

For discussion on
2 June 2000

Progress Report for the LegCo Panel on Home Affairs

Follow-up on concluding comments of the United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women on the initial report on the HKSAR under the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)

Introduction

The Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was extended to Hong Kong in October 1996. In accordance to Article 18 of the Convention, the initial report on the HKSAR under CEDAW was submitted to the United Nations as part of China's report in August 1998. The United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women ("the Committee") issued its concluding comments (at Annex A) after the hearing on the initial report which was held in February 1999. This paper set out the progress of implementing the recommendations in the concluding comments.

A. The adoption of a constitutional definition of discrimination

2. The Committee recommended the adoption of a constitutional definition of discrimination, both direct and indirect, to complement the prohibition of discrimination in civil law under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance.

3. As Article 8 of the Basic Law already provides that the laws previously in force in Hong Kong shall be maintained, the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance, apart from the provisions which were declared to be inconsistent with the Basic Law, continues to be in force in Hong Kong, including Article 1 which provides for the equal rights of men and women to the enjoyment of all rights set out in the Hong Kong Bill of

Rights. Besides, Article 3 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, on which Article 1 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights is based, is entrenched in our constitutional document by virtue of Article 39 of the Basic Law.

B. Central mechanism on women

4. The Government's announcement on 6 May 2000 of setting up a Women's Commission in 2000 to promote the well-being and interests of women is our commitment to implement the Committee's recommendation to set up a central mechanism on women. The Women's Commission will be a central body to oversee women's needs and to specifically address matters of concern to women in a comprehensive and systematic manner and will assume four main roles, i.e. advisory, liaison, research, and educational/promotional. The proposed terms of reference of the Commission is at Annex B.

5. The Commission will develop a long-term vision and improved strategy to deal with women issues. The Commission will promote improved co-operation and co-ordination in the delivery of women services. The Commission will also maintain close liaison with local women's groups and service agencies, and will provide non-officials (and non-governmental organizations) with a formal and high level forum for direct communication with the Government.

C. Women's right to participation in public life

6. Regarding the Committee's concerns on women's participation in public life, we have all along pursued the principle of equal opportunities for both sexes on relevant issues. The electoral system does not contain any structural obstacles to women's political participation. Both genders enjoy the same right to vote and to stand for election. A person's gender is not a criterion, either directly or indirectly, to qualify a person as an elector or as a candidate in elections to District Councils and the Legislative Council.

7. The general conduct of elections to Rural Committees is governed by their constitutions. The right to vote by women set out in

these constitutions is not subject to restrictions or conditions that do not apply to men or have a disproportionate impact on women. When overseeing the elections to the Rural Committees, District Officers, as the returning officers for these elections, help to ensure that the procedure for conducting such elections does not contravene the principle of equal opportunities between women and men in rural elections. Nevertheless, if the District Officer finds that members of the executive committee of a certain Rural Committee have been returned by a procedure in which women have not been able to participate on equal terms with men, the District Officer will, in accordance with the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, not issue a certificate recognising that body as a Rural Committee.

8. On appointment to Government advisory and statutory bodies, the Government's objective is to ensure that the most suitable candidates available are appointed. In considering appointments to these bodies, the Administration takes into account relevant factors relating to the need and the business of the bodies concerned, including personal abilities, expertise, experience, integrity and commitment to public service of the prospective candidates. Gender is not a relevant factor.

9. We will continue with our efforts to facilitate members of the community, irrespective of gender, to have equal opportunities to be appointed to these bodies. For example, we have uploaded the Curriculum Vitae Form onto the relevant homepage to facilitate those who are interested in serving on these bodies to indicate their interests. We have also actively invited members of various organizations in the community, including women's organizations, to indicate their interests in serving on these bodies.

D. Women's right to participation in high levels of decision-making

10. On the Committee's concerns on women's participation in high levels of decision making, the Government always seeks to ensure that appointment to the civil service is free of discrimination. In recruitment exercises, all candidates who meet the basic entry requirements are considered on an equal basis. Promotion is decided on the basis of performance, ability, experience, character and any qualifications prescribed for the promotion rank. Promotion exercises are

conducted on a fair basis, irrespective of the gender of eligible officers. In this regard, we do not consider that there is a need to institute any quota system for appointment to the civil service. To do so would in fact go against the principle of selecting the best person for the job, irrespective of gender.

