

序言 Foreword



「現時正是香港社會
發揮守望相助、互助關懷、
團結友愛的時候。」

“Now is the time for
our society to bring into
full play its characteristics
of **mutual concern and
assistance and demonstrate
solidarity and affection.**”

2002-03 年度是本港社會充滿挑戰的一年。經濟持續不景和失業率高企，導致對福利援助的需求激增。綜合社會保障援助（下稱「綜援」）個案數目，由 2002 年 3 月底的 247 192 宗增加至 2003 年 3 月底的 271 893 宗，升幅達 10%；當中，失業個案大幅飆升 37%，佔總個案量 16%。除經濟需要的原因外，面對壓力、情緒困擾或甚至是家庭暴力的人士和家庭亦向支援網絡求助。

與此同時，本港經歷連續三年的嚴重財政預算赤字及超過 50 個月持續通縮之後，政府必須推行緊縮措施，控制公共開支的增長。因此，緊接資源增值計劃在 2002-03 年度完成後，政府立即推出另一項重大的節約措施，以期在 2006-07 年度恢復財政收支平衡。

基於這樣的背景，本署在 2002-03 年度以致力提供持續的服務為工作重點：我們決心維持一個有效的福利制度，所着眼的不僅僅是今天和明天，而且更是較長遠的將來。我們充分了解到，我們的使命不單是妥善照顧現時在我們福利制度之內的長者和弱勢社羣，更加是那些由於環境逆轉而向我們求助的市民。

The year 2002-03 was full of challenges for Hong Kong. With persistent economic downturn and high level of unemployment, there was a rapid growth in demand for welfare support - the number of Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) cases rose from 247 192 in March 2002 to 271 893 at end March 2003, reflecting a 10% increase. Among them, unemployment cases surged by 37%, accounting for 16% of the total caseload. Financial needs aside, individuals and families facing stress, emotional distress or even domestic violence turned to the support network for relief.

At the same time, after three consecutive years of serious budget deficits and over 50 months of continual deflation, the Government has to implement stringent measures to control growth in public expenditure. Thus, the completion of the three-year Enhanced Productivity Programme in 2002-03 was immediately followed by another major efficiency drive with a view to help restore fiscal balance by the year 2006-07.

Against this background, the Department's work in 2002-03 was characterised by a strive for sustainability: that we are committed to maintaining an effective welfare system not only for today and tomorrow, but also in the longer term. We fully recognise that our mission is not only to adequately look after the elderly and the vulnerable who are currently within our system, but many more who have to turn to it for support in light of the changing circumstances.



年內，社署繼續堅定不移地在福利服務的組織、管理和服務提供各方面作出改善、改良服務和在衡量量值方面取得更佳效益。這包括關閉部門的非核心服務單位或將這些單位脫離政府編制，改由非政府機構營運，以及進一步把家庭、青少年及長者服務進一步加以整合。在社會保障方面，我們盡心竭力向社會人士解釋有必要按照通縮調整援助金額，以便我們能夠協助越來越多墮入安全網的人士和家庭。

香港是一個開放的社會，市民有權知悉政府每項決定背後所持的理據，而政府亦有責任聆聽市民的意見。為了促進彼此的交流，我由2002年10月開始，每周在社署的網頁撰寫「署長隨筆」專欄，與大家分享我對大眾關注的福利課題的看法。我希望藉此機會對這個專欄的讀者，不論是我認識或不認識的人士所不吝提出的寶貴意見，表示感謝。

During the year, the Department continued steadfastly to transform the way welfare services are organised, managed and delivered, and to bring about service improvement and better value for money. These included closing or hiving off to non-governmental organisations the Department's non-core service units and further service integration in family, youth and elderly services. On the social security front, we explained painstakingly to the community that deflationary adjustments to the payment rates had to be made in order to enable us to help the growing numbers of individuals and families that fell into the safety net.

In an open society like Hong Kong, the public has a right to know the rationale behind each Government decision and the Government has an obligation to listen. To facilitate this exchange, I started writing weekly columns on the Department's website from October 2002 to share my views on topical welfare issues. I wish to take this opportunity to thank readers of my column, whom I know or do not know, for giving me their valuable feedback.



社署積極推廣「傳心傳義」義工活動
SWD actively promotes the "Campaign Evergreen"

署長林鄭月娥出席第八屆遠東及南太平洋區傷殘人士運動會中國香港代表隊授旗典禮
Mrs Carrie Lam attended the flag presentation ceremony for the 8th Far East and South Pacific Games for the Disabled

2002-03 年度最後一個月，香港面對更嚴峻的考驗。嚴重急性呼吸系統綜合症（下稱「非典型肺炎」）在本港爆發，短短數星期內便對社會各行各業造成嚴重打擊，不但威脅到市民的生命，亦令經濟陷於癱瘓。在對抗非典型肺炎一役中，醫護人員以及福利界前線人員竭誠奉公，發揮高度專業精神，值得我們致以最大的敬意和感謝。

烏雲背後總有一線光明，挑戰往往帶來新的機遇。非典型肺炎一役已喚起每個香港市民的公民精神，觸動民間源源不絕的龐大力量，自發地獻出關懷和支持。我在撰寫本序言時，香港正逐漸從非典型肺炎的陰霾中恢復過來。只要我們團結一致，互助互愛，我們當可渡過種種難關，變得更加堅強。

林鄭月娥

社會福利署署長
林鄭月娥

The last month of 2002-03 has turned out to be even more trying. In just a few weeks' time, the outbreak of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) has hit every sector of the community, threatening lives and paralysing the economy. In combating against SARS, the professionalism and dedication of health care staff, as well as frontline staff in the welfare sector deserves our greatest respect and appreciation.

Every dark cloud has a silver lining and every challenge gives rise to new opportunities. This battle against SARS has awakened our community spirit and displayed tremendous citizen-initiated mutual concern and support. At the time I am writing this foreword, Hong Kong is reviving from the threat of SARS. With unity and care, we can pull through all difficulties and emerge stronger than ever.

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Mrs Carrie Lam
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