

**RESTRICTED**

(cleared for publication)

**Minutes of the Sixty-Fifth Meeting of  
The Equal Opportunities Commission  
held on 15 March 2007 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m. in the  
Equal Opportunities Commission's Conference Room**

**Present**

Mr. Raymond TANG Yee-bong

Chairperson

Dr. CHENG Kwok-kit, Edwin

Prof. Randy CHIU

Ms CHOI Wai-kam, Virginia

Mrs. CHONG WONG Chor-sar, M.H., J.P.

Mrs. KOO CHEUNG Man-kok, Christine

Miss LAM Kam-yi

Dr. LAW Koon-chui, Agnes, J.P.

Mr. LIU Luk-por, Desmond

Dr. LO Wing-lok, J.P.

The Hon TAM Heung-man, Mandy

Mr. Saeed UDDIN, M.H.

Mr. YIP Kin-man, Raymond

Mr. Michael CHAN Yick-man

Secretary

[Director, Planning &  
Administration]

**Absent with apology**

Ms WONG Fung-ye, Margaret

**In attendance**

Mr. Joseph LI Siu-kwai	Director, Operations [D(Ops)]
Mr. Herman POON Lik-hang	Chief Legal Counsel [CLC]
Dr. Ferrick CHU	Head, Policy and Support [HPR]
Ms Betty LIU Jia-shin	Head, Corporate Communications and Training [HCCT]
Ms Mariana LAW	Senior Corporate Communications Officer [SCCO1]
Ms Shana WONG	Senior Corporate Communications Officer [SCCO2]
Miss Gloria YU	Senior Equal Opportunities Officer, Administration & Planning [SAP]
Mr. Max FUNG	Information Technology Officer [ITO]

**I. Introduction**

1. The Chairperson (C/EOC) welcomed Commission Members (Members) to the 65<sup>th</sup> EOC meeting.
2. Apology for absence was received from Ms WONG Fung-ye, Margaret due to clash of meetings.
3. C/EOC informed Members that a press conference had been scheduled after the meeting at 5:15 pm and invited Members to join if they wished.
4. Before the meeting commenced, the Secretary (DPA) advised Members that discussion papers on the two AOB Agenda Items, EOC Papers No. 9/2007 and 10/2007, had been tabled for Members' consideration and according to the Meeting Procedures of the

Commission, papers tabled at meetings might be discussed at the meeting but no decision would be made in respect of them. Such decisions would be adjourned to the next meeting or would be dealt with by circulation. Additionally, at the request of a Member, C/EOC agreed to bring forward these two AOB Agenda Items for discussion immediately after the confirmation of the minutes of the last meeting. He supplemented that these agenda items arose from a programme proposal discussed at the meeting on the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of EOC held a week before. In that meeting, it was decided that further discussion of this proposal at either the Community Participation and Publicity Committee (CPPC) or the EOC would be required. Having regard to the schedules of different meetings and the timetable of the proposed programme, and also in view that relevant information had been made ready, they were put on the Agenda of this EOC Meeting under AOB for Members' discussion if considered appropriate.

## **II. Confirmation of Minutes**

5. The Minutes of the 64<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 14 December 2006 were confirmed with the following amendments:

- (i) Proposed amendments to paragraphs 30, 31 and 32 in response to a Member's request as tabled during the meeting. [A copy of the amended pages is attached at the Appendix.]
- (ii) Paragraph 7, line 1: "...**2002** check-walk results..." should read as "...**2000** check-walk results...".

*(The meeting proceeded to the discussion of the 2 AOB Agenda Items)*

**III. Policy Guidelines on EOC's Financial Support to Collaborated Projects outside the Community Participation Funding Programme**  
(EOC Paper No. 9/2007; Agenda Item No. 10(1))

6. C/EOC informed Members that EOC Paper No. 9/2007 as tabled aimed at seeking Members' advice and endorsement on policy guidelines for collaborated projects outside the Community Participation Funding Programme. He reiterated that the paper could be discussed but decision/advice from Members would not be sought at this meeting.

