

**Minutes of the One Hundred and Thirty-eighth Meeting of
The Equal Opportunities Commission
held on 15 June 2023 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m. in the
Equal Opportunities Commission's Conference Room**

Present

Mr Ricky CHU Man-kin, IDS	Chairperson [C/EOC]
Ms Queenie CHAN Lai-kwan, MH	
Miss CHOW Lily	
Dr Theresa CUNANAN	
Mr FONG James Mathew	(via video-conferencing)
Mr Simon LAM Ken-chung	
Dr Sigmund LEUNG Sai-man, BBS, JP	
Mr Vishal MELWANI	
Dr Henry SHIE Wai-hung	
Ms Anna THOMPSON	(via video-conferencing)
Miss Shirley TO Shuk-yi	
Ms Linda TSANG Chi-man	
Dr Rizwan ULLAH, MH	(via telephone-conferencing)
Mr Gary WONG Chi-him, JP	
Dr Kitty WU Kit-ying, JP	
Dr Ferrick CHU Chung-man	Secretary Executive Director (Operations) [ED/O]

Absent with apologies

Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP
Ms Rosanna CHOI Yi-tak

In attendance

Mr Ivan LUK Chi-cheung	Executive Director (Enforcement) [ED/E]
Mr Oska LI Kam-hung	Director, Corporate Planning and Services [DCPS]
Mr Tony SIU Kit-hung	Director, Complaint Services [DCS]
Mr Allan MAN Sui-lun	Chief Legal Counsel [CLC]
Miss Lisa CHAN Kit-ching	Acting Head, Corporate Communications [Ag HCC]

Ms Doris TSUI Ue-ting	Acting Head, Policy, Research and Training [Ag HPRT]
Miss Gloria YU Wai-ling	Senior Equal Opportunities Officer, Administration & Personnel [SAP]
Ms Hollis LING Yin-har	Equal Opportunities Officer, Administration & Personnel [EAP]

I. Introduction

1. The Chairperson (C/EOC) welcomed all Commission Board Members (Members) to the 138th Meeting, in particular Miss Lily CHOW, Mr James FONG, Mr Vishal MELWANI, Miss Shirley TO and Dr Kitty WU who joined the meeting for the first time. C/EOC informed the Meeting that Mr James FONG and Ms Anna THOMPSON would join the meeting via video-conference (Zoom), and Dr Rizwan ULLAH would join the meeting via telephone conference. Dr Henry SHIE and Dr Theresa CUNANAN would join the meeting at a later time. Apologies for absence were received from The Hon Vincent CHENG and Ms Rosanna CHOI due to prior engagements.

2. C/EOC said that there were no special issues for informing the media, hence no press briefing would be held after the meeting.

II. Confirmation of Minutes (Agenda Item No. 1)

Confirmation of Minutes of the 136th (Special) Meeting on 9 March 2023 and Minutes of the 137th Meeting on 16 March 2023

3. The draft minutes of the 136th (Special) EOC Meeting held on 9 March 2023 and the draft minutes of the 137th EOC Meeting held on 16 March 2023 were issued to Members on 26 and 11 April 2023 respectively. No request for

amendments to the minutes was received. Members confirmed the minutes of the 136th (Special) and 137th EOC Meeting without amendments.

III. Matters Arising (Agenda Item No. 2)

4. There were no matters arising from previous meetings that required Members' attention in this meeting.

IV. New Agenda Items

Chairperson's Quarterly Report

(EOC Paper No. 6/2023; Agenda Item No. 3)

5. C/EOC updated Members on the important work done during the period from March to May 2023 as contained in EOC Paper No. 6/2023.

6. Members noted that in the wake of the incident of the purported discrimination and insulting acts to Mandarin-speaking passengers by the cabin crews of Hong Kong's home-grown air carrier reported by the media in mid-May 2023, C/EOC gave media interviews to various media organisations, attended four live radio programmes and one pre-recorded TV programme to express EOC's grave concerns about the incident, as well as the discrimination faced by Mainland people in the city. Members also noted that the EOC had been liaising closely with the Government to follow up on the recommendations of a legal study submitted by the EOC to the Government in 2021, laying out the proposals to tackle discrimination, harassment and vilification between people from Hong Kong and those from the Mainland through legislation. C/EOC said though a timetable had yet to be available for the proposed legislative amendments under Race Discrimination Ordinance, the progress had been encouraging.

