

Meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

Work Progress and Key Focuses of the Equal Opportunities Commission

Purpose

This paper provides an update on the work of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) in 2023-24 and its key focuses for 2024-25.

Background

2. Established in 1996 under the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO) (Cap 480), the EOC is an independent statutory body tasked with implementing Hong Kong's anti-discrimination ordinances, which currently include the SDO, the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO) (Cap 487), the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance (FSDO) (Cap 527) and the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) (Cap 602).

Functions and powers of the EOC

3. The vision of the EOC is to create a pluralistic and inclusive society where there is no barrier to equal opportunities. As set out in the four anti-discrimination ordinances, the main functions and powers of the EOC are to:

- Work towards the elimination of discrimination on the grounds of sex, marital status, pregnancy, breastfeeding, disability, family status and race;
- Promote equal opportunity between men and women, between people with disability and those without, and irrespective of family status and race;
- Work towards the elimination of sexual harassment, breastfeeding harassment, and harassment and vilification on the grounds of disability and race;

- Investigate complaints lodged under the ordinances and encourage conciliation between the parties in dispute;
- Provide other forms of assistance, including legal assistance, to eligible applicants when a settlement cannot be reached through conciliation;
- Undertake self-initiated investigations into situations and issues giving rise to discrimination concerns under the ordinances;
- Develop and issue codes of practice under the ordinances as practical guidance;
- Review the working of the ordinances and draw up proposals for amendment; and
- Conduct research and educational activities on issues of discrimination and equal opportunity.

WORK PROGRESS IN 2023-24

4. With the approval of the EOC Board, the EOC extended its Strategic Plan 2020-2022 (the Strategic Plan) in end-2022 by one year until the end of 2023. The arrangement was made by the EOC, having considered that the continual impact brought by the COVID-19 epidemic and the ensuing social distancing measures from 2020 to 2022 had made it difficult for the EOC to take forward the programmes under the Strategic Plan in full swing. There are five strategic goals under the Strategic Plan, namely:

- Setting in place a stronger anti-discrimination legal framework;
- Maintaining an efficient, effective and victim-centric redress system for complaints;
- Developing a stronger knowledge base about discrimination;
- Reducing inequality among communities at higher risks of discrimination; and
- Delivering organisational excellence.

Based on these goals, the EOC implemented a range of initiatives and activities through a three-pronged approach of law enforcement, prevention, and education in 2023. Simultaneously, the EOC remained responsive to the latest developments and situation in society, adjusting its work strategies as needed to

tackle the discrimination issues faced by members of the community. During the past year, the EOC further strengthened its work on preventing sexual harassment, and at the same time enhanced the protection for persons with mental health needs through a multi-pronged approach, by calling on the public to eliminate bias and discrimination, while actively working with various sectors to advance equal opportunities for the disadvantaged and marginalised communities, in an effort to build a caring and equal society. The paragraphs below detailed the work of the EOC in 2023.

I. Law Enforcement

(a) Enquiry and complaint handling

5. The main function of the EOC is to handle enquiries and complaints lodged by members of the public under the anti-discrimination ordinances. In 2023 (January to December 2023), the EOC handled 10 198 enquiries, 17% more than the figure (8 705) in 2022 (January to December 2022). Among these:

- 6 411 were general enquiries about provisions under the ordinances and events organised by the EOC; and
- 3 787 were about specific scenarios or incidents that might become complaints.

6. As for complaints, the EOC received 1 050 complaints for investigation in 2023¹, 70% of them were related to the employment field. The EOC also conducted 28 self-initiated investigations. These were incidents noticed by the EOC or brought to the EOC's attention by third parties or aggrieved persons who did not wish to be involved in an investigation. Most of these cases were related to recruitment, accessibility of premises, and the provision of goods, services and facilities. Altogether the EOC handled a total of 1 331 complaints in 2023, including cases carried forward from the previous year. Annex A presents a breakdown of the complaints handled in 2023 by ordinance.

Conciliation

¹ 20% more than the figure (873) in 2022.

7. The performance pledge of the EOC is to conclude 75% of the complaints within six months. In 2023, the EOC was able to conclude 90% of the complaints within six months. The average handling time of each complaint case was 90 days, which was half the duration of the targeted handling time of 180 days. As stipulated in the anti-discrimination ordinances, the EOC would encourage the parties in dispute to settle through conciliation, which is entirely voluntary. In 2023, 121 out of the 148 cases that underwent conciliation reached a settlement, translating into a success rate of 82%. The EOC also managed to secure over HK\$4.75 million of monetary payment for complainants through conciliation.

8. Under the anti-discrimination ordinances, the EOC may also decide not to conduct, or to discontinue an investigation into a complaint for any of the following reasons:

- The EOC is satisfied that the alleged act is not unlawful by virtue of a provision under the ordinances;
- The EOC is of the opinion that there is no desire on the part of the aggrieved persons for the investigation to be conducted or continued;
- More than 12 months have elapsed since the act;
- The EOC determines, in the case of a representative complaint, that the complaint should not be a representative complaint (in accordance with the relevant rules dealing with representative complaints); or
- The EOC is of the opinion that the complaint is frivolous, vexatious, misconceived, or lacking in substance.

In 2023, the EOC decided not to conduct investigation for 50 cases and discontinued investigation for 760 cases. Annex B sets out the breakdown of the cases concluded based on their outcome.

(b) Legal assistance

9. The anti-discrimination ordinances provide that if an individual has lodged a complaint with the EOC but there has not been a settlement of the case, the complainant may apply to the EOC for other forms of assistance, such as legal

assistance, which may include providing initial legal advice, conducting legal proceedings for successful legal assistance applicants, and appearing in court on behalf of assisted persons. Upon receipt of applications for legal assistance, the Legal Service Division (LSD) of the EOC would analyse the information and consolidate the information gathered by the Complaint Services Division during the complaint-handling process, and prepare a report for consideration by the Legal and Complaints Committee (LCC) of the EOC to decide whether legal assistance should be granted to the complainant. The LCC would consider a wide range of factors on a case-by case basis in deciding whether to grant legal assistance or not. These factors include:

- Whether the case raises a question of principle;
- Whether the complexity of the case or the parties' relative positions make it too difficult for the applicant to deal with the case unaided;
- Strength of the evidence and likelihood of success in court;
- Whether the case can set an important legal precedent;
- Whether litigation can lead to effective remedy for the applicant, and whether the case can be effectively used to enhance public awareness and promote equal opportunities; and
- The attitude and behaviour of the parties.

