

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)1673/00-01
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/HA

LegCo Panel on Home Affairs

**Minutes of special meeting
held on Tuesday, 20 February 2001 at 2:30 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building**

Members Present : Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo (Chairman)
Hon CHOY So-yuk (Deputy Chairman)
Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan
Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP
Dr Hon TANG Siu-tong, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS
Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
Hon IP Kwok-him, JP

Other Members Attending : Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
Hon LAU Chin-shek, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

Members Absent : Prof Hon NG Ching-fai
Hon LAU Wong-fat, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Sing-chi

Public Officers Attending : Item I
Mr H T LUI
Deputy Director of Home Affairs (1)

Mr C D B WILLIAMS
Assistant Director of Home Affairs (2)

Mr Edward CHU
Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (5)1

Item II

Mr Leo KWAN
Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1)

Mr Charles CHAN
Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs (3)

**Attendance by
Invitation** : Item II

The Hong Kong Buddhist Association

Ven Sik Hin Hung
Managing Director and the Chairman
of Dharma Propagation Committee

Mr AU Kit-ming
Managing Director and the Vice Chairman
of Public Relation Committee

Hong Kong Christian Council

Rev LI Ping-kwong
Chairman

Rev SO Shing-yit
General Secretary

Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong

Mr Joseph ZEN Ze-kiun
Coadjutor Bishop

Father Louis HA Keloan
Director of Hong Kong Catholic Social
Communications Office

The Confucian Academy

Dr TONG Yun-kai
President

Mr SHUM Choi-sang, OBE, JP
Vice-President

The Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association

Mr Ali TUET
Vice Chairman

Mr MA Fung-wai, Kasim
Committee Member

Hong Kong Christian Institute

Ms Rose WU
Director

Mr Frankie NG
Project Secretary

Social Concern Group, St. Bonaventure Church

Father Stephen CHAN, OFM

Church Workers Association

Rev FUNG Chi-wood
Vice Chairperson

Student Christian Movement of Hong Kong

Mr WAN Hoi-wing
Executive Secretary

Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students

Miss LAW Lap-man
External Vice President

Ms LAU Yuen-wan
Internal Vice President

Christian for Hong Kong Society

Miss BUT Ngan-ping
Executive Secretary

Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee

Mr CHAN Ka-wai
Associate Director

Clerk in Attendance : Miss Flora TAI
Chief Secretary (2)2

Staff in Attendance : Mr Stephen LAM
Assistant Legal Advisor 4

Mr Stanley MA
Senior Secretary (2)6

Action

I. Proposed creation of an Assistant Director Post in Home Affairs Department
[Paper No. CB(2)812/00-01(01)]

The Chairman advised members that the Establishment Subcommittee of the Legislative Council would discuss on 21 February 2001 the proposal to create a Directorate (Assistant Director (AD)) post in the Home Affairs Department (HAD), the details of which were set out in the paper provided by the Administration.

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Director of Home Affairs (1) (DD(HA)1) elaborated on the justifications and urgency for creating a directorate post in HAD. He pointed out that there had been public demand for the injection of more resources to provide enhanced services on building management. In this regard, the Administration proposed to create one permanent post of Administrative Officer (AO) Staff Grade C (D2) to head a new Division (Division IV) in HAD to cope with the increasing workload and responsibilities, particularly in relation to building management, maintenance and safety.

Functions of the new AD and the new Division

3. Mr IP Kwok-him said that he supported the Administration's proposal in principle with a view to better addressing building management issues. He asked whether HAD would enhance its frontline services to building owners and owners' corporations (OCs) following the creation of the proposed new post. He pointed out that some of the community organisers deployed by HAD to attend meetings of District Councils (DCs) and OCs were not well versed with the Building Management Ordinance (BMO).

