

Fu Hong Society's 40th Anniversary Symposium
"Growing Old and Included - Challenges to Civilized Societies"
1 June 2016

Abstracts of Keynote Speech by Prof. Alfred Chan
Policies and Measures on Equal Opportunities and Disability Inclusion

Prof. Alfred Chan
Chairperson of Equal Opportunities Commission, Hong Kong

To achieve equal opportunity amid the rapid aging population, the vital attention must be given to ensuring that everyone's basic rights and dignity is safeguarded, and everyone has the same chances to have their potential realised. While Hong Kong people enjoy the highest life expectancy in the world, the older population has its higher rate of co-occurrence of multiple chronic conditions. Senior citizens, in particular those with disabilities, are facing considerable challenges in the areas of barrier free access and facilities, employment opportunity and residential care services.

Since its inception, the Equal Opportunities Commission has taken various measures to protect the rights of persons with disabilities and to promote their independence and social participation. The Commission urged the Government to incorporate the universal design concept into its policies, as well as suggesting legislation for retrospective improvement to access in old buildings. And since 2013, a Web Accessibility Recognition Scheme has been launched to encourage the adoption of accessibility design in websites and mobile apps. Currently our study of taxi accessibility would bring a review of accessible features of taxi to the Government.

The living experience and wisdom of the seniors, with or without disabilities, is making a significant contribution to society. We trust that through the concerted effort of the Government and key stakeholders, we can meet the challenges and build an inclusive society which is free from discrimination.