10. In 2023, the EOC received and handled 16 applications for legal assistance, seven of which were granted legal assistance. A breakdown of the number of applications for legal assistance by ordinance handled in the last three years is available at [Annex C](#).

11. In 2023, the EOC initiated legal proceedings for two cases concerning disability discrimination in the employment field. In one of the cases, the claimant was dismissed as a result of contracting upper respiratory tract infection and showing symptoms of COVID-19 infection. The legal proceedings of the case remained in progress as of January 2024. In the other case, the claimant alleged that her former employer (the first respondent), director of the former employer (the second respondent), and her immediate supervisor (the third respondent) discriminated against her on the ground of her disability (acute lower back pain) by subjecting her to a series of discriminatory treatments, including harassment, and finally terminating her employment. The parties concerned ultimately

reached an out-of-court settlement, in which the three respondents agreed to pay a total of HK\$88,000 in compensation to the claimant.

12. The EOC also initiated legal proceedings in 2023 on behalf of a foreign domestic helper, who alleged that she had been sexually harassed by her former employer on a number of occasions in the course of employment. By taking the aforementioned cases to the court, the EOC hopes to raise public awareness on preventing discrimination while reminding employers that it is unlawful to discriminate against employees on the ground of disability or to sexually harass anyone in the workplace.

13. Separately, the District Court ruled in favour of the relevant claimants in two cases in 2023. These cases had been granted legal assistance by the EOC in 2021 and 2019 respectively. In the first case, the claimant – a female employee of a recreation club – was sexually harassed on multiple occasions by a male manager (the respondent). The District Court awarded a sum of HK\$80,000 to the claimant for injury to feelings on 28 July 2023. In the second case, the claimant was discriminated against by her employer because of her pregnancy. As well as withholding her end-of-year bonus, the employer did not renew her contract right before her maternity leave. The District Court awarded around HK\$926,000 of compensation to the claimant on 17 August 2023. In both cases, the EOC's in-house lawyers represented the claimants and attended court as trial counsel on behalf of the claimants. The positive outcome in the two cases not only enabled the victims of discrimination to obtain redress, but it also led to extensive media coverage, achieving the effect of public education.

Other areas of legal work

14. In addition to handling legal assistance applications and representing complainants in legal proceedings, the LSD is responsible for the following major legal work:

- Providing legal support at various stages of the complaint-handling process by assigning internal legal counsels to pair up with case-handling officers in the Complaint Services Division in conducting complaint investigation;

- Reviewing the four anti-discrimination ordinances and make recommendations for amendments;
- Exploring the possibility of expanding the scope of protection of the four anti-discrimination ordinances to address discrimination issues currently not covered by the legislation and making submissions to the Government when appropriate;
- Drafting codes of practice, guidance and other publications to explain the ordinances to the public;
- Advising on legal issues arising from the daily operation of the EOC;
- Reviewing contracts and agreements to which the EOC is a party;
- Providing legal support in cases where the EOC is a party; and
- Providing legal support to issues relating to the corporate governance of the EOC.

15. In the case of reviewing the anti-discrimination legislation, the EOC continued to consult stakeholders, maintain close communication with the Government, and monitor the actual situation in society so as to follow up on the proposals in the legal studies as appropriate, including the study on enhancing the protection against sexual harassment under the SDO, and on the protection from discrimination that may be encountered by persons arriving in Hong Kong from the Mainland. The EOC also continued to work on an internal legal study to explore ways of protecting sexual minorities from discrimination under the framework of the existing anti-discrimination legislation.

II. Prevention of Discrimination

(a) Research study

16. On the prevention front, the EOC has been monitoring the prevalence of discrimination in society through research studies, and making policy enhancement recommendations to the Government and relevant parties. In 2023, the EOC released the following studies:

- Study on Perceptions of Stigmatisation and Discrimination of Persons with Mental Illness in the Workplace (released in February 2023);

- Study on Effective Strategies to Facilitate School-to-work Transition of Young Persons with Disabilities in Hong Kong (released in June 2023); and
- Study on Challenges, Effective Policies, and Best Practices of Ordinary Schools in Educating Students with Special Educational Needs in Hong Kong (released in June 2023).

The EOC has taken corresponding follow-up actions after the publication of the findings. This included collaborating with the Labour Department (LD) to deliver a talk for the Human Resources Managers' Clubs in December 2023, sharing the major findings of the first and second studies with over 130 participants, and providing relevant recommendations to employers. Separately, the EOC began working on another study named 'Study on Breastfeeding at Publicly Accessible Premises in Hong Kong' in 2023 to assess breastfeeding women's understanding of the provisions on breastfeeding under the SDO, the prevalence and experience of breastfeeding in publicly accessible premises, and the effectiveness of breastfeeding facilities. The results are expected to be released in the second quarter of 2024.

17. The EOC also provided funding support to nine research projects conducted by academic institutions and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) under the Funding Programme of Research Projects on Equal Opportunities 2020-21. All of the following studies were completed, with the findings released in 2022 and 2023:

- A Study of Online Media Representation of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong and Their Experiences of Online Racial Discrimination (Department of Media and Communication, City University of Hong Kong) (released in May 2022);
- Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy Checklist – Research Report on Tertiary Institutions (2020-2021) (The Association for the Advancement of Feminism) (released in May 2022);
- Admitting Ethnic Minority Kindergarteners: Overcoming Challenges and Identifying Opportunities (School of Education and Languages of Hong Kong Metropolitan University and Hong Kong Child-rity Association) (released in June 2022);

- An Exploration of the Challenges and Enablers of Parental HPV Vaccination Decision for Adolescent Daughters among South Asian Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong (The Nethersole School of Nursing, The Chinese University of Hong Kong) (released in July 2022);
- Exploring Intersectional Experiences of South Asian Ethnic Minority Students and Families in Special Educational Context in Hong Kong (Caritas Institute of Higher Education) (released in September 2022);
- Family Caregivers of Persons with Advanced Illnesses (Caritas Institute of Higher Education) (released in January 2023);
- Creating a Barrier-Free Online Learning Environment for Primary School Students with Special Educational Needs in Hong Kong (The University of Hong Kong) (released in February 2023);
- Exploring the Experiences and Needs of College Students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (The Chinese University of Hong Kong) (released in February 2023); and
- Mixed-methods Investigation of Family-friendly Employment Practices: From Work-Family Conflict to Enrichment (The Education University of Hong Kong) (released in June 2023).