11. The same principle is also adopted for judicial appointments. The qualification for such appointment is stipulated in law. Candidates are assessed on the basis of their professional competence in the law, judicial temperament and personal conduct. Gender is not a factor for consideration.

E. Domestic Violence

12. Efforts have been made to enhance services for victims of domestic violence and access to a wide range of social welfare and medical services is available. Prompt medical treatment at A&E Departments of public hospitals is available to victims of abuse. The 65 Family Service Centres operated by the Social Welfare Department and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) provide counselling and referral services. Other support services available include telephone hotlines, compassionate rehousing and child care services. There are at present 3 refuges for victims of domestic violence which provide 120 places for battered spouses and children in need. Those in need of financial assistance can apply for Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) and charitable trust funds. Legal aid is available to eligible applicants to seek court injunctions under the Domestic Violence Ordinance, as well as for applying for divorce, child custody and maintenance payments.

13. A number of improvement measures on services for battered spouses have been implemented by the Working Group on Battered Spouse, which was established in 1995 to strengthen co-ordination amongst Government departments and NGOs in handling the problem of spouse battering. These include speedier processing of conditional tenancy cases by the Housing Department and the Social Welfare Department, conducting multi-disciplinary seminars for relevant professionals, stepping up training for front-line Social Welfare

Department staff and the Police in handling battered spouse cases, and issue of internal guidelines (such as Checklist for Good Practice on Compassionate Rehousing) to equip staff with the knowledge and skills to handle battered spouse cases.

14. The Working Group has recently produced a set of Multi-disciplinary Guidelines on Handling of Battered Spouse Cases which have been designed to streamline handling procedures. It has also set up a Central Information System on Battered Spouse Cases to collect basic statistics on battered spouse cases to facilitate service planning. A series of public education activities has also been launched to arouse public awareness on the battered spouse problem.

15. Other improvements implemented in response to the needs of the battered spouses include the provision of a temporary relief service in one centre, and the introduction of 24-hour admission in all three refuges. The Social Welfare Department is also expanding its the Child Protective Services Unit into 5 “Family and Child Protective Services Units” (one in each Social Welfare Department region) to provide strengthened and co-ordinated services to victims of domestic violence. We will seek funding from the Finance Committee shortly to increase manpower in these units as well as those in each refuge, under the Promoting Self-reliance Strategy.

F. Marital rape

16. The Committee expressed concern over the issue of marital rape. Under section 118 of the Crimes Ordinance, a man commits rape if he has unlawful sexual intercourse with a women who at the time of the intercourse does not consent to it. The Department of Justice has advised that a husband may be guilty of raping his wife, if on the evidence of the case, his wife does not consent to the sexual intercourse. All front-line police officers are instructed to handle marital rape cases according to the law.

17. However, since some commentators consider that the law is not entirely clear on this point, the Government is currently examining whether a legislative amendment should be introduced to put the matter

beyond doubt. The Administration is in no doubt that marital rape should be punished. We will also take various measures, in cooperation with NGOs and concerned parties, to promote public understanding that marital rape is covered under existing law.

G. Women sex workers

18. Legislation is in place and enforced to protect women sex workers. While prostitution itself is not an offence in Hong Kong, our law aims to tackle those who organize and exploit prostitution but not the prostitutes themselves.

19. There are specific provisions prohibiting criminal activities related to the sex trade under the Crimes Ordinance. These criminal activities include, among other things, trafficking in persons to or from Hong Kong, control over persons for the purpose of unlawful sexual intercourse or prostitution, causing prostitution, living on the earnings of prostitution, keeping a vice establishment, and soliciting for an immoral purpose. The Police enforce the law fairly without discrimination against women.

