benefit from broader experience in working for the promotion of women's interests.

## Kowloon Women's Organisations Federation

### *Interacting Under the Same Sky*

Education and training are essential means to empower women. They can enable women to improve themselves, keep abreast of the times and build up their self-respect, self-confidence, independence and self-empowerment.

The Commission consulted our organisation before promoting its parent education projects and Capacity Building Mileage Programme. Members' concern and willingness to incorporate the views of grassroots women's organisations convinced us that they were not operating at lip-service level. They have also shown they are working for the empowerment of women centrally, through organisations and on an individual level. Members have created strategies and implemented them; and connected up central, organisational and individual forces so that they complement and reinforce each other's work effectively.

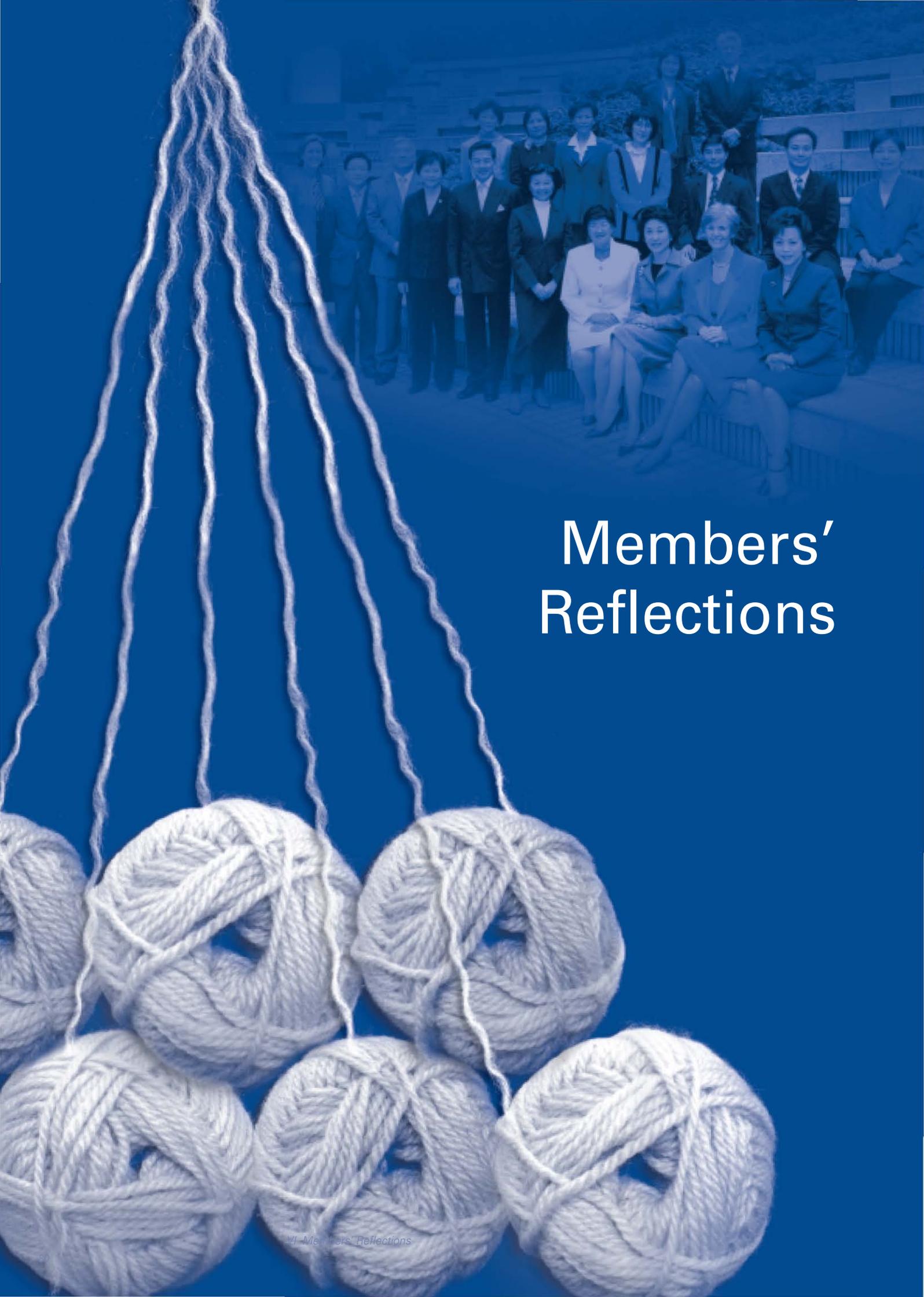
**Ms Sheila CHEUNG, Executive Producer**  
**Radio Television Hong Kong**

*Meticulous Approach to Work*

Working with the Commission to produce two 10-episode television drama series “Women with Dreams” gave rise to many thoughts and feelings. I was most impressed by Members’ meticulous attitude towards their work. I remember that two days before the first series was screened, I was still in intense discussion with the Chairperson and several Members over content. At the time I thought, “Are they about to bring in more revisions now?” as Members gave their views on themes, content, characters and story-lines. Their aim was to enhance gender-sensitivity and awareness and to perfect the production but their opinions were way over what we expected.

When the Chairperson saw I was worried, she tapped me lightly on the shoulder and said: “We are here to do our heart talk!” In the end, the meeting – which lasted three hours – yielded wonderful results and after making a strenuous effort on revisions, the series was successfully aired.

The super-volunteers of the Commission put in tremendous amounts of time, effort and work. The series showed women’s empowerment to be a worthwhile endeavour so both women and men understand the importance of its theme. I hope the series encouraged people to say, “How can I help?”, for we should not only look after our own affairs but also help our family, friends and others. I also hope to have the opportunity to produce more and better women-oriented series with the Commission.



# Members' Reflections

## Abiding by Each Other

Three years ago, 22 committee members from different occupations, backgrounds and with a variety of experience came together to form the first Women's Commission. There have been times of intense debate and discussion over issues but, today, Members are still moving in a common direction. For we all share the same dream – to advance the well-being and interests of women, and to build a society in which men and women can be equals and live harmoniously with each other. Our three-year term passed quickly but Members, who have given their utmost to this mission, have also been growing every day, together with the women of Hong Kong.

Below, Members give their thoughts, impressions and hopes for advancing the well-being of women in Hong Kong.

### Non-Official Members

#### Ms Cecilia CHEN, MH, JP (Chairperson, The Legal Education Trust Fund)

*The Commission is a serious, dedicated and hard-working group*

At the start it was difficult because so many women's issues seemed to require attention. All Members were familiar with women's problems but because they represented different sectors with different experience and interests, they also had different priorities.

Through visiting women's groups and community organisations, several brainstorming sessions, and a close working relationship between Members and the Secretariat, we identified three priority areas of work. The Commission is a serious, dedicated and hard-working group. Out of so many meetings, there was not one relaxed social gathering. Members spent their time on policy discussions, group meetings and reading papers. They also joined the Secretariat in organising and participating in many events.

It has been a rich and rewarding three years and I have enjoyed working with fellow Members.

#### Echoes

Frank debates –

stimulate the heart

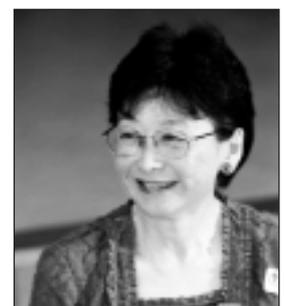
Site visits –

strengthen beliefs

From thinking to  
action

From within to  
without

Deep impressions  
were left on lives



## Mr Wellington CHENG (Executive Director of Supercrest Ltd and Topway Engineering (HK) Ltd)

*Foster communication, encouragement and acceptance in a spirit of unity to promote women's well-being*



In the past three years, the Commission has done a lot of good for women in Hong Kong but many challenges still await. As new immigrant women in their 30s and 40s are on the rise in Hong Kong and the average life expectancy of women is longer than men, in 20 to 30 years there will be a large number of women in their 60s and 70s. The Government has to be ready to respond to this increase.

Spouse abuse is another issue. Most victims are women who suffer physical trauma and immense psychological pressure and pain in silence. In fact, there are more than 300 women's organisations and associations in Hong Kong, each with their own missions and goals. I hope the Commission, government departments and women's organisations can foster communication, support and acceptance, and promote women's well-being in a spirit of unity. I also hope women's organisations can make good use of the resources available and utilise the Commission's new web page functions to share information and express their views.

Humans are the wisest and most capable of all living beings. Men and women should care for each other and live in respect and equality so that together they can work for a better world.

## Ms Ophelia CHEUNG, JP (Global Vice-President, International Women's Forum and community service volunteer)

*The Commission has drawn attention to women's issues*



The establishment of the Commission as a central mechanism within the Government was a landmark in the social development of Hong Kong. To me, it was a challenge to be appointed a Member of this new and much-awaited organisation in which such high hopes were placed.

Much time was spent during the early months on workshops, forums, brain-storming and "soul-searching" in an effort to make work plans and set priorities for the first three-year term. This was worthwhile as not only did we achieve these objectives but in the process Members got to know more about one another, which was useful when working so closely together. Under the inspiring leadership of our Chairperson and with the support of the Secretariat, Members worked very hard on the mission set out for the Commission.

To date, the Commission has drawn attention to women's issues and launched many projects of benefit to women. There is still a lot to be done and the task that lies ahead for the Commission is colossal. But I firmly believe a good foundation has been laid and the Commission is going in the right direction.

**Professor Fanny CHEUNG, JP (Chairperson of the Department of Psychology and Director of the Gender Research Centre, The Chinese University of Hong Kong)**

*A milestone in women's development in Hong Kong*

The establishment of the Commission in 2001 was a milestone in women's development in Hong Kong. It gives me a sense of accomplishment to be closely associated with the movement that made it a reality. Throughout my involvement in the War-on-Rape campaign, the Women's Centre, the campaign for CEDAW and setting up a Women's Commission, I firmly believed in a central mechanism to promote women's status and development. During my time as the first Chairperson of the Equal Opportunities Commission, I became more convinced of the need for a government structure that could address the fundamental barriers to women's development beyond the framework of unlawful discrimination.

Starting an organisation like the Commission is challenging. Given the enthusiasm and dedication of Members, we have explored many areas of need and embarked on meaningful projects in a short time. As a result, I look forward to the strategic development of policies for Hong Kong women in the 21st century.



**Dr Susan FAN (Executive Director, The Family Planning Association of Hong Kong)**

*A deep admiration for the strength and dedication that women devote to those they serve*

Being a Member of the Commission has been both an inspiring and a humbling experience.

Inspiring because through working with other women and members of the community, I have gained a broader understanding of the wide range of issues that impact on women's lives, and a deep admiration for the strength and dedication that women devote to those they serve.

Humbling in the realisation that there is still so much to be done and that we need to support one another in working towards common goals.



## Ms IP Shun-hing (Tuen Mun District Council Member)

### *Brightening the history of the local women's movement*



From 1987 onwards, New Territories women's organisations and I urged the Government to establish a Women's Commission. Finally, in 2001, the Government announced the setting up of the Commission to promote women's interests in Hong Kong. I was honoured to be appointed one of its Members. I have been working on behalf of grassroots women for more than 20 years and the Commission has been an opportunity to contribute further.

In the past three years, ex-officio and non-official Members have made great efforts to carry out the Commission's work. By visiting local women's groups and service organisations, and learning more about women's situation, we worked out directions, objectives, priorities and concrete plans. Though there is room for improvement, it has been a good start, brightening the history of the local women's movement.