The findings of the aforementioned nine studies, which were promulgated through press conferences and press releases, were widely covered in 79 media reports and five media interviews. Six of the studies have subsequently applied for additional funding from the EOC to conduct non-research follow-up activities, such as online workshops, a human library, and an award scheme, involving a total of 388 participants.

18. With the completion of all the funded projects under the Funding Programme of Research Projects on Equal Opportunities 2020-21, the EOC is liaising closely with the Government with a view to continuing the monitoring of discrimination trends in society through funded research.

(b) Policy advocacy

19. Apart from making recommendations in research reports, the EOC also made submissions on public policies to the authorities concerned. The EOC made

a submission to the Government in August 2023 in response to the 2023 Policy Address Public Consultation, putting forward a series of proposals on enhancing support measures for persons with disabilities (PWDs), the elderly, students with special educational needs (SEN), the non-ethnic Chinese (NEC) population, and carers. The submission also included suggestions on promoting universal design, implementing sex education, imposing a positive duty on employers to eradicate sexual harassment in the workplace, and providing funding for universities to set up Equal Opportunities Offices. Another submission was made on International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March 2023 to the authorities concerned regarding the promotion of education and employment opportunities for the NEC population and the advancement of racial inclusion.

(c) Training courses, workshops, and seminars

20. The EOC endeavours to equip different sectors with knowledge of the anti-discrimination ordinances by conducting calendar and customised training programmes for human resources practitioners, executives, managers, business owners, and employees in both public and private sectors. The topics covered include introduction to the anti-discrimination ordinances, managing complaints of discrimination and harassment in the workplace, combating workplace sexual harassment, promoting racial inclusion in the workplace, and issues in human resources management under the anti-discrimination ordinances. In 2023, the EOC launched two new paid courses, namely Access for All under the Anti-Discrimination Ordinances and Manager's Roles in Combating Workplace Sexual Harassment. The former course explores the concept of universal accessibility and measures to promote universal accessibility, while the latter aims to equip frontline supervisors with the necessary knowledge and skills to respond to subordinates' concerns or complaints about sexual harassment, using role-play and case study as training methods. In 2023, the EOC conducted 498 training sessions for a total of 31 447 participants from various sectors.

21. The EOC also produced a new learning kit called Quality with Equality for civil servants and workplace participants at public organisations. The learning kit, which includes an interactive board game, a video series on different scenarios, and self-learning materials, aims to enhance participants' understanding of the four anti-discrimination ordinances and the importance of complying with the

ordinances. The EOC introduced the learning kit to the Secretaries of all Bureaux and the Heads of over 50 Departments, encouraging them to use the learning kit in training. As of December 2023, over 3 900 civil servants and members of public organisations already finished the relevant training with the aid of the new learning kit. The EOC has supplied the Civil Service College and other government departments with the self-learning materials from the learning kit, such that civil servants can learn at their own pace.

(d) Preventing sexual harassment

22. Preventing sexual harassment has long been one of the EOC's key work focuses. In November 2020, the EOC established a dedicated Anti-Sexual Harassment Unit (ASHU). By working on prevention, research and policy advocacy, providing advice on policy and training, as well as acting as a first port of call for those affected by sexual harassment, ASHU serves to strengthen the work on anti-sexual harassment.

Anti-Sexual Harassment Hotline

23. The ASHU has set up a dedicated hotline at 2106 2222 to provide the public with information related to sexual harassment, including provisions of the relevant ordinances, advice on where and how to lodge complaints and seek redress, and information on emotional support, legal advice or other services. In 2023, the ASHU received 498 enquiries about sexual harassment. These were made through the ASHU's hotline, the general enquiry hotline, forms submitted online, by mail or SMS, and in person at the EOC office. Out of these enquiries, more than half were raised by prospective complainants hoping to seek redress, while nearly 20% were made by human resources practitioners, or those representing employers on handling internal complaints or establishing anti-sexual harassment mechanism. Furthermore, more than 10% of the enquiries were made by bystanders or prospective witnesses, while the rest were made by education practitioners, prospective respondents, and the general public.

24. In addition, the ASHU has set up a dedicated website on sexual harassment entitled COMPASS. The website serves as a resource platform and contains a host of information, such as introduction to the legislation, court cases, research

reports, training toolkits, policy development guidelines, and publications and videos on preventing sexual harassment. An interactive question-and-answer feature was added to COMPASS in mid-2023. The feature helps members of the general public identify their own needs and guides them to the relevant webpages, enabling them to easily obtain useful information even during non-office hours.

25. Apart from handling enquiries, the ASHU also carried out strategic public education and training in response to the latest social issues and needs. For example, the EOC received a number of anonymous reports of sexual harassment in 2023 but was unable to take further action or provide assistance, as the enquirers or complainants did not provide their contact details. In response, the ASHU began working on a series of comics to explain the concept of sexual harassment and the EOC's complaint-handling procedures in layman's terms, with the aim of encouraging those affected by sexual harassment to provide their names when lodging complaints.

Preventing sexual harassment in tertiary institutions

26. The EOC attaches great importance to working with the tertiary institutions in preventing and eliminating sexual harassment on campuses. In early 2023, the EOC launched the online training module on the prevention of sexual harassment developed for the eight UGC-funded universities. Over 12 000 students have already completed the training module to date. Meanwhile, the EOC has been developing another online learning module for non-UGC-funded tertiary institutions, which is expected to be launched in 2024-25. With due regard to alleged incidents of sexual harassment at university orientation camps in the past, the EOC reaches out to the universities annually, urging them to mandate anti-sexual harassment training for students, including those involved in planning, executing, and participating in orientation camps. In June 2023, the EOC wrote a letter to all tertiary institutions to make the same appeal again. Following allegations of sexual harassment on university campuses, the EOC immediately contacted the relevant institutions to express concerns and reminded them to make use of the online training module. The EOC also offered to provide more in-depth training with a view to further enhancing academic staff and students' understanding of sexual harassment. Indeed, the EOC has been continuously organising anti-sexual harassment training for tertiary institutions. In 2023, the

ASHU and Training Section organised five training workshops and 56 training sessions respectively for various institutions, which registered participation of close to 3 700 staff members, postgraduate students, and student leaders.

27. In 2023, the EOC updated the Framework for an Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy and sent it to the Education Bureau (EDB) in October. The EDB subsequently uploaded the updated Framework on the ‘Prevention of Sexual Harassment in Schools’ webpage under its official website. Moreover, a hyperlink to the COMPASS’s ‘FAQs for Students and Educators’ section was added to the webpage. The EOC also invited the EDB in writing to co-organise training for schools and sponsoring bodies.