20. On the links between the presence of migrant women, a regulatory approach to prostitution and trafficking in women, migrant workers are subject to strict immigration control. The Police and Immigration Department take joint enforcement action against trafficking in women for prostitution. In addition, under section 129(1) of the Crimes Ordinance, a person who takes part in bringing another person into, or taking another person out of Hong Kong for the purpose of prostitution shall be guilty of an offence and shall be liable on conviction on indictment to imprisonment for 10 years.

21. For women sex workers, free treatment and counselling service for sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) and HIV infection are also provided. Through outreach teams of the Anti-Venereal Disease Office and social networks of attending sex workers, they are encouraged to seek treatment or advice from STD/HIV clinics where they are given priority over other clients for consultation. Condoms are also freely distributed. In case of need, recommendations for other services such as

social work counselling and methadone treatment will be given. In addition, the Government supports non-governmental organizations (such as Action for Reachout) through funding, training and technical support to provide an outreach AIDS prevention and education service.

H. Women migrant workers

22. Women migrant workers enjoy the same rights, benefits and protection under labour legislation as local employees. They also enjoy safeguards against abuse and violence like other workers in the HKSAR in accordance with the law. Foreign domestic helpers, who are mostly women and form the majority of foreign workers, are entitled to a minimum allowable monthly wage as well as free food, accommodation, medical treatment and passage on top of their statutory benefits. They are also informed of the channels of complaint against their employers.

I. Educational specialization of women and men

23. The Committee also expressed concern about the degree of segregation on the educational specialization of women and men. At the tertiary level, there is no discrimination on grounds of gender in the enjoyment of the right to tertiary education and training. The eight University Grants Committee (UGC)-funded institutions admit students on the basis of their performance in academic and non-academic areas, including sports, music, public service, etc.. Admission is based on personal choice and individual merit.

J. Women in the higher level of teaching professions

24. All tertiary institutions in Hong Kong aim at appointing the best qualified persons available to their academic posts. To achieve this objective, academic staff of UGC-funded institutions are recruited and promoted on the basis of their academic achievements, performance in teaching and teaching-related activities, research and scholarship. They adhere strictly to the principles of equal opportunities and non-discrimination and gender has never been, and will never be, a consideration by the institutions in the appointment and promotion of academic staff.

K. Gender stereotypes

25. It has always been Government's policy to provide equal educational opportunities to students of both sexes and we disagree with any practice which reinforces gender stereotyping. From time to time, the Education Department issues circulars and organizes workshops reminding schools to ensure that all students are afforded equal learning opportunities. When conducting school inspections or visits, officers of the Department, will see if any discrimination exists in the schools arrangements for curriculum planning and streaming of students. If discrimination is found, the Department will urge schools to rectify the situation.

L. Gender studies programme

26. UGC-funded institutions regard gender studies (including women studies) as an integral part of academic research, and have conducted many studies in this area. It is estimated that about \$32m has been allocated to these projects over the past three years. Some examples of these studies include: climacteric in Chinese women: symptoms, hormone replacement therapy and osteoporosis; gender in the Hong Kong Civil Service; and "Are Gender Differences in Academic Achievements of Hong Kong Students Disappearing?"

27. In addition, the University of Hong Kong established a Women's Studies Research Centre in 1995. The Chinese University of Hong Kong launched a Gender Research Programme in 1985 and established a Gender Studies Programme in 1997. The former Lingnan College also hosted an International Conference on Feminist Studies in Modern Literature in Chinese in 1996.

M. Wage discrepancies between men and women

28. While we recognise the Committee's concerns that earnings of women are generally lower than men and that women occupy comparatively a larger proportion of the lower income bracket, we note that the problems are not due to insufficient job opportunities for women

as compared with men nor the lack of a statutory minimum wage. The income disparity between men and women may have been caused by multiple factors such as differences in education attainment levels, qualifications, nature of jobs taken as well as socio-cultural factors such as family commitments and career aspiration.

