

ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE

HEAD 149 - GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT : HEALTH AND WELFARE BUREAU Subhead 001 Salaries

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee -

- (a) the creation of the following permanent posts in the Health and Welfare Bureau -

1 Administrative Officer Staff Grade B
(D3) (\$ 127,900 - \$135,550)

1 Administrative Officer Staff Grade C
(D2) (\$116,650 - \$123,850); and

- (b) an increase in the ceiling placed on the total notional annual mid-point salary value of all non-directorate posts in the permanent establishment of Head 149 - Government Secretariat : Health and Welfare Bureau in 2000-01 from \$39,753,000 by \$3,568,320 to \$43,321,320 to facilitate the creation of six non-directorate posts.

PROBLEM

We need to establish a dedicated team in the Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB) to advance Government initiatives to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong. There is also a need to provide the necessary administrative and secretarial support (with research capability) to the Women's Commission.

/PROPOSAL

PROPOSAL

2. Secretary for Health and Welfare (SHW) proposes to establish a dedicated team by creating in HWB -

- (a) one permanent Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (AOSGB) (D3) post;
- (b) one permanent Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2) post; and
- (c) six non-directorate posts, involving a total notional annual mid-point salary (NAMS) value of \$3,568,320 to provide the necessary support to the Women's Commission, to be partly offset by the deletion of one non-directorate post on the permanent establishment of Home Affairs Bureau (HAB) (at \$660,000 in NAMS value).

JUSTIFICATION**The Women's Commission**

3. Women make up half of our population and play important roles in our community. Notwithstanding all of their achievements, women and girls still face a number of unique difficulties (e.g. women are usually required to perform domestic responsibilities and take care of the children, ill, aged and handicapped), and remain subject to long-standing prejudices (e.g. gender stereotyping, preconceived ideas about the ability and roles of women in family, workplace and the society, horizontal segregation in the labour market and career stereotyping). Different bureaux and departments are responsible for developing and implementing policies and initiatives related to women. Prior to May 2000, HAB was responsible for the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women, the co-ordination of reports under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)¹, and follow-up action on the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action². However, no specific body within the Government was tasked to ensure that women's concerns and needs were effectively addressed in a holistic manner.

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¹ This was extended to Hong Kong in October 1996 and HKSARG submitted its initial report under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 1998. The report was examined by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women in February 1999.

² The Beijing Platform for Action, adopted at the Fourth World Conference on Women held in 1995, identifies priority areas for action by Governments, international communities, NGOs and private sectors for the empowerment of women.

4. The Chief Secretary for Administration announced on 6 May 2000, the establishment of a Women's Commission under the purview of SHW, to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong. The Women's Commission is a central body to oversee women's needs and to specifically address matters of concern to women in a comprehensive and systematic manner. The Commission will develop a long-term vision and improved strategy to deal with women's issues. Apart from the strategic planning function, the Women's Commission will also assume four other main roles, (i.e. advisory, liaison, research, and educational/promotional) and will ensure that women-related concerns are taken into account in policy formulation, where applicable. It will identify priority areas for attention and advise on policies and initiatives that are related to the development and advancement of women (e.g. the impact of Government policies and programmes on women).

5. In addition, the Commission will -

- (a) initiate research on emerging women's issues;
- (b) serve as a focal point to address women's concerns about current service provision and facilitate more effective delivery of such services;
- (c) promote improved co-operation and co-ordination in the delivery of women's services in areas such as education, employment, health, welfare, and security;
- (d) maintain close liaison with local women's groups and service agencies;
- (e) provide non-officials (and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)) with a formal and high level forum for direct communication with the Government; and
- (f) promote awareness of women's issues within the local community to promote the advancement of women.

Encl. 1 The terms of reference of the Commission is at Enclosure 1.

