

Latest Survey from MasterCard Reveals Decline in Hong Kong's Women's Advancement Index Score

Women Consumers in Hong Kong Less Optimistic than Six Months Ago

(Hong Kong, 27 February, 2009) – MasterCard Worldwide today released the findings of its annual MasterCard Worldwide Index of Women's Advancement. Hong Kong saw its Index score drop to 76.5 from 81.7 in 2008, ranking sixth in the Asia/Pacific. This is the fifth year that MasterCard has released this Index.

Hong Kong saw a 5.2 point decrease in its MasterCard Worldwide Index of Women's Advancement score, driven mainly by the drop in the proportion of women to men perceiving themselves to be earning above median income. The number of women per men dropped from 80 women per 100 men in 2008 to 49 women per 100 men in 2009.

The other three indicators saw slight increases from last year. The ratio of female to male participation in the labor force rose to 82 women per 100 men in 2009 from 81 women per 100 men in 2008 and with regards to tertiary education enrollment rates, there were 110 women per 100 men in 2009 compared to 108 women per 100 men in 2008. The number of women considering themselves in managerial positions rose from 58 women per 100 men in 2008 to 65 women per 100 men in 2009.

Women in Hong Kong were less optimistic about their outlook of the next six months (43.1) compared to six months ago (86.4). They were less optimistic in terms of their outlook towards Quality of Life (55.7) than they were six months ago (86.4), the Stock Market (21.1 vs. 75.5 six months ago), Regular Income (67.7 vs. 94.2), the Economy (29.7 vs. 90.0) and Employment (41.2 vs. 91.5).

However, compared to their male counterparts (40.9), women in Hong Kong (43.1) were relatively more confident in their outlook of the next six months. They were more optimistic in terms of their outlook towards Quality of Life (55.7 for women vs. 42.6 for men), Regular Income (67.7 vs. 65.4 for men) and the Economy (29.7 vs. 27.2 for men). They were however less optimistic as compared to the men when it came to the Stock Market (21.1 vs. 26.9 for men) and Employment (41.2 vs. 42.2 for men).

The MasterCard Worldwide Index of Women's Advancement measures the socioeconomic level of women in relation to men using four key indicators:

- Two of the indicators are based on source data from national statistics bureaus and show the ratio of female to male participation in the labor force and tertiary education.
- Two of the indicators are based on survey data, and measure the ratio of female to male respondent perceptions of whether they hold managerial positions at work and earn above median income. These subjective factors are a gauge of how empowered and valuable respondents feel at work.

The resulting Index figure calculated from these indicators shows how close or how far women in each market are achieving socioeconomic parity with men. A score under 100 indicates gender inequality in favor of males while a score above 100 indicates inequality in favor of females. A score of 100 indicates equality between the sexes. *The Index and its accompanying reports do not represent MasterCard financial performance.*

The pan-regional Index score across 14 Asia/Pacific markets¹ edged up slightly from 71.6 in 2008 to 72.4 in 2009.

Australia had the highest Index score (96.1) in the Asia/Pacific, followed by Thailand (91.5) and New Zealand (90.5).

Singapore had the highest ratio of women to men who saw themselves in a managerial role at work (86 women per 100 men), followed by China (75) and Australia (74). In terms of women who felt they earned above the median income, Singapore ranked the highest in Asia/Pacific, with 98 women per 100 men indicating that they earn above the median income, followed by Australia (92) and Thailand (83).

Additional highlights include:

In 14 Asia/Pacific markets:

- Australia saw the greatest increase in its Index score, followed by Thailand, New Zealand, Singapore and China. The rest of the markets showed decreases in their scores.
- The Index score for the Philippines saw the biggest drop, followed by Taiwan, Korea and Japan.
- In terms of tertiary education enrollment rates, markets recording the highest scores were New Zealand (154 per 100 men), Australia (132) and Malaysia (131).
- In terms of labor force participation, the proportion of women to men was the highest in Vietnam (94 women per 100 men), New Zealand (89), Thailand (88) and Australia (87).
- More than 50% of the women surveyed in eight of the 14 Asia/Pacific markets saw themselves as the one who makes most of the major financial decisions for the household. Topping the list was Thailand (77.8% of the women surveyed), followed by Korea (74.4%), China (73.2%), Vietnam (68.8%), Indonesia (59.6%), the Philippines (57.6%), Japan (54.4%), Taiwan (54.2) and New Zealand (50.5%).
- In terms of consumer confidence across Asia/Pacific, women in seven of the 14 markets surveyed were more positive than men in terms of their overall outlook for the next six months: Hong Kong, India, Japan, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Vietnam.