4. In response, DD(HA)1 said that HAD aims at providing comprehensive and practical advice including successful building management experiences to owners and tenants of private buildings so that they would be better prepared to manage their buildings and discharge their responsibilities of building management, maintenance and safety. He pointed out that HAD had set up two Building Management Resource Centres (BMRCs) to provide information,

Action

services and advice to building owners, tenants, OCs, mutual aid committees and management bodies. As the demand for such services was increasing, the Administration was actively planning the establishment of a third BMRC in the New Territories. He added that currently the number of appointments made with BMRCs for interview with duty members of professional bodies had exceeded the service that could be provided by volunteers of professional bodies. HAD was liaising with relevant professional bodies with a view to arranging more professionals to serve as duty members.

5. Assistant Director of Home Affairs (2) (AD(HA)2) advised that to start with, the Administration would initially deploy additional Liaison Officers (LOs) to assist building owners and OCs in managing their buildings in five old districts, namely Central and Western, Kowloon City, Sham Shui Po, Wan Chai and Yau Tsim Mong. Such an arrangement would gradually be extended to the other 13 districts. DD(HA)1 added that meetings of building owners or OCs were usually held in the evenings. Based on the considerations for deployment of resources, community organisers were assigned to attend some of these meetings. DD(HA)1 said that the Administration was considering allocating additional resources so that more LOs would be deployed to attend these meetings. He pointed out that the proposed new Division would be underpinned by one Senior Government Counsel and one Government Counsel who would provide legal advice in respect of the Division's frontline services, as well as to enhance the professional knowledge of LO in building management.

6. Mr Albert CHAN expressed doubts over the proposal to create a new AD post to be taken up by an AO Staff Grade C (D2). He was of the view that the work in relation to building management, maintenance and safety fell under professional aspects and it might not be appropriate to deploy a non-professional to head the new Division. He also pointed out that given the frequent reshuffle of AOs, the proposed arrangement would undermine continuity in the leadership of the Division. Moreover, AOs were always busy with major and important social functions and were unable to dedicate themselves fully to professional duties relating to building management. Mr Albert HO also remarked that the provision of legal advice on building management should be strengthened. Miss CHOY So-yuk took the view that the new post should be responsible for reviewing the drafting and registration of deed of mutual covenants (DMCs). The post holder should therefore possess legal knowledge and practical experience in building management.

7. DD(HA)1 responded that the new AD post would have to monitor and co-ordinate different areas of work and it would be more appropriate if the post was taken up by an AO Staff Grade C. As far as the post was concerned, its holder would not attend activities and meetings of building owners and OCs in general. He pointed out that the proposed new Division would be underpinned by permanent posts of Senior Government Counsel and Government Counsel who would provide professional advice on the work of the Division.

Action

8. Ms Audrey EU expressed support for the proposal to create an AD post. She pointed out that HAD should take the initiative in providing comprehensive supporting services on building management to DCs, OCs and other relevant bodies. She asked whether the Administration would consider providing departmental professional advice on legal and accounting matters besides drawing support from professionals to provide free services in BMRCs.

9. DD(HA)1 responded that owners of private buildings had the responsibility to manage their buildings properly. Given the resources constraint, the Administration could only provide them with assistance and advice. Therefore, departmental professional staff such as Government Counsels and accountants could only provide advice to the departments concerned.

10. Mr Henry WU said that he supported the proposal to create an AD post in principle. He asked whether collating and processing recommendations for nominations for Justices of the Peace was a new duty. AD(HA)2 responded that HAD was all along responsible for such duty as it needed to liaise closely with non-governmental organisations and people from various sectors of the community.

11. Dr TANG Siu-tong expressed his support for HAD's proposal. He asked about the division of responsibilities between HAD and the Buildings Department (BD) in the maintenance of buildings following the creation of the new post. AD(HA)2 responded that BD was mainly responsible for following up professional, technical and legal matters in relation to the maintenance of buildings whereas HAD was mainly responsible for assisting owners' organisations or OCs to carry out building maintenance works.

Deed of Mutual Covenants (DMCs)

12. Ms Audrey EU remarked that many terms of DMC were unfair to building owners. She suggested that HAD should participate in assessing whether the terms were fair and reasonable. Mr Andrew WONG asked whether existing legislation were sufficient to allow repeal and amendment of the terms of DMC which were obviously unreasonable. Mr Albert HO also pointed out that many DMCs contained terms which restricted owners to form OCs. In response, DD(HA)1 said that DMCs were commercial agreements made between developers and owners, and the registration of DMCs was currently the responsibility of the Lands Department. AD(HA)2 added that the Administration was well aware of the problems arising from DMCs and would follow up with the Director of Lands for improvements and remedies on a long-term basis.