Other sectors

28. Apart from the education sector, the EOC also collaborated with other sectors to prevent sexual harassment. For example, the EOC co-organised a forum on preventing sexual harassment in the workplace with Zonta Club of Kowloon and Hong Kong Small and Medium Enterprises Association in November 2023. The forum aimed to enhance understanding of protection against sexual harassment under the SDO among small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Hong Kong, to discuss the current status of sexual harassment in the workplace, and to share effective sexual harassment prevention policies, training, and best practices. Participants were mainly employers, management, and personnel representatives of SMEs in the construction sector, the professional and business services sectors, and the accommodation and catering sectors. SMEs are required to attend this forum as a prerequisite for joining other follow-up activities organised by the EOC in 2024. In addition, the EOC submitted recommendations to the LD in May 2023 on the department’s Code of Practice for Employment Agencies, with the aim of strengthening the awareness of sexual harassment among employment agencies, job-seekers, and employers for preventing and combating sexual harassment during the recruitment process and formal employment.

III. Promoting Equal Opportunities for the Disadvantaged and Marginalised Communities

(a) Advancing equal opportunities for EMs

29. Another major focus of the EOC is advancing equal opportunities for the EM communities. In 2023, the EOC initiated various projects to address the difficulties faced by EMs in the areas of education, employment, and access to services and facilities. These projects also aimed to facilitate the integration of EMs into society.

Education

30. The EOC continued to advocate through various channels the measures for improving the learning of Chinese as a second language among EM students. To encourage schools to instil the concept of racial integration into students through activities and to create a diverse and inclusive learning environment, the EOC organised the first Racially Friendly Campus Recognition Scheme for Schools between March and April 2023. Over 60 schools participated in the Scheme, committing to organise various student activities to promote the message of racial integration. In view of the positive response, the EOC announced the launch of the second edition of the Scheme in July 2023, with the number of participating schools increasing to 179. The EDB also became a supporting organisation of the Scheme. Under the Scheme, the EOC organised a number of training sessions on preventing campus racial discrimination and promoting racial integration. Over 250 teachers and administrative staff members participated in the training sessions between October and December 2023.

Employment

31. Launched in August 2018, the Racial Diversity and Inclusion Charter for Employers (Charter) provides a set of nine best practices for employers. It aims to help employers remove barriers in their employment policies for staff and job seekers, cultivate cultural awareness, sensitivity and acceptance among staff members, and establish a racially inclusive environment for employees. As of end-December 2023, 400 organisations in the public and private sectors already signed the Charter. To celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Charter, the EOC held a ‘Racial DEI Progress: Gains, Gaps & Goals’ seminar in November 2023. Besides organising events for signatories to exchange and share their best

practices, the EOC also encourages signatories to provide internship opportunities for NEC students so as to broaden their exposure and career path.

32. The EOC continued to collaborate with the LD in different areas, including providing training on the anti-discrimination ordinances for the Department's latest cohort of Employment Services Ambassadors for Ethnic Minorities. Meanwhile, the EOC continued to organise training for foreign domestic workers and relevant organisations to help them understand the protections afforded by the anti-discrimination ordinances. For example, the EOC held a sharing session titled 'Understanding Hong Kong's Anti-discrimination Ordinances and Creating an Inclusive Work Environment' for employment agencies of foreign domestic workers in July 2023. The sharing session aimed to explain how the anti-discrimination ordinances would apply during the recruitment process and enhance the industry's understanding and awareness of the relevant laws. In September, the EOC collaborated with the LD on three sharing sessions for foreign domestic workers from different language backgrounds.

Access to services and facilities

33. EMs continue to face, from time to time, unfavourable or even discriminatory treatment frequently when accessing services or facilities, especially in tenancy. Some estate agents and landlords simply refuse to provide services or rent accommodation to them. In response, the EOC carried out the following publicity and education activities in 2023:

- In April, the EOC ran a bus body advertising campaign entitled 'Racially Friendly Customer Services for All', calling on goods and services providers to cater to the needs of diverse customers in an equal and friendly manner;
- In July, the EOC ran an MTR compartment advertising campaign entitled 'Open Your Doors to Tenants of All Ethnicities' to draw the public's attention to racial discrimination in tenancy, and encourage landlords to eliminate bias and treat tenants from all ethnicities and backgrounds equally; and

- The EOC continued to collaborate with the Estate Agents Authority to provide training for estate agents.

Racial integration

34. To facilitate the integration of EMs into the community, the EOC connected and collaborated with various racial and religious organisations. For example, in 2023, the EOC co-organised workshops with the Consulate General of Bangladesh and the Sri Lankan Buddhist Cultural Centre to explain the protections afforded by the anti-discrimination ordinances. In the fourth quarter of the same year, the EOC met representatives of the Hong Kong Council of Social Service and the Pakistan Association of Hong Kong to discuss the obstacles EMs encounter in seeking jobs, accessing welfare, and obtaining medical services, as well as to explore solutions to these problems. The EOC also provided frequent training sessions on the RDO and cultural sensitivity to organisations in the public and private sectors, which totalled 120 training sessions for over 5 400 participants in 2023.

(b) Protecting the equal rights of PWDs

35. In addition to EMs, the EOC is also concerned with the difficulties PWDs face in various aspects, including education, employment, access to services and facilities, as well as biased and discriminatory attitude by some people towards PWDs. Through research studies, policy advocacy, and publicity, the EOC took proactive steps to enhance the well-being of PWDs.

Promoting universal design

36. The EOC learnt from rehabilitation and PWD self-help organisations that there is a lack of accessible facilities in restaurants, making it difficult for PWDs to dine out. To address this issue, the EOC released Hong Kong's first 'Practical Guide on Universal Design for Catering Services' (the Guide) in October 2023 to assist the catering industry in providing convenient dining environments and services for individuals with diverse needs. In addition to explaining the rights of PWDs under the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the

DDO, the Guide also provides best practices for accommodating the needs of various customers at different stages of the dining experience, from entering the restaurant to placing orders, as well as the built environment.

37. Following the release of the Guide, the EOC organised a seminar titled ‘Application of Accessible Technology in Catering Services’ in November 2023, targeting managers and executives in the catering industry. Aside from introducing the protections afforded by the anti-discrimination ordinances and the concept of digital accessibility, the EOC also invited various stakeholders from the catering industry to share best practices in adopting accessible technology. The event aimed to encourage the catering industry to integrate accessible technology into its operations to ensure that customers with diverse needs can equally enjoy convenient services.