“This is the fifth year of the MasterCard Worldwide Index of Women’s Advancement and it has been interesting to see the movements in scores for Hong Kong in terms of labor force participation, tertiary education enrollment rates as well as perceptions

¹ *Markets surveyed include Australia, China, Hong Kong, India, Indonesia, Japan, South Korea Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan, Thailand and Vietnam.*

towards managerial positions and earning above median income. It is encouraging to see the proportion of women to men who perceive themselves to be in managerial positions increase over the years. The women's segment is of importance to many businesses and we are glad to be providing these insights to help companies better understand and reach out to this important target group," said Georgette Tan, vice president, Communications, Asia/Pacific, Middle East and Africa, MasterCard Worldwide.

MasterCard is committed to empowering women through initiatives such as its U21 Global Scholarship for Women in Travel and Tourism, which was launched in 2006 to provide working women professionals a program to develop their leadership skills and realize their full potential in the area of travel and tourism. The program comprises scholarships given out for the U21Global Executive Diploma of Business Administration that can articulate into The University of Nottingham MSc in Tourism and Travel Management.

MasterCard has devoted extensive resources to developing a deeper understanding of the women's segment in Asia/Pacific, Middle East and Africa. It regularly releases consumer insights and trend research on women. These can be accessed at its online repository of proprietary research www.masterintelligence.com

NOTE TO EDITORS:

This news release is distributed with the table below that shows the MasterCard Worldwide Index of Women's Advancement by market. The full report can be found at the website www.masterintelligence.com

Asia/Pacific

Market	MasterCard Worldwide Index of Women's Advancement			
	2006	2007	2008	2009
Australia	96.1	83.9	79.1	96.1
China	88.3	81.5	73.3	82.3
Hong Kong	77.4	80.8	81.7	76.5
India	N/A	39.1	39.4	37.8
Indonesia	69.2	61.0	66.4	62.7
Japan	59.8	60.7	63.4	54.5
South Korea	61.4	61.6	57.7	45.2
Malaysia	92.9	71.3	76.0	69.9
New Zealand	90.1	96.5	80.0	90.5
Philippines	92.8	89.2	88.0	70.4
Singapore	86.6	78.7	78.1	88.3

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Taiwan	77.2	86.8	76.0	60.3
Thailand	79.6	77.2	78.4	91.5
Vietnam	67.4	68.6	69.2	65.9
Asia/Pacific	79.0	73.8	71.6	72.4

MasterCard and its Suite of Research Properties

The MasterCard Worldwide Index of Women's Advancement is part of the MasterCard Worldwide Index suite of research products in Asia/Pacific. The other key MasterCard Worldwide Index research products include the MasterCard Worldwide Index of Consumer Confidence, the MasterCard Worldwide Index of Consumer Purchasing Priorities, the MasterCard Worldwide Index of Consumer Purchasing Resilience, the MasterCard Worldwide Centers of Commerce and the MasterCard Worldwide Emerging Markets Index. Besides the suite of Indexes put forth by MasterCard, MasterCard also develops Insights reports as part of its series of ongoing research and analysis of business dynamics, financial policies and regulatory activities in the Asia/Pacific region. Over 60 reports have been produced since 2004.

The suite of Indexes and reports do not represent MasterCard financial performance.

About MasterCard Worldwide

MasterCard Worldwide advances global commerce by providing a critical economic link among financial institutions, businesses, cardholders and merchants worldwide. As a franchisor, processor and advisor, MasterCard develops and markets payment solutions, processes approximately 21 billion transactions each year, and provides industry-leading analysis and consulting services to financial institution customers and merchants.

Through its family of brands, including MasterCard®, Maestro® and Cirrus®, MasterCard serves consumers and businesses in more than 210 countries and territories. For more information go to www.mastercard.com.

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