7. As the paper was to consider policy guidelines, for more meaningful discussion, a Member expressed that more time would be required for reading the paper. Some other Members appreciated the Secretariat's prompt effort in preparing the paper for discussion, yet they echoed that more time would be needed for them to consider the paper before proceeding to discussion.

8. A Member enquired when EOC papers would normally be sent to Members for consideration before meetings. DPA replied that normally EOC papers would be sent to Members not less than 7 clear days before the meeting.

9. A Member suggested inviting the EOC staff who drafted the paper to brief Members the contents of the paper; however, another Member considered it not necessary as Members could read it themselves after the meeting to save time.

10. A Member enquired if the paper should be discussed at the CPPC or EOC Board Meeting. Another Member enquired about the amount of funding available annually for such purpose. C/EOC replied that as

this paper was related to policy, it would be more appropriate to discuss it at the EOC Board Meeting. He also clarified that there was no specific sum of money for this purpose and the funding availability would depend on the disbursement of budgeted items and any unaccounted for funding of the Commission for a particular financial year.

11. In view that some Members would like more time to consider the paper, the discussion was adjourned. Advice from Members would be sought in another meeting.

**IV. Proposal from the Federation of Trade Unions for Financial Support on a Collaborated Project Promoting Gender Equality**  
(EOC Paper No. 10/2007; Agenda Item No. 10(2))

12. C/EOC informed that the proposed project was to commence in June 2007. Although Members' advice would not be sought at this meeting, he invited Miss LAM Kam-yi, who was a member of the Federation of Trade Unions (FTU) and familiar with the details of the project to brief Members on the proposal.

13. Miss LAM briefed Members the inception of the idea, objectives, work plan and estimated budget of the proposed project. Members appreciated FTU's initiative in furthering equal opportunities concepts in the community through promoting gender rights in the workplace and family harmony, but some Members had concerns on the following: (i) the procedural fairness in considering similar proposals, in particular when Member(s) themselves were involved / connected to the project and / or the organization proposing the project; (ii) information on availability of funding on collaborated projects and whether such

information was generally made known to the public who might have an interest in seeking EOC funding support for a good cause. Members opined that fair guidelines and procedures should be agreed and adopted by the Commission before a decision could be made on whether or not a particular project was to be supported.

14. Miss LAM Kam-yi further expressed that the main objective of the FTU in submitting the proposal for the Commission's consideration was to help promote equal opportunities concepts in the workplace and community at large. In fact, the FTU had from time to time collaborated with different public bodies to organize programmes for the benefit of frontline workers and the community. On the other hand, being a Member of the EOC, she felt a need to initiate programmes promoting equal opportunities in the community. For the proposal being put forward as detailed in EOC Paper No. 10/2007, the FTU would adhere to guidelines and procedures of the EOC as appropriate.

15. C/EOC summarized Members' views and requested the Secretary to revise the paper taking into account Members' comments expressed at the discussion. When that was done, the paper would be discussed at either a regular or a special meeting.

*(Ms Mandy TAM left the meeting at this juncture.)*

## V. Matters Arising

### Formal Investigation on Accessibility in Certain Publicly Accessible Premises

(Paragraphs 5-8 of the minutes of the 64<sup>th</sup> meeting held on 14 December 2006)

16. This was reported under the new agenda item in EOC Paper No. 2/2007.

## **VI. New Agenda Items**

### **Update on Progress of Formal Investigation on Accessibility in Certain Publicly Accessible Premises**

(EOC Paper No. 2/2007; Agenda Item No. 3)

17. C/EOC invited D(Ops) to update Members on the progress including the outcome on the selection of suitable consultant / consulting company to perform the access audit. D(Ops) provided an update to Members as detailed in EOC paper No. 2/2007.

18. In response to a query from a Member, D(Ops) confirmed that there was a typo and the word “February” in line 7 of paragraph 3 in the EOC paper should read as “January”. D(Ops) then informed Members that the selection panel had interviewed the prospective service providers that morning and decided on a suitable service provider for the access audit. The access audit would commence shortly after the consultant / consulting company was appointed. On soliciting views from stakeholders, he mentioned that encouraging support and views were received. More views would be obtained from different users and contacts would also be made with professional groups. Members would be regularly updated on the progress.

### **EOC’s Work Plan for 2007/2008**

(EOC Paper No. 3/2007; Agenda Item No. 4)

19. Members noted EOC’s work plan for the period of 2007/2008 as contained in EOC Paper No. 3/2007.

**Endorsement of Co-opted Members of the Public Education and Research Committee**

(EOC Papers No. 1/2007 and 4/2006; Agenda Item No. 5)

20. C/EOC informed Members that EOC Paper No. 4/2007 reported the result of the advice given by Members sought via circulation of EOC Paper No. 1/2007 on the proposed appointment of two co-opted Members of the Public Education and Research Committee (PERC). He reiterated that nine Members had endorsed the appointment while one Member had informed that she did not agree to the appointment and commented that she would prefer people coming from the “grassroots” and suggested that perhaps an EOC Member, Mr. Saeed UDDIN, would be in a better position to provide nominations. Additionally, another Member suggested to discuss the proposed appointment in an EOC Meeting; hence Members’ advice on the way forward was now sought.

21. Some Members, who were also Members of the PERC supplemented that the recommendations of the two co-opted Members were made based on whether or not they had good knowledge and frequent direct contacts with ethnic minorities and whether the services they provided or their profession had any connection with EOC’s mandate on anti-discrimination work, in which case they could then be able to assist EOC in the promotion of equal opportunities.

22. C/EOC added that PERC’s terms of reference would permit three co-opted Members. Following the appointment of the two endorsed co-opted Members, there was still one vacancy left. He therefore invited Mr. Saeed UDDIN to give his views on nominating someone from the “grassroots”, who also had a close affiliation with ethnic



minorities to fill the last vacancy. Mr. UDDIN responded that he had been paying efforts in this regard and had made contacts with several prospective candidates who advised him that they would like to know more about EOC's work before tendering a concrete reply. He would be able to provide an update in due course. C/EOC thanked Mr. UDDIN for his efforts and concluded that a third co-opted Member of PERC would be considered when more information was available. The Meeting raised no further comments on the approved appointment of the two co-opted Members.

**Six-monthly Review of EOC's Work (July – December 2006)**  
(EOC Paper No. 5/2007; Agenda Item No. 6)

23. Members noted EOC Paper No. 5/2007.

24. A Member suggested streamlining the review report to include only items of work completed for the period. C/EOC agreed to the suggestion.

**Reports of the Legal & Complaints Committee, Community Participation & Publicity Committee, Public Education & Research Committee and Administration & Finance Committee**  
(EOC Paper No. 6/2007; Agenda Item No. 7)

25. Members noted EOC Paper No. 6/2007.

**Report on New Survey Studies Endorsed by the PERC**  
(EOC Paper No. 7/2007; Agenda Item No. 8)

26. HPR informed Members that the two survey studies, namely "Study on Public Perception of Portrayal of Female Gender in the Hong Kong Media" and "EO Awareness Survey 2007" were both endorsed by

Members of the Public Education and Research Committee (PERC) to be carried out in the coming months. Interested service providers had been invited to submit study proposals before the respective deadlines. Members also noted that selection panels would be formed to help select suitable service providers to conduct the surveys.

27. In response to a query from a Member, HPR confirmed that the approved initial budget for the “Study on Public Perception of Portrayal of Female Gender in the Hong Kong Media” had been revised and approved by PERC at its meeting held a week ago. But at the time when EOC Paper No 7/2007 was prepared, the budget had not yet been changed and hence the revised budget was not included. The Member suggested in future, subsequently revised information could be reported verbally to the Meeting. The suggestion was noted.

28. The same Member also raised if his university background would pose any conflict of interest to his participation in the selection of a service provider for the survey study. He also enquired about the appropriate procedures to be taken when a situation of potential conflict of interest arose. CLC and DPA then explained EOC’s standing procedures regarding conflict of interest. In order to ensure that procedures on selection of a service provider were fair as well as seen to be so, after deliberations, the Member was excused from the selection process. Another Member would be invited to assist in the selection exercise.

29. Members noted the paper. Further updates would be provided to Members as the survey projects progressed.

*(Mrs. Christine KOO left the meeting at this juncture.)*

**Purchase of Document Management System**  
(EOC Paper No. 8/2007; Agenda Item No. 9)

30. ITO briefed Members the main benefits of purchasing an electronic Document Management System (DMS) in the EOC Office. He explained that it would help in the backup of physical files, facilitate fast tracking and retrieval of documents, reduce usage and storage need of paper documents and improve data security.

31. Members noted that the estimated budget already included a 5-year warranty cost, staff would be given access to the system on a need basis and normal procurement procedures would follow. Members approved the use of reserve funds for the purchase, which was in accordance with the normal procedure.

*(Miss LAM Kam-yi left the meeting during the discussion on the above Agenda Item before Members' approval was given.)*

**Any Other Business**  
(Agenda Item 10)

**EOC Office Working Atmosphere, Staff Morale and Training**

32. A Member suggested the EOC Office to give consideration to preparing some information on changes observed in working atmosphere in the office, staff morale and training received for Members' information in due course.

**Implementation of 5-day Week in EOC Office**

33. C/EOC informed Members that the EOC Office would implement the full 5-day working week effective from 1 April 2007 in support of the Government's work life balance initiative. In fact, EOC Office had adopted 3 Saturday offs and 1 Saturday on working schedule since 1 July 2006 with extended working hours on the weekdays. With the implementation of the full 5-day working week policy, staff working hours on the weekdays would be further extended. Early announcement would be made on the change of EOC Office's business hours to the public.

**VII. Date of Next Meeting**

34. The next EOC meeting would be held on 14 June 2007 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m.

35. There being no other business, the meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m.

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*Equal Opportunities Commission  
April 2007*

**Any Other Business**  
(Agenda Item No. 9)

- (1) **Proposed amendments to the Minutes of the 64<sup>th</sup> EOC Meeting held on 14 December 2006.**
- (2) **The proposed amendments were endorsed by the EOC Board at its 65<sup>th</sup> Meeting held on 15 March 2007.**

(1) **Authority for signing cheques**

30. Dr. Edwin CHENG raised his concerns about the changes in Authorised Signatories of EOC Bank Accounts which was recently approved by majority of Members through circulation. The Member said he strongly opposed to such change without discussion by the A&FC and also the Reply Slip enclosed with the said circulation did not provide Members with a choice for requesting an EOC meeting to discuss the subject matter before giving their advice even members wanted to do so and hence it was contrary to good governance practice. He further explained that his concern was for risk control and over-provision of the contingency plan for the absence of both two authorised signatories in Group B of the HSBC No. 1 Current Account as, in fact, either one signatory from Group B was enough and requested that his objection to be formally noted.

31. C/EOC informed that the addition of signatories was for contingency purposes in case where both the C/EOC himself and DPA (the original two signatories from Group B) were not in the office as had occurred in the past, to act in conjunction with the signatory required from a Member in Group A. The office's intention was to have a contingency plan in place, to have the two next most senior officers at the level of 'Director' as signatories; and as further

safeguards, since the two new signatories were not handling administration matters on a daily basis, the Accountant's recommendation would be provided before they would be asked to sign cheques. C/EOC added that while the approval from Members in this instance was requested vide paper circulation, Members could always request a meeting to discuss the subject matter before giving their advice. This was in accordance with the Procedures for Meeting adopted by the EOC Board in June 2005.

32. Discussion ensued on whether the change was an over-provision of the contingency plan and whether additional signatories should be authorized by the EOC Board only when a contingency situation arose, and on the time, administration and management cost involved. In answer to a comment from a Member, the Accountant clarified that when EOC was first established, there were three signatories (the Chairperson, the Director of Administration and the Chief Executive) in Group B and that the Chairperson and the Director of Administration were named as signatories as office bearers of "Chairperson" and "Director of Administration" rather than as Chair and Secretary to the EOC Board. C/EOC further commented that the arrangement would be consistent with general corporate governance requirement that Group A should consist of non-executive Members and Group B should comprise of executive personnel. After further discussion, it was decided that the subject should first be raised for discussion again at an A&FC meeting and a recommendation to be provided to the EOC Board thereafter.