I hope Members will work more closely with women's organisations for a better tomorrow for women in Hong Kong.

## Ms Sophia KAO, JP (Community service volunteer, Retired Human Resources Director of Airport Authority)

### *Empowerment of women should not only be a priority of the Women's Commission, it should be considered an important policy in the social development of Hong Kong*



Women are a massive force in the push for social development. They have great influence through nurturing and educating the next generation and in their ability to build solidarity and cohesion in the family and community. Thus, empowerment of women should not only be a priority of the Commission, it should be considered an important policy in the social development of Hong Kong.

In the past three years, the Empowerment Task Force worked hard on both individual and collective levels of empowerment. The most rewarding results was the implementation of Capacity Building Mileage Programme. The origin, incubation and development of this programme progressed in response to hopes for self-enhancement expressed by various women in different settings. I hope that you will continue to offer your active participation and support, and also suggest recommendations for its improvement.

As a Member of the first Commission, I have had the opportunity to work with a group of women and men from different backgrounds, who worked together with zeal as we shared the same beliefs. I also had the chance to exchange views and collaborate with many women's groups and individuals involved with women's concerns. It has been an exciting and unforgettable experience. I hope that those tasks begun and not yet completed in the term of the first Commission might be implemented and continued in the future to promote women's well-being. Examples of such tasks are the compilation of a women services directory and the project to review legislation on women's rights.

### **Dr Joseph KWOK, JP (Associate Professor, Applied Social Studies, City University of Hong Kong)**

#### *The cornerstone of an egalitarian and harmonious society*

In the past three years, I have had the opportunity to work with Members of the Commission who come from very different backgrounds but share the same goals, passion and enthusiasm. It has been a most enriching experience. My own contributions seem minuscule in comparison.

Members have been careful to preserve unity on the main themes and willing to accommodate on minor points when considering issues. They have made continuous and painstaking efforts to promote women's well-being and interests and worked sincerely to secure the co-operation of, and develop partnerships with, government agencies and community organisations.

The Commission has indeed delivered on its early promise by laying down a solid foundation for an egalitarian and harmonious society. An encouraging situation to share with you all!



## Mrs Peggy LAM, GBS, OBE, JP (Chairman, Hong Kong Federation of Women)

*We should step up our efforts to liaise with women from all walks of life and encourage women to broaden their perspectives, to empower themselves and to enable the public to affirm their contributions to the family and society*



After Hong Kong's return to China, the Honourable Tung Chee-hwa, Chief Executive of HKSAR, read the opinion paper presented by Hong Kong Federation of Women. He acknowledged women's contributions to society in his 1997 Policy Address, and after persistent and energetic public requests and lobbying by women's groups, the Women's Commission was finally set up in 2001.

In the past three years, the Commission has engaged in an active opinion-gathering to collect views on directions and strategies of endeavour, and we are now clearer with regard to ways and means of work. We spent much efforts researching women's public policy, and in long-term planning for the promotion of women's well-being. We also set up three Task Forces to promote gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women and public education.

Personally, I think that the Commission should step up efforts to liaise with women from all walks of life, review policy related to women's well-being and interests, encourage women to broaden their participation in political, social and economic domains, and develop women's potentials, enhance their capacities and improve their quality of life. We should do more to build solidarity with women from different circles. We should also do more to encourage women to broaden their perspectives and empower themselves so that the public can acknowledge their contributions to family and society, and the work of the Commission would be recognised by all sectors of the community.

## Mr Maurice LEE (Partner of Robertsons, Solicitors)

*Diamond cut diamond*



It has been a rare and wonderful experience to work in a group in which I, as a member of the male minority, was surrounded by competent women leaders from our community. My lady colleagues were wise, charming, creative and determined to achieve. Our Chairperson was, in particular, a special leader: a candle that lights up others. She was visionary, fearless, outspoken and resourceful and she could bite if she thought you were not doing well.

The Commission is a new body with the formidable task of taking care of half of the population in Hong Kong. Possibilities are many but that also makes focus and depth very difficult. The Commission, however, does not tolerate clichés and grumbles. I was relieved that after many months of “soul-searching” and scratching of brains, we concluded that “capacity building” was the way to go ahead.

During this critical time in Hong Kong, I am dismayed that many people are still indifferent and naive enough to think that their problems are caused by others. Government, family, school, friends and the social environment all have to change for them and yet they themselves are not obliged to change for the better. She that is ill to herself will be good to nobody. I truly believe that intellectual, spiritual and emotional capacity building is the panacea. I look forward to witnessing a better you, me and Commission in the years to come.

### **Professor Judith MACKAY (Doctor and Director, Asian Consultancy on Tobacco Control)**

*I have drawn great strength and encouragement from the Women’s Commission and from other like-minded people*

Soon after I arrived in Hong Kong in the 1960s, I was actively engaged in campaigning for equal pay and terms of service, separate taxation for married women, a refuge for battered women, maternity leave, better treatment for victims of rape, an end to discriminatory laws and sexist portrayal in the media, the collection of sex-disaggregated data, improvement in women’s health (the topic that led me into tobacco control), and general awareness of gender issues. It is disappointing that many of these issues – and new ones – are still with us 40 years on.

But today the task is less controversial, and in the intervening years there has been much positive action by government, academia, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and society in general on many gender issues. I have drawn great strength and encouragement from the Commission and from other like-minded people – men and women. Being primarily involved with gender mainstreaming on the Commission has provided a unique opportunity to establish a template for government to ensure that women’s perspective and needs are considered for legislation, policy and programmes.



**AN ODE TO THE WOMEN'S COMMISSION**  
**On Its First Birthday**  
**Professor Judith MACKAY**  
*January 2002*

*On the 19th January Two Thousand and One  
To right existing gender wrong  
The Year of the Dragon heralded in  
The Women's Commission of Hong Kong*

*With women drawn from all Hong Kong  
And some male colleagues too  
Our job is to advise the government...  
And society, on just what to do*

*"To enable women in Hong Kong"  
Our mission for all – whether single or wife  
"To fully realize their due status, rights,  
And opportunities in all aspects of life"*

*Task forces followed, in total three  
Gender mainstreaming and education are two  
Empowerment of women is the third  
There are countless things to do!*

*We've attended six main meetings  
But that is just the core  
Counting all the sub-committees  
There've been many, many more*

*Our shelves are packed with papers  
And our emails full of the same  
The work increases more and more  
And never seems to wane.*

**AN ODE TO WOMEN'S DAY 2003**  
**Professor Judith MACKAY**  
*8 March 2003*

*The United Nations decided  
To right existing gender wrong  
With an International Women's Day  
Long celebrated in Hong Kong*

*From the early 1980s  
Women gathered on the day  
To campaign for their equal rights  
And, no less, equal pay*

*Back in the nineteenth century  
There were quite simply no  
Female judges, lawyers, doctors  
Or women members of Legco*

*Our Chairperson rallies us around  
Making sure that nothing's missed  
And the Secretariat rules us firmly  
With a velvet iron fist*

*We've been bussed to many site visits  
In merry yet serious bands  
We've met with delegations  
And visited foreign lands*

*Let's have some stats on women  
And see them sit on government boards  
Let's have new laws on stalking  
And help for new arrival hoards*

*We must address domestic violence  
And single parents too  
Sex workers, and community needs  
A never-ending list to do*

*And as we look to the future  
How do we judge what our success will be?  
That we are renamed 'The Gender Commission'  
In ten more years and three.*

*Ladies even had their feet bound  
And it was not until  
Well into the twentieth century  
Mui tsais were reduced to nil*

*A pioneer in 1951  
The first policewoman was recruited  
And slowly but surely in the Force  
Women were saluted*

*In 86 the very first  
District Judge was Helen Lo  
Showing appointing senior women  
Was Hong Kong's way to go*

*We had pioneers like Ellen Li  
Anson Chan and Anna Wu  
Maria Tam on separate taxation  
And our own dear Elsie Tu*

*Lydia, Rosanna, Selina all  
Proved their worth once selected  
Emily Lau, a first in 91  
To Legco was elected*

*Christine Loh was another  
To focus on vital issues  
And show us women can be strong  
Not just weep and reach for tissues!*

*Thus women entered politics  
And professions such as law  
Doctors, judges, housewives  
They opened many a door*

*Countless things were rectified  
And marriage laws improved  
Equal pay came to government  
And forward regulations moved*

*Great strides were made in better health  
Even an Olympic gold  
Women showed it could be done  
Whether they were young or old*

*In 77 the War on Rape  
Brought the issue to the fore  
And Harmony House from 85  
Showed battered women a safe door*

*Universal schooling for all girls  
Separate tax for those married  
Maternity leave and better health  
Yet women still feel harried*

*The cigarette companies  
Worldwide, but specially Asian  
Targetted Hong Kong's young women  
With messages of emancipation*

*Other ads still discriminate  
And make women look just like  
Sex objects, even empty heads  
With no hint of our might*

*Our progress over decades  
Is there for all to see  
But there's still so far to go  
For women's equality*

*Let's have some stats on women  
See them sit on government boards  
Let's have new laws on stalking  
And help for new arrival hoards*

*We must address domestic violence  
And single parents too  
Sex workers, and community needs  
A never-ending list to do*

*We need the Women's Commission  
And the strength of the EOC  
We need to report to CEDAW  
So all the world can see*

*We need the NGO community  
Like the International Women's Forum  
And academia, to campaign  
Sometimes loud; at times, decorum*

*Hong Kong has done not badly  
Compared with other states  
Especially those in Asia  
Where women's issues waits*

*So let us toast together  
The women of Hong Kong  
And here's to equal opportunities  
And may it not take long*

*Brigitta Blaha-Silva  
Is one of the very few  
Female consuls in Hong Kong  
She gives women their just due*

*We thank you for your thoughtfulness  
And may this never cease  
And to your future's many years  
Of health, and joy and peace.*

## Ms Diane WILCOXSON (Senior Partner, Strategic Planning with Corporations and Organisations, Hong Kong, Asia, Europe)

*Everyone seems to have done the best possible to make a difference in the few years we have been established*



The opportunity to serve on the Women's Commission has been, for me, a special and educational challenge. It has allowed me to learn in some detail about situations that women and families in Hong Kong face daily. This insight has developed from first-hand visits to groups and individuals all over the city, in forums and seminars, from experts and through reports by those who work in many areas of the community and Government.

People from a surprisingly wide variety of backgrounds and sensibilities serve on the Commission. I have developed a deep respect for what each one has contributed. Everyone seems to have done the best possible to make a difference in the few years we have been established. To best accomplish the work it is tasked with, the Commission has worked effectively with a diversity of group and individual approaches. I anticipate that the Commission will use ever-wider collaboration in years to come as it refines this aspect of its work locally, regionally and internationally.

Serving on the Commission has been a way to contribute some of what I know from my work within business, communities and women's issues. It is these opportunities to both serve and to learn for which I am, and will long be, grateful. Surely, the Commission in years ahead will generate more activity and progress on many fronts, which will, hopefully, build on the good intentions and foundations established by this first group of appointees.

## Ms Margaret WONG (Executive Director, Harmony House Limited)

*The Commission has been nurtured by support from a variety of sectors in society, all committed to making sure it has the right ground to grow*



The setting up of the Women's Commission three years ago reminds me of a poster depicting a large, green field in the midst of which a yellow seedling nudged its way out of the earth. The plant had unfolded its first small leaves, embraced the sunlight and its presence had started to enhance the world around it.