Review of BMO

13. Mr Andrew WONG was of the view that while BMO had been amended in 2000, there was still much room for improvement. He suggested that the

Action

Administration should conduct a comprehensive review of the operation of BMO. Miss Cyd HO asked about the timing for the review. She pointed out that one of the major responsibilities of the new AD(4) post was to monitor and coordinate the implementation of BMO, and review BMO as necessary. When the proposal was discussed by the Finance Committee, members could seek an undertaking from the Administration to report the progress of the review of BMO to the Panel by the end of the current session.

14. In response, DD(HA)1 said that in the light of the practical experience in enforcing BMO, the Administration would keep the operation of relevant provisions under constant review. Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs added that the Administration had been closely monitoring the actual operation of the amended BMO and would review if further amendments should be made to BMO in due course. Currently, there was no definite timetable for the review.

15. In concluding the discussion, the Chairman said that the Panel would follow up the review of BMO in due course.

II. Definition of religious bodies

16. The Chairman welcomed representatives of the deputations to the meeting. At the invitation of the Chairman, the deputations presented their views, the salient points of which were set out in paragraphs 17 to 29 below.

The Hong Kong Buddhist Association (HKBA)
[Paper No. CB(2)910/00-01(02)]

17. Ven Sik Hin Hung of HKBA briefed members on HKBA's submission. Ven Sik pointed out that he originally intended to define in the first place what was "orthodox" and what was "evil" according to the Buddhist doctrines and then examine the definition of evil cults in his capacity as an ordinary citizen. Due to time constraint, he would only elaborate his views from the latter perspective at the meeting. He explained that Articles 32 and 141 of the Basic Law provided for the protection of freedom of religious belief in Hong Kong. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) could not impose restrictions on religious activities as long as they did not contravene the law. However, the issue of evil cults was as a matter of fact a serious social problem in the 21st century. As a responsible government, the HKSAR Government should closely observe the activities of "highly dangerous religious bodies". He explained that the definition of "highly dangerous religious bodies" should include ——

- (a) any religious bodies whose followers would be misled under the influence of superstitious ideas or the guidance of such bodies to behave in a way which might cause harm to themselves or other people;

Action

- (b) any religious bodies whose followers would lose their senses or commit extreme or abnormal acts as a result of their beliefs, complying with the doctrines of such bodies or taking part in their activities; and
- (c) any religious bodies which were highly organised with ample resources and which set national laws and state powers at defiance.

18. Ven Sik further pointed out that the most effective and fundamental way of solving the problem of evil cults was to help the development of orthodox religious beliefs and orthodox religions.

Hong Kong Christian Council (HKCC)

19. Rev LI Ping-kwong of HKCC said that there was no consensus among Christian organisations on the definition of evil cults. All they did was to define and prescribe “orthodox” and “heretical” doctrines and beliefs. Generally speaking, Christian organisations were of the view that religious bodies and societies registered under statutory requirements as well as their lawful activities and gatherings should be respected and accepted. He stressed that Christian organisations would not deny and criticise other religious bodies on the ground that the beliefs and behavior of such bodies were different from theirs. He was of the view that the people of Hong Kong should continue to enjoy freedom of religious belief, speech and lawful assembly.

Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong (CDHK)

20. Mr Joseph ZEN Ze-kiun, Coadjutor Bishop of CDHK said that there was no need for the HKSAR Government to define and prescribe “religious bodies” by legislation. Neither was it necessary to enact laws on religion because unlawful practices of any organisations could be caught under existing legislation. He stressed that Hong Kong had been upholding the principle of religious diversity and to impose a definition on “religious bodies” might lead to a divided community. He further pointed out that the activities of Falun Gong in Hong Kong and related issues had aroused much concern and controversy among all sectors of the community. Under the prevailing social climate, it would be more difficult for the community to engage in fair discussions on the issue of legislation on religious bodies.

