

## MESSAGE

Women's contribution to the development of Hong Kong in terms of its economic, political and social life has been increasingly significant with the passage of time. Today, 54% of our undergraduates are women. And about 43% of our workforce, or some 1.5 million people, are women. Many of them are successful in their trade or professions and are upwardly mobile. These statistics, of course, do not take into account women's considerable contribution to the community through unremunerated work. In short, women are now active in various sectors serving the community, and women's role is no longer confined to home-making. Hong Kong women, as a Chinese saying puts it, shoulder half of the sky.



Despite the considerable progress made, there remain a number of obstacles to women's further development and enhancement, e.g. pressures faced by single mothers, training and re-training needs, employment problems, adaptation problems faced by newly arrived women and family violence. Preconceived notions and stereotypes of women, and insensitivities of gender roles and biases against women also create barriers to women's rightful participation in economic and social life. These issues straddle many policy areas. It is therefore important that a holistic view of various policies and initiatives that impinge on women is taken.

The establishment of the Women's Commission is a significant milestone in our drive to promote the advancement of women in Hong Kong. The Commission is a central mechanism tasked to advise the Administration on a strategic overview of women's issues and the development of a long-term vision and strategies on advancement of women. Right from its inception, the Commission has worked earnestly in researching and deliberating on gender issues and in providing advice and comments on a number of government initiatives and policies from the women's perspectives. Commission members have visited local women's groups and service agencies to collect views and concerns on women-related issues. The

Commission has set itself the mission to enable women to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life. Three priority areas of action, namely gender mainstreaming, empowerment of women and public education, have been identified. We have been working jointly with the Commission in devising specific action plans and programmes on these three areas. The initial programmes are set out in this booklet.

Many initiatives in this booklet, in particular those related to empowerment of women and public education, cannot achieve the desired results with government efforts alone. Sustainable progress can only be made by concerted efforts of all stakeholders. We look forward to working together with the Women's Commission and the community in facilitating the development of women's potential in full.

I welcome your comments and suggestions.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dr E K Yeoh', with a horizontal line underneath.

(Dr E K Yeoh)  
Secretary for Health and Welfare

**Promote the Well-being and  
Interests of Women**

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**Policy Objective  
and  
Key Result Areas**

# PROMOTE THE WELL-BEING AND INTERESTS OF WOMEN

Our Policy Objective is to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong.

To demonstrate our commitment to promote the advancement of women and sincerity in handling women's issues, we established the Women's Commission (WoC) in January 2001. The WoC is a high-level central mechanism which is tasked to advise the Administration on a strategic overview of women's issues and to develop a long-term vision and strategies for the development and advancement of women. The mission of the WoC is to enable women to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life. With the advice of the WoC, we will ensure that women's perspectives are factored in during the formulation of policies, where applicable, and that women will be better equipped to meet various challenges in life. In addition, we will continue our efforts in improving the delivery of services for women by reviewing existing services and recommending improvements. We will also promote public awareness of women's issues by organising training, educational and promotional activities.

## Overall Targets

Our targets this year in pursuing this Policy Objective are –

- to evaluate a pilot of incorporating gender consideration (i.e. gender mainstreaming) in the process of formulation and implementation of certain government policies and legislation
- to enhance the awareness and understanding of the public on women's issues
- to enhance gender sensitivity of the Administration and to improve the current delivery of women's services to better serve women's needs

- to improve communication between the relevant non-governmental organisations and the Government and to strengthen liaison with relevant international bodies
- to identify specific needs and concerns of women through surveys and researches

## Progress

Women's issues impinge on a wide range of policy areas. With the establishment of the WoC in January 2001, we are able to better promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong. Instead of individual bureaux and departments handling women's issues separately, a strategic overview is being developed to provide the broad framework within which women's issues can be addressed. As a high-level central mechanism, the WoC seeks to identify all women's needs and to address all matters of concern to women in a holistic manner. To fulfil its mission, the WoC has identified three priority areas of action, namely, gender mainstreaming, public education and empowerment of women.

Since its establishment, the WoC has researched and, deliberated on, gender issues, their relevance in the Hong Kong context and identified priority areas for action. The WoC has also been visiting local women's groups and service agencies to exchange views on women-related issues. It has also discussed with the Census and Statistics Department regarding the collection of sex-disaggregated data. A number of the WoC's suggestions have already been reflected in the gender statistics report released in August 2001. Furthermore, the WoC has initially reviewed services for women on welfare, education, health and employment, and advised on possible improvements. It has also been consulted on a number of new policy initiatives including the Health Care Reform, Law Reform Commission's Report on Stalking and the Family Welfare Services Review. The need to pay particular attention to women's needs and barriers faced by them in the planning and implementation of various services have been stressed. The Health and Welfare Bureau is responsible for policies relating to women, provision of secretariat and administrative support to the WoC, as well as undertaking implementation responsibilities relating to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

We also achieved the following progress in our four Key Result Areas (KRAs).

