

YOUR ADDRESS

Ms. Michelle Ainsworth,
The Secretary,
Inter-departmental Working Group on Gender Recognition,
5th Floor, East Wing, Justice Place,
18 Lower Albert Road, Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms. Michelle Ainsworth,

Re: Response on Gender Recognition Public Consultation

The Church affirms the universal, inviolable and inalienable dignity of every man and woman, irrespective of their sex and gender. She stands up for and promotes the human flourishing of all people, especially those who are suffering, marginalized and vulnerable. In particular, the inherent worth and identity of every child should be respected and valued by all. The Church rejects all forms of bullying, hatred and unjust discrimination against those who suffer from gender incongruence. The people living in such difficulty deserve compassion, sensitivity and help from our society.

The Church recognizes the distress and suffering of people—and the ones close to them—who experience a mismatch between the biological sex and gender identity. Even though gender identity confusion is no longer treated as a psychiatric disorder, the associated afflictions (e.g. depression and suicidal ideations) should be treated as true maladies requiring charity and tender care.

We appreciate that the Inter-departmental Working Group on Gender Recognition has taken considerable time since it was formed to research on the subject with the help of experts. For lay people, a mere 4 months would hardly be enough to give this subject thorough consideration. Hence, we request for an extension of time at least until 31st March, 2018 to allow a bit more time for a more thorough response from the general public. The following is a few reasons to support our request:

- a. The impact and consequences of GR legislation on all walks of life could not be studied or estimated in such short period of time;
- b. The extended period can allow the party a bit more time to prepare a thorough response;
- c. There is inadequate publication of the public consultation by the government. Most members of the general public is not aware of the public consultation; and
- d. There is inadequate public education and the general public does not have a thorough understanding of the implication of any GR legislations.

To give you a hasty response in this short period of time, we can only afford the following opinion:

Q1: Whether a gender recognition scheme should be introduced in Hong Kong?

Our opinion: No! The introduction of a gender recognition scheme for consultation presupposes that a legislative, judicial or administrative scheme can tackle effectively with a fundamentally bio-psycho-social issue. The Catholic Church, however, opines that gender identity confusion as a primarily psychological issue should be dealt with fundamentally through bio-psycho-social measures, not through any arbitrary legislative, judicial or administrative schemes. Besides, the imposition of such a gender recognition scheme presupposes that a man or woman's biological sex and the self-perceived gender can be severed from each other. From an ecological perspective, this radically disembodied view of the human person defies fundamental human experience and the sheer fact that the sexually-differentiated body is integral to the wholeness of man and woman. We must admit that biological sex is a given by nature which constitutes each and every person's authentic identity. Gender therefore is distinct but not separate from biological sex and that one cannot self-decide maleness or femaleness at will.

Other reasons:

- a. Legislation does not eliminate discrimination. A balanced public education is more urgently needed.
- b. GR is against the traditional concept of family in Chinese culture. GR law will harm the family and society.
- c. GR law could violate the freedom of conscience.
- d. GR law could override parental right.
- e. GR law could put people at risks in sex-specific facility, such as public toilet or changing room, especially woman
- f. GR law could force sex-specific organizations to operate against their original vision and mission, such as girl school may be forced to intake biological male.
- g. GR law could create same-sex marriage in fact, as persons of same biological sex could get married.