In the past few years, there have been strong winds, stormy weather and frustrations as well as happy, satisfying moments but the Commission, like that seedling, is ready to weather all obstacles in order to achieve its mission. To foster its aim to promote women's development, the Commission has put down three major root systems: gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women and public education. It has also been nurtured by support from a variety of sectors in society, all committed to making sure that it has the right ground to grow and, one day, bring about recognition of the due rights of all women in the community.

The Commission has put forth initial shoots and, though still young, is clearly demonstrating the value of equality, respect and compassion. It will certainly continue to flourish, and as it does so boost women's concerns to new levels of visibility.

### **Miss Annie WU, SBS, JP (Managing Director, Hong Kong Beijing Air Catering Ltd)**

#### *Constantly improving ourselves to face challenges and live a full life*

I have been involved in promoting youth education in Hong Kong and children's education in Mainland China for a long time. They are the future pillars of society. Similarly, I have been involved in promoting the well-being of women in Hong Kong. I deeply believe that by demolishing gender stereotypes and helping women build up their capacities, women from different sectors of society (and especially the younger generation), will be enabled to realise their potential and shoulder "half the sky" with the men of Hong Kong.

We live in an era of advanced information technology and a world that is increasingly globalised. Women need to increase their capacities be they far-reaching women entrepreneurs, working in society or young women in school, or one of the many talented homemakers. We need to develop our capacities, to be constantly improving ourselves, to face challenges and to live a full life.

I was privileged to be appointed to the Commission and to contribute to the promotion of women's rights and well-being in Hong Kong. I hope others value the opportunity and set up closer links with overseas women's organisations so we can work for the well-being of women unconstrained by boundaries.



**Mr YEUNG Ka-sing, JP (Head – Corporate Human Resources,  
The Hong Kong and China Gas Company Limited)**

*A rewarding and fulfilling mission*



The Commission aims to promote women’s rights in the community. It is truly a rewarding and fulfilling mission. I would like to take this opportunity to say what an honour and privilege it has been to serve on the Commission.

I am glad to see that over the past years, our efforts have gradually borne fruit. Promotion of women’s rights is beginning to make headway. The Commission could not have achieved this and done the many demanding jobs before it without the efforts of different community organisations seeking to create a more caring community. This unswerving support has been the driving force for improvements within the Commission.

The increasing awareness of women’s rights will undoubtedly assist the Commission in extending its reach and developing its programmes. I am confident that the Commission will further promote women’s rights in all walks of life in Hong Kong in the coming years. In so doing, together we can build a better future and a more harmonious society for Hong Kong!

**Dr Agnes YEUNG LAW (Professor, Department of Social Work,  
Zhongshan University, Guangzhou, Mainland China)**

*Accommodate multifaceted gender perspectives in determining criteria  
for reviewing the polices and quality of services*



The biggest challenge facing modern women is how to manage confusing social messages and conflicting social expectations. Mainstream society has always lauded equality between men and women. But women now have to be breadwinners and keep up traditional virtues so they live under immense pressure.

Women need to understand their own needs, interests and potential to overcome all these challenges. They need to state their opinions and make their own way in life. Mainstream society, especially decision-makers, also need to reflect on how to eliminate prejudice against women and how to enable them to develop their potential.

In the past three years, I have had contact with women from many types of social backgrounds. This enabled me to systematically integrate my past experience with women's issues. Through site visits, I got to know members of many different women's groups. Grassroots women's organisations have immense potential for strengthening social cohesion. I hope that in the days ahead, the Commission can reduce meetings and paper work and increase their contact with women from different social strata to better understand their needs. I also hope the Commission can strengthen its communication and co-operation with women's organisations so government and private organisations can accommodate multifaceted gender perspectives in determining criteria for reviewing polices and quality of services.

### **Ms Cecilia YOUNG (Executive Director, Sze Kuen Investments Ltd)**

#### *A significant contribution to the local women's movement*

The commitment in the Commission's first year to make gender mainstreaming one of the objectives was a huge step forward. Implementing the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist has made me realise the complexity of dealing with the huge government structure. Our success in getting "Gender Focal Point" to be designated within government departments and bureaux is a significant contribution to the local women's movement.

The struggle to be accountable to civil society – to women we serve in the case of Commission – is never easy. Strategic moves have to be made from within and outside the government mechanism and honest consultation undertaken before sustainable changes can occur.

Participating in the Commission for the past three years has fostered better understanding and network. To my colleagues and especially the Secretariat, a sincere note of thanks.



## Ex-officio Members

### Secretary for Education and Manpower or representative Professor the Honourable Arthur LI, GBS, JP (Secretary for Education and Manpower)

#### *The Commission had made progressive achievements*



I am very pleased to extend my congratulations to the Women's Commission on the successful completion of its first term.

The Commission was established to advise Government on the direction of policy on women issues. In addition, it has been tasked with identifying women's needs and addressing matters of concern to women. The Commission has made progressive achievements in its first term to these ends. Apart from sound advice to Government, the Commission promoted public education on gender issues through a series of well-received activities which had enhanced public awareness and knowledge. It also organised capacity building programme and made invaluable contribution towards the promotion of the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong. These are important to a society which emphasizes nurturing all individual potentials to the full, and we owe much to the visionary leadership of Chairperson of the Commission and concerted efforts of Members.

I wish the Commission continued success in the coming new term.

### Secretary for Home Affairs or representative

### Dr the Honourable Patrick HO, JP (Secretary for Home Affairs)

#### *Developed a clear vision and a long-term strategy*



The establishment of the Women's Commission in 2001 was a milestone in the development of equal rights for women and men and the advancement of human rights for all. As the Principal Official responsible for human rights, one of my duties is to promote recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all human beings. Both women and men are entitled to human rights without distinction.

In Hong Kong, women often play a dual role of income-gainer and home-maker, and the pressures on them can be enormous. I support the work of the Women's Commission in identifying women's needs and addressing the related issues and problems.

The law and the Judiciary in Hong Kong provide effective means of dealing with individual cases of abuse of women. However, there are still instances of prejudice and discrimination against women. We must work together to promote universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms for both women and men.

Since its establishment, the Women's Commission has developed a clear vision and a long-term strategy for the development and advancement of women in Hong Kong. The Commission's work deserves our fullest support and I wish the Commission every success in its future endeavours.

## Director of Social Welfare or representative

**Mrs Carrie LAM, JP (then Director of Social Welfare)**

**(Mr Paul TANG, JP has been Director of Social Welfare since**

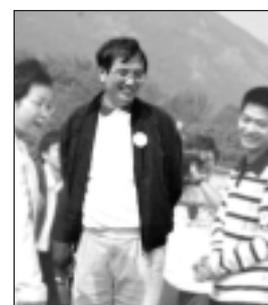
**November 2003)**

### *Join hands in promoting the well being and interests of women*

Having served in the Women's Commission as an ex-officio member since its set up in January 2001, I have witnessed the many areas of work being carried out by the Commission to promote public education and raise awareness within the local community on gender-related matters.

I have participated in very serious and sometimes passionate discussions in Commission meetings on issues relating to the empowerment of women. I am particularly indebted to the Chairperson and Members of the Commission for the advice and support they have given to the Social Welfare Department in taking forward various initiatives to tackle family problems, including the pilot Integrated Family Service Centres and the Ending Exclusion Project for single parent CSSA recipients.

Looking ahead, we will continue to join hands in promoting the well-being and interests of women and in building a more caring community.



## Vice-Chairperson

### Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food or representative

### Dr the Honourable YEOH Eng-kiong, JP (Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food)

*I am most impressed by the enthusiasm, dedication and zeal put in by Members*



In the first three years, the Commission has made significant progress in its primary goal of promoting the development and advancement of women. Members have laid down after careful and detailed deliberation, the Commission's mission, which is "to enable women to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life". I fully identify with and endorse the mission and the Government will do its utmost to support the Commission in creating an environment which will facilitate women to develop their potential and participate in society. This includes gender mainstreaming, or incorporating women's needs and perspectives in policy making, and addressing some deep-seated gender stereotyping notions in society about the roles, images and abilities of the two sexes.

The Commission has successfully incubated a new learning platform, the Capacity Building Mileage Programme, to bring about new learning opportunities and dimensions for women. The Commission is also rolling out mechanisms for collaborating with various sectors of the community to achieve synergy in its work.

I am most impressed by the enthusiasm, dedication and zeal put in by Members of the Women's Commission and the vast amount of work they have done in the first three years of the Commission's life. The Commission is certainly one of the most active and diligent advisory bodies the Government has ever appointed. I am deeply grateful for the insightful advice and innovative suggestions given by Commission members across a wide range of issues.

I look forward to working with the Commission in further promoting the well-being and interests of women and the community as a whole.

## Chairperson

### **The Honourable Mrs Sophie LEUNG, SBS, JP (Deputy, 10th National People's Congress, Mainland China)**

*We have striven to find the means to promote the interests and welfare of women in a sincere, truthful way. Our task has been to establish a solid foundation while meeting the challenges and overcoming the obstacles facing our nascent organisation*

As the Women's Commission's first chairperson, I have had to move step by step in the past three years. I was aware that women from different social backgrounds had a range of experiences, difficulties and needs. Members of the Commission, while all keen to advance women's welfare, also had their own varied views on gender issues. How were we to consider all these disparate women's voices? How could Commission members be brought to consensus?

The mode of action I decided on was to work from the heart – to listen sensitively and to engage in genuine dialogue. Thus, along with formal Commission meetings, members held several reflective sessions lasting deep into the night. These were valuable, soul-searching occasions. Clashes of opinion were bravely debated using reasoned argument and frank exchange. Such in-depth discussions led to friendship and a high degree of mutual trust as we explored viewpoints and directions, settled differences and sought common ground in order to forge a way to realise our shared ideals.

Interaction with women in the community also gave members great awareness and inspiration. In my term of office, we were active in visiting groups and organisations and made contact with women in a variety of circumstances. Their experiences, wisdom and fortitude often provided new views on gender issues to consider.

During these pioneering days at the Commission, we have striven to find the means to promote the interests and welfare of women in a sincere, truthful way. Our task has been to establish a solid foundation while meeting the challenges and overcoming the obstacles facing our nascent organisation. I hope that in the coming days, the Women's Commission will take our present work to greater depth and breadth and that more people will join us in building a brave, new world of gender equality and harmony that enriches the lives of us all.



A woman with dark hair, wearing a light-colored jacket, is speaking at a podium. Her hands are clasped in front of her. A microphone is visible to her right. The background is a solid blue color with a white, textured, wool-like pattern in the foreground. The text "Chairperson's Message" is overlaid in white on the blue background.

# 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!

# Annex



# 1 Terms of Reference and Membership

## Terms of Reference

The Women's Commission is tasked to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong. As such, it:

- advises the Government on the development of a long term vision and strategies related to the development and advancement of women;
- advises the Government on the integration of policies and initiatives which are of concern to women, which fall under the purview of different Policy Bureaux;
- keeps under review, in the light of women's needs, services delivered within and outside the Government and to identify priority areas for action, and monitor the development of new or improved services;
- initiates and undertakes independent surveys and research studies on women's issues and organises educational and promotional activities; and
- develops and maintains contact with local and international women's groups and service agencies with a view to sharing experiences and improving communication and understanding.

