

**For discussion on
14 November 2000**

Paper No. CB(2)207/00-01(02)

Home Affairs Panel

PROPOSED CREATION OF NEW POSTS IN THE HEALTH & WELFARE BUREAU TO SUPPORT THE WOMEN'S COMMISSION

INTRODUCTION

Members of the Panel are invited to note and comment on the proposal to create two permanent Directorate posts in the Health & Welfare Bureau :-

1 permanent post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade B
(D3) (\$127,900 - \$135,550); and

1 permanent post of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C
(D2) (\$116,650 - \$123,850)

PROBLEM

2. Policy responsibility for women's issues was transferred to the Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB) in May 2000 as a prelude to the setting up of a Women's Commission. As such, we need to establish a dedicated team in 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.

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, the Home Affairs Bureau (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

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.

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.

4. The Chief Secretary for Administration announced on 6 May 2000, the establishment of a Women's Commission under the purview of the Secretary for Health and Welfare, to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong.

5. 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, 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).

6. In addition, the Commission will :-

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.

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

Women's Division within HWB

7. A LegCo motion debate on the setting up of the Women's Commission was held on 1 June 2000. Most Members agreed :-

- there was a need to set up a central mechanism to promote women's

interests in Hong Kong;

- 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;
- 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
- the need for Government to attach importance to the Women's Commission and its work.

8. 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.

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

- clearly demonstrate to the community, the importance that Government attaches to women's issues; and

- 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

10. 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 with the following major duties:

- to support the Women's Commission in formulating a long term vision and strategy related to the development and advancement of women;
- to provide the necessary steer and leadership in taking forward strategies and programmes mapped out by the Women's Commission;
- to provide the necessary strategic guidance on gender mainstreaming within the Government and other new initiatives to be explored;
- to examine the gender impact of government policies that may have relevance to women, as appropriate ;

- to enhance co-ordination between relevant bureaux and other bodies in addressing women's concerns, e.g. delivery of services, organisation of educational and training programmes etc;
- to oversee implementation of CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action in Hong Kong; and
- to participate in discussions and negotiations at international fora.

11. The Deputy Secretary (Women) will lead the Women's Division in supporting the Women's Commission in developing and implementing an action programme based on an integrated strategy to be mapped out by the Women's Commission. The officer will also play a critical role in sensitizing the community to women's issues.

12. 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. As we have pointed out earlier, women's issues cut across a number of different major policy areas and will require extensive co-ordination between different government bureaux, departments and 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. The proposed ranking of D3 will give the post-holder sufficient standing to deal effectively with other government bureaux and departments. 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

13. 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 :-

- 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
- 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.

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

- 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 and ensure that, as appropriate, women's

perspectives are taken into account during the formulation of policies;

- 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;
- 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
- 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.

15. 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).

16. 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 to promote women's health, to prevent and eliminate violence against women, to

promote women's access to employment, continuing education and vocational re-training etc.

17. 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 in the provision of new improvement measures.

18. PAS(Women) will also be required to :-

- liaise with the relevant international bodies, 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;
- ensure that Hong Kong is represented in the international arena and arrange representation of Hong Kong at appropriate international meetings;
- follow up on the UN's and other international organisations' initiatives on women;
- participate in the review of the declarations and reservations on

CEDAW entered into by Hong Kong and preparation of reports every four years in respect of CEDAW implementation in Hong Kong;

- co-ordinate the collation of sex-disaggregated data so as to fulfil our international obligations, and set up a comprehensive database within the Government;
- devise and implement promotional / gender sensitive educational programmes to raise community awareness on gender-related matters and eliminate stereotypes and prejudices about women;
- plan and arrange gender-related training programmes for civil servants with a view to ensuring that women's perspectives are taken into account during policy formulation, the legislative process, and the implementation phase;
- develop and improve communications between local NGOs and the Women's Commission; and
- organise large-scale focus group meetings 2 or 3 times a year, as well as visits to service agencies etc.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

19 . The additional notional annual salary cost of the above proposal in

2000-01 at MID-POINT (NAMS) is:-

<u>New permanent posts</u> (director level)	<u>No. of Post</u>	<u>NAMS(\$)</u>
Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3)	1	1,580,400
Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2)	1	1,443,000

Total	2	3,023,400
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20. The additional full annual average staff cost of the proposal, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$5,072,184. In addition, the proposal will necessitate the creation of six non-directorate posts, comprising SAO, SEO and Personal Secretary I posts. The creation of these non-directorate posts will be dealt with in accordance with the normal procedures through the Departmental Establishment Committee mechanism. Details of these six non-directorate posts are set out in Enclosure 1.

21. The existing and revised organisation charts of HWB are at Enclosures 2 & 3.

22. Necessary supplementary PE provision will be provided in 2000-01 under delegated authority. We have included sufficient provision in the

2001-02 Estimates to meet the cost of this proposal.

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.

