

**For Discussion  
on 15 October 2007**

**Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs**

**Policy Initiatives of  
Labour and Welfare Bureau  
in Promoting Well-being and Interests of Women**

**Purpose**

The Chief Executive announced his 2007-08 Policy Address on 10 October 2007. This note sets out the initiatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau in promoting the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong.

**2007-08 Policy Address and Policy Agenda**

2. In 2007-08, the Administration will continue to provide support to the Women's Commission (WoC) in promoting the well-being and interests of women through its three-pronged strategy – viz, the provision of an enabling environment, empowerment of women and public education.

***Provision of an Enabling Environment***

**Gender Mainstreaming**

3. To enable women to fully realise their potentials, an enabling environment is instrumental, whereby women and men have equitable access to, and benefit from, society's resources and opportunities. Since 2002, the Administration has, with the assistance of the WoC, applied the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist to 24 policy or programme areas<sup>1</sup>. The Checklist is an analytical tool developed by the WoC to assist the Government officers in incorporating, in a more systematic way, the gender perspectives in the policy formulation and programme development processes. In 2007-08, the Administration will continue to introduce the

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<sup>1</sup> Including five new programme areas started in 2006-07, viz. District Council Review 2006, Community Rehabilitation Day Centre Services, review of the services for victims of sexual violence, operation of the Multi-Purpose Crisis and Support Centre and the publicity and public education programme of the Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority.

use of the Gender Mainstreaming Checklist in more policy areas on an incremental basis.

4. To help promote the concept of gender mainstreaming in the Government, all bureaux and departments have since 2003 designated their own Gender Focal Points (in most cases, a directorate officer) to serve as the resource person for his/her organisation. A Core Group of Gender Focal Points was set up in late 2005 to devise plans to further promote gender mainstreaming within the Government. On the advice of the Core Group, we have strengthened training to civil servants to raise their awareness of gender-related issues and the concept of gender mainstreaming. To date, over 2 700 civil servants of various grades and ranks have attended various classroom gender-related training. We also launched in 2006 a web-training course and produced a self-learning CD-ROM for civil servants on gender, race, disability and equal opportunity in collaboration with Civil Service Training and Development Institute, Home Affairs Bureau and Equal Opportunities Commission. We will continue to provide more training on gender-related issues to different levels of civil servants, from senior officials involved in the formulation of policies to frontline colleagues who are involved in the delivery of the services. On the advice of the Core Group, we are also planning to develop a web-portal on gender awareness and gender mainstreaming, and produce a leaflet for handy reference by all civil servants.

5. To further promote gender mainstreaming in the community, in the past year, we supported the WoC in arranging a number of exchange sessions with members of the District Council and visited a number of districts to share the Administration's experience in implementing gender mainstreaming. Efforts will continue on this front.

#### Family-friendly Employment Policies and Practices

6. To facilitate women to participate fully in the economy, in decision-making and in all other aspects of life, the WoC considers it crucial that women and men can share out family responsibilities whilst achieving at the same time a better balance between work, family and life. To that end, we have supported the WoC in promoting the wider adoption of family-friendly employment policies and practices (FEPP) in Hong Kong through partnership with the Labour Department and other stakeholders. We have supported the WoC in producing a promotional leaflet on FEPP for distribution to all sectors, including the business sector, and in co-organising a seminar on FEPP with the Labour Department and other stakeholders in

June 2007. In the coming year, we will assist the WoC in collecting good practices of FEPP to facilitate experience sharing and further promotion across different sectors of the community.

### *Empowerment of Women*

#### The Capacity Building Mileage Programme

7. Launched in March 2004, the Capacity Building Mileage Programme (CBMP) is a key initiative of the WoC in empowering women. The CBMP is implemented jointly by the Open University of Hong Kong, the Commercial Radio and nearly 80 partnering women's groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

8. The CBMP is a flexible learning programme tailored to the needs and interests of women. It is mainly delivered through radio broadcasting and supplemented by optional learning activities and face-to-face courses delivered by NGOs. The courses include subjects such as managing interpersonal relationships, finance management, health and other practical issues in daily life. Since its launch, it has encouraged women of different backgrounds and educational levels to pursue life-long learning and self-development. Up to July 2007, the cumulative number of enrolments exceeded 18,000 and there is also a large network of audience reached through the radio programmes. Feedback from students is that they have benefited from the programme in terms of increased interests in learning, and enhanced confidence and knowledge in resolving problems in daily life.

9. The CBMP was first operated on a pilot basis for three years with funding support from the Lotteries Fund. In full recognition of the positive outcomes of the CBMP, the Administration has since March 2007 provided funding to support the continued operation of the CBMP. We will continue to work closely with the WoC and other collaborators to further enhance the CBMP.

#### Women's Safety

10. In January 2006, the WoC issued a report on "Women's Safety in Hong Kong: Eliminating Domestic Violence", setting out a multi-dimensional strategy to eliminate domestic violence and putting forward 21 recommendations. The Administration has responded positively to the recommendations of the WoC, including reviewing the

Domestic Violence Ordinance, strengthening services and support for victims of domestic violence, improving the handling of domestic violence cases by the Police and introduction of a pilot Batterer Intervention Programme. The Administration will continue to support the WoC in implementing the multi-dimensional strategy in tackling domestic violence in partnership with the stakeholder groups.

### Nurturing Caring Family

11. The Administration has supported the WoC in taking forward its initiatives to promote nurturing of caring families. Building on the results of its study on “the core life values for parenting education” which was released in September 2006, the WoC has initiated two pilot projects on quality parenting in collaboration with the Kwun Tong District Council and the North District Council. The pilot projects aim to promote quality parenting education and core life values for instilling in the younger generation. The pilot also aims to establish a support network for parents to share experience and offer mutual help on parenting issues. The two pilot projects have been in good progress and we will continue to support the WoC in further promoting quality parenting.

### ***Public Education***

12. The Administration and the WoC continue to work together to organise public education and publicity programmes to reduce gender prejudice and stereotype, as well as to raise public awareness of women-related issues. In connection with the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the HKSAR, we have supported the WoC in organising a series of activities, collectively named “Colourful Lives of Women” (華彩半邊天), to give recognition to the contribution of all sectors, in particular women’s groups, in empowering women. These included an exhibition on “Empowerment of Women and Women in Art” held in March 2007 to highlight the different roles and achievements of modern Hong Kong women in the society, and a series of short TV programmes to introduce the achievements and contributions of local women’s groups and NGOs in helping women to build up self-confidence and independence. The TV series was broadcast once a week consecutively over a six-month period.

13. As a finale to the series of events, the WoC will organise a large scale exhibition on the “Development and Contribution of Hong Kong Women” in November 2007 to showcase the development of women in

Hong Kong in the past century and to pay tribute to women's contribution to the society. The Exhibition will showcase significant experiences of women in Hong Kong during different periods of time, particularly in the areas of work, family, education and participation in the society. The Administration will fully support the WoC in taking forward this important initiative.

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
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