## Membership (15 January 2001 – 14 January 2004)

### Chairperson:

The Honourable Mrs Sophie LEUNG, SBS, JP

### Vice-Chairperson:

Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food or representative

### Ex-officio members:

- Secretary for Education and Manpower or representative
- Secretary for Home Affairs or representative
- Director of Social Welfare or representative

### Non-official members:

- Ms Cecilia CHEN, MH, JP
- Mr Wellington CHENG
- Ms Ophelia CHEUNG, JP (*Co-convenor, Public Education Task Force*)
- Professor Fanny CHEUNG, JP
- Dr Susan FAN
- Ms IP Shun-hing
- Ms Sophia KAO, JP (*Co-convenor, Empowerment Task Force*)
- Dr Joseph KWOK, JP (*Co-convenor, Empowerment Task Force*)
- Mrs Peggy LAM, GBS, OBE, JP (*Co-convenor, Public Education Task Force*)
- Mr Maurice LEE
- Professor Judith MACKAY, JP (*Co-convenor, Gender Mainstreaming Task Force*)
- Ms Diane WILCOXSON
- Ms Margaret WONG
- Miss Annie WU, SBS, JP
- Mr YEUNG Ka-sing, JP
- Dr Agnes YEUNG (*Co-convenor, Gender Mainstreaming Task Force*)
- Ms Cecilia YOUNG

### Secretary:

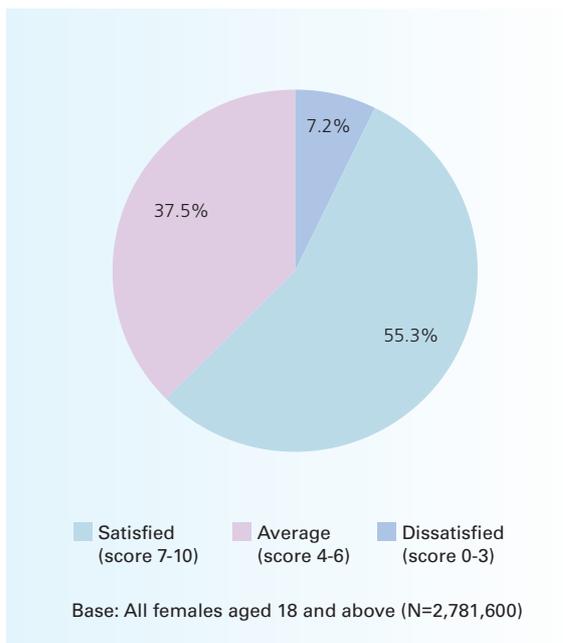
Principal Assistant Secretary for Health, Welfare and Food (Women)

## 2 Survey and Research Findings

### 2.1 Extent of Women’s Satisfaction in Hong Kong

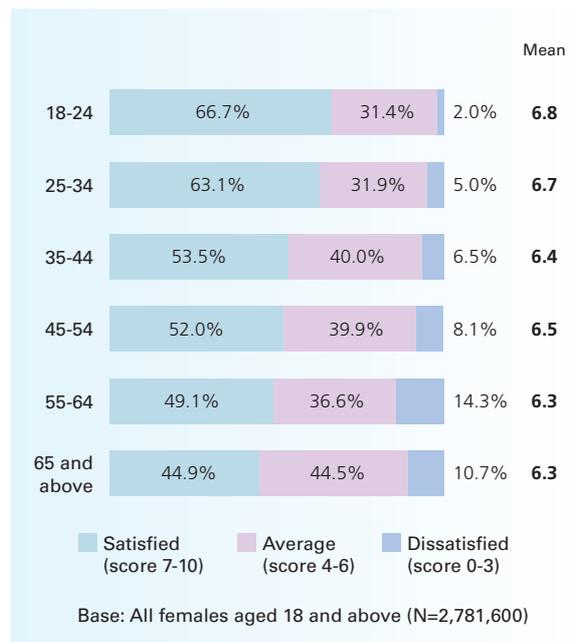
Findings showed that 55.3% of those interviewed were, in general, “satisfied” with their current existence, with 37.5% considering their level of satisfaction “average” and 7.2% “dissatisfied”. (Chart 1)

**Chart 1: Overall satisfaction**



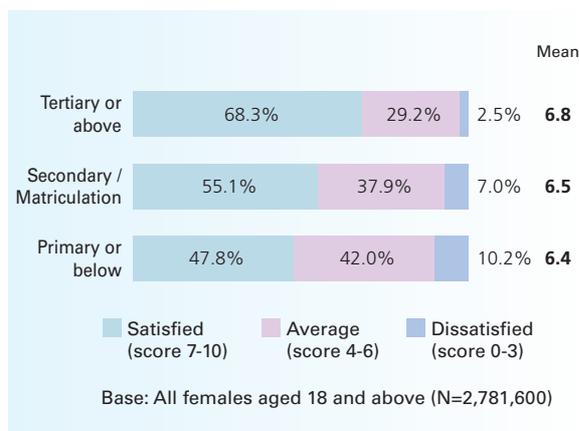
Age, educational attainment, household income, marital status and employment status all had an impact on overall satisfaction levels. Younger women (18-34) were found to be more satisfied with their current existence than older women. Younger women were not only satisfied with their “family life”, a large proportion was also satisfied with their “social life”. Older women (aged 55 and above) tended to have lower satisfaction levels, being mainly dissatisfied with their “health” and “financial status”. (Chart 2)

**Chart 2: Overall satisfaction — by age**

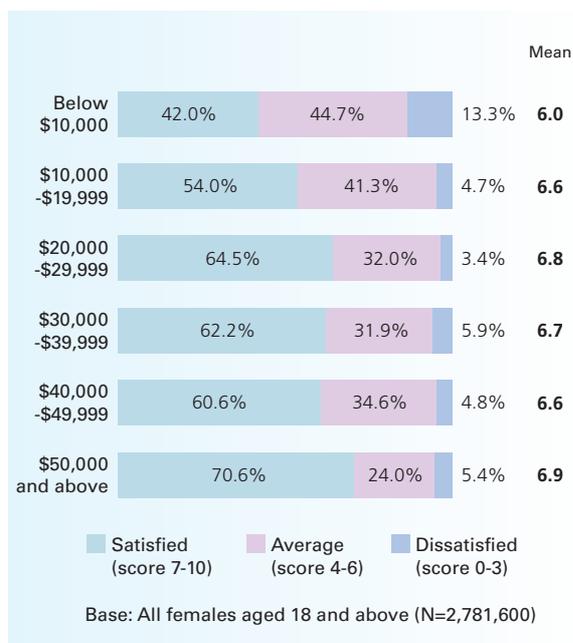


Women with higher education levels and higher household income were more satisfied with their current existence than less educated women and lower household income groups. (Charts 3 and 4)

**Chart 3: Overall satisfaction — by education level**

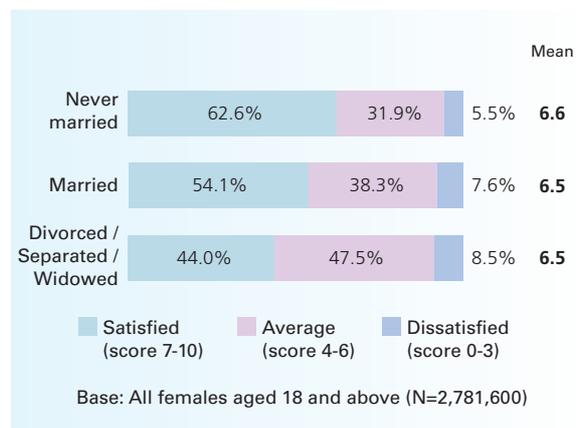


**Chart 4: Overall satisfaction — by household income**

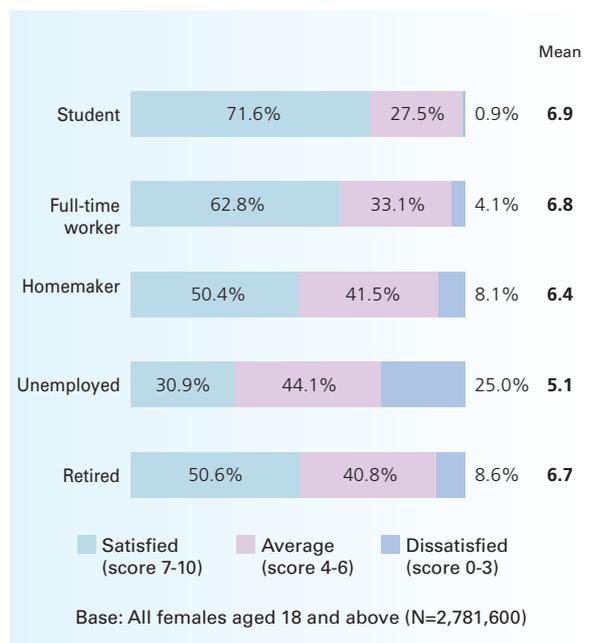


Women who were divorced, separated or widowed were less satisfied with their current existence than those who were married or had never married. In relation to employment status, students were found to be the most satisfied, with unemployed women least satisfied with their current existence. (Charts 5 and 6)

**Chart 5: Overall satisfaction — by marital status**

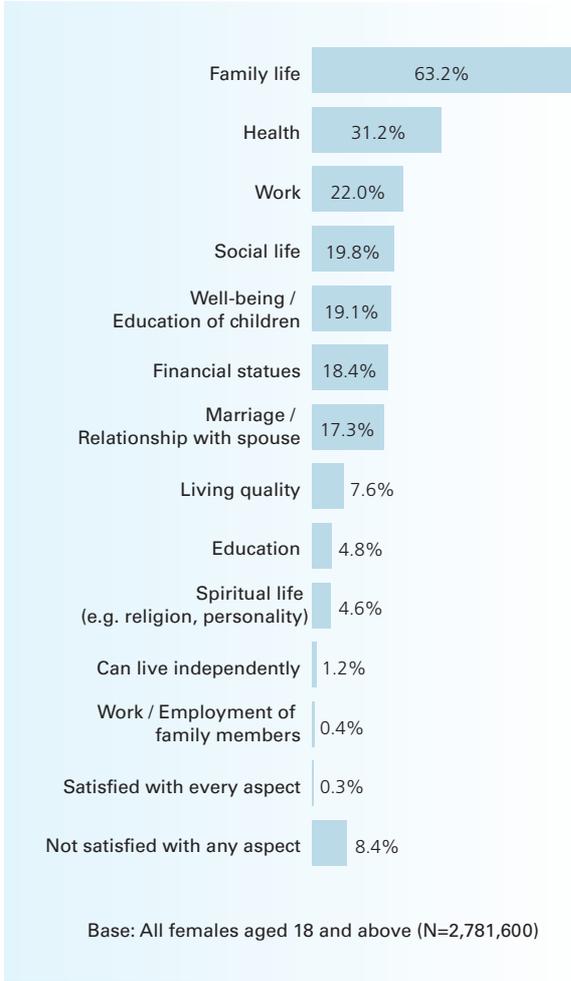


**Chart 6: Overall satisfaction — by employment status**



“Family life” (63.2%), “health” (31.2%), “work” (22%), “social life” (19.8%) and “well-being or education of children” (19.1%) were key areas where women were relatively satisfied. (Chart 7)

**Chart 7: Areas of satisfaction**



“Family life” and “health” were most important to overall satisfaction to 45.5% and 16.6% of “satisfied” women respectively, compared with 20.4% and 3.5% of “dissatisfied” women. (Table 1)

