

Statement of Anna Wu of 12 November, 2003.

I refer to my letter of 22nd July to Mr. Michael Wong and my statement of 6th November both of which are with the Legislative Council. I confirm that these two documents as well as this statement can be provided to members of the public and to the press.

I have issued a letter to the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) requesting consent for me to access the records of the EOC and waiver of the obligation of confidentiality which binds me as a former chair. I have also made it clear that EOC should secure consent from any party whose private information may be involved in the process.

I have been subject to the most vicious personal attack with confidential information leaked and distorted by several members of the EOC. With regard to the six allegations raised against me in a publication of 12th November, let me say clearly that they are completely unfounded.

The article made it clear that it was a smearing campaign against me. Government and several members of the EOC have been cited as participants to this smearing campaign. I am appalled and government's role in this needs to be clarified.

These allegations and vicious attacks are not only damaging to my reputation but are clearly undermining the credibility and operation of the EOC as an institution. Actions and deliberations of the EOC are subject to the monitoring mechanisms of the EOC, its sub-committees and the Home Affairs Bureau.

Newspaper reports have suggested that government officials were present at the time the strategy for smearing was hatched. It is the duty of the government to maintain the credibility and integrity of the institution, not to undermine it and certainly not to connive with a covert smearing operation.

Clarification to the operation and activities of the EOC can be sought from the EOC and they are matters of record.

- I am dismayed that even employment matters occurring both before and after my tenure as chair were attributed to my failure. The

information is by no means correct and is implicating all past employees of the EOC.

- Legal applications are vetted by a sub-committee and not approved by the chair. Record will demonstrate the success rate of the EOC contrary to what was suggested.
- During my tenure, promotion and education activities were increased and training was established as a service to help parties to increase their awareness and to comply with the law.
- During my tenure, the organization became flatter and the budget was cut not increased.
- During my tenure I have also had research on the set up of a tribunal undertaken. On my request, the presentation of this paper to the relevant sub-committee was deferred to enable Mr. Michael Wong to consider it. I was glad to see that Mr. Wong endorsed the proposal.
- All matters relating to the finances, employment, contracting and statistics can be checked with the EOC and these are subject to scrutiny procedures which I inherited.
- Periodic reports on finances and activities are made to the Home Affairs, the EOC's house keeping bureau.

I have requested EOC to respond to me clearly whether these allegations represent the views of the EOC and I have informed the EOC that I am reserving all my legal rights against all relevant parties.

By way of background I have described in my statement of 6th the restructure process of the EOC. In March 2002, the members endorsed the recommendations that the complaints handling process should be made more effective and that the two operations divisions together with the directorships for disability and gender should be merged into one with one director for operations. As a consequence of this merger there would also be savings arising from the deletion of one director's post. The process of change began in August 2002. The two directors for gender and disability left the EOC after years of service in the summer of 2002 and spring of 2003 leaving these two posts vacant and to be filled by a new Director of Operations.

The recruitment of Mr. Patrick Yu was a continuum of the process of restructure. I had hoped that the post of the Directors of Operations would be filled by March or April of 2003 leaving a few months of overlap between myself and the new director. In the event, the recruitment process was

completed in May well before Mr. Michael Wong's appointment was made known to me.

I provided the name of Patrick Yu to the search firm for its handling before the process of selection was completed and because members of the recruitment board had expressed certain views to me. I am subject to a duty of confidentiality regarding these views. You would see clearly from Mr. Michael Wong's statement of 5th November that other members of the EOC were asked for referrals. This was accepted practice. I suffered from no conflict of interest. I had only met Mr. Yu once from my recollection before his name was provided to the search firm. Mr. Yu was invited by me to give a short presentation of his work to the EOC when he visited Hong Kong.

You would see from the statement of Mr. Michael Wong as well as the chronology of events supplied by Mr. Michael Chan that the procedure was regular and the board was properly comprised. I wish to clarify that the procedure adopted was not new as I inherited it from my predecessor.

Turning now to my letter to Mr. Michael Wong of 22nd July 2003, I wish to point out that the letter was received by Mr. Michael Wong and I had received no corrections from him. The events described in the letter were witnessed by others. My conversation with Mr. Wong on the 18th of July concluded with Mr. Wong agreeing to a meeting on the 28th. I did not cancel that meeting. I was informed by Mr. Michael Chan that Mr. Wong would not have the time to come. The meeting for the 28th was a briefing exercise. Contrary to the statement of Mr. Wong, there was no press conference on SARS planned until after the meeting was cancelled by him. Internal circulars and instructions to officers to prepare a briefing program for Mr. Wong would make this clear. On my instruction, Mr. Michael Chan then prepared and sent a bundle of documents and briefing materials to Mr. Wong. My letter of the 22nd set out these events clearly.