

開創新天地

平等機會委員會在1996年5月20日成立，標誌著香港的反歧視工作開展了新紀元。委員會負責執行本港首兩條反歧視條例，即《性別歧視條例》及《殘疾歧視條例》。社會人士對委員會的成立反應不一，有人期望殷切，也有人半信半疑；就是在這樣的環境下，委員會毅然迎接挑戰，努力開創一片新天地。

反歧視及平等機會的理念雖然得到高度認同，但這些理念畢竟較為抽象，需要加以闡明。甚麼是歧視？如何消除歧視？這些問題向來備受公眾爭議。兩條條例概括地列出了處理歧視的法律途徑，以及平等機會委員會的角色和職能，而平等機會委員會的責任就是落實計劃，並付諸行動。

平等機會委員會的職能是消除歧視和推廣平等機會，主要專注性別和殘疾歧視。委員會致力透過立法及非立法的途徑去實踐其抱負。

平等機會委員會第一年的首要任務是建立組織及實施法例，在1996/97年度的工作目標包括：

- 建立人事架構，招募及訓練員工；
- 成立辦事處；
- 訂定處理查詢及投訴的運作程序；
- 發出《僱傭實務守則》；
- 實施《性別歧視條例》及《殘疾歧視條例》；
- 提高公眾對委員會的工作及兩條條例的認識；
- 製作公眾教育的材料；及
- 確立性別及殘疾歧視的基線指標。

這些工作目標為平等機會委員會奠定良好的基礎。各項目標均已完成：

- 平等機會委員會辦事處於1996年9月20日投入服務。在1997年3月，委員會的所有職位均已聘得人手。主任級職員及輔助人員均接受了有關法例、運作程序及處理投訴等訓練。
- 委員會制定了辦事處管理政策，並於成立六個月後檢討了辦事處的運作情況。
- 有關處理查詢及投訴的初步運作程序亦已制定。
- 在經過兩輪公眾諮詢後，《性別歧視條例》及《殘疾歧視條例》的《僱傭實務守則》已於1996年12月20日生效。
- 《性別歧視條例》及《殘疾歧視條例》中與僱傭無關的條文於1996年9月20日生效，而兩條條例中關乎僱傭的條文亦於1996年12月20日生效。
- 透過多種方式推廣宣傳，包括推出電視、電台及報章廣告、張貼海報、派發通訊、發新聞稿及舉行新聞簡報會等。此外，委員會職員亦籌辦研討會、舉行講座及出席公開場合。
- 用以推行公眾教育的教材資料套陸續完成設計。
- 已展開了四個有關性別及殘疾歧視的基線調查，亦已委託機構進行一個有關同值同酬的可行性研究調查。

要開創一片新天地，平等機會委員會面對的挑戰著實不少。委員會必須建基於法律、尊重人類尊嚴、體諒個別人士的憂慮、及瞭解社會的需要，以奠定鞏固的基礎。要改變固有的價值觀念，破舊立新，實有賴社會各界人士共同努力。平等機會委員會致力實現這個抱負：聯同社會各界的力量，致力締造一個機會平等、沒有歧視的社會。



主席序言
Chairperson's
Foreword

平等機會委員會主席
張妙清博士

Breaking New Ground

The appointment of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) on 20 May 1996 marks the dawn of a new era in anti-discrimination efforts in Hong Kong. Tasked with eliminating discrimination based on the first two discrimination ordinances in Hong Kong, namely, the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (SDO) and the Disability Discrimination Ordinance (DDO), the EOC took up the challenge of breaking new ground amidst high expectations as well as scepticism in different quarters of the community.

The concepts of discrimination and equal opportunities, despite their popular acclaim, are abstract ideas which need clarification. What constitutes discrimination and how to eliminate discrimination are subjects of continuing public debate. The legislative approach to discrimination, and the role and functions of the EOC are laid down in general terms in the two ordinances. It is the responsibility of the EOC to translate these into concrete plans and action.

The main functions of the EOC are to eliminate discrimination and promote equal opportunities with specific reference to gender and disability. The EOC aims to achieve its mission through legislative and non-legislative means.

The first tasks of the EOC in the first year were to set up the organization and bring the legislation into operation. In 1996/97, the EOC has set out to:

- establish the staffing structure, recruit and train staff
- set up the office
- set down operating procedures for handling enquiries and complaints
- issue codes of practice on employment
- bring the SDO and the DDO into effect
- raise public awareness on the work of the EOC and the two ordinances
- develop materials for public education
- establish baseline indicators on gender and disability discrimination

These objectives which serve to lay a firm foundation for the EOC to carry out its mission have essentially been accomplished:

- The EOC office has been set up and commenced operation since 20 September 1996. By March 1997, all staff positions have been filled. Officers and supporting staff have received training on the ordinances, operating procedures, and specific aspects of handling complaints.
- Office management policies have been developed. A management review on office operations was conducted six months after the commencement of the office.
- Preliminary operational procedures for handling enquiries and complaints were in place.
- The Codes of Practice on Employment under the SDO and the DDO came into effect on 20 December 1996 after two rounds of public consultation.
- The non-employment provisions of the SDO and the DDO came into operation on 20 September 1996 and the employment-related provisions of the two ordinances were brought into force on 20 December 1996.
- Publicity campaigns were mounted through various media including television, radio and newspaper advertisements, posters, newsletters, press releases and press briefings. EOC staff organised conferences, conducted talks and made public appearances.
- Training modules to assist public education efforts were being developed.
- Four baseline surveys on gender and disability discrimination have commenced. A feasibility study on equal pay for work of equal value was commissioned.

In breaking new ground, the EOC faces many challenges ahead. It is essential for the new Commission to lay a firm foundation which is based on legislative provisions, respect for human dignity, sensitivity to individuals' concerns, and understanding of societal needs. Promoting paradigm shifts in preconceived values involves the joint effort of the whole community. The Equal Opportunities Commission is committed to its vision: To create, with the support of the community, an environment where there is no barrier to equal opportunities and no discrimination.

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