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Hong Kong Association of Business and Professional Women
香港商務及專業婦女協會

28 June 2006

The Hon. Dr Fernando Cheung
Chairman
Panel on Welfare Services
Legislative Council
Hong Kong SAR
People's Republic of China

Dear Dr Cheung,

Services for victims of sexual violence

I write on behalf of the Hong Kong Association of Business and Professional Women to protest again, as in November 2005, at the government's decision not to support the one-stop rape crisis centre.

We feel it imperative that women should be able to use a one-stop service which we and other women's groups fought hard and long to establish in Hong Kong. We were delighted when RainLily opened in 2001. To discontinue this service would be retrogressive and entirely against the interests of rape victims. We find it impossible to understand the reasoning behind this decision.

To pass the service to the Family Service Centres means that social workers will be even more heavily burdened than they already are. Moreover we understand there are no further resources to fund the service which will only be available from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday to Friday. RainLily operates around the clock 365 days a year.

If the one-stop service is discontinued rape victims will once again be required to visit separately the hospital, the police station and the clinic, each time having to re-live their ordeal as they provide the necessary details. Is this civilised and humane treatment of a traumatised woman?

The government maintains its concern for the welfare of the family and the community in Hong Kong. A healthy society needs healthy women. It does not need women who are traumatised, who are often unwilling to seek help from generalised services, who require but cannot find the human support of an individual and dedicated rape counsellor.

We implore the government to re-consider its policy on this issue. We applaud the government initiative to facilitate the establishment of a one-stop service five years ago. Hong Kong is internationally one of the leaders in this field of women's health. Let us not abandon this hard-won position.

Yours sincerely,

Moyreen Tilbrook
Convener, Public Affairs Committee

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