The Confucian Academy (the Academy)

21. Dr TONG Yun-kai of the Academy presented to members the views of the Academy on the meaning of religions as well as the effects of religions on individuals and the community as a whole. He pointed out that through their doctrines and beliefs, religious bodies guided their followers to give full play to the goodness in human beings and to the right track so that different social groups could live together in harmony. As far as the Confucious doctrines were concerned, a religious body would be regarded as abnormal if it created unrest in

Action

the community, challenged institutions other than its own and causing bodily and mental injury to its followers or other people in a direct or indirect way. Abnormal religious activities should be properly guided and regulated in accordance with laws. Failing which, restrictions should be imposed on such activities for the well-being of the community at large.

The Chinese Muslim Cultural and Fraternal Association (the Association)

22. Mr Ali TUET of the Association said that religious bodies should aim at bringing peace to individuals and the community, enabling their followers to achieve peace of mind and attain spiritual harmony and satisfaction. He was of the view that religious bodies were not orthodox if their doctrines ran counter to this basic principle, particularly if such bodies misled their followers to hurt themselves or cause bodily or mental injury to others. He stressed that the Islamic doctrines required followers to respect and observe the laws of any country or any place. It definitely did not advocate the worship of idols. He added that respecting laws implied not affecting and intruding upon other people's lives and habits, etc.

Hong Kong Christian Institute (HKCI)

[Paper No. CB(2)910/00-01(01)]

23. Ms Rose WU of HKCI briefed members on the submission of HKCI. She stressed that HKCI called upon all religious bodies and all LegCo Members to defend freedom of religion and freedom of conscience to ensure that the basic human rights of the general public were protected.

Social Concern Group, St. Bonaventure Church (the Concern Group)

[Paper No. CB(2)902/00-01(02)]

24. Father Stephen CHAN of the Concern Group briefed members on its submission. He considered it unnecessary for LegCo to convene a meeting to discuss the definitions of religions or evil cults unless there was a need to legislate on religion. He said that to define religions by legislation would undermine the integrity of the Societies Ordinance and give rise to discussions on the need to enact laws for organisations of different natures. He stressed that as long as the activities of a citizen or organisation did not contravene the laws, the Government should not impose any restrictions on such activities.

Church Workers Association (CWA)

[Paper No. CB(2)910/00-01(03)]

25. Rev FUNG Chi-wood of CWA shared with members his views on whether Falun Gong carried a trait of an evil cult. Rev FUNG pointed out that from his experience and knowledge of Falun Gong, he did not consider that Falun Gong bore any characteristics of an evil cult.

Action

Student Christian Movement of Hong Kong (Student Movement)

26. Mr WAN Hoi-wing of the Student Movement said that there was no need for LegCo to examine issues relating to the definition of religions and the definition of evil cults as it was very difficult to draw a line between “orthodox” and “evil”. In fact, because of the respect for religious freedom and tolerance for religious diversity, western societies generally did not legislate against evil cults. In this way, the individual’s freedom of religious belief could be protected and everyone was free to practise their religious beliefs as long as they abided by the laws of the society. Mr WAN illustrated the danger of defining “evil cults” by citing historical events in which disasters had been caused by rejection and attack among different religious denominations due to differences in their religious beliefs. Citing examples, he also pointed out that western countries usually adopted a lenient and tolerant attitude towards people who had hurt themselves or infringed upon other people’s rights out of their religious beliefs.

Hong Kong Federation of Catholic Students (the Federation)

27. Miss LAW Lap-man of the Federation said that the Federation shared the views of Mr Joseph ZEN of CDHK and Father Stephen CHAN of the Concern Group. She considered that there was no need for LegCo to discuss issues relating to “the definition of evil cults” because there would not be any objective criteria. The community also should not define evil cult on the basis of the criteria determined by a minority. The Federation was of the view that as long as the doctrines of a religious group did not contravene the basic principles of human rights, the Administration should not intervene in its activities lest this would hinder the free and diversified development of religions. Ms LAU Yuen-wan of the Federation added that religious bodies were adequately monitored under existing legislation in Hong Kong. The Government should not consider enacting laws on religion to regulate the activities of religious bodies. Otherwise, there would be little room remained for the development of minor stream religious bodies in the community.

