

**Extract of minutes of meeting of Administration of Justice
and Legal Services Panel held on 26 June 2001**

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Review of Legal Education and Training in Hong Kong
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1794/00-01(01) and 1809/00-01(01))

7. The Chairman said that she and a few members of the Panel had exchanged views with the two overseas consultants engaged to conduct the Review at an informal meeting on 6 June 2001. At that meeting, members had taken the opportunity to convey to the consultants their views that the study should comprehensively review the current legal education system in Hong Kong in order to identify the inadequacies of the system, and propose measures to address the problems having regard to the needs of the community. Specifically, the consultants were asked to explain the justifications for the outline of a provisional model they had earlier presented to the Steering Committee on Review of Legal Education and Training in Hong Kong (the Steering Committee) which included, inter alia, a new four-year Bachelor of Laws programme (LLB) and a practical legal training course of about 15 weeks focusing on vocational skills to replace the Postgraduate Certificate in Laws course (PCLL).

8. The Chairman said that the consultants were also informed of the concerns expressed by the relevant parties at previous meetings of the Panel, such as the need to raise the language standard of university law graduates, and the financial implications associated with a reformed legal education and training system.

9. Ms Audrey EU opined that the "Consultation Paper on Legal Education and Training in Hong Kong : Preliminary Review" released by the consultants in September last year appeared to be only a compilation of the submissions gathered in an earlier consultation exercise, and did not contain concrete proposals of how to put in place an improved system which could produce world class lawyers locally.

10. Ms Emily LAU said that for the Review to be worth the time and money spent, the Final Report produced by the consultants should make substantial proposals and recommendations on how to introduce desirable changes to the existing system.

11. In response, Mrs Margaret HILL said that the consultants, having taken into account the views collected in the public consultation process, had put forward some provisional suggestions for the Steering Committee to consider.

The Panel had been briefed on a summary of the preliminary outline of the Final Report at the meeting on 24 April 2001. She informed members that the consultants had recently submitted a draft report to the Steering Committee. To ensure that the exercise had so far covered all the elements that should be dealt with, the consultants had visited Hong Kong in early June 2001 to hold discussions with the Steering Committee on the draft report, as well as to listen to further views from the interested parties and organisations, including members of the LegCo Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services. The consultants had indicated that as a result of the discussions, they might propose to revise some of their recommendations in the draft report.

12. Mrs Margaret HILL further said that the Final Report on the Review was still in the process of development, in view of the comments contributed by interested parties and stake-holder organisations in the legal community. She anticipated that the Final Report could be published and publicly released around late July or early August 2001. Members of the Steering Committee had agreed not to discuss the contents of the Final Report until it was published. They also agreed that after the Final Report was published, there should be at least three months for the Steering Committee to consider the recommendations at length, and to decide how to proceed with the Second Stage of the Review. This would give all parties concerned sufficient time to consider the Report and make their views known.

13. In response to the Chairman, Mrs Margaret HILL said that it would be more appropriate for the Steering Committee to consult the Panel again on the subject around October 2001, when the Committee would be able to present to the Panel its informed views on to how to take forward the Second Stage of the Review.

14. At the suggestion of the Chairman, members agreed that representatives of the Steering Committee should be invited to attend the regular meeting of the Panel in October 2001 to discuss the subject.

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