

LCQ9: Promotion of women's participation in advisory bodies

Following is a question by the Hon Tam Heung-man and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho, in the Legislative Council today (December 6):

Question:

On promoting women's participation in advisory bodies, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) of the number and percentage of the existing advisory bodies with female members accounting for 25% or more of their compositions?
- (b) whether it will review the 25% gender benchmark set for the composition of advisory bodies (i.e. at least 25% of their members are of either sex); if it will, of the direction and details of the review; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (c) whether it will consider formulating guidelines to ensure, as far as possible, that there is women's participation in each advisory body?

Reply:

Madam President,

The reply to the three-part question is as follows:

- (a) There are 369 advisory and statutory bodies (ASBs) with appointed non-official members. Of these, 180, or nearly half, have 25% or more of their seats taken up by women. These figures do not include the 41 ASBs on which there are no appointed non-official members.
- (b) We continue to monitor the progress in implementation of the 25% gender benchmark for the composition of advisory bodies. As at October 31, 2006, 1,294 (or 25.77%) of the 5,021 appointed non-officials on ASBs were women. Our present focus is on further encouraging the participation of women in Government boards and

committees and we shall in due course consider reviewing the 25% benchmark having regard to local circumstances, operational needs and international practices.

(c) Bureaux and departments are continually reminded to promote women participation in ASBs by taking proactive measures to reach out, identify and cultivate women who are willing and able to contribute to the work of ASBs. It is also established practice for appointing authorities to take into account the need for balanced representation of genders in making appointments, having regard to the operational needs of the ASBs concerned and the availability of suitable candidates.

Ends/Wednesday, December 6, 2006