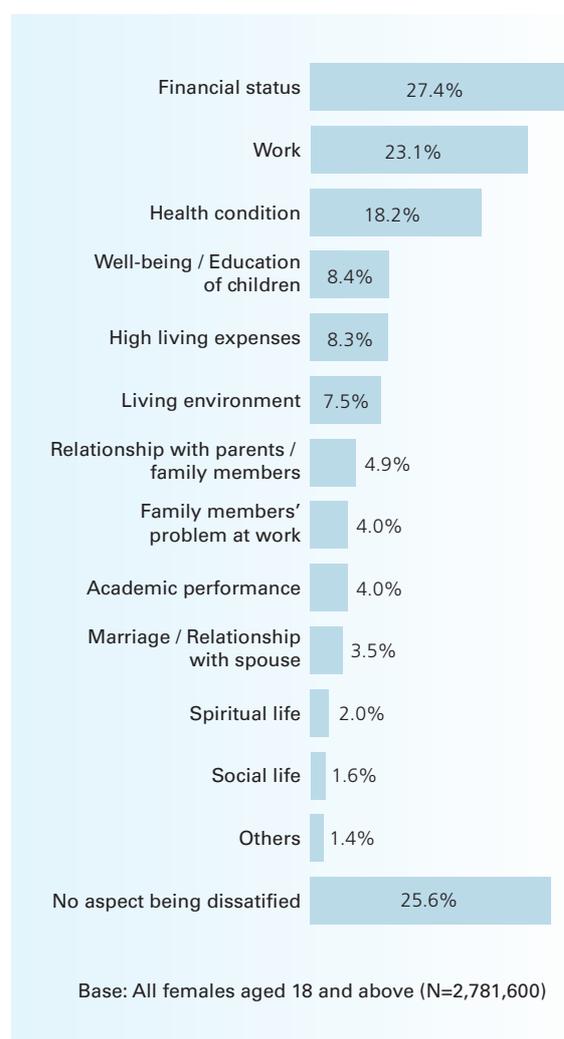
**Table 1: Areas most satisfied – by level of satisfaction**

	Satisfied		Average		Dissatisfied		Total	
	No. of persons ('000)	%						
Family life	699.5	45.5	414.2	39.7	40.6	20.4	1 154.3	41.5
Health	254.9	16.6	126.8	12.2	7.0	3.5	388.7	14.0
Well-being / Education of children	91.9	6.0	109.9	10.5	10.5	5.3	212.4	7.6
Social life	97.2	6.3	48.0	4.6	14.4	7.2	159.5	5.7
Work	109.4	7.1	39.4	3.8	6.8	3.4	155.6	5.6
Marriage / Relationship with spouse	79.0	5.1	50.7	4.9	15.1	7.6	144.8	5.2
Financial status	74.5	4.8	41.9	4.0	3.5	1.7	119.9	4.3
Living quality	69.0	4.5	43.8	4.2	3.5	1.7	116.3	4.2
Spiritual life (e.g. religion, personality)	22.4	1.5	17.7	1.7	3.8	1.9	44.0	1.6
Others	26.8	1.7	18.9	1.8	-	-	45.7	1.6
Satisfied with every aspect	7.0	0.5	-	-	-	-	7.0	0.3
Not satisfied with any aspect	7.0	0.5	132.4	12.7	94.1	47.2	233.5	8.4
Total: All females aged 18 and above (000)	1 538.6	100.0	1 043.8	100.0	199.2	100.0	2 781.6	100.0

*Notes: Percentages in individual column(s) may not add up to 100% due to rounding of figures.*

While a quarter (25.6%) claimed “no area of dissatisfaction”, just over a quarter were relatively dissatisfied with their “financial status” (27.4%), followed by “work” (23.1%) and “health” (18.2%). These were also the top three areas where women were most dissatisfied. (Chart 8)

**Chart 8: Areas of dissatisfaction**

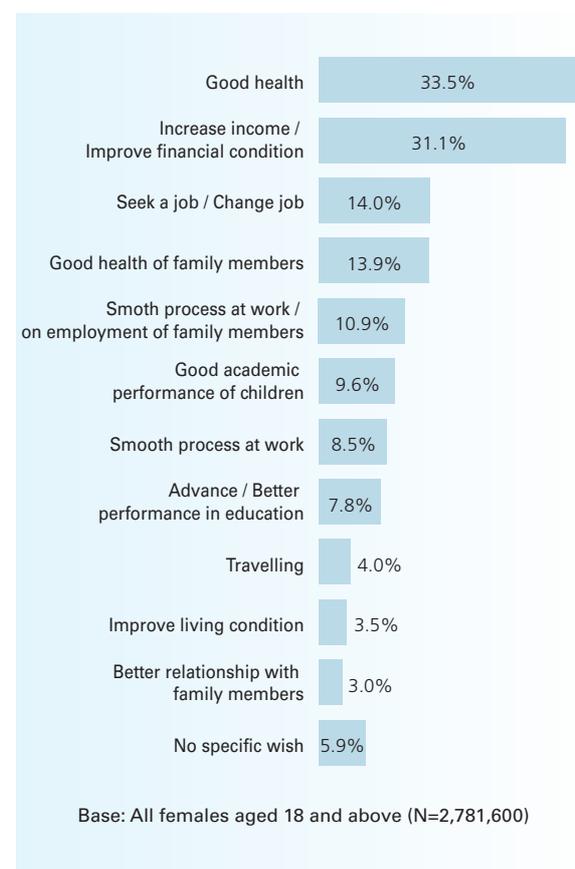


Note: The sum of % did not add up to 100% as respondents could give multiple answers.

Answers less than 1% were aggregated to the group “Others”.

With regard to wishes for the coming year, one-third (33.5%) wanted “good health”, with just under one-third (31.1%) wishing to “increase income/improve financial status”. More than 10% wanted to “seek a job/change job”, “good health for family members”, and “family members’ work to go smoothly”. (Chart 9)

**Chart 9: Wishes for the coming year**

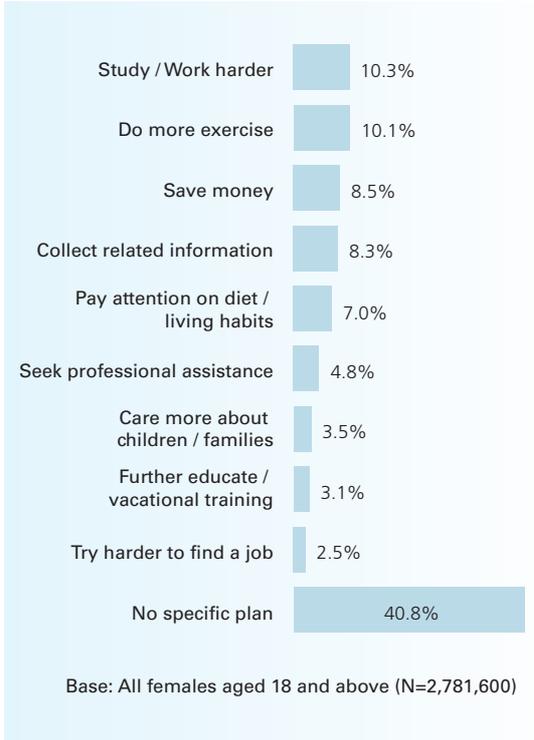


Note: The sum of % did not add up to 100% as respondents could give multiple answers.

Answers with less than 2% mentioned were not shown.

Of those interviewed, 40.8% had “no specific plan” to achieve their wishes. Some 10.3% and 10.1% claimed they would “study or work harder” and “do more exercise” to achieve them. (Chart 10)

**Chart 10: Plan to achieve wishes**

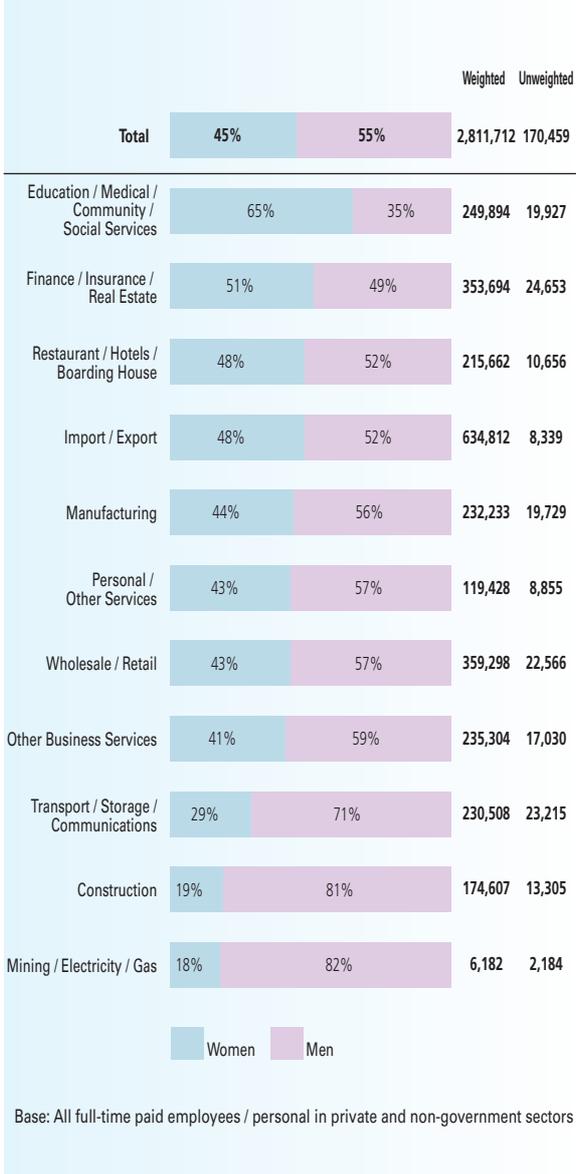


Note: Answers with less than 2% mentioned were not shown.

2.2 Extent and Level of Women’s Participation in the Workplace

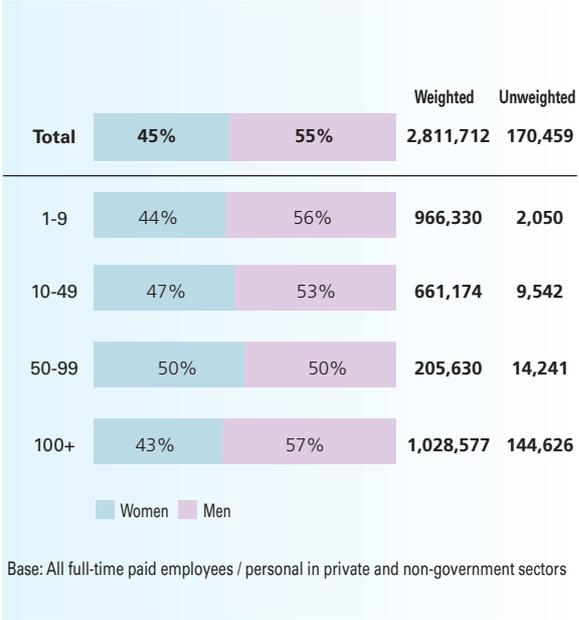
It was estimated that 1,559,014 males and 1,252,698 females (45%) were working full-time in the private and non-governmental sectors in Hong Kong during the research period. Women’s involvement was highest (58%) in the community/social and personal services sectors, in particular “education/medical/community/social services” (65%), while “transport/storage/communications”, “construction” and “mining/electricity/gas” had high concentrations of men (more than 70%). (Chart 1)

**Chart 1: Proportion of women vs men in different industry sectors**



Companies with 10-99 full-time employees tended to hire a higher percentage of women. Establishments with headquarters in North America tended to employ a significantly higher percentage of women (54%) than Asia-Pacific, European and Hong Kong companies (46%, 45% and 44% respectively). (Charts 2 and 3)