38. The EOC also announced the launch of the first Universal Design Award Scheme in 2024 to recognise companies and organisations with outstanding performances and contributions in creating accessible built environments and adopting universal design, as well as to encourage the wider adoption and mainstreaming of universal design. In fact, with an accelerating ageing population in Hong Kong, the adoption of universal design in the built environment can help meet the needs of different communities, serve individuals of all ages, abilities, and medical conditions, thereby creating an accessible and inclusive society.

Fostering the development of disability-related affairs in the Greater Bay Area

39. According to the plan for protection and development of disabled people during the 14th Five-Year Plan period, one of the country’s key tasks is to “safeguard the equal rights of persons with disabilities and provide a barrier-free environment and convenient conditions for them”. Meanwhile, the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) is a key development strategy in our country’s reform and opening up in the new era. To align with the country’s development direction and enhance exchange and integration with the GBA, the EOC participated in the 2nd Greater Bay Area Forum on Synergistic Development of Disability Rights and Welfare (第二屆大

灣區殘障事業協同發展論壇), which was held from 17 to 19 November 2023 at Shenzhen University. The event was organised by China Disability Research Society, Guangdong Disabled Persons' Federation, and Shenzhen University. The Forum brought together organisations, academics, and experts engaged in disability-related affairs from Guangdong, Hong Kong, and Macao. During the Forum, the EOC presented an overview of the situation of PWDs in Hong Kong, explained the protections provided by the anti-discrimination ordinances and the work of the EOC, and shared its experience in promoting universal design. The EOC believes that Hong Kong and the GBA can strengthen exchange and collaboration on the issue of creating barrier-free environments and jointly promote the interests of PWDs in the area, with a view to making the GBA a more accessible place to live, work, and travel.

Promoting education and employment opportunities

40. To promote equal opportunities for PWDs in education, the EOC launched a series of online teaching materials in 2023 in response to the growing number of university students with SEN in recent years. The materials were designed to enhance tertiary students' understanding of students with SEN, thereby facilitating the latter's integration on campus. The online teaching materials cover relevant topics, such as the concept of equal opportunities, an introduction to the DDO, and tips on the etiquette of interacting with PWDs. Since its launch in August 2023, the online training programme has attracted enrolments from close to 1 000 school staff members, students, and the public. In October, the EOC uploaded the programme's videos to its website for use by members of the public who are interested in learning about SEN.

41. The EOC continued to advocate for improving the employment situation of PWDs in 2023, encouraging more employers to hire PWDs. It also participated in events organised by various organisations, such as continuing to act as the supporting organisation for the CareER's Disability Inclusion Index and taking part in CareER's Inclusive Recruitment Fair in October 2023.

(c) Eliminating misunderstanding and bias against persons with mental health needs and persons in recovery

42. In recent years, there has been a growing awareness of mental health issues in society. Nevertheless, the public still generally hold biased views against persons with mental health needs and those in recovery, with stigmatisation and misunderstanding being seen from time to time. In February 2023, the EOC released the findings of the ‘Study on Perceptions of Stigmatisation and Discrimination of Persons with Mental Illness in the Workplace’. The study found that approximately 80% of both employed persons (81.7%) and persons with mental illness (PMIs) (78.5%) considered discrimination against PMIs in Hong Kong to be very prevalent or quite prevalent. The most observed situations of workplace discrimination against PMIs were “having fewer opportunities for promotion” (71.3%) and “not hired because of mental illness” (67.5%). In light of the findings, the EOC will publish a set of guidelines and an educational video on “How to Support People with Mental Illness in the Workplace” in mid-2024 to enhance employers’ understanding of various mental health needs and offer recommendations on how to provide reasonable accommodation and appropriate support to employees with mental health needs.

43. Indeed, the public’s attitude towards mental health issues have a significant influence on the behaviours of persons with mental health needs, such as whether they are willing to seek help and receive treatment or they would choose to hide their medical history and isolate themselves. It also affects whether persons in recovery can integrate into the community and rebuild their lives. The EOC believes that the media has an important role to play in promoting a positive and accurate understanding of mental illnesses to the public. In view of this, the EOC organised a ‘Seminar on Media Reporting of Mental Health Issues’ on 28 September 2023. Supported by the Advisory Committee on Mental Health and the Hong Kong News Executives’ Association, the seminar brought together frontline journalists, editors, academics, health professionals, persons with mental health needs, and persons in recovery to explore ways of promoting balanced media reporting of mental health issues, enhancing the public’s understanding of mental illnesses, and eliminating biases. The participants formed a general consensus that the industry should establish standardised guidelines on covering mental health issues, which would serve as a reference for the media when writing stories and handling complaints from readers. The EOC is currently discussing with relevant organisations on the formulation and implementation of the guidelines.

44. Meanwhile, the EOC attended and took part in events and seminars related to mental health organised by different organisations, such as the Asia Pacific International Mental Wellness Conference organised by the Richmond Fellowship of Hong Kong in December 2023. The event allowed the EOC to explore with experts from around the world measures to facilitate the integration of persons with mental health needs into the community.

Supporting carers with family responsibilities

45. The EOC has continued to raise awareness of the protection afforded by the FSDO to persons with caring responsibilities for their immediate family members through various channels to support carers, such as delivering training and seminars through the EO Club network. Other activities include promoting the benefits of family-friendly employment policies (FFEPs) and the protection afforded by the FSDO to businesses, including SMEs, through exhibitions. In addition, the EOC's Funding Programme of Research Projects on Equal Opportunities 2020/21 funded the Department of Psychology of the Education University of Hong Kong to conduct a study on FFEPs, which was published in June 2023. The study found that over 85% of the respondents considered FFEPs to be "not very prevalent" or "totally not prevalent" in Hong Kong. It also found that there was a gap in the expectations between employers and employees. Separately, the EOC funded an external organisation to organise the Caring for Carers: Storytelling Campaign under the 'Community Participation Funding Programme on Equal Opportunities'. By collecting and sharing carers' stories, the campaign served to raise awareness of the situation and needs of carers, and recognise their contributions, thereby building a supportive community and a family-friendly workplace culture.

