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**Submission to the Bill Committee on Domestic Violence Amendment (2007) Bill**

**Response to Administration Proposal on Coverage of Cohabitation Relationships in domestic Violence Ordinance of May 08**

Fruits in Suits, HK (FinS), is writing to the Bills Committee on behalf of the GLBT (Gay, Lesbian, Bi-sexual, Transgender) community of Hong Kong. We welcome and encourage the government's proposal to introduce the amendment to the Domestic Violence Ordinance (DVO) to include cohabitation between persons of the same sex in its coverage.

What does the DVO bill aim to do and why should the cohabitation relationships in the GLBT community be included in its coverage?

The government states in 'The Coverage of Cohabitation Relationships in Domestic Violence Ordinance' that it does not recognize same sex relationships, unions or marriages, but these do exist in society and by not including same sex couples in this bill the administration disregards its responsibilities to protect not only their rights as obligated by the international human rights laws, but this exclusion has a trickle down effect in society that affects and involves family members and relatives, grandparents, children, cohabiting same sex couples as well as cohabitating opposite sex couples, that might be living in the same household and/or be in the cohabitation relationship(s).

We are talking about VIOLENCE, pure and simple. By not including Cohabitation Relationships, the government is stating that it is acceptable to inflict psychological and physical harm upon another human being since there is no recourse for the victim in the criminal courts to deal with a perpetrator's actions. Thus, the government gives the perpetrator a green light to victimize a cohabitating same sex or opposite sex partner.

How do we all benefit as a society by attempting to exclude a portion of that society from receiving the same protection, coverage and the same rights as the rest of society? WE DO NOT!

Fruits in Suits look forward to the addition of the amendment of Cohabitation Relationships to the DVO that will include and cover same sex couples. By doing so the government upholds the principle of non-discrimination based upon sexual orientation and the equality of all before the law.

Fruits in Suits Hong Kong  
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**Fruits in Suits, HK**, is a community based organization, providing a monthly GLBT professional networking event in Hong Kong. There are chapters in Sydney, Melbourne, Christchurch (NZ), Shanghai, Tokyo and London. FinS is celebrating its 4<sup>th</sup> successful year in providing a platform for the GBLT community with access to politics, culture and current events at the monthly gatherings. FinS is operated and run by an all volunteer staff.