

PathFinders Limited: Oral Submission on the HKSAR Government's Outline of the Fourth Report of the HKSAR to China for China's Ninth Report to the United Nations under the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women ['CEDAW']
Monday, 20 May 2018
3.30 pm to 4.30 pm
Conference Room 1, LegCo Complex

My name is Paula Grogan and I represent PathFinders. We repeat our comments in our written submission and use today as an opportunity to highlight our 2 recommendations under CEDAW's Temporary Special Measures provisions at Article 4, both of which relate to maternity leave:

Recommendation 1:

- **PathFinders most strongly urges the government to take temporary special measures within the next 6-12 months to clarify and explain how a Foreign Domestic Worker's statutory maternity leave should be handled in the best interests of the new baby's life, the mother and the employer.**
- With the government itself forecasting that our majority-female domestic worker population will increase from the current 380,000 to 600,000, taking special measures now provides a golden opportunity to ameliorate, or even better avoid, the dire and burgeoning humanitarian crisis that PathFinders sees and tries its best to deal with every day.
- PathFinders has helped over 5,500 babies children and women because there is no policy or law that captures and protects this population or indeed any preventative education to avoid it.
- We have been importing hundreds of thousands of foreign domestic workers into Hong Kong for decades - most of these workers are women of child bearing age - how can it be that the administration have not have thought about and provided for what should happen if they have their family while they work here?

Recommendation 2:

- **PathFinders strongly urges the government within the next 12 months to enact temporary special measures to catch up with the rest of the developed world by updating its antiquated statutory maternity leave provision to 14 weeks.**
- Please prepare an amendment to the Employment Ordinance and get it ratified.
- Dr CK Law's announcement on the radio in October 2017 that it will take at least 3 years for statutory maternity leave to be improved is unacceptable.
- By increasing the leave to 14 weeks, Hong Kong would finally be on a par with China and in compliance with International Labour Organisation recommendations.
- If cost of the extra 4 weeks is in issue, then the government can consider applying its significant reserves immediately and on an interim basis while the government then gets its legislative house in order through its proposed consultation process. We have waited long enough for this change. We can and should do better to protect the unborn child and its mother.

Thank you.