IV. Public Education

46. On the public education front, the EOC carried out various online and offline activities in 2023 to encourage members of the public to eliminate prejudice and discrimination and build a caring and inclusive society. The EOC's annual 'Community Participation Funding Programme on Equal Opportunities' aims to encourage non-profit-making organisations, charitable groups, schools,

and others to organise educational activities for raising public awareness of the anti-discrimination ordinances and promoting the values of equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion. In addition, the EOC carried out extensive publicity efforts through various mass media channels, including:

- Arranging broadcast of Announcements in the Public Interest on breastfeeding discrimination and harassment and harassment in common workplaces on various television and radio stations;
- Launching the short movie series ‘Under the Same Sky’ in May 2023 on multiple television channels. The short movie series consists of eight individual episodes, which address the everyday discrimination and challenges experienced by different groups through emotional drama scenes, with a view to enhancing the public’s understanding of discrimination. Apart from arranging broadcast on television, the EOC also uploaded the movie series to the EOC website and YouTube channel for public viewing;
- Commissioning HOY TV Channel to produce five thematic segments for broadcast between October and November 2023, focusing on different discrimination issues, including carers’ responsibilities and the FSDO, sexual harassment in the workplace, universal design, racial harmony, and pregnancy discrimination and breastfeeding discrimination and harassment, with a view to enhancing public understanding of the discrimination issues; and
- Partnering with the Radio Television Hong Kong Radio 2 to produce a new Cantonese radio show titled ‘Inclusive Society’ in November 2023, delving into discrimination cases handled by the EOC, the protection provided by the anti-discrimination ordinances, and best practices in building a diverse and inclusive environment.

Equal Opportunity Youth Ambassador Scheme

47. In recent years, the EOC has been actively using different social media platforms to promote messages on diversity, equality, and inclusion to the general public, especially young people. In 2023, the EOC’s social media accounts achieved over 4.7 million reach, attracting nearly 130 000 interactions on its posts. Indeed, the EOC has always attached great importance to youth education.

Each year, the EOC organises various activities to enhance the awareness of equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion among the younger generation. In 2022-23, the EOC introduced the inaugural Equal Opportunity Youth Ambassador Scheme, which recruited 35 students from tertiary institutions to become Equal Opportunity Youth Ambassadors. Through a series of experiential activities, the Scheme allowed the Youth Ambassadors to gain first-hand understanding of the needs and situations of different communities in society, and encouraged them to promote the message of equal opportunities to their peers. The inaugural edition of the Scheme was completed in March 2023 and a recognition ceremony was held in June 2023. Building on the success, the EOC launched the Equal Opportunity Youth Ambassador Scheme 2023/24 in October 2023 to recruit a new cohort of Equal Opportunity Youth Ambassadors. In addition to increasing the quota for participants to allow more students from tertiary institutions to join, the EOC also enriched the Scheme's programme content. In view of the allegations of sexual harassment at university orientation camps, the EOC added an anti-sexual harassment training workshop to the latest round of the Scheme. Other experiential learning activities include training with athletes with disabilities, visiting a company with diversity, equity, and inclusion employment policies, joining community multicultural tours, and exploring barrier-free environments.

V. Enhancing Organisational Effectiveness and Work Efficiency – Exchange with the Mainland

48. As the statutory body responsible for enforcing the anti-discrimination legislations in Hong Kong, the EOC has been striving to enhance its effectiveness and efficiency, such as organising staff training and exchange activities. To enable staff members from different departments to understand our country's development and the latest situation in society, economy, rule of law, and foreign affairs, and gain insights into our country's future development strategies and their implications for Hong Kong, the EOC participated in a National Studies Course (NSC) in September 2023 in Beijing, along with the Office of the Ombudsman of Hong Kong and the Office of the Privacy Commissioner for Personal Data of Hong Kong. The NSC was organised by the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Peking University. The EOC sent a delegation of 23 representatives

to participate in the NSC. They attended lectures by professors from different disciplines at Peking University to gain deeper insights into our country's achievements and future trends, and visited the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, the China Disabled Persons' Federation, ByteDance, and the Museum of the Chinese Communist Party. In particular, the meeting with the China Disabled Persons' Federation enabled both parties to identify areas of common interest and the experiences to draw on, laying the foundation for future cooperation and exchanges.

KEY FOCUSES FOR 2024-25

Strategic Plan 2024-2026

49. To map out the new strategic plan, the EOC held a retreat in October 2023, which brought together Board Members, the management team, and senior staff members to discuss the EOC's strategic directions and work priorities for the next three years. The Strategic Plan 2024-2026 (the Strategic Plan) was subsequently submitted to and was endorsed by the EOC Board in December 2023. In developing the Strategic Plan, the EOC took into account the group discussions at the retreat and the views collected by the EOC from stakeholders. In addition, consideration was given to Hong Kong's social and economic development trends, as well as the challenges on the horizon. The Strategic Plan sets out in detail the EOC's work priorities for the next three years, providing the direction for how the EOC will allocate its resources. Below are the six strategic goals of the Strategic Plan:

- Strategic Goal 1: Further enhance capacity building and strengthen the reputation of the EOC's complaint-handling and conciliation mechanism through professional development and knowledge sharing;
- Strategic Goal 2: Promote talents from marginalised communities, and foster a diverse and inclusive workforce;
- Strategic Goal 3: Advance accessibility, promote universal design, and realise smart city living;
- Strategic Goal 4: Build a diverse and inclusive culture in society, encourage mutual respect, and promote equal opportunities;

- Strategic Goal 5: Empower young people with knowledge of equal opportunities, and promote diversity and inclusion to the next generation; and
- Strategic Goal 6: Maintain high standards of corporate governance.

The strategic goals above not only serve to tackle the discrimination issues, but also address the changes and challenges in Hong Kong, including the ageing population and labour shortage. The paragraphs below summarise the key work focuses of the EOC in 2024-25, which will be implemented to achieve the aforementioned strategic goals.

I. Promoting the Mainstreaming of Universal Design and the Creation of Universally Accessible Facilities

50. The EOC has been actively promoting the creation of accessible, barrier-free environments and facilities to enable PWDs to live independently and fully participate in various aspects of life. In addition to enforcing the law and handling complaints related to difficulties in accessing to goods, services, and facilities due to disabilities, the EOC has also been calling on all sectors to remove both visible and invisible barriers in society to allow everyone, regardless of age or abilities, to have unimpeded access to different public spaces and various resources. In fact, Hong Kong's rapidly ageing population is making the issue of accessibility even more crucial and imminent. The EOC believes that universal design can greatly improve accessibility in Hong Kong. Adopting products, services, and facilities that incorporate universal design not only meets the needs of PWDs, but also benefits the elderly, carers, pregnant women, and families with strollers. In 2024-25, the EOC will implement a large-scale, territory-wide programme and publicity campaign to mainstream the concept of universal design. The initiatives align with the Government's Hong Kong Smart City Blueprint 2.0, which aims to create a smart city that enhances mobility and quality of life.