Christian for Hong Kong Society (the Christian Society)

28. Miss BUT Ngan-ping of the Christian Society said that the Christian Society did not see a need for the Government to define evil cults by legislation. Under the existing legislation, a person could lodge a complaint to the Police if he was subject to unlawful nuisance. She pointed out that the community should not form a simple judgement as to whether the doctrines and activities of the Hong Kong Association of Falun Dafa could be classified as those of an evil cult. Like Christian organisations, all other religious bodies were also part of the community and they should actively participate in community building and social transformation so as to attain a better world. Miss BUT added that the Christian Society did not consider that the activities of the Hong Kong Association of Falun Dafa would have an adverse impact on the stability of Hong Kong.

Action

Hong Kong Christian Industrial Committee (HKCIC)
[Paper No. CB(2)902/00-01(01)]

29. Mr CHAN Ka-wai of HKCIC said that HKCIC's position on the Hong Kong Association of Falun Dafa was set out in the joint statement made by 12 Christian organisations. He pointed out that the Government should not enact laws to regulate the activities of religious bodies for fear that freedom of religion and the social functions of religious bodies would be affected. He explained that apart from fostering social cohesion to achieve peace and stability in the community, religious bodies would organise or participate in social reforms. In the course of these social movements and reforms, religious bodies would inevitably be critical of Government policies. It would be dangerous for the Government to label a religious body as orthodox or evil simply on the basis of their criticisms. Mr CHAN cited some examples in history to illustrate the social functions of religious bodies as well as some horrible incidents in which religious bodies had been labeled as evil cults as a consequence of their involvement in political and social reforms. Mr CHAN hoped that the Government would not interfere with the life of followers of a religious body who merely practised their religion, and would avoid infringing upon people's right to freedom of religious belief.

Discussion

30. The Chairman explained that the meeting was called mainly as a result of the remarks made by Mr TUNG Chee-hwa, the Chief Executive at the Council meeting on 8 February 2001 that "Falun Gong more or less bears some characteristics of an evil cult". The purpose of the meeting was to allow religious bodies to express their views on the definitions of "orthodox religions" and "evil cults" as well as the need for the Government to respect freedom of religion. The Panel had also invited representatives of the Administration to the meeting to receive the views of deputations direct.

31. Ms Emily LAU referred to the points raised by HKCI in its submission that by legislating against evil cults, China had violated Article 36 of its Constitution which stated that its citizens enjoyed freedom of religious belief, and that the criticisms made on Falun Gong in Hong Kong by Mr YE Xiaowen, head of the Bureau of Religious Affairs under the State Council, were intentionally meant to put pressure on HKSAR Government. Given that the person-in-charge of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in HKSAR recently had also made statements on the activities of Falun Gong, Ms LAU asked whether this spate of incidents had given the deputations an impression that the Central Government was interfering with HKSAR's internal affairs to the effect of undermining the principle of "one country, two systems" as well as jeopardising freedom of religious belief as guaranteed under Article 32 of the Basic Law.

32. In response, Mr CHAN Ka-wai of HKCIC said that it was not appropriate for officials of the Central and HKSAR Governments to publicly express views

Action

on the nature of religious bodies and their activities as it might put undue influence on people's freedom to choose their religious belief and take part in religious activities as well as undermine the principle of "one country, two systems". He suggested that the Central Government should consider abolishing the legislation on religion so that all people could enjoy freedom of religious belief as guaranteed under Article 36 of the Constitution of The People's Republic of China. Mr WAN Hoi-wing of the Student Movement said that he did not see the remarks of Mr YE Xiaowen a direct interference with HKSAR Government's handling of issues relating to the local Falun Gong. His remarks had been made as a result of the spate of incidents in the Mainland. However, he said that there was no need for officials of the Hong Kong Government to actively respond to Mr YE's remarks as it might cause misunderstanding that Mainland officials had intentionally meddled in HKSAR's internal affairs. Ms Rose WU of HKCI concurred with the two representatives. She added that as there was great difference between the laws regulating religious bodies in Hong Kong and those in China, it was not appropriate for Mainland officials to comment on the activities of the Hong Kong Association of Falun Dafa on the basis of the Mainland's policy on and attitude towards evil cults.