**Chart 2: Proportion of women in the private and non-governmental sectors – by establishment size**



**Chart 3: Proportion of women in the private and non-governmental sectors – by location of headquarters**



Women were most concentrated in “accounting/finance” (72%), followed by jobs in the fields of “administration/human resources/public relations” (55%) and “purchasing/merchandising” (53%). Men were found to be highly concentrated in science and technology-related disciplines such as “engineering/construction/research and development” (88%) and “information technology/management information systems” (78%). (Chart 4)

**Chart 4: Proportion of women in different fields**



Among companies involved in “engineering/construction/research and development”, 82% only had male employees in these areas. Similarly, 67% of companies only had men in their “information technology/management information systems” departments. (Table 1)

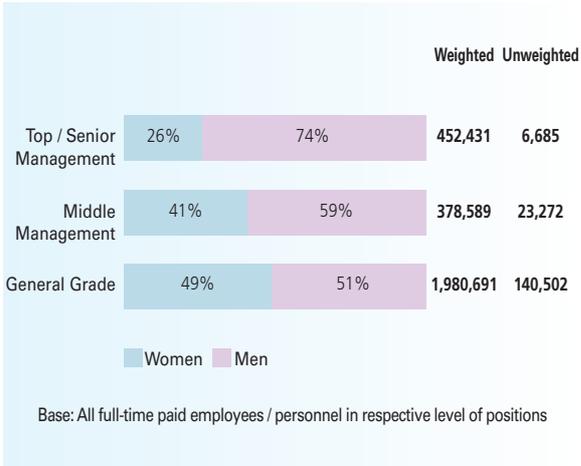
**Table 1: Percentage of private and non-governmental establishments – by proportion of women in different fields**

Proportion of Women in Employment	Accounting / Finance	Admin / HR / PR	Purchasing / Merchandising	Sales / Marketing	Production / Operations	IT / MIS	Engineering / Construction / R&D	Others
0%	20%	31%	49%	51%	52%	67%	82%	22%
1-30%	*%	4%	1%	4%	6%	7%	4%	4%
31-60%	6%	23%	12%	15%	14%	7%	7%	16%
61-99%	4%	10%	4%	6%	7%	1%	*%	5%
100%	70%	33%	35%	24%	21%	19%	7%	53%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

\*Denotes figures less than 0.5%

Women held about a quarter of all “top/senior management” positions (26%). Women were also under-represented in “middle management” (41%). (Chart 5)

**Chart 5: Proportion of women at different levels**



Similar patterns were found to occur across industry sectors, except for those that already had a high concentration of women, for example, the “education/medical/community/social services” (56%) and “personal and other services” (38%) sectors. The pattern was consistent among companies of different sizes and countries of origin. While more than 20% of the male working population were engaged in top or senior management, only 9% of the female working population reached these levels. (Table 2)

**Table 2: Overall percentage of women at different levels – by industry sector**

Level of Positions	Total	Manu- facturing	Cons- truction	Wholesale / Retails	Import / Export	Restau- rants / Hotels	Transport / Storage / Communi- cations	Finance / Insurance / Real Estate	Other Business Services	Education / Medical / Community / Social Services	Personal / Other Services	Mining / Electricity / Gas
Top / Senior Management	<b>26%</b>	18%	11%	25%	26%	24%	27%	23%	33%	56%	38%	9%*
Middle Management	<b>41%</b>	34%	14%	44%	44%	37%	35%	43%	41%	55%	35%	15%*
General Grade	<b>49%</b>	51%	22%	49%	57%	52%	28%	57%	43%	68%	45%	18%*

\* Denotes small base - number of establishments < 30

A majority (72%) of establishments had not adopted any gender-related employment practices. Adoption was especially slow in “manufacturing” (81% had adopted none) and “wholesale/retail” (78%). Among companies which had adopted some gender-related practices, “flexible working hours/practices” was the most common (23%). In general, large companies tended to have a higher adoption rate. (Table 3)

**Table 3: Adoption of gender-related employment practices – by industry sector**

	Total	Manu- facturing	Cons- truction	Wholesales / Retail	Import / Export	Restaurant / Hotels / Boarding House	Transport / Storage / Communi- cations	Finance / Insurance / Real Estate	Other Business Services	Education / Medical / Community / Social Services	Personal / other Services	Mining / Electricity / Gas
Flexible working hours / practices	<b>23%</b>	14%	20%	20%	20%	29%	19%	32%	32%	31%	40%	17%
Written Policies on anti- gender discrimination	<b>4%</b>	4%	4%	3%	2%	6%	5%	10%	6%	12%	2%	30%
Compilation and recording of sex-disaggregated statistics	<b>2%</b>	3%	4%	1%	4%	4%	3%	1%	1%	2%	1%	17%
Written policies to prevent and handle sexual harassment at workplace	<b>2%</b>	1%	3%	1%	2%	4%	3%	7%	1%	2%	2%	17%
Day care / after school care facility or subsidy	<b>1%</b>	-	3%	1%	2%	#	-	#	#	3%	1%	-
None of the above	<b>72%</b>	81%	75%	78%	76%	65%	72%	58%	62%	58%	58%	53%

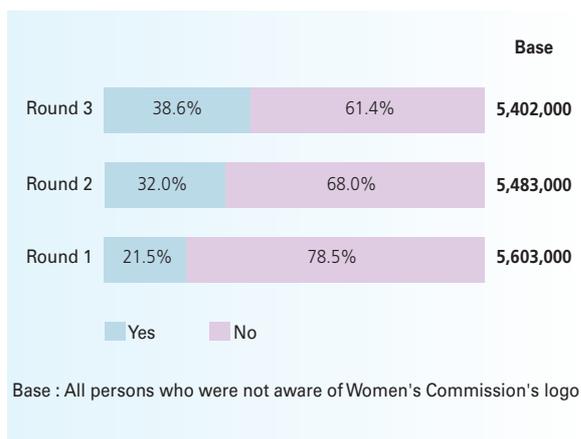
Base: All establishments in the private and non-governmental sectors in Hong Kong

# Less than 0.5%

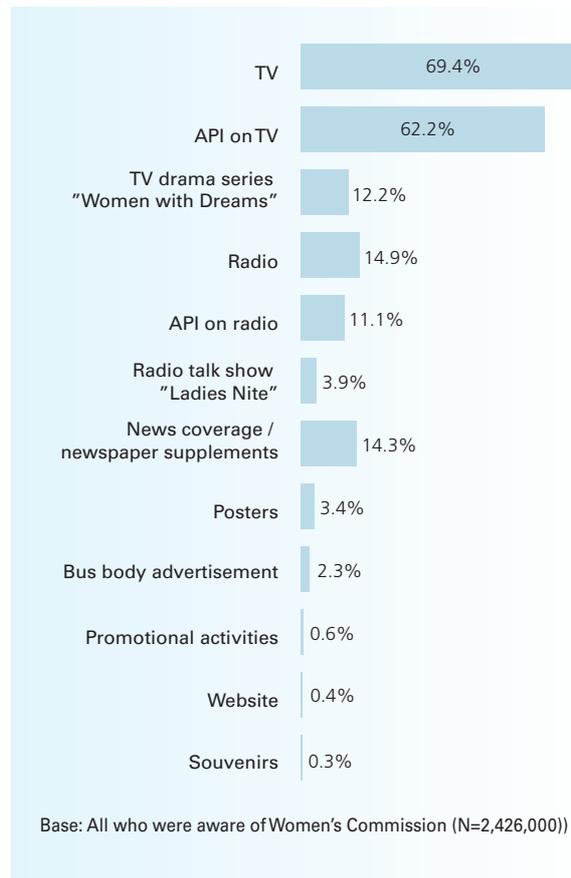
### 2.3 Effectiveness of Publicity and Public Education Campaign

The Commission’s survey on its public education and publicity campaign revealed that the campaign had, on the whole, significantly increased public awareness. Of people who were aware of the Commission, the majority had got to know about it from “TV” (nearly 70%). (Charts 1 and 2)

**Chart 1: Awareness of Women’s Commission when prompted**

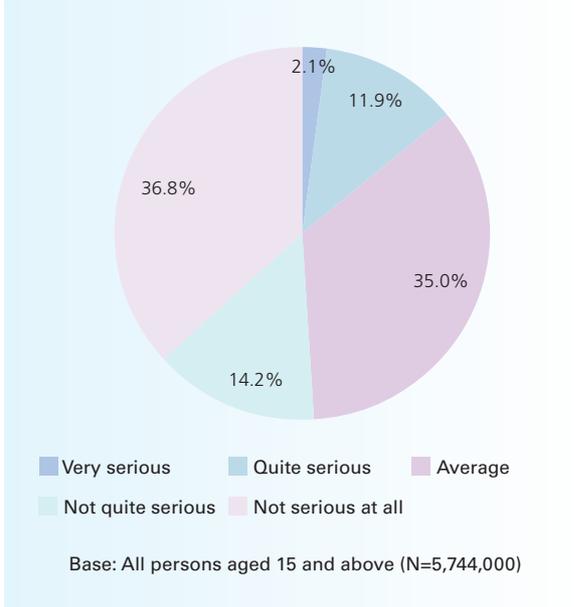


**Chart 2: Channels of awareness about Women’s Commission**



Findings in the third round of the survey show that gender stereotyping is still evident in Hong Kong, particularly in families and academic settings. Some 14% of respondents considered the issue of gender stereotyping “very/quite serious” and about 35% of “average” seriousness. (Chart 3)

**Chart 3: Seriousness of gender stereotyping in Hong Kong**



While very few respondents (5%) had heard of gender mainstreaming before, the majority (around 80%) considered it “definitely/quite necessary” after the concept was explained to them. (Chart 4)

**Chart 4: Attitudes towards the need for gender mainstreaming**



Through analysis of the data from people who were aware of Women’s Commission advertisements or promotional activities as oppose to those who were not, it was observed that the former tended to show slightly less gender stereotyping. (Table 1)

**Table 1: Overall extent of gender stereotyping – by awareness of Commission advertisements or promotional activities**

Index	Yes (%)	No (%)	Total (%)
0 - 20	13.7	8.8	11.5
21 - 40	39.6	43.0	41.1
41 - 60	32.4	35.1	33.6
61 - 80	12.9	12.2	12.6
81 - 100	1.4	0.9	1.1
<b>Average</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>41</b>

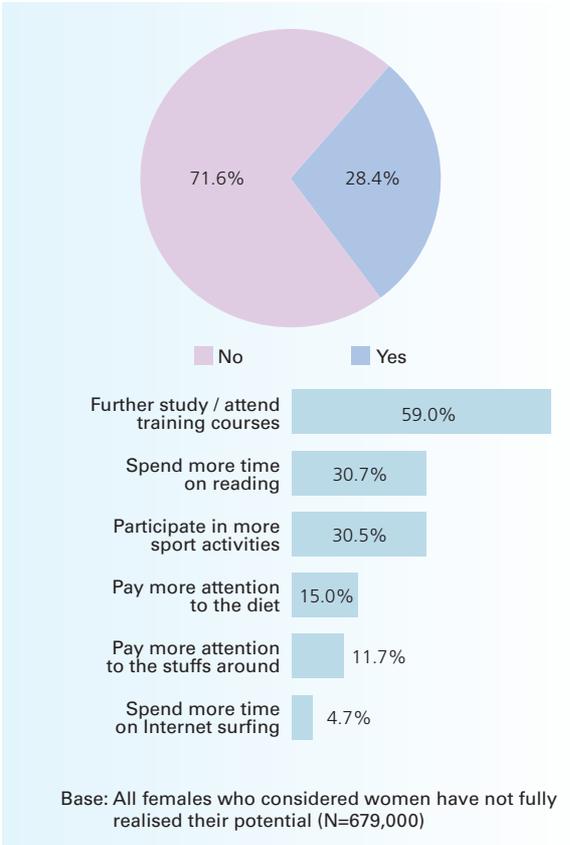
The survey found that nearly 15% of respondents considered women “probably/definitely cannot” realise their potential due to factors such as the “existence of sex discrimination” and the “need to take care of children.” (Table 2)