(Dr Henry SHIE joined the meeting at this juncture.)

7. Members noted that the EOC had been a tenacious advocate in eliminating stigmatisation and discrimination against Persons with Mental Illness (PMIs). This year, like previous years, the EOC would participate in the research team of the Mental Health Month (MHM) campaign and conduct the annual MHM survey to assess the well-being of Hong Kong people. The survey findings were expected to be released by October 2023. On another front, the EOC had been liaising with the Workplace Consultation Promotion Division of the Labour Department (LD) to explore potential collaboration opportunities by leveraging LD’s network of Human Resources Managers’ Clubs. A possible collaboration would be a talk in the Club’s meeting to share the major findings of the “*Study on Perceptions of Stigmatisation and Discrimination of Persons with Mental Illness in the Workplace*” (a research study’s findings released by the Commission in February 2023), good organizational practices for creating a discrimination-free environment, and suggestions on rendering mental health support to employees.

8. As regards the promotion of racial inclusion, a press release was issued on 21 March 2023 to launch a series of initiatives under the theme “All Races as One” to mark the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (IDERD) 2023. The initiatives included bus body advertisements, MTRC advertisements, the Racially Friendly Campus Recognition Scheme and the “All Races As One” Racial Inclusion Seminar for Schools. The EOC also launched the Learning Kit on Eliminating Racial Discrimination and the School Policy Framework for the Prevention of Racial Discrimination & Harassment during the seminar. In respect of the Racial Diversity & Inclusion Charter for Employers (the Charter), the list of Charter signatories had grown to over 320. To forge closer ties with signatories, ongoing opportunities had been provided for them to deepen their workplace racial inclusion.

9. Members noted that the EOC had made a submission relating to the protection from sexual harassment to the Government in October 2021 in which

legislative amendments to the Sex Discrimination Ordinance and other recommendations were proposed for the Government to consider. In April 2023, the Government approached the EOC to seek clarifications on the submission, to which the Commission already provided its responses.

10. Members noted that of the nine applications approved to be funded under the Funding Programme of Research Projects on Equal Opportunities, eight reports had been finalised and eight press conferences were held to release the research findings during the period from Q2/2022 to Q3/2023. The said research reports and press releases had been made available on the EOC website for public viewing.

11. Given the imminent commencement of a new academic cohort, a Member suggested the Commission to maintain close communication with the respective student affairs offices of universities to remind them of the importance of avoiding any content that might give rise to claims of sexual harassment during orientation camps. The Member emphasised that this would help ensure a safe and inclusive environment for all students. ED/O said the Commission had stepped up efforts to raise awareness on the prevention of sexual harassment in universities through online training for students and academic staff. The online training module (OTM), since its launch in eight universities between January and April 2023, had attracted enthusiastic participation. Over 2,500 students had completed the training and were awarded a certificate. Ag HPRT supplemented that besides the OTM, training sessions covering sexual harassment for academic and administrative staff members had been conducted throughout the years. A meeting with representatives from eight universities was held in June 2023 to share the positive feedback from students and encouraged universities to make use of the OTM when the semester started to convey anti-sexual harassment messages. Further reminders would be given to student affairs offices to promote awareness against anti-sexual harassment in tertiary institutions before orientation camps were held.

12. In addition to the multi-pronged strategies mentioned above, another

Member said the EOC might consider stepping up the social media promotions on anti-sexual harassment so as to deepen the impact and reach, with due consideration to the participation rates of universities in the online training. Two Members expressed their agreement with the above suggestions, and added that organisers of orientation camps should be committed to ensuring that the events would be free from any elements that might be prone to claims of sexual harassment and take appropriate measures to prevent potential incidents of sexual harassment and the related misconduct.