Organising the Universal Design Award Scheme and accessibility forum

51. In October 2023, the EOC published Hong Kong's first-ever 'Practical Guide on Universal Design for Catering Services'. To further enhance public

understanding of universal design and encourage its adoption, the EOC is organising the inaugural Universal Design Award Scheme in 2024. The Scheme aims to recognise organisations that have demonstrated excellence in providing accessible built environments and adopting universal design, and encourage the sharing of best practices with different organisations.

52. The Scheme has five application categories, namely shopping malls and retail spaces, office buildings and office spaces, restaurants, buildings and sites with recreational, sports or cultural purposes, and revitalised sites. The Scheme is open for applications from February until mid-April 2024. After random site audits by the EOC and selection by the judging panel, the results will be announced in October 2024, followed by an award presentation ceremony. The EOC will carry out both online and offline publicity to promote the Scheme and the concept of universal design. Furthermore, the EOC plans to organise a forum on the topic of creating an accessible city in the first quarter of 2024-25. The EOC will invite leaders and professionals from across different industries in the public and private sectors to attend the forum. The goal is to explore ways of improving the accessibility of Hong Kong's built environment, advancing digital accessibility, and adopting accessible technology for enhancing service provision.

53. Apart from promoting universal design in Hong Kong, the EOC will enhance exchange and strengthen cooperation with relevant bodies in the GBA, such as the Guangdong Disabled Persons' Federation and the Shenzhen Disabled Persons' Federation. This includes participating in relevant forums to explore ways to promote and implement additional facilities and services that incorporate universal design in the GBA, thereby enhancing the quality of life and social participation of PWDs and persons with different needs in the region.

Guidelines on support for service animals

54. Service animals, such as guide dogs, play a crucial role in helping PWDs participate in society and lead independent lives. While the public has become more aware of the role of guide dogs in recent years, there are nevertheless still occasional incidents of discrimination against such animals and their handlers. Additionally, there is a lack of understanding among the public of other types of

service animals, such as hearing dogs. To enhance the public's understanding of service animals and promote greater acceptance of service animals among stakeholders in different public domains, the EOC will develop guidelines on supporting service animals in 2024.

II. Promoting Racial Inclusion for a Caring and Harmonious Society

55. Over the past decade, Hong Kong's EM population has experienced continuous growth, from 450 000 in 2011 to nearly 620 000 in 2021. The growth of EM population, at 37%, is much higher than that of Hong Kong's total population. The majority of the young EMs were born in Hong Kong, with over 60% of those aged 5 to 14 able to read and write Chinese. They provide a valuable pool of talent that can help alleviate the city's labour shortage in the long run. In 2024-25, the EOC will continue to adopt a multi-pronged approach encompassing policy recommendations, public education and community engagement to eliminate barriers to education, employment, and access to goods, services, and facilities for EMs. Leveraging the 15th anniversary of the RDO, the EOC will carry out a major publicity campaign to promote racial inclusion.

Education

56. In the field of education, the EOC will continue to mobilise relevant authorities to strengthen support measures for NEC students to learn Chinese as a second language. This includes encouraging relevant authorities to develop educational software with pronunciation, character recognition, and translation programmes tailored to the needs of students to enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning. To mark International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination on 21 March, the EOC will organise a seminar for the education sector in March 2024, which will bring educators and experts from different fields together to share their experiences and activities in promoting racial inclusion in schools. In addition, the EOC will organise a recognition ceremony for the second edition of the Racially Friendly Campus Recognition Scheme in July 2024 to recognise schools that have actively fostered inclusive campuses, thereby encouraging more schools to follow suit.

Employment

57. To encourage enterprises to employ EMs, the EOC will continue to recruit more organisations to sign the Charter in 2024-25. To mark the sixth anniversary of the Charter, the EOC will organise a recognition ceremony for the signatories. The EOC will also organise various activities, such as seminars and workshops, for companies to share their diversity and inclusion employment practices. In addition, the EOC will continue to organise training and seminars for companies to enhance the cultural sensitivity of their employees and to build diverse and inclusive workplaces.

Racial integration

58. The year 2024 marks the 15th anniversary of the RDO, which came into full effect in July 2009. To commemorate this milestone, the EOC will organise a series of promotional and educational activities aimed at enhancing the public's understanding of cultural diversity and promoting the integration of EMs into the community. Activities will include:

- Organising a large-scale racial inclusion sports day, which will include basketball, dodgeball, physical exercises, and more to foster interaction and understanding among people of different races and promote racial harmony through sports; and
- Conducting large-scale, territory-wide advertising campaigns to promote the talents and contributions of NECs through various channels and media.

59. In addition to publicity campaigns, the EOC will conduct a 'Study on Improving Social Wellbeing of Ethnic Minorities in Hong Kong through Ameliorating the Digital Divide' to examine how the digital divide EMs face affects their integration into the community, such as their access to public information, and possible measures to bridge the divide.

III. Combating Sexual Harassment in Schools and in the Workplace to Promote a Culture of Mutual Respect

60. The EOC recognises that in order to enhance Hong Kong's competitiveness and attract talent, it is vital to cultivate a diverse, inclusive, and

respectful corporate culture which has zero tolerance for sexual harassment. To this end, the EOC has worked with a wide range of public and private organisations to help them formulate sexual harassment prevention policies and complaint-handling mechanisms, and provide training to their staff. At the same time, through complaint handling and legal assistance, the EOC has collected cases to demonstrate to the public the importance of combating sexual harassment. Various research studies have also been conducted to monitor the prevalence of sexual harassment in different sectors. In terms of public education and publicity, the EOC will launch a territory-wide anti-sexual harassment publicity campaign involving television, radio, and social media in 2024 to spread the message of anti-sexual harassment and mutual respect.

Workplace

61. To address sexual harassment in the workplace, the EOC will continue to work with various professional bodies and organisations to organise seminars and workshops on the formulation and implementation of anti-sexual harassment policies and preventive measures. With the growing number of start-ups in Hong Kong and the mainstreaming of flexible working arrangements following the COVID-19 pandemic, more companies and organisations are using shared workspaces in recent years. Meanwhile, the Discrimination Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Ordinance 2020 amended the SDO to protect individuals in common workplaces from sexual, disability, or racial harassment. In order to obtain more systematic data and information about sexual harassment in common workplaces, the EOC will conduct a research study on the subject in 2024-25. In addition to analysing the current situation, the EOC will also liaise with providers and users of shared workplaces to explore long-term partnerships on promoting anti-sexual harassment. Another study to be carried out by the EOC is a ‘Study on Gender Perspectives in Public Transport’, which will examine the experiences of men and women using public transport and assess the feasibility of incorporating equal opportunities and anti-sexual harassment measures in the public transport system.