**1. Develop a long-term vision and strategies related to the development and advancement of women**

We have made good progress towards the development of a long-term vision and strategies related to the development and advancement of women. We established the WoC in January 2001. The WoC is a high-level central mechanism tasked to advise Government on a strategic overview of women's issues and the development of a long-term vision and strategies on advancement of women. The WoC has researched and, deliberated on, gender issues and has set itself the mission to enable women to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life. Three priority areas of action, namely gender mainstreaming, public education and empowerment of women, have been identified. Initial programmes to take forward work in these three areas are set out in this booklet.

**2. Facilitate women to participate more fully in the community**

We are concerned that, despite progress in the last decade, women in Hong Kong still experience difficulties in trying to participate in the economic and public life of the community. Five priority areas for empowerment of women, namely health, education and training, economic well-being, safety at home and in public places, and women's participation in political and societal affairs, have been identified. Home Affairs Bureau has been invited to consider measures to promote women's participation in advisory and statutory bodies. To have a more thorough understanding on factors hindering women's participation in societal affairs, a survey will be conducted in the fourth quarter of 2001. Results are expected in early 2002.

**3. Identify women's needs and improve women's services**

Initial reviews on existing services for women on welfare, health, education, training and re-training and employment have been conducted since the inception of the WoC. The WoC has emphasised on the need to take into account women's specific needs and concerns in formulating and implementing the services concerned. The WoC has also visited about 30 local women's groups and service agencies

to solicit their views on women-related issues. An Open Forum was held in July 2001 to get feedback from the public on the WoC's future direction of work. A report on "Women and Men in Hong Kong Key Statistics" was released in August 2001. We have commissioned the Census and Statistics Department to conduct a survey on time use by women in end-2001.

#### **4. Raise public awareness on women and gender-related issues and reduce gender stereotyping**

We have successfully organised the first seminar on gender-related issues in February 2001 for members of the WoC and over 100 civil servants to enhance their understanding and awareness on women's issues. Gender-related training courses have been offered to Social Work Assistants and Social Work Officers in 2001. We will continue to organise tailor-made training sessions to other groups of staff in the Civil Service in 2002. A special task force has been set up under the WoC to develop specific public education programmes to enhance the community's awareness on gender-related issues.

Progress on each previously announced initiative under the above KRAs is set out in the "Detailed Progress" section of this report.

### **Looking Forward**

To achieve our overall targets this year, we will undertake the following initiatives and targets under each of the KRAs for the coming year.

# 1

## **Develop and implement a long-term vision and strategies related to the development and advancement of women**

We have accorded a high priority to women-related matters. The establishment of the Women's Commission (WoC) demonstrates our determination to factor in women's perspectives during policy formulation and to address women's needs in a comprehensive, holistic and systematic manner. We fully endorse and support the WoC's mission to enable women to fully realise their due status, rights and opportunities in all aspects of life.

Having consolidated views and concerns from local women's groups and service agencies, the WoC has come to a view that gender mainstreaming and empowerment of women should be the priority areas for action. To ensure that work in these two areas could be pursued in an efficient and effective manner, public education to enhance the public's as well as the Administration's understanding of women's issues and specific needs will be launched as another priority area of action.

Instead of an inadequately coordinated practice of individual bureaux and departments handling women's issues separately, a strategic overview will be developed to provide the broad framework within which women's issues can be addressed. We intend to make women's concerns and experiences an integral dimension of policy formulation and implementation. Through such gender sensitive decision making processes (i.e. gender mainstreaming), we will ensure that women have equitable access to, and benefit from, the community's resources and opportunities, with the aim of achieving women's advancement. Our target is to pilot and evaluate a checklist of questions on several policy initiatives for gender mainstreaming purposes in 2002. Last but not least, we will continue to oversee the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and the Beijing Platform for Action.

We will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicators –

- Progress in taking forward the three identified priority areas of action.



- Progress in implementing appropriate mechanisms for gender mainstreaming in the Administration to ensure that women’s perspectives are being appropriately taken into account during policy formulation. Our target is to pilot and evaluate a checklist of questions on several policy initiatives for gender mainstreaming purposes in 2002.
- Number of officers who have received gender-related training. Our target is to continue relevant training programmes in 2002.
- Progress in implementing CEDAW, the United Nations Committee’s Concluding Comments on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government’s (HKSARG) initial report under CEDAW and relevant measures and initiatives in meeting the Beijing Platform for Action. This will be an on-going effort.