13. C/EOC agreed with Members' suggestions and said the Commission would proactively remind universities and tertiary education institutions to prevent sexual contents in orientation camps. Additionally, in the long run, the Commission would continue to promote awareness against sexual harassment through innovative and interactive means, including social media platforms.

(Dr Theresa CUNANAN joined the meeting at this juncture.)

14. In response to a question raised by a Member, C/EOC agreed that the aforementioned legislative amendments to the Race Discrimination Ordinance would strengthen the legal framework and provide greater protection for victims of intra-racial discrimination.

15. Members noted EOC Paper No. 6/2023.

Reports of the Legal & Complaints Committee, Community Participation & Publicity Committee, Policy, Research & Training Committee and Administration & Finance Committee
(EOC Paper No. 7/2023; Agenda Item No. 4)

16. EOC Paper No. 7/2023 presented the important matters raised and decisions made at the recent meetings of the four committees held during the period from

April to May 2023.

17. C/EOC was pleased to inform Members that the Board had endorsed via circulation earlier the convenership and deputy-convenership of the four functional Committees. The appointments of the following Conveners and Deputy Conveners had taken effect from 20 May 2023:

<u>EOC's Committees</u>	<u>Convener and Deputy Convener</u>
Legal & Complaints Committee	Dr Henry SHIE (Convener) Mr Simon LAM (Deputy Convener)
Community Participation & Publicity Committee	Mr Gary WONG (Convener) Ms Queenie CHAN (Deputy Convener)
Policy, Research & Training Committee	Dr Rizwan ULLAH (Convener) Dr Theresa CUNANAN (Deputy Convener)
Administration & Finance Committee	Dr Sigmund LEUNG (Convener) Ms Rosanna CHOI (Deputy Convener)

18. C/EOC thanked Members for their zealous support of the work of the EOC and invited them to continue to work together towards developing inclusivity and diversity in the community.

19. Members noted EOC Paper No. 7/2023.

V. Any Other Business

Strategic Retreat for EOC's Strategic Plan 2024 – 2027

20. C/EOC informed Members that, for the purpose of mapping out a new strategic plan for the Commission in the coming three years, a retreat would be hosted amongst Members and senior staff of the Commission. The plan would be

the guide to steer the direction of EOC's work and focuses from 2024. Tentatively the retreat would be a one-day programme likely be held in Q4/2023.

21. DCPS updated Members that the Commission had been searching for a suitable venue for holding the retreat and tentatively it would probably be run in October 2023. The venue would be equipped with appropriate facilities, including an infrastructure to deploy simultaneous interpretation services, a number of breakout rooms for small group discussions, and be conveniently accessible by public transport. The preliminary choice would be a hotel at Causeway Bay. In the meantime, the Commission had been in search of a seasoned facilitator to assist in the conduct of the retreat's activities. With the views and suggestions gathered from the retreat, the EOC office would devise a draft Strategic Plan for 2024 – 2027 and put forth the draft plan for Members' approval in the EOC Board Meeting scheduled for December 2023.

22. C/EOC added that the new Strategic Plan would provide an updated roadmap for the EOC to re-prioritise its strategic actions and re-allocate resources to achieve the work goals ahead. Navigated by the four anti-discrimination ordinances as the framework, discussions could be extended to such top topics as protections from discrimination against sexual orientation, gender identity and age, universal accessibility design and measures to prevent disability discrimination and harassment in employment. Formal invitation would be sent to Members once the retreat date and venue be confirmed. Depending on Members' availability on the retreat day, Members would be encouraged to join the retreat programme to the extent affordable, either in full or in part.

[Post-meeting note: After verbal consultations with Members about their availability and preference, it has been decided that the strategic retreat be scheduled for 6 October 2023 at the Regal Hong Kong Hotel (Causeway Bay). Invitations were extended to Members on 27 June 2023.]

23. There being no other business, the Meeting was adjourned at 3:15 pm.

VI. Date of Next Meeting

24. The next regular EOC Meeting was scheduled for **21 September 2023**
(Thursday) at 2:30 p.m.

Equal Opportunities Commission

July 2023