Education

62. The alleged occurrence of sexual harassment incidents during the orientation camps of local universities in 2023 indicates a continuing need for the education sector to enhance awareness of gender equality issues and vigilance against sexual harassment among the younger generation. In this regard, the EOC will continue to liaise and work with the tertiary institutions to tackle the problem. Making use of different channels and methods, the EOC will reiterate to the institutions the need to strengthen anti-sexual harassment training for teachers and students. The EOC's anti-sexual harassment online learning platform for non-UGC funded tertiary institutions is expected to be launched in 2024-25, which will enable more tertiary students to gain in-depth knowledge on preventing and combating sexual harassment. In addition, the EOC is currently developing educational comics to explain the anti-sexual harassment legislation and the EOC's complaint-handling procedures and guidelines in layman's terms. The EOC will make use of social media platforms to publish these materials, so that more young people will be exposed to the related concepts.

IV. Promoting FFEPs and Supporting Employees with Caring Responsibilities

63. Expanding the talent pool to address the talent shortage in various sectors has been a pressing challenge for Hong Kong in recent years. Various sectors are also concerned with providing more effective support to carers with family responsibilities to increase their participation in the labour market. In recent years, the EOC has been actively promoting the adoption of FFEPs by companies, which would allow employees to better balance their family and work responsibilities. Such policies would also enable companies to attract talent. For example, the EOC organised a seminar in January 2024, inviting human resource practitioners from public, private, and not-for-profit organisations to explore how to effectively implement FFEPs and support employees who have to take care of their family members.

64. To enhance community members' understanding of people with mental health needs as well as the importance of supporting their carers, the EOC will conduct a 'Study on Effective Policies and Measures for Supporting Carers of Persons with Mental Illness' in 2024-25. Through data collection and analysis,

the EOC aims to identify and put forward evidence-based recommendations on more effective support measures and policies.

V. Nurturing the Young Generation to Embrace Diversity, Equality, and Inclusion

65. Over the past few years, Hong Kong has been experiencing structural demographic changes, with a declining birth rate and an ageing population on the one hand, and a growing population of new arrivals and EMs on the other. To resolve the cultural and background differences and build a culture of inclusivity, mutual understanding and respect, the EOC sees engaging young people as a top priority. This means enabling young people with different protected characteristics to enjoy equal opportunities, as well as encouraging more young people to embrace a diverse and inclusive culture. To this end, the EOC will step up its efforts to reach out to the young people in 2024-25, raising their awareness of anti-discrimination issues and promoting the concepts of equality and inclusion through the following initiatives:

- Launching the second edition of the Equal Opportunity Youth Ambassador Scheme to recruit tertiary students as Youth Ambassadors and enhance their understanding of equal opportunities, diversity, and inclusion through a series of experiential learning activities, empowering them to spread the message on campuses;
- Organising a territory-wide Inter-Secondary School Debate Competition on Equal Opportunities to raise secondary school students' awareness of the anti-discrimination ordinances and equal opportunities issues;
- Releasing online teaching materials in the form of engaging animated cartoons to facilitate teachers and parents in teaching primary school students the values of respect, care, and empathy, which will also tie in with and complement the EDB's Values Education Curriculum Framework (Pilot Version) 2021; and
- Using social media platforms to spread the message of equality and inclusion among the younger generation.

Staffing and financial situation

66. Primarily funded by the Government, the EOC's operation is founded on the principles of prudent fiscal management and efficient use of resources. The EOC's projected expenditure for 2023-24 is approximately \$144.14 million, while its projected total income, including Government subventions and other income, is approximately \$144.23 million. As at 31 January 2024, there were 108 full-time staff members in the EOC. The EOC will closely monitor its financial situation to ensure it has sufficient resources for providing high-quality public services, enforcing the law effectively, and advancing its work in relation to the anti-discrimination ordinances.

Conclusion

67. As the statutory body responsible for enforcing Hong Kong's anti-discrimination ordinances, the EOC is committed to fulfilling its statutory functions, and working with the Government and stakeholders from various sectors to promote a caring and respectful culture in society, create a diverse and inclusive environment, and strengthen the foundation for Hong Kong's sustainable development. Members are invited to note the content of this paper and comment on the work plan of the EOC (paragraphs 49 to 65).

Equal Opportunities Commission
February 2024

Annex A

Number of Complaints Handled by the EOC
from January to December 2023 (by ordinance)

Ordinance	Sex Discrimination Ordinance	Disability Discrimination Ordinance	Family Status Discrimination Ordinance	Race Discrimination Ordinance	Total
Complaint investigation					
Employment field	367	466	53	40	926
Non- employment field	94	213	13	48	368
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>461</i>	<i>679</i>	<i>66</i>	<i>88</i>	<i>1 294</i>
Self-initiated investigation	8	29	0	0	37
Total	469	708	66	88	1 331

**Breakdown of Complaint Cases Concluded under Complaint Investigation
in 2023**

Outcome	Number
Investigation not conducted	50
Investigation discontinued	760
Early resolution with respondent	26
Early conciliation successful	114
Conciliation successful after investigation	7
Conciliation unsuccessful	27
Total	984

Annex C

Number of Applications for Legal Assistance in 2021-2023

Year	No. of applications processed (including those brought forward from the previous year)		Ordinances			
			Sex Discrimination Ordinance	Disability Discrimination Ordinance	Family Status Discrimination Ordinance	Race Discrimination Ordinance
2021	<i>Given</i>	11	5	5	1	0
	<i>Not given</i>	7	1	6	0	0
	<i>Withdrawn</i>	0	0	0	0	0
	<i>Under consideration</i>	2	1	1	0	0
	Total	20	7	12	1	0
2022	<i>Given</i>	8	5	3	0	0
	<i>Not given</i>	3	0	3	0	0
	<i>Withdrawn</i>	0	0	0	0	0
	<i>Under consideration</i>	1	1	0	0	0
	Total	12	6	6	0	0
2023	<i>Given</i>	7	2	4	0	1
	<i>Not given</i>	7	2	5	0	0
	<i>Withdrawn</i>	0	0	0	0	0
	<i>Under consideration</i>	2	0	2	0	0
	Total	16	4	11	0	1