We will pursue the following initiatives and targets to deliver results in this area –

Initiative *	Target
To take forward the three identified priority areas of action, namely, gender mainstreaming, public education and empowerment of women  <i>(Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB))</i>	To start the first programme in 2002
To incorporate women’s perspectives in the process of policy making  <i>(Women’s Commission)</i>	To pilot and evaluate a “Gender Mainstreaming Checklist” in 2002

\* the bracketed information denotes the agency with lead responsibility for the initiative

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Target</b>
<p>To provide gender-related training to civil servants to facilitate the taking into account of women's perspectives during policy formulation, the legislative process, and the implementation phase</p> <p><i>(HWB)</i></p>	<p>Gender-related training programmes will be offered to Social Welfare Officers, Administrative Officers, Information Officers and Police Officers in 2002</p>

# 2

## Facilitate women to participate more fully in the community

Women comprise 43% of our existing labour force and play an important and valuable role in public life, including advisory and statutory bodies. Women make up more than half of our population, but there is clearly potential for more women to participate to a greater extent in various aspects of life in our community.

We intend to empower women through removal of the obstacles to their active participation in all spheres of public and private life through a full and equal share in economic, social, cultural and political decision-making. This has to do with not only the elimination of gender biases, but also changing the deep-rooted stereotyping held by the community about women's roles and abilities. We will continue to encourage relevant agencies to introduce initiatives to develop women's potential and to facilitate them to participate more fully in the community.

We will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicators –

- Rate and spectrum of labour force participation of women. We will continue to consult the Women's Commission (WoC) on how to facilitate women to participate in the labour market.
- Number of women serving on government advisory and statutory bodies. We will work with the Home Affairs Bureau and other bureaux and departments to increase the level of women's participation.
- Attendance/participation in training and retraining programmes. We will consult the WoC on how to facilitate women's participation in these programmes.
- Attendance/participation in adult education and further education programmes.

We will pursue the following initiatives and targets to deliver results in this area –

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Target</b>
To facilitate women's participation in government advisory boards and bodies <i>(Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB)/Home Affairs Bureau)</i>	To review the situation in order to facilitate women's participation
To facilitate women to participate more fully in the community, e.g. by providing employment training opportunities, child care facilities etc. <i>(HWB)</i>	To consult the WoC on the areas and issues that require early attention and to initiate relevant specific programmes in 2002

# 3

## Identify women's needs and improve women's services

We will focus our efforts on two main areas, i.e. on identification of women's needs and delivery of services.

In order that services provided could better cater for the needs of women, the Women's Commission (WoC) has been examining existing services for women. Strong emphasis will be placed on the need to take into account women's specific needs and concerns when formulating and implementing the services concerned. We will continue to enable the WoC to review services for women with a view to ensuring the appropriateness, adequacy and quality of service. Moreover, building on our past endeavours in liaising with the community on women's issues, we will broaden and strengthen our liaison with local women groups and service agencies to ensure that women's needs are clearly identified and that there is community input in the process. Regular fora and meetings will be organised to solicit their views and input on topical issues.

We will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicators –

- Effectiveness in identifying women's needs through conducting studies, surveys and research, improving communication with local community groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and relevant international organisations and collecting the necessary women-related statistics. Our target is to consult the WoC on priority issues for study in 2002 and meet with local women's groups and NGOs.
- Extent of improvement in the delivery of services to women to address their needs and concerns. We will continue to enable the WoC to review services for women. This is an on-going effort. Our target is to raise gender awareness among service providers within and outside the Administration, with a view to ensuring that women's perspective would be taken into account during formulation and implementation of services for women.

We will pursue the following initiatives and targets to deliver results in this area –

Initiative	Target
To commission studies, surveys and research on women’s needs <i>(Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB))</i>	To complete analysing the results of the thematic household survey in 2002
To review services delivered within and outside the Government <i>(HWB)</i>	To consult the WoC on priority areas for action
To identify priority areas for action and to develop new and improved services <i>(Women’s Commission (WoC))</i>	To co-ordinate the initiatives for the introduction of new or improved services proposed by the WoC in 2002

# 4

## Raise public awareness of women and gender-related issues and reduce gender stereotyping

In recent years, the Government has launched numerous promotional activities, including the production of television advertisements, booklets, CD-ROMs and leaflets in an attempt to raise public awareness about gender-related issues and to reduce gender stereotyping.

Notwithstanding these efforts, the community at large is still not sufficiently sensitive to women's issues. In the coming year, we will work to gradually change preconceived ideas about the role of women and to enhance community awareness on gender-related issues. We will work to enhance the Administration's understanding about women's issues and continue with our educational and promotional efforts in these areas.

