

## 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.