29. The unemployment rates and underemployment rates of women have generally been lower than those of men in recent years. Under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance, it is unlawful for an employer to discriminate against women in recruitment and on employment terms. An aggrieved employee may apply to the Court for damages in respect of any discriminatory act. Moreover, the Labour Department has been promoting equal opportunities in employment actively through a number of activities. These include highlighting the principle of equal opportunities in employment and equal pay for equal work in the "Guide to Good People Management Practices" distributed by the Labour Department to employers, employers' associations, employees and trade unions. Employers who register vacancy orders with Labour Department's Job Centres are not allowed to specify any restrictive requirements including sex, age or family status.

30. Remuneration for local employees is determined by individual agreements between employers and the employees and are subject to the market forces of labour supply and demand. The current wage-setting mechanism has served the economy well and the Government does not consider it appropriate to introduce any form of statutory minimum wage in the HKSAR.

N. Equal pay for work of equal value

31. The principle of equal pay for work of equal value is a relatively new concept in Hong Kong. While we support proposals that enable the realization of equality, we recognize that compliance with this principle might incur contrived requirement which should be examined carefully and critically. We are aware of difficulties some employers might face in realizing this principle, which include the development of job evaluation methodology, job classification and wage fixing system. Therefore, in considering the way forward in implementing the principle,

we must carefully examine its implications and assess whether employers are provided with the necessary guidance.

32. In March 2000, the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) organised a Conference on Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value to tap the views and experiences of specialists, academics and concerned parties on the concept of equal pay for work of equal value and to promote public awareness on this issue. Subsequently, a Task Force on Equal Pay for Work of Equal Value has been established with the objective of promoting this principle and recommending ways to progressively implement this principle in the HKSAR. The Task Force comprises representatives from the EOC, government bureaux and departments, academics and professionals. We are supportive of the EOC's efforts to encourage implementation of this principle.

O. Reservations and Declarations

33. As the reservations and declarations to the Convention touch on a wide range of policy areas, we are continued carefully considering and reviewing their applicability to the HKSAR.

Health and Welfare Bureau
May 2000

**Concluding Comments of the Committee on the
Elimination of Discrimination against Women
on the Initial Report on the HKSAR under
the Convention on the Elimination of
All Forms of Discrimination against Women**

**[Extracted from the report of the
Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
on the Twentieth session (19 January –5 February 1999)]**

China

251. The Committee considered the combined third and fourth periodic reports of China (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4 and Corr.1 and Add.1 and 2) at its 419th to 421st meetings, on 1 and 2 February 1999 (see CEDAW/C/SR.419-421). Addendum 2 to the third and fourth periodic reports covered the implementation of the Convention by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, over which the Government of China resumed the exercise of sovereignty on 1 July 1997.

[paragraphs 252-257 deal with the third and fourth periodic report of China]

258. The representative of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, in introducing the initial report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (CEDAW/C/CHN/3-4/Add. 2), noted that the Government of China had resumed the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong, with effect from 1 July 1997, under the principle of "one country, two systems". The Convention had been extended to Hong Kong on 14 October 1996 and had remained in force since the reunification on 1 July 1997.

259. The representative noted that the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, the constitutional document of the Region, included a list of fundamental rights and freedoms of residents and other persons in the Region, applicable to women and men. The Basic Law also provided for the continuing application of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance.

260. The representative explained that in the period between 1996 and 1998, a legislative review had been undertaken leading to the enactment of a number of amendments and ordinances to eliminate discriminatory or unfair treatment of

women. The rights of women were also protected by legislation that included the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (1995) and the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (1997). The Equal Opportunities Commission, an independent statutory organization established in 1996, was responsible for the elimination of discrimination and the promotion of equality between women and men, for enforcing the anti-discrimination ordinances and for handling complaints.

261. The Government's Policy Groups, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration and attended by senior representatives of the policy bureaux, ensured coordination among the various bureaux on all matters concerning women.

262. The improvement of the position and status of women in Hong Kong was apparent in different areas. In 1997, women accounted for 39 per cent of the total working population and made up 33 per cent of the civil service. Women also occupied two out of the three highest ranking government posts. Almost a third of the members of the Executive Council were women. Women made up between 21 and 36 per cent of the legal, accounting and medical professions.

263. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was committed to providing equal access to and opportunities in education, which included nine years of free and universal basic education. More than half the university graduates in 1997 were women.

264. Women's health remained a government priority, and a range of health-care services was available to women, including with regard to reproductive health. Hong Kong's infant mortality rate was among the lowest in the world, and women's life expectancy was 82.2 years.

265. The representative noted that China had entered seven reservations and declarations in respect of the application of the Convention to Hong Kong. These would be kept under review.

266. In conclusion, the representative welcomed the Committee's views and suggestions in support of the full implementation of the Convention.

Concluding comments by the Committee: China

Introduction

[paragraphs 267-268 deal with the third and fourth periodic report of China]

269. The Committee commends the Government for having sent a high-level and large delegation that included specialists from different departments of the

central Government, as well as the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, headed by the Permanent Representative of China to the United Nations.

[paragraphs 270-307 deal with the third and fourth periodic report of China]

**Concluding comments by the Committee:
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

Introduction

308. The Committee expresses its appreciation to the Government of China, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, for submitting, in a timely manner, an extremely well-structured and informative initial report. It commends the Government on its oral presentation of the report and for the detailed oral and written replies, including statistical information, to the questions posed by the Committee.

309. The Committee notes that there are many non-governmental organizations working actively in Hong Kong for the full implementation of the Convention.

Positive aspects

310. The Committee commends the Government of China for the continuing applicability of the Convention to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region following resumption of Chinese sovereignty over Hong Kong on 1 July 1997 under the principle of "one country, two systems". It notes that the Government has disseminated the Convention, including through the Internet.

311. The Committee welcomes the guarantee of human rights and fundamental freedoms of women and men, contained in the Hong Kong Basic Law and in the Bill of Rights Ordinance. It also notes the recent adoption and revision of laws to eliminate discrimination against women. The Committee commends, in particular, the Sex Discrimination Ordinance of 1995 and the establishment thereunder of the Equal Opportunities Commission as an independent statutory body and with adequate resources, responsible for addressing complaints on discrimination and promoting gender equality through public education and other means.

312. The Committee welcomes the recent judicial decision which has enforced the right to non-discrimination by recognizing that a non-marital child can claim residence in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on the basis of the residence rights of either her mother or father.

313. The Committee expresses satisfaction at the high level of literacy and

the universal system of free education.

Factors and difficulties affecting the implementation of the Convention

314. The Committee notes with concern that China has entered seven reservations and declarations in respect of the provisions of the Convention as applied to Hong Kong. Of particular concern is the reservation exempting "the affairs of religious denominations or orders" from the scope of the Convention.

Principal areas of concern and recommendations

315. The Committee expresses concern that the Basic Law does not contain a prohibition of discrimination against women.

316. The Committee recommends the adoption of a constitutional definition of discrimination, both direct and indirect, to complement the prohibition of discrimination in civil law under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance.

317. Notwithstanding the important mandate and valuable work of the Equal Opportunities Commission, the Committee is concerned about the absence of a governmental mechanism for the advancement of women in Hong Kong charged with the pro-active development of policy and long-term strategies on gender equality.

318. The Committee recommends that the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region establish a high-level central mechanism with appropriate powers and resources to develop and coordinate a women-focused policy and long-term strategy to ensure effective implementation of the Convention.

319. The Committee expresses concern that the electoral system of the Region contains structural obstacles to the equal political participation of women, which is indirect discrimination against women, especially with respect to the functional constituencies.

320. The Committee urges the Government to take all measures necessary to ensure the equal representation of women in all constituencies, including rural committees, on the basis of the principle of universal and equal suffrage, in accordance with the Committee's general recommendation 23.

321. The Committee notes the low representation of women in governmental advisory boards and statutory committees, as well as in the civil service and the judiciary.

322. The Committee recommends that the Government make use of affirmative action and temporary special measures in accordance with article 4, paragraph 1, of the Convention to realize women's right to participation in all areas of public life and particularly at high levels of decision-making. It also recommends that the Government study the experience of other countries in using quotas, timetables for achieving specified goals and databases on women candidates, with a view to applying them in Hong Kong.