We will assess our performance in respect of this KRA against the following indicator –

- Number of gender sensitive educational activities. Our target is to conduct a major convention on women matters in Hong Kong and public education programmes in 2002.

We will pursue the following initiatives and targets to deliver results in this area –

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Target</b>
To raise public awareness and facilitate exchange of views and ideas on women matters <i>(Women's Commission)</i>	To organise a major convention on women matters in Hong Kong in 2002
To launch public education programmes to enhance public awareness on gender-related issues <i>(Health and Welfare Bureau)</i>	To launch public education programmes on an on-going basis. The first programme to be organised in 2002





**Promote the Well-being and  
Interests of Women**

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**Detailed Progress**

# 1

## Develop a long-term vision and strategies related to the development and advancement of women

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past year. Details are set out below –

<b>Initiative</b> *	<b>Target</b> #	<b>Present Position</b> +
To set up a Women's Commission (WoC) <i>(Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB))</i>	To establish the WoC in 2000 <i>(2000)</i>	The WoC was established in January 2001. <i>(Action Completed)</i>
To draw up longer term strategies and plans to promote the well-being and interests of women in Hong Kong <i>(WoC)</i>	To complete by 2001 <i>(2000)</i>	The WoC has laid down its mission and identified three priority areas of action in 2001 to enable women's development and advancement. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>

\* the bracketed information denotes the agency with lead responsibility for the initiative

# the bracketed information denotes the year in which the target was set

+ the bracketed information denotes the status of the target

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), the United Nations Committee's Concluding Comments on the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's initial report under CEDAW and relevant measures and initiatives in fulfilling the Beijing Platform for Action</p> <p><i>(HWB)</i></p>	<p>This is an on-going effort. We will continue to implement the recommendations contained in the United Nations Committee's Concluding Comments, as far as possible</p> <p><i>(2000)</i></p>	<p>The establishment of the WoC in January 2001 is one of the recommendations contained in the United Nations Committee's Concluding Comments.</p> <p><i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>

# 2

## Facilitate women to participate more fully in the community

To achieve results in this area, the following initiative has been undertaken in the past year. Details are set out below –

<b>Initiative</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Present Position</b>
To facilitate women to participate more fully in the community e.g. by providing employment training opportunities, child care facilities, etc. <i>(Health and Welfare Bureau)</i>	To consult the Women's Commission on the areas and issues that require early attention and to initiate specific programmes in 2001 <i>(2000)</i>	Five priority areas for empowerment of women, namely health, education and training, economic well-being, safety and women's role in decision making and social participation, have been identified.  <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>

# 3

## Identify women's needs and improve women's services

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past year. Details are set out below –

Initiative	Target	Present Position
To commission studies, surveys and research on women's needs <i>(Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB))</i>	To start the first study in 2001 <i>(2000)</i>	Research has been conducted on gender issues and gender roles. A survey on time use and obstacles to women's participation in the community is planned for introduction in fourth quarter of 2001.  <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>
To step up communication between local women's groups and service agencies and the Administration, and to build up liaison network with international bodies <i>(HWB)</i>	To meet with local community groups and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) regularly and to participate in key international fora.  <i>(2000)</i>	As at 30 September 2001, the Women's Commission has visited about 30 local NGOs and organised an Open Forum for the public. We have also participated in ten international meetings on women-related issues.  <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>
To establish a sex disaggregated database and collect the necessary women-related statistics <i>(Census &amp; Statistics Department)</i>	To publish a report on women-related statistics in 2001  <i>(2000)</i>	A report on "Women and Men in Hong Kong Key Statistics" was published in August 2001  <i>(Action Completed)</i>

Initiative	Target	Present Position
<p>To review services delivered within and outside the Government, to identify priority areas for action and to develop new or improved services (HWB)</p>	<p>To complete the first review and to co-ordinate the introduction of some improved services in 2001 (2000)</p>	<p>Initial review on welfare, community, education, training and re-training, health and employment services for women were conducted. <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i></p>

# 4

## Raise public awareness of women and gender-related issues and reduce gender stereotyping

To achieve results in this area, various initiatives have been undertaken in the past year. Details are set out below –

Initiative	Target	Present Position
To devise and implement a gender sensitive educational programme <i>(Health and Welfare Bureau (HWB))</i>	To complete the first programme in 2001 <i>(2000)</i>	A seminar on gender related issues was organised in February 2001.  <i>(Action Completed)</i>
To provide gender-related training to civil servants with a view to ensuring that women's perspectives are taken into account during policy formulation, the legislative process, and the implementation phase <i>(HWB)</i>	To develop and start relevant training programmes in 2001 <i>(2000)</i>	Gender-related training will be offered to about 200 officers in 2001.  <i>(Action in Progress: On Schedule)</i>