

For information

**Legislative Council Subcommittee
to Study the Subject of Combating Poverty**

Study on Women in Poverty -

**Appointment of Women to
Public Sector Advisory and Statutory Bodies**

Purpose

This paper provides information on the participation of women in the work of public sector advisory and statutory bodies (ASBs).

Background

2. ASBs play an important role in Hong Kong's public policy-making structure and decision-making process. Women's participation in these bodies has, however, been relatively low. A balanced gender composition would enable the perspectives and concerns of both men and women to be fully reflected. It would also enable the Government to benefit from all-round advice and to gauge the views of both genders more extensively through ASBs. In January 2004, an initial working target of at least 25% for each gender (the 25% gender benchmark) has been set for the purpose of appointments to ASBs.

Appointment Policy

3. In making appointments to ASBs, the Government aims to secure the services of the most suitable persons to meet the requirements of the board or committee concerned. Each appointment is made on the basis of the merit of the individual concerned, taking into account the candidate's ability, expertise, experience, integrity and commitment to public service, and having due regard to the functions and nature of business of the board or committee concerned. As a matter of general principle, the composition of ASBs should broadly reflect the interests and views of the community, including those of the grassroots.

4. While the principle of appointment by merit should be upheld, we encourage bureaux and departments to take proactive measures to reach out, identify and cultivate women who are willing and able to contribute to community service. All submissions relating to the appointments to ASBs need to include a paragraph on gender consideration. The paragraph should highlight the current position of women's representation on the particular board or committee, and the impact of the proposed appointments on gender balance. Bureaux and departments have also been asked to encourage women to contribute their curriculum vitae to the Central Personality Index maintained by the Home Affairs Bureau, a central database housing the biodata of potential candidates for appointments to ASBs.

Women's Participation in ASBs

5. Participation of women in the work of ASBs has improved over the past two years. The working target of 25% for each gender was achieved in December 2005. As at February 2006, 1 259 (25.6%) of the 4 913 appointed non-official post holders were women, compared with a women participation rate of 22.3% (1 670 female post holders) in January 2004.

6. We shall continue to monitor progress in enhancing women's participation in ASBs, and report progress to the Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs. We shall also consider raising the gender benchmark in future, having regard to local experience and international practices.

Advice Sought

7. Members are invited to note on contents of this paper.

Home Affairs Bureau
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