WAY FORWARD

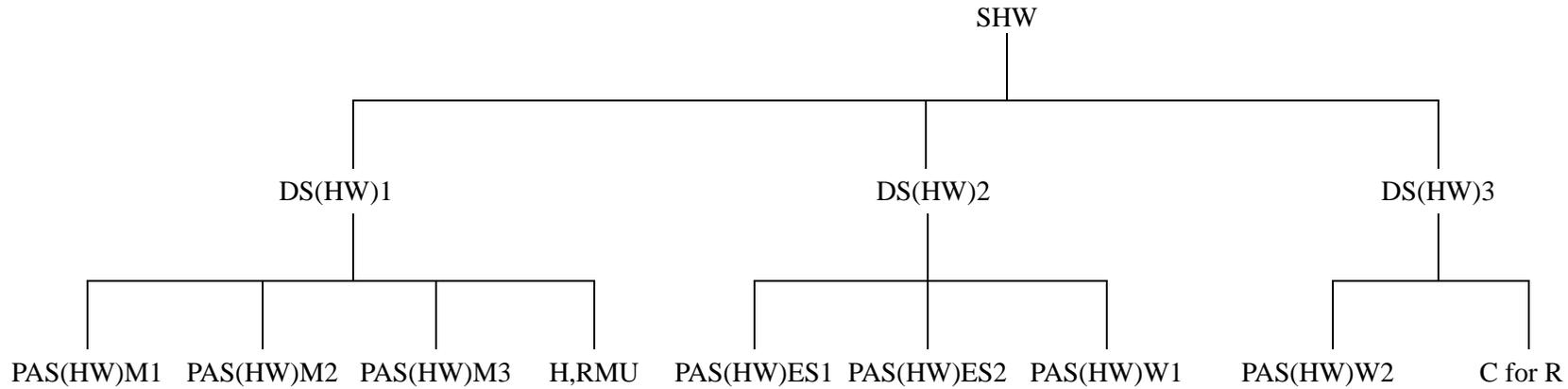
24. Approval will be sought from the Legislative Council's Establishment Sub-Committee and the Finance Committee for the creation of 2 permanent posts as well as an increase in NAMS value for the creation of six non-directorate posts in HWB on 20 December 2000 and 12 January 2001 respectively.

Health & Welfare Bureau
10 November 2000

List of Non-directorate Posts Proposed to be Created

<u>Rank</u>	<u>Nos</u>	<u>NAMS for Rank</u> <u>\$</u>	<u>Total NAMS</u>
Senior Administrative Officer	2	985,260	1,970,520
Senior Executive Officer	1	722,280	722,280
Personal Secretary I	3	291,840	875,520
	—		—
	6		3,568,320
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**Existing Organisation Chart of Health and Welfare Bureau
(as at October 2000)**



Note:

SHW – Secretary for Health and Welfare

(HW) –(Health and Welfare)

DS - Deputy Secretary

PAS – Principal Assistant Secretary

M – Medical

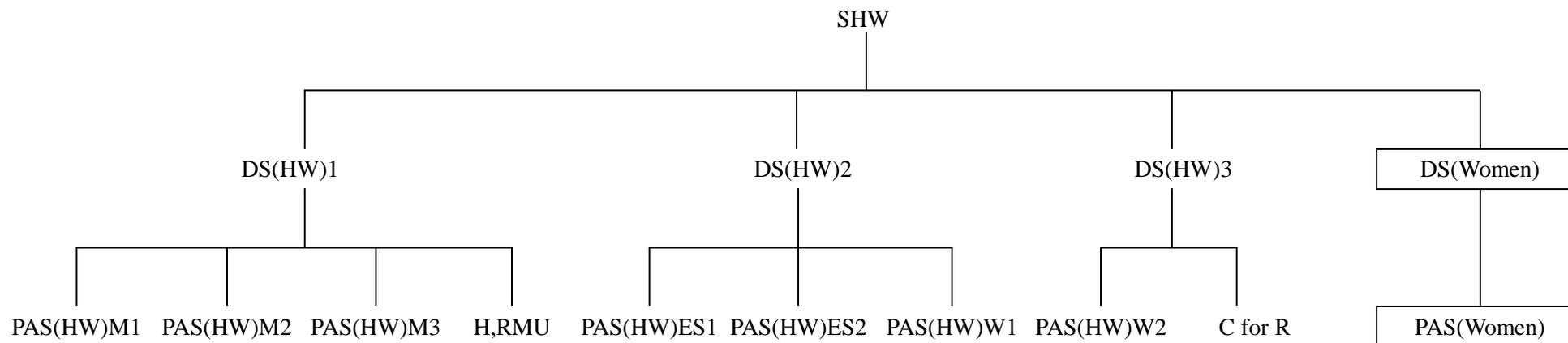
ES – Elderly Services

W – Welfare

H,RMU – Head, Resource Management Unit

C for R – Commissioner for Rehabilitation

Revised Organisation Chart of Health and Welfare Bureau



Note:

SHW – Secretary for Health and Welfare

(HW) –(Health and Welfare)

DS - Deputy Secretary

PAS – Principal Assistant Secretary

M – Medical

ES – Elderly Services

W – Welfare

H,RMU – Head, Resource Management Unit

C for R – Commissioner for Rehabilitation

▭ Post under consideration