Women's Division within HWB

6. A Legislative Council motion debate on the setting up of the Women's Commission was held on 1 June 2000. Members generally agreed -

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- (a) there was a need to set up a central mechanism to promote women's interests in Hong Kong;
- (b) the need to have an executive arm within the Government to ensure that strategies and recommendations made by the Women's Commission are effectively implemented by the Administration;
- (c) the need to designate an officer at a sufficiently high level within Government to oversee and co-ordinate women's issues across a number of different bureaux and departments, to examine women-related policies, and to participate in discussions at international fora; and
- (d) the need for Government to attach importance to the Women's Commission and its work.

7. Having considered Members' comments, the vocal and repeated demand within the women's community for a stronger steer and dedicated leadership within Government on women's issues, and given that these issues impinge on a wide range of policy areas and touch on a range of initiatives and services which require extensive co-ordination, we accept that there is a need to set up within the HWB, a dedicated Women's Division.

8. The setting up of a Women's Division in HWB will -

- (a) clearly demonstrate to the community, the importance that Government attaches to women's issues; and
- (b) provide the necessary support to the Women's Commission.

The setting up of the Division within HWB, rather than as a separate department, will facilitate more effective programme co-ordination and implementation amongst the bureaux concerned. Similar institutional arrangements have been adopted to support the work of the Elderly, Education and Youth Commissions.

Need for an Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) post

9. To give a sharper focus to women's issues, we believe that it is justified to designate a senior government official, at the Deputy Secretary level within HWB, to lead the Division. The schedule of duties of the Deputy Secretary (Women) is set out in Enclosure 2.

Encl. 2

10. Taking into account the job requirements, we propose to rank the post at the D3 level (i.e. AOSGB). This ranking will ensure that the post-holder has the necessary experience to execute these responsibilities. Women's issues cut across a number of different policy areas and will require extensive co-ordination between different Government bureaux, departments as well as parties outside the Government. An officer of this seniority can help to ensure the speedy resolution of inter-departmental and inter-organisational differences and problems. Within HWB, the Elderly Division, which provides support to the Elderly Commission, is also headed by a D3 officer.

Need for One Additional Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) post

11. To provide adequate support to the Women's Commission and to the Deputy Secretary (Women), it is important that the proposed Women's Division is adequately staffed. The proposed Division will take over certain duties previously undertaken by HAB -

- (a) firstly, it will oversee implementation of CEDAW, the Beijing Platform for Action (which covers 12 critical areas for action) in Hong Kong and other matters concerning CEDAW including related activities and meetings; and
- (b) secondly, it will be required to maintain links with the relevant international bodies, such as the United Nations (UN) and Asian-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), and arrange representation of Hong Kong at appropriate international meetings.

12. On top of these, the Women's Division will also take on a number of new duties including -

- (a) firstly, it will support the Commission and the Deputy Secretary (Women) to develop a long-term vision and strategy, with the aid of studies, surveys and research to ensure that, as appropriate, women's perspectives are taken into account during the formulation of policies;
- (b) secondly, the Division will support the Commission to keep under regular review, services for women, identify priority areas for action and advise on the development of new and improved measures;
- (c) thirdly, the Division will need to provide secretariat support to the Commission, follow up on its advice and recommendations, assist in drawing up an annual action plan and set work priorities; and

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- (d) finally, the Division will be responsible for organising promotional/educational activities to raise community awareness on gender-related matters and eliminate stereotypes and prejudices about women.

13. As the work of the Women's Division involves substantial policy content, extensive co-ordination both within and outside Government, liaison with local and international women-related organisations, implementation of new/improvement initiatives, as well as execution of public education and promotional activities and setting up of and serving a number of sub-committees, we propose to create an additional AOSGC (i.e. PAS(Women)) post to support the Deputy Secretary (Women).

14. In overseeing the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action which has twelve critical areas of concern, PAS(Women) will be required to initiate and co-ordinate integrated measures for the twelve areas, including the promotion of women's health, the prevention of violence against women, the promotion of women's access to employment, continuing education and vocational re-training etc.

15. In addition, it should be noted that local women's groups have called for the setting up of one-stop services for victims of sexual violence and the proposal is being followed up by an inter-departmental Working Group on Sexual Violence which was set up in May 2000. PAS(Women) will be required to participate in the Working Group, oversee the interface between the Commission and the Working Group and ensure effective co-ordination of the provision of new or improved measures. The officer will also be required to perform a range of other duties to support the functions of the Women's Commission. The proposed schedule of duties of PAS(Women) is set out in Enclosure 3.

Encl. 3

Need for Non-directorate Support

16. To provide the necessary support to the Deputy Secretary (Women) and the Principal Assistant Secretary (Women), a team comprising two Senior Administrative Officers (SAO), one Administrative Officer (AO) (to be redeployed from existing resources within HWB), one Senior Executive Officer (SEO), and three Personal Secretary I posts is proposed. One of the Senior Administrative Officers will provide the necessary secretarial support to the Women's Commission and follow up on its recommendations including co-ordination with other bureaux and departments on service improvements. The other SAO will support the Commission by conducting research and surveys, collecting and compiling relevant

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data and sex-disaggregated statistics, carrying out reviews on existing women-related services and work related to sensitizing the community to gender issues. The AO will support PAS(Women) on international liaison work, the review of reservations and declarations relating to CEDAW, following up on the recommendations made by the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women as well as work related to the Working Group on Sexual Violence. The SEO will assist PAS(Women) in local consultation activities and the development of a liaison network and the organisation of large-scale promotional/educational activities.

17. To enable the creation of these six non-directorate posts, we propose to raise the NAMS ceiling of all non-directorate posts in HWB from \$39,753,000 by \$3,568,320 to \$43,321,320 in 2000-01, to be partly offset by the deletion of one non-directorate AO post on the permanent establishment of HAB (at \$660,000 in NAMS value). The creation of these non-directorate posts will be dealt with in accordance with the normal procedure through the Departmental Establishment Committee mechanism.

18. With the change in policy responsibility to HWB, one AO has been transferred from HAB to HWB to offset the cost of the above proposal. The duties of the PAS in HAB, originally tasked with women-related duties, have been changed to include overseeing the Trust Funds, Temples and Cemeteries Section and matters relating to religion. The PAS will continue to have responsibilities for the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance, and the promotion of equal opportunities.

Encls.4-5 19. The existing and revised organisation charts of HWB are at Enclosures 4 and 5 respectively.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

20. The additional notional annual salary cost of the proposal of creating one AOSGB (D3) and one additional AOSGC (D2) posts at mid-point is \$3,023,400. The additional full annual average staff cost of the proposal, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$5,072,000.

21. The additional notional annual mid-point salary and full annual average staff cost of the proposal for the creation of the proposed six additional non-directorate posts (as detailed in paragraphs 16 and 17 above) are \$3,568,320 and \$5,964,000 respectively.

22. The cost of the above proposal will be partially met from existing resources, by deletion of one AO post in HAB. Subject to Members' approval, we will administratively freeze a NAMS value of \$660,000 in HAB, and provide necessary supplementary provision under Personal Emoluments in 2000-01 under delegated authority.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

23. On 6 May 2000, the Chief Secretary for Administration announced the establishment of a Women's Commission to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong. The idea of establishing a central mechanism on women's issues has been suggested by local women's groups in the past and was echoed by the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women after hearing the Government's initial report under CEDAW in 1999. In addition, legislators supported the establishment of a central mechanism for women's issues during a Motion Debate in April 1999. The topic was also discussed at another Motion Debate held on 1 June 2000.

CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS

24. The Administration has considered carefully alternative means to provide an appropriate level of support to the new Commission, bearing in mind the need for efficiency and productivity. We consider this proposal to create one AOSGB and one AOSGC posts and a supporting team the most appropriate way to proceed. Having regard to the policy commitment to establish a Women's Commission to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong and the reasons put forward in paragraphs 3 to 19 above, Civil Service Bureau considers the proposal to be justified and the grading and ranking of the posts to be appropriate.

ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

25. The Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service has advised that the grading proposed for the posts would be appropriate if the posts were to be created.

**TERMS OF REFERENCE OF
WOMEN'S COMMISSION**

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

- (a) advise the Government on the development of a long term vision and strategies related to the development and advancement of women;
- (b) advise the Government on the integration of policies and initiatives which are of concern to women, which fall under the purview of different Policy Bureaux;
- (c) keep 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;
- (d) initiate and undertake independent surveys and research studies on women's issues and organise educational and promotional activities; and
- (e) develop and maintain contact with local and international women's groups and service agencies with a view to sharing experiences and improving communication and understanding.

Schedule of duties of Deputy Secretary (Women)

The duty of Deputy Secretary (Women) is to support the Women's Commission in promoting the interest and well-being of women in Hong Kong. In particular, the officer will be responsible for the following duties -

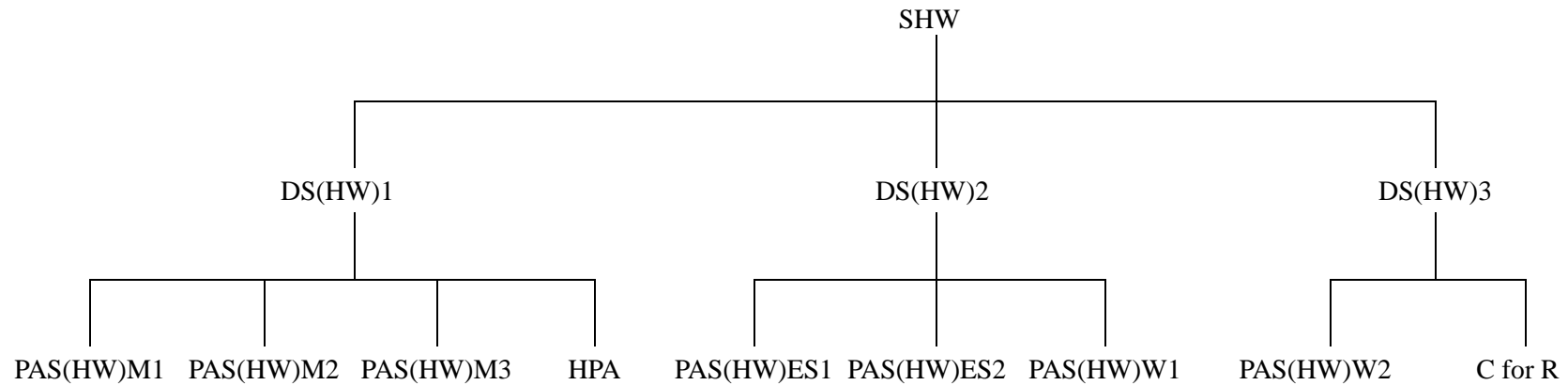
- (a) to make recommendations to the Women's Commission on the development of a long term vision and strategy related to the development and advancement of women;
- (b) to develop programmes for implementing strategies mapped out by the Women's Commission on development and advancement of women in Hong Kong;
- (c) to develop programmes to promote gender mainstreaming within Government;
- (d) to examine gender impact of Government policies and legislation on women, and to initiate changes and improvement where necessary;
- (e) to explore and develop areas of improvements (e.g. in service delivery) which will enhance the well-being of women in Hong Kong;
- (f) to see to the implementation of the provisions in CEDAW and Beijing Platform for Action in Hong Kong;
- (g) to develop and maintain liaison with the local women's groups as well as international bodies and participate in discussion and negotiation at international fora;
- (h) to promote awareness of the community at large in respect of gender related issues; and
- (i) to co-ordinate with other Government bureaux and departments on women related matters.

Schedule of duties of PAS(Women)

To assist the Deputy Secretary (Women) in the following duties -

- (a) to initiate and co-ordinate integrated measures for implementation of provisions contained in the Beijing Platform for Action, CEDAW and recommendations made by the UN Committee on Elimination of Discrimination against Women;
- (b) to oversee implementation of programmes developed for implementing strategies mapped out by the Women's Commission;
- (c) to oversee implementation of measures to improve the delivery of women services;
- (d) to arrange for and oversee implementation of specific proposals for promoting gender mainstreaming within the Government;
- (e) to monitor surveys, research and projects initiated by the Commission;
- (f) to represent the Women's Division in the Working Group on Sexual Violence and ensure effective co-ordination;
- (g) to co-ordinate the collation of sex-disaggregated data and set up a comprehensive database within the Government;
- (h) to organise promotional and educational activities to enhance community awareness about women's issues, including to plan and arrange gender-related training programmes for civil servants, as well as to organise large-scale focus group meetings 2 or 3 times a year and visits to service agencies etc;
- (i) to develop and improve communication channels between the Women's Commission and local women's organisations, service agencies and other relevant bodies;
- (j) to maintain liaison with international organisations (such as UN, APEC and its Ad Hoc Advisory Group on Gender Integration, UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, and the Women Leaders' Network formed by women leaders in APEC economies), prepare representation at international fora and follow up on UN's and other international organisations' initiatives on women; and
- (k) to provide necessary secretarial support to the Women's Commission and its sub-committees.

**Existing Organisation Chart of Health and Welfare Bureau
(as at December 2000)**



Legend

SHW - Secretary for Health and Welfare

(HW) - (Health and Welfare)

DS - Deputy Secretary

PAS - Principal Assistant Secretary

M - Medical

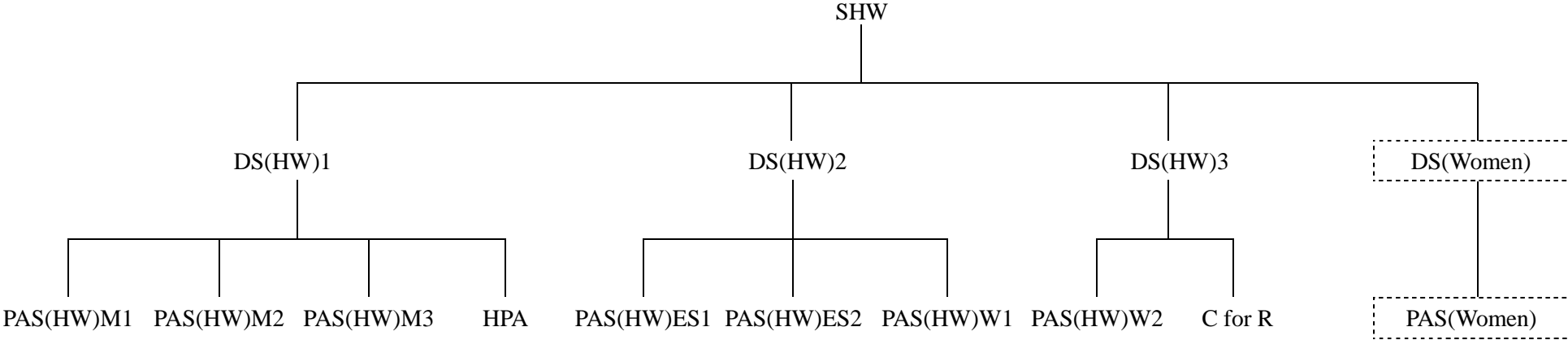
ES - Elderly Services

W - Welfare

HPA - Head, Planning and Administration

C for R - Commissioner for Rehabilitation

Revised Organisation Chart of Health and Welfare Bureau



Legend

- SHW - Secretary for Health and Welfare
- (HW) - (Health and Welfare)
- DS - Deputy Secretary
- PAS - Principal Assistant Secretary
- M - Medical
- ES - Elderly Services
- W - Welfare
- HPA -Head, Planning and Administration
- C for R - Commissioner for Rehabilitation
- Post under consideration

