

## **TWF releases infographic to highlight workplace challenges women face in Hong Kong for International Women's Day**

**Hong Kong, 7 March 2019** - To mark International Women's Day this Friday, March 8 2019, The Women's Foundation (TWF) released an infographic examining workplace gender equality in Hong Kong within the context of the Asia Pacific region.

The graphic looks at six different areas of women's workplace progress with comparisons to Australia, Japan, Mainland China, Malaysia and Singapore, including women's representation in the workforce, legislative body, boardroom, management as well as the gender pay gap and maternity leave.

This infographic also aims to highlight the challenges working women in Hong Kong face today: entrenched gender biases, social and familial pressures for women to be primary carers, and a lack of work-life balance all of which contribute to women being highly under-represented in senior leadership and decision making roles, and over-represented in casual, part-time work or dropping out of the workforce altogether.

There are several key findings:

- Hong Kong's female workforce participation is low at 55%, and lags behind Australia, China, Japan and Singapore
- Women in Hong Kong are woefully under-represented in senior leadership positions on both private sector boards and in the Legislative Council
- Women earn an average of 22% less than their male counterparts
- Hong Kong's maternity leave at 10 weeks is well behind neighbouring economies

"We hope this infographic serves as an important resource for individuals and organisations to better understand some of barriers to workplace gender equality and collaborate on creative solutions to advance gender equality in Hong Kong," said Fiona Nott, CEO of The Women's Foundation.

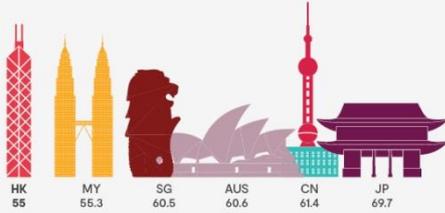
Improving gender diversity is not only better for business, but delivers benefits for our whole society.

"Disappointingly for a global financial centre, the position of women in Hong Kong lags behind other developed markets and our regional neighbours. These low numbers underscore the gravity of gender inequality in Hong Kong. Without concerted efforts of business, Government and civil society Hong Kong risks falling further behind. At TWF, we will continue to advocate for structural changes in Hong Kong to support the full participation of women at work and more broadly in our society," Nott said.

The HD infographic is available [here](#).

# HONG KONG AND GENDER EQUALITY

## How is Hong Kong progressing on workplace gender equality compared to Asia Pacific?



### Low numbers of women in the workforce<sup>1</sup> (%)

Despite women comprising the majority of university graduates, only 55% of women are in the workforce in Hong Kong. This is lower than Australia, China, Japan and Singapore. The low participation rate is partially attributed to:

- entrenched gender biases
- the lack of work-life balance
- caring responsibilities

### Women remain under-represented in government<sup>2</sup> (%)

Only 15.9% of Hong Kong Legislative Council members are female.



Only

# 55%

of women in Hong Kong are in the workforce

### Women are missing in the boardroom<sup>3</sup> (%)

As women move up the corporate ladder, their representation reduces dramatically.



1. Australia 30%
2. Malaysia 19.2%
3. Singapore 15.2%
4. Hong Kong 13.9%
5. China 10.7%
6. Japan 4%

### Women earn less than men<sup>4</sup> (%)



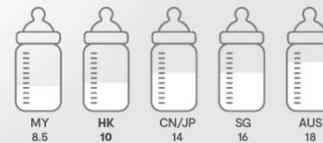
Hong Kong has an average gender pay gap of 22%

### Only one third of management is female<sup>5</sup>

Japan has the lowest representation of women in management at 22%, while Hong Kong, Australia and Singapore are at 29%, 29.7% and 30% respectively.



**3/10** management roles in Hong Kong are held by women. This is well behind Malaysia (38%) and Mainland China (37%).



### Maternity leave is often inadequate<sup>6</sup> (weeks)

Part of the challenge comes from inadequate support for working mothers.

New mothers in Hong Kong are currently given 10 weeks of maternity leave.

The Government has recently proposed raising this to the international standard of 14 weeks.

### Caring responsibilities are still a barrier<sup>7</sup>

Working mothers in Hong Kong confront biases at work and pressure to be the primary caregiver at home.

30% of women drop out of the workforce due to caring responsibilities.

**>50%** of employers said they would not hire women with children.

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### **About The Women's Foundation**

The Women's Foundation is a Hong Kong registered not-for-profit organisation dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls in Hong Kong. TWF is focused on challenging gender stereotypes, increasing the number of women in decision-making and leadership roles, and empowering women in poverty through ground-breaking research, innovative and impactful community programmes, and education and advocacy.

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