33. Mr Albert CHAN expressed concern about the definition of the term "highly dangerous religious bodies". He asked how HKBA would assess the incident in the Chinese history about the Government of the Qing Dynasty setting fire to destroy the Shaolin Monastery.

34. Ven Sik Hin Hung of HKBA responded that the term "highly dangerous religious bodies" mentioned in its submission referred to those bodies that would pose threat to people's personal safety and social stability. He stressed that the three definitions of "highly dangerous religious bodies" were made on the basis of religious bodies' behaviour instead of their religions and doctrines. As the standards on behaviour were more objective, LegCo and enforcement agencies could decide the standards to be adopted by holding open discussions or through a democratic process. Regarding the incident about setting fire to the Shaolin Monastery, Ven Sik was of the view that it should not be mixed up with the definition of "highly dangerous religious bodies".

35. Mr Albert HO said that everyone was free to choose their religious belief and comment on the nature of individual bodies, but it was difficult for the community as a whole to differentiate between what was "orthodox" and what was "evil". He considered that the most important question was whether existing legislation was adequate to protect freedom of religious belief and the personal safety of members of religious bodies and the public. In this regard, Mr HO asked whether the case about Falun Gong practitioners causing disturbance in the Po Lin Monastery on Lantau Island as mentioned by HKBA had been referred to the Police for proper investigation.

36. Ven Sik Hin Hung of HKBA responded that he shared Mr Albert HO's view that the activities of Falun Gong practitioners should be dealt with from a

Action

legal perspective. He added that as those Falun Gong practitioners who had caused disturbance in the Po Lin Monastery were well aware of the grey area of the existing legislation, the Police could not intervene to offer any assistance. The matter was ultimately resolved as a result of discussions between Ven Chi Wai and representatives of the Hong Kong Association of Falun Dafa.

37. Mr LAU Chin-shek said that he showed the greatest respect for those Buddhist monks who committed self-ignition to protest against the government of the day during the Vietnamese War in the 60's. In this connection, he asked whether this kind of behaviour would be regarded by the Buddhist as extreme and abnormal.

38. Ven Sik Hin Hung of the Hong Kong Buddhist Association responded that the Buddhist doctrines imposed a strict ban on suicidal behaviour. He explained that by "highly dangerous religious bodies", he referred to those bodies whose followers were misled under the influence of superstitious ideas and the guidance of the leaders of such bodies to behave in a way that might cause harm to themselves as well as others. He pointed out that the Buddhist Monks who had set themselves on fire during the Vietnamese War had acted on their own wishes and stance.

39. Mr LAU Chin-shek asked whether existing legislation was sufficient to prescribe religious and non-religious activities. In response, Rev SO Shing-yit of HKCC pointed out that the existing legislation was sufficient to protect freedom of religion and the scope of activities undertaken by members of the public. As such, there was no need to introduce amendments to existing legislation at this stage. He pointed out that heretical activities had emerged in Hong Kong in the 80's and some of these heretical cults even had doctrines similar to those of Christianity. Although Christian churches were very concerned about the activities of such heretical cults, they had never propose any administrative or legislative measures to restrict such activities.

40. Having regard to the views expressed by the deputations, the Chairman asked whether the Administration considered that religious bodies and their activities were adequately regulated under existing legislation. In response, Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs (1) (DS/HA(1)) pointed out that the Administration only attended the meeting at the Panel's request. He stressed that the Administration had yet to consider legislating on the definition of religions and religious activities. He pointed out that religious freedom and rights were fully guaranteed under the Basic Law and the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance in Hong Kong. Therefore, there was no legislation in Hