

**Minutes of the One Hundred and Twenty-ninth Meeting of
The Equal Opportunities Commission
held on 19 March 2020 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m. in the
Equal Opportunities Commission's Conference Room**

Present

Mr Ricky CHU Man-kin, IDS	Chairperson [C/EOC]
Mr Samuel CHAN Ka-yan, JP	(via telephone-conferencing)
Prof Cecilia CHAN Lai-wan, JP	(via telephone-conferencing)
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH, JP	
Prof Andy CHIU Man-chung	(via telephone-conferencing)
Prof Susanne CHOI Yuk-ping	(via telephone-conferencing)
Mr Mohan DATWANI	
Ms Maisy HO Chiu-ha, BBS	
Ms Elizabeth LAW, MH, JP	(via telephone-conferencing)
Ms Juan LEUNG Chung-yan, MH	
Dr Sigmund LEUNG Sai-man, BBS, JP	
Ms Shirley LOO, BBS, MH, JP	
Ms Anna THOMPSON	
Dr Rizwan ULLAH	
Mr Gary WONG Chi-him	
Dr Ferrick CHU Chung-man	Secretary Acting Chief Operations Officer [Ag COO]

Absent with apology

Dr Henry SHIE Wai-hung
Miss YU Chui-ye, BBS, MH

In attendance

Mr Ivan LUK Chi-cheung	Chief Legal Counsel [CLC]
Mr Oska LI Kam-hung	Director, Corporate Planning and Services [DCPS]
Mr Tony SIU Kit-hung	Director, Complaint Services [DCS]
Ms Shana WONG Shan-nar	Head, Corporate Communications [HCC]
Mr John KEUNG Shui-cheung	Senior Equal Opportunities Officer, HR Development and Projects [SHRDP]

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 Members (Members) to the 129th Meeting. He informed the Meeting that apologies for absence were received from Dr Henry SHIE and Miss YU Chui-yee who had other prior engagements. Mr Samuel CHAN, Prof Cecilia CHAN, Prof Andy CHIU, Prof Susanne CHOI and Ms Elizabeth LAW would join the meeting via telephone conference. Mr Samuel CHAN would need to leave the meeting early at around 3:30pm whereas Mohan DATWANI had informed that he would join the meeting at a later time.

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 128th Meeting on 19 December 2019

3. Draft minutes of the 128th EOC Meeting held on 19 December 2019 were first issued to Members on 17 January 2020. Comments on paragraphs 11 and 31 were received from Prof Andy CHIU. Amendments were hence incorporated into the draft minutes and issued to Members on 3 February 2020. Subsequently, proposed amendments to paragraph 25 of the revised draft minutes were received from Mr Samuel CHAN. Further revised draft minutes were then issued to Members on 13 February 2020 and no proposed amendment was received thus far.

4. The revised minutes issued on 13 February 2020 were confirmed without further amendments.

III. Matters Arising (Agenda Item No. 2)

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

(SHRDP joined the meeting at this juncture.)

IV. New Agenda Items

Progress Update on EOC's Strategic Plan for 2016 – 2019

(EOC Paper No. 1/2020; Agenda Item No. 3)

6. EOC Paper No. 1/2020 updated Members on the implementation progress of the EOC's Strategic Plan 2016 – 2019 (Strategic Plan) for the period between early 2019 and end February 2020. It summarised the work done by the EOC office in the five priority areas and the results accomplished over the past one year. The last update on the Strategic Plan was provided to Members via EOC Paper No. 5/2019 at the 125th EOC Meeting on 21 March 2019.

7. Members noted EOC Paper No. 1/2020.

(SHRDP left the meeting at this juncture.)

EOC's 25th Anniversary Programme

(EOC Paper No. 5/2020; Agenda Item No. 4)

8. HCC led Members through EOC Paper No. 5/2020 which set out the proposed activities and programmes of the 25th anniversary campaign of the EOC. Established on 20 May 1996, Members noted that the EOC would enter its

25th year of operation in May 2020. Riding on the 25th anniversary occasion, it was proposed to organize a large-scale, citywide anniversary campaign from May 2020 to December 2021. Featuring a range of activities and programmes, the campaign aimed to raise awareness of the EOC's work and contribution to society, educate the general public on the anti-discrimination ordinances, and build rapport with stakeholders and the community at large, with a view to enhancing the corporate profile and image of the EOC.

9. Members noted that the proposed activities of the 25th anniversary campaign would include (a) an Equal Opportunities (EO) Awards Scheme; (b) a visual storytelling project and roving exhibitions; (c) Conference on Asia-Pacific Women Caregivers with Disabilities; (d) online/social media promotions; and (e) making use of collaterals, publications and souvenirs and production of an updated EOC Casebook.

(Hon Vincent CHENG left the meeting at this juncture.)

10. Members expressed their support to the proposal. They also gave suggestions to further enrich the campaign, including interviewing past Chairpersons to give highlights, accentuating milestones of the Commission over the past 25 years and organising an open day in the EOC office.

(Mr Mohan DATWANI joined the meeting at this juncture.)

11. Members noted that the proposed EO Awards Scheme (the Scheme) had been scaled down and retuned following an earlier proposal on the Scheme submitted to the CMAB seeking funding support. Members also noted that the Scheme would leverage on the signatories of the Racial Diversity & Inclusion Charter (the Charter) organised by the Ethnic Minorities Unit. The tentative timeline of implementing the Scheme was from May to December 2021 as set out in paragraph 10 of EOC Paper No. 5/2020. In view that the Scheme could be a signature event of the EOC's 25th anniversary programme, Members suggested

launching the Scheme earlier if practicable, say, in Q4 of 2020, and having the presentation ceremony held in May 2021. C/EOC said that the EOC office would work towards the suggested timeline to the extent practicable.

12. Members also expressed their support to launch an online/social media promotion which included setting up of a dedicated website for the 25th anniversary campaign and promoting through the use of various social media platforms, including LinkedIn, Instagram and WeChat. Members proposed that the EOC office could hire a marketing agency for professional advice on the strategic use of different social media platforms to effectively reach the targeted groups of audiences. Noting the budgetary constraints, Members suggested redeploying resources earmarked for other promotional activities to fund the much needed online/social media initiatives.

13. Members also suggested to strive engaging more youngsters and secondary school students through the anniversary campaign. Members noted that the new version of the EOC Casebook would highlight the present complaint-handling mechanism and the legal assistance work process which had been revitalized with EOC's victim-centric approach. HCC confirmed that the new version of the EOC Casebook would be a built-on version incorporating recent noteworthy cases.

14. C/EOC thanked Members for their valuable suggestions. He said that the Community Participation & Publicity Committee would discuss Members' suggestions, taking into account the scale of the proposed activities and the resources available, and would report back to the Board at the soonest.

15. Members noted EOC Paper 5/2020.

(Prof Andy CHIU and Mr Samuel CHAN left the meeting at this juncture.)

Reports of the Legal & Complaints Committee, Community Participation & Publicity Committee, Policy, Research & Training Committee and Administration & Finance Committee

(EOC Paper No. 2/2020; Agenda Item No. 5)

16. Members were invited to take note of EOC Paper No. 2/2020 which provided updates on important matters raised and decisions made at the four EOC Committee meetings held during the period from 10 December 2019 to 5 March 2020.

17. Ag COO informed Members that the term of office of the three Co-opted Members of the Policy, Research and Training Committee (PRTC), Mr CHAN Ho-ting Mac, Mr CHONG Yiu-kwong and Ms YIM Chor-pik Rabi would expire on 19 May 2020. Members noted that Mr CHAN Ho-ting Mac would have served the PRTC for six years upon expiry of his current term. Members recorded a vote of thanks to Mr CHAN for his contribution and insightful advice provided to the PRTC in the past years.

18. As regards Mr CHONG Yiu-kwong and Ms Rabi YIM, endorsement from full PRTC Members had been given to reappoint them via paper circulation. Ag COO sought and Members gave their formal approval of reappointing them as Co-opted Members of the PRTC for another two years from 20 May 2020 to 19 May 2022 in accordance with the established procedures.

Review of Work of the EOC in 2019

(EOC Paper. 3/2020; Agenda Item No. 6)

19. As regards the substantial surge of hacking activities as reported in Annex 1 of EOC Paper No. 3/2020, DCPS informed Members that the EOC Information Technology Team had taken steps to investigate and counter the attacks. While the parties initiating these unauthorized attacks could hardly be tracked and identified, the integrity and safety of EOC website remained intact thus far and no harm had been brought about to the EOC's systems and the web services to the

public. To prepare for possible attacks in future, the Team had already taken measures to forestall security threats and make available sufficient capacity in web servers to cope with the unexpected traffic on the web. A Member suggested the Commission to consider engaging specialists to launch ethical hacking as a measure to further check and enhance the security of EOC's information systems.

20. C/EOC shared with Members his past experience in combating cyberattacks. He said that ethical hacking could be one of the strategies to enhance system security, and there were usually certain patterns in cyberattacks. For example, when an organisation received more public attention, it would be more prone to be attacked. In the unfortunate event that when an organisation was being chased after by world class hackers, it might not be easy to sustain in such cyberattacks. In this respect, the EOC office would continue to make its best endeavours to maintain system integrity and prevent attacks in future.

21. Members noted EOC Paper No. 3/2020.

Chairperson's Quarterly Report

(EOC Paper No. 4/2020; Agenda Item No. 7)

22. In response to a question raised by a Member, C/EOC said that the Commission had been taking steps to deliver training sessions online. Ag COO explained that the demand for EOC's training remained insistently great. Yet, given the social movement since mid-2019 and the recent ongoing threat of COVID-19 infection, it was difficult to continue with the usual mode of conducting face-to-face training sessions. The Training Team had proactively examined the option of delivering EOC training online and the Team had already assessed the viability of using a common software for the purpose. While noting that the security concerns arising would be less prevalent than those associated with formal meetings involving confidential matters, the Training Team was mindful of the client companies' digital capability to meet the technical requirements for online training, particularly in small businesses. Also, in the

possible event that training sessions were videotaped and reused without EOC's knowledge, it might infringe EOC's copyright and adversely affect EOC's training income in the long term.

23. Members in general agreed that live webinars had an edge over videotaped training as real-time interactions between speakers/trainers and participants could be allowed. They also opined that participants were often interested in joining training online and it could accommodate a large number of participants at one time. It would be worthwhile to take on board online training to the extent practicable in future.

24. C/EOC thanked Members for their valuable inputs. He said that the Commission would continue to explore offering more online training, in tandem with using other social media platforms to promote equal opportunities to the public as far as possible.

25. Members noted EOC Paper No. 4/2020.

V. Any Other Business

Discrimination Issues Arising from the COVID-19 Epidemic

26. A Member brought up for a discussion on recent discrimination-related issues arising from COVID-19 pandemic situation. C/EOC said that the Commission had been adopting a multi-pronged approach to tackle the issues, including proactive handling of massive enquiries/complaints by the Complaint Services Division (CSD) and a series of promotion and publicity endeavours by the Corporate Communications Division (CCD). He also invited DCS and HCC to briefly explain to Members their coping efforts done in recent months.

27. DCS informed Members that CSD had lately received an influx of over 600 enquiries/complaints about an alleged discriminatory act against certain

groups of restaurant customers. Enquirers/complainants had immediately been responded with written replies explaining the discrimination legislation and its exemption with a view to accentuating the impropriety of the alleged act and that the Commission would be prepared to follow up as and when the circumstances of the cases at issue found pursuable.

28. HCC informed Members that since February 2020, a total of seven press statements and eight opinion articles had been released to the media for the purpose. Also, a thematic webpage on COVID-19 had recently been set up on the EOC website, promulgating the relevant press releases and statements, commentaries and opinion articles, media interviews with C/EOC, radio programmes and other resources on a one-stop basis.

29. As the issues related to COVID-19 evolved, C/EOC commented that there were cases substantiating the presence of inadequacies under the prevailing anti-discrimination ordinances. He suggested that the Commission could start legal researches to examine and crystalize such incapacity areas with a view to formulating recommendations to the Government for refinements of the prevailing legislation. Members agreed that continuous legislative refinements along the suggested approach would help promote and internalise equal opportunities values in the community. Meanwhile, Members opined that it would be equally important for the Commission to balance the diverse views received from different parties in the process.

Advocacy for Legislative and Policy Change to Strengthen Protections for Women

30. In response to a question raised by a Member, Ag COO said that the Commission had been keeping under close review the working of the four anti-discrimination ordinances and where appropriate, making submissions to amend the legislation to better promote equality and eliminate discrimination. He said that the Discrimination Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2018 and

Sex Discrimination (Amendment) Bill 2020 were the direct results of the EOC's efforts in following up the recommendations in the Discrimination Law Review since 2016. The progress of the law amendments was all along reported in EOC meetings regularly. The latest progress of the relevant work was detailed in page 1 to 5 of the Appendix to EOC Paper No. 1/2020 considered under Agenda Item 3.

31. C/EOC added that the Commission had been working with the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau closely regarding the law amendments from the very beginning before and after the introduction of the relevant Bills. Members also noted that the Commission had paid much efforts to lobby political parties to solicit their support to the law amendments and which had been found crucial in the formative stage of the relevant Bills. The remaining work focuses on the part of the Commission were to keep in view the passage of the Bills in tandem with the timely drafting of relevant guidance booklets. These would be published once the Bills were passed.

32. There being no other business, the Meeting was adjourned at 4:40 pm.

(Mr Gary WONG left the meeting at this juncture.)

VI. Date of Next Meeting

33. The next regular EOC Meeting was scheduled for **18 June 2020 (Thursday) at 2:30 p.m.**

*Equal Opportunities Commission
April 2020*