**Table 2: Reasons that deter women from fully realising their potential**

	Round 1 (Feb 2002) (%)	Round 2 (Jun 2002) (%)	Round 3 (Jul 2003) (%)
Existence of sex discrimination	53.8	52.7	45.1
Need to take care of children	41.5	34.1	30.6
Limitation in physical condition	25.4	15.8	23.2
Low education level	14.1	7.7	20.2
Health problem	1.3	0.5	16.4
Gender prejudices on roles and ability of women	22.5	21.7	11.4
Concern of personal safety	7.4	3.3	9.6
Lack of opportunity	2.0	12.9	8.1
Lack of self-confidence	18.6	17.1	8.1
Insufficient financial ability	7.9	5.2	3.6
Lack of Government support	6.0	11.9	1.3
Base: All persons who considered women had not fully realised their potential	666,000	841,000	809,000

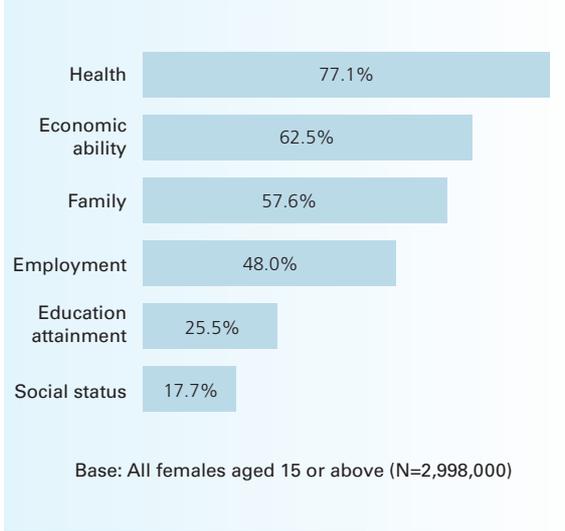
Among women in this group, nearly 30% had taken the initiative to enhance their own abilities. Close to 60% would take “further study/attend training courses” and over 30% “spend more time on reading”. (Chart 5)

**Chart 5: Action taken to enhance own abilities**



On women’s major concerns in the next five to 10 years, most (77.1%) mentioned “health” as their major concern, followed by “economic ability” (62.5%) and “family” (57.6%). Findings might be due to the impact of SARS as the survey was conducted in July 2003. (Chart 6)

**Chart 6: Women’s concerns in the next 5-10 years**



## 2.4 Time Use and Factors Affecting Women's Participation in Society

The survey found that, on average, economically active women spent about 7 hours a day on "paid work" compared with 7.3 hours for economically active men. (Table 1)

**Table 1: Average time spent on different activities per day**

	Male (hours)	Female (hours)	Homemaker (hours)	Students (hours)	Retired persons (hours)
Personal basic necessities (including sleeping)	11.4	11.6	12.5	11.9	13.7
Paid Work	7.3	7.0	*	*	*
Education and training	0.1	0.1	*	6.7	*
Unpaid activities	0.8	1.7	6.8	0.7	3.2
Free-time / leisure activities	3.7	3.3	4.4	4.5	6.8
Activities outside Hong Kong	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.3

*Base: All persons aged 15 and over*

*Note: \* Less than 0.05 hours*

With regard to "unpaid activities", women spent 3.3 hours a day on care for the home, voluntary work and unpaid activities for relatives and friends. This was three times more than men (1.1 hours). (Table 2)

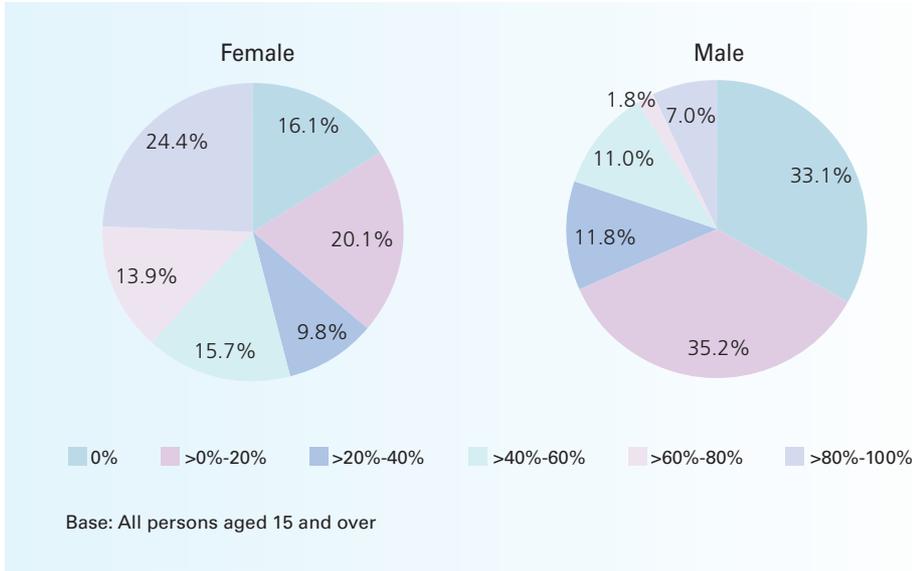
**Table 2: Average time spent on different activities per day**

	Male (hours)	Female (hours)
Personal basic necessities (including sleeping)	11.9	12.1
Paid work	5.3	3.6
Education and training	0.6	0.6
Unpaid activities	1.1	3.3
Free-time / leisure activities	4.4	4.1
Activities outside Hong Kong	0.6	0.3

*Base: All persons aged 15 and over*

In relation to homemaking and home care, the survey found that nearly 84% of women were involved in some housework, including care-giving, cooking, shopping, cleaning, and managing the household (for example, instructing domestic helpers and other household work such as home repairs and maintenance), compared to around 67% of men. About 80% of those undertaking “heavy/very heavy” loads of housework were women. (Chart 1 and Table 3)

**Chart 1: Percentage distribution of persons — by sex and relative share of household responsibilities**



**Table 3: Share of housework overall (all households) — by sex**

Ratings	Overall (%)	Female (%)	Male (%)
No Housework	24.3	16.1	33.1
Very light	27.4	20.1	35.2
Light	10.7	9.8	11.8
Moderate	13.4	15.7	11.0
Heavy	8.1	13.9	1.8
Very Heavy	16.0	24.4	7.0
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>5,597,500</b>	<b>2,899,800</b>	<b>2,697,700</b>

In terms of average time spent, homemakers spent 6.8 hours a day on care-giving to household members, household work, purchasing goods and services for their own household, and other voluntary work and unpaid activities, compared to 1.1 hours for men. Women with dual roles spent 3 hours a day on these chores. (Tables 4 and 5)

**Table 4: Overall time use by women with dual roles compared with relevant populations (in hours)**

Categories of Time Use	Women with dual roles (%)	Homemakers (%)	All Females (%)
Personal basic necessities (including sleeping)	11.5	12.5	12.1
Paid work	7.0	0.0	3.6
Education and training	0.0	0.0	0.6
Unpaid activities	3.0	6.8	3.3
Free-time / leisure activities	2.4	4.4	4.1
Activities outside Hong Kong	0.1	0.4	0.3

**Table 5: Overall time use — by sex**

	Overall (hours)	Female (hours)	Male (hours)
Personal basic necessities (including sleeping)	12.0	12.1	11.9
Paid work	4.4	3.6	5.3
Education and training	0.6	0.6	0.6
Unpaid activities	2.2	3.3	1.1
Free-time / leisure activities	4.2	4.1	4.4
Activities outside Hong Kong	0.5	0.3	0.6

In contrast to the time devoted to family care, voluntary work and helping out relatives and friends, women did not have much free time for themselves. Women who performed multiple roles as an employed person, family carer, and parent, for example, had negligible time for education and training and were less inclined to engage in other activities, such as cultural or recreational activities. (Table 6)

**Table 6: Overall time use of women with dual roles for weekdays and weekends compared with relevant populations (in hours)**

Categories of Time Use	Women with dual roles (%)	Homemakers (%)	All Females (%)
<b>Weekdays</b>			
Personal basic necessities (including sleeping)	11.1	12.3	11.9
Paid work	8.2	0.0	4.2
Education and training	0.0	0.0	0.8
Unpaid activities	2.8	7.2	3.3
Free-time / leisure activities	1.9	4.1	3.6
Activities outside Hong Kong	0.0	0.3	0.3
<b>Weekend Days</b>			
Personal basic necessities (including sleeping)	12.4	13.0	12.9
Paid work	4.1	0.0	1.9
Education and training	0.0	0.0	0.3
Unpaid activities	3.4	5.6	3.2
Free-time / leisure activities	3.7	5.0	5.3
Activities outside Hong Kong	0.3	0.4	0.4

Survey results confirmed that more women than men were engaged in voluntary work (63% of all people aged 15 or over who had carried out voluntary work in the 12 months before the survey were women) and women played a greater role in building social networks and social capital within their community. (Table 7)

**Table 7: Economic activity status of persons who had undertaken voluntary work — by sex**

Economic Activity Status	Female (%)		Male (%)	
	Employed	37.8	(48.5)	53.3
Unemployed	2.0	(2.4)	3.7	(5.2)
Student	26.6	(8.0)	31.5	(8.6)
Homemaker	25.5	(25.0)	N/A	N/A
Retired Person	7.2	(14.2)	7.7	(15.1)
<b>Total Population</b>	<b>275,300</b>	<b>2,899,800</b>	<b>161,100</b>	<b>2,697,700</b>

*Numbers in brackets refer to relevant portion in overall population. Only female homemakers were included in the analysis.*

It was observed that financial well-being was critical in shaping use of time and participation in society. Marital status was also highly important. Survey results indicated that lack of time was the primary barrier to participation in voluntary work with a large majority suggesting that they were too busy to participate in such activities. (Table 8)

**Table 8: Reasons for not engaging in voluntary work (percentage) – by economic activity status**

	Employed		Unemployed		Student		Home-maker (*)	Retired	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Female	Male
No Time	88.3	87.7	65.9	52.5	78.8	74.8	66.4	28.7	32.2
No Interest	13.3	14.8	29.1	41.9	16.5	21.0	22.5	13.8	21.6
Too young / old	0.8	1.2	0.8	1.9	1.8	1.3	9.5	59.0	51.1
Never though about it	5.2	5.4	9.2	12.6	7.0	6.6	6.8	3.9	5.0
Health problem	0.4	0.5	1.9	3.0	0.7	0.9	4.5	24.5	19.7
Do not know how to participate	5.9	4.6	9.1	5.5	5.5	4.7	7.1	2.9	3.7
Not enough knowledge or skills	1.7	1.5	3.0	2.5	2.8	2.1	3.8	2.6	2.9
<b>Base:</b>	<b>1,303,488</b>	<b>1,744,100</b>	<b>65,200</b>	<b>133,700</b>	<b>160,200</b>	<b>181,100</b>	<b>656,000</b>	<b>390,200</b>	<b>396,000</b>

*Note: Participants may have selected more than one reason for not participating in voluntary work, column numbers therefore do not total to 100%.*