323. The Committee is concerned that the Domestic Violence Ordinance applies only to physical abuse in marital relations, and that it does not provide for counselling and treatment of offenders. It also notes with concern that the report does not contain information on rape and that marital rape is not considered a criminal offence in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

324. The Committee recommends that the Government enhance services for survivors of domestic violence, including domestic workers, with a view to their empowerment and rehabilitation, including through psychological counselling, legal aid and temporary shelter and appropriate health services. The Committee also urges the amendment of existing legislation to include marital rape as a criminal offence. It requests the Government to provide information on sexual crimes, including rape and marital rape, in its next report under article 18 of the Convention.

325. The Committee notes that while prostitution itself is not unlawful, provisions to ensure the health and safety of sex workers are unclear, and there may be discrimination against women in the enforcement of related crimes.

326. The Committee recommends that adequate regulations to protect women sex workers be put in place and enforced. It also recommends that the Government monitor the links between the presence of migrant women, a regulatory approach to prostitution and trafficking in women.

327. The Committee commends efforts to develop a standard labour contract for migrant workers with provision for minimum wages, but it is concerned that these workers can be exposed to abuse and custodial violence.

328. The Committee recommends that the Government monitor and take action to protect women migrant workers from abuse and violence, as well as to prevent such violence.

329. Noting that over 50 per cent of recent university graduates were women, the Committee is nevertheless concerned at the degree of segregation in the educational specialization of women and men and at the low percentage of women in

the higher levels of the teaching professions and academia.

330. The Committee recommends the adoption of temporary special measures aimed at increasing de facto equality between women and men within the meaning of article 4, paragraph 1 of the Convention, to increase the number of women in non-traditional areas of education, especially in science, technology and engineering, and to promote women from junior and auxiliary positions in teaching and academia to senior positions. It urges the Government to address the perpetuation of gender stereotypes and to allocate adequate resources for gender studies programmes.

331. Noting the growing participation of women in the formal economy and the low level of unemployment of women, the Committee is nonetheless concerned about the large discrepancies in wages earned by men and women. The Committee is also concerned about the highly disproportionate number of women in the lowest wage levels, especially given the absence of minimum wage laws. The Committee is also concerned that the contraction of the manufacturing sector affects particularly low-skilled women.

332. The Committee recommends that the principle of equal pay for work of equal value be included in relevant legislation and that criteria be established to determine the measure of equal value in a largely gender-segregated labour market.

333. The Committee encourages the Government to review regularly the reservations entered to the Convention. It urges the Government to amend all laws that are incompatible with the Convention, including those relating to immigration and to pension schemes, with a view to removing the relevant reservations. In particular, it encourages the Government to eliminate discrimination against indigenous women following its review of the small house policy. The Committee also encourages the Government to re-examine the reservation relating to the favourable treatment of women in respect of labour law protection of pregnancy and maternity, which might well be in accordance with articles 4, paragraph 1, and 11, paragraph 2, of the Convention, as well as that regarding religious denominations.

334. The Committee invites the Government to hold public consultations with non-governmental organizations in the process of the implementation of the Convention and when preparing its second periodic report.

335. The Committee requests the Government of China and the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to provide information addressing the concerns raised in the present concluding comments in the next periodic report required under article 18 of the Convention.

336. The Committee requests the wide dissemination in China and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the present concluding comments, in order to make the people of China and the Region, and particularly its government administrators, politicians and senior level cadres aware of the steps that had been taken to ensure de jure and de facto equality for women and further steps that are required in that regard. It also requests the Government to continue to disseminate widely, and in particular to women's and human rights organizations, the Convention, the Committee's general recommendations and the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action.

**PROPOSED 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 longer term vision and strategies related to the development and advancement of women;
- (b) advise the Government on policies and initiatives which are of concern to women;
- (c) keep under review, in the light of women's needs, services delivered within and outside the Government; to identify priority areas for action; and to advise on the development of new or improved services; and
- (d) initiate surveys and research studies on women's issues and organise educational and promotional activities.