*(\*) Only females included.*

### 3 Women's Commission Conference

10 May 2002 (Day 1)

#### Informal Networking Sessions

##### *Gender Mainstreaming*

Theme : Gender Mainstreaming Experience  
Across Sectors

Objectives : To learn about "gender mainstreaming"  
and share experience in adopting  
gender mainstreaming or gender-  
sensitive measures, and to encourage  
private and non-governmental sectors  
to initiate gender mainstreaming

Facilitators:

- Prof Vivienne WEE
- Dr Susan FAN (Member, Women's Commission)

Panellists:

- Ms Helene DWYER-RENAUD (Director of Gender-Based Analysis, Status of Women Canada)
- Ms CHAN May-ling (Programme Director, Oxfam Hong Kong)
- Ms Alice CHIN (Managing Director, Merck Sharp & Dohme (Asia) Ltd)

##### *Empowerment of Women*

Theme : Experience Sharing on Women  
Empowerment Practices

Objective : To promote good ideas for empowering  
women through experience sharing

Facilitators:

- Ms Sophia KAO (Co-convener of Empowerment Task Force, Women's Commission)
- Dr Joseph KWOK (Co-convener of Empowerment Task Force, Women's Commission)

Panellists:

- "Women's Health": Dr LEUNG Tung-yeung (Tung Wah Group of Hospital Well Women Clinic)
- "Women's Safety at Home and in Public": Ms Irene NG (Association Concerning Sexual Violence Against Women)
- "Women's Education": Ms CHAN Yu (Hong Kong Federation of Women's Centres)
- "Women's Economic Well-being": Ms WU Mei-lin (Hong Kong Women Workers' Association)
- "Women's Political and Social Participation": Ms IP Shun-hing (Hong Kong Women Development Association)

##### *Public Education*

Theme : Gender Roles in School Education

Objectives : To explore gender differences in the  
present school system and curricula,  
define new roles of women in this fast  
changing technological age and  
knowledge-based economy, and to  
explore how schools can help  
transform the curricula to prepare  
women for the 21st century

Facilitators:

- Mrs Peggy LAM (Co-convener of Public Education Task Force, Women's Commission)
- Mr YEUNG Ka-sing (Member, Women's Commission)
- Mr Wellington CHENG (Member, Women's Commission)

Panellists

- Ms Theresa CHAN (Principal, Ng Wah College)
- Ms Maggie KOONG (Principal, Causeway Bay Victoria Kindergarten)
- Ir Dr HUI Ming-fong (Parent Teacher Association, Victoria English Primary School)
- Mrs Mary LEUNG (Baptist Oi Kwan Social Service)
- Miss Jolie CHOW (St Paul's Convent School)

## Opening Ceremony

Welcome Address: The Honourable Sophie LEUNG  
(Chairperson, Women's  
Commission)

Opening Remarks: The Honourable TUNG Chee-hwa  
(Chief Executive)

Address: Speech by Ms GU Xiulian (Vice-President,  
All-China Women's Federation (ACWF))  
read by Ms HUA Fuzhou (Vice-President,  
ACWF)

Keynote Speech: "The Challenges of Transformation  
— Women's Role For a Better  
Tomorrow" by Dr Linda MIRANDA  
(Regional Programme Director,  
East and Southeast Asia Regional  
Office of United Nations  
Development Fund for Women  
(UNIFEM))

Entertainment Programme: Martial Arts Performance  
— led by Ms LI Fai

## 11 May 2002 (Day 2)

### Plenary Sessions

#### *Gender Mainstreaming*

Topic : Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) in  
Government Processes: Building  
Blocks, Elements and Players that  
facilitate a Successful GBA Integration

Facilitator : Prof Judith MACKAY (Co-convener of  
Gender Mainstreaming Task Force,  
Women's Commission)

Speaker : Ms Helene DWYER-RENAUD (Director  
of Gender-Based Analysis, Status of  
Women Canada)

#### *Public Education*

Topic : Between the Lines of Images of  
Gender

Facilitators :

- Ms Ophelia CHEUNG (Co-convener of Public  
Education Task Force, Women's Commission)
- Mrs Peggy LAM (Co-convener of Public Education  
Task Force, Women's Commission)

Speaker : Ms XU Xi (writer)

### Break-out Sessions

#### *Gender Mainstreaming*

Topic : Gender Mainstreaming Strategy in  
Hong Kong

Objectives : To encourage comments and views on  
the proposed gender mainstreaming  
strategy in Hong Kong

Facilitator : Dr Agnes YEUNG (Co-convener of  
Gender Mainstreaming Task Force,  
Women's Commission)

#### *Public Education*

Topic : Portrayal of Women in Popular Culture

Objectives : To learn from renowned representatives  
of the media industry and academia on  
the portrayal of women in popular culture  
with a view to reflecting on the change  
in the conceptions or misconceptions on  
women

Facilitators :

- Ms Ophelia CHEUNG (Co-convener of Public  
Education Task Force, Women's Commission)
- Mr Maurice LEE (Member, Women's  
Commission)

Panellists

- Ms Sylvia CHANG (film director)
- Ms Eileen CHA (radio programme host)
- Mr Rex WONG (film critic)
- Prof Eric MA (School of Journalism and  
Communication, Chinese University of Hong  
Kong)

Messages from:

- Ms Ann HUI (movie director)
- Ms Lydia SHUM (artist)

Short film “Images of Women in Hong Kong Films”:  
narrated by Mr Leslie CHEUNG (singer)

## Luncheon

Speaker : The Honourable Elsie LEUNG  
(Secretary for Justice)

## Plenary Sessions (Con’t)

### *Empowerment of Women*

Objectives : To expose participants to ideas of  
empowerment of women from both an  
international as well as a practical angle

Facilitators:

- Ms Sophia KAO (Co-convener of Empowerment Task Force, Women’s Commission)
- Dr Joseph KWOK (Co-convener of Empowerment Task Force, Women’s Commission)

Speakers:

- “Monitoring Women’s Empowerment”: Dr Patricia LICUANAN (former Chair of United Nations Commission on the Status of Women)
- “Women Empowerment and Enhancement of Women’s Competence in All Aspects of Life”: Ms ZOU Xiaoqiao (Deputy Director-General of the International Liaison Department, ACWF)

## Break-out Sessions (Con’t)

### *Empowerment of Women*

Objectives : To identify issues and challenges  
concerning women empowerment and  
to discuss possible ways to address  
such issues and challenges

Topic : Women’s Safety at Home and in Public

Facilitators :

- Miss Jessica LI (City University of Hong Kong)
- Ms Margaret WONG (Member, Women’s Commission)

Panellists :

- Ms Heidi IP (Community Education and Resource Centre, Harmony House)
- Ms Shirley CHU (Hong Kong Police Force)
- Mr David SHUM (Youth Outreach)

Topic : Women’s Economic Well-being

Facilitators :

- Miss Amy TAM (The University of Hong Kong)
- Mr Maurice LEE (Member, Women’s Commission)

Panellists :

- Mr Patrick PANG (Employees Retraining Board)
- Mr Eddie NG (Hong Kong Institute of Human Resources Management)
- Ms FUNG Yu-chuk and Ms POON Chun-po (Tin Yiu Mutual Help Child Care Group)

Topic : Women’s Health

Facilitators :

- Miss Diane CHAU (Polytechnic University of Hong Kong)
- Dr Susan FAN (Member, Women’s Commission)

Panellists :

- Dr Susie LUM (Hospital Authority)
- Dr Regina CHING (Department of Health)
- Dr Margaret CHUNG (Regeneration Society)

Topic : Women's Education

Facilitators :

- Miss Ada MA (Hong Kong University of Science and Technology)
- Dr Joseph KWOK (Co-convenor of Empowerment Task Force, Women's Commission):

Panellists :

- Prof Y H LUI (The Open University of Hong Kong)
- Ms KO Po-ling (Kowloon Women's Organisations Federation)
- Mrs Betty IP (Education Department)

Topic : Women's Political and Social Participation

Facilitators :

- Miss TAM Suet-yan (Chinese University of Hong Kong)
- Ms Sophia KAO (Co-convenor of Empowerment Task Force, Women's Commission)

Panellists :

- Mrs Alice LUI (Hong Kong Girl Guides Association)
- Ms Flora CHUNG (Agency for Volunteer Service)
- Mr Stephen FISHER (Home Affairs Bureau)

## Closing Session

### *Report Back and Summary*

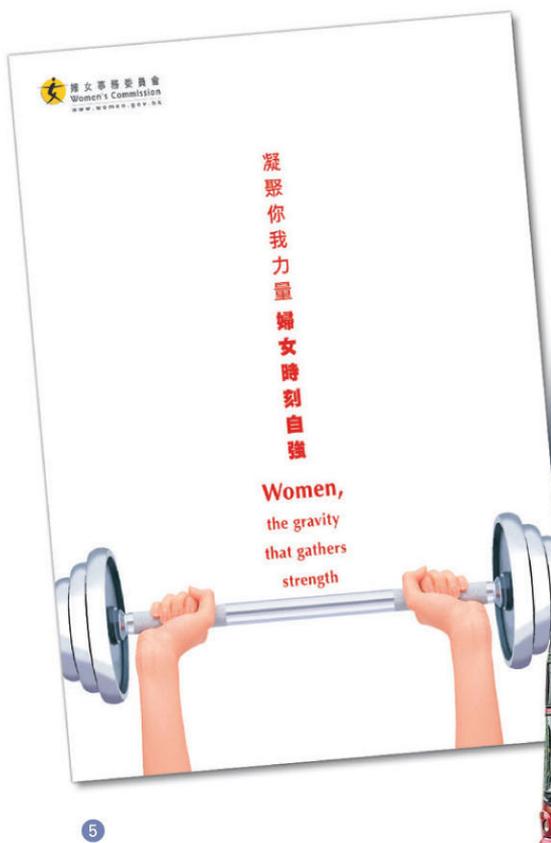
Closing Address : Dr E KYEOH (then Secretary for Health and Welfare)

## Closing Reception

Address : The Honourable Donald TSANG  
(Chief Secretary for Administration)

## 4 Publications and Publicity Materials

- Women's Commission overview<sup>1</sup>
- "Towards due recognition of women" and "Women's Capacity Building"
  - Announcement of Public Interest on television<sup>2</sup>
  - Announcement of Public Interest on radio
  - Bus body advertisement<sup>3</sup>
  - Poster<sup>4,5</sup>



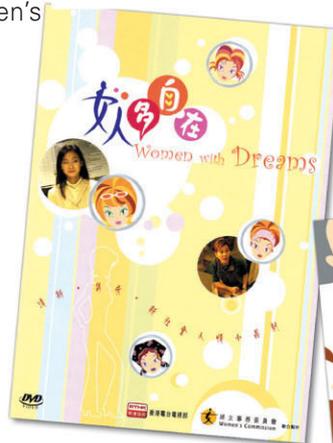
- Booklet on winning essays of “The New Sky of Modern Women” Essay Competition<sup>6</sup>
- Booklet on Good Practices on Empowerment of Women<sup>7</sup>
- Women’s Commission Report
- Survey and research
  - Extent of Women’s Satisfaction in Hong Kong
  - Extent and Level of Positions taken up by Women in the Private and Non-governmental sector in Hong Kong
  - Effectiveness of Publicity and Public Education Campaign
  - Time Use and Factors Affecting Women’s Participation in Society
- “Women with Dreams” TV drama series I and II DVD<sup>8,9</sup>
- Women’s Commission magnet<sup>10</sup>
- Women’s Commission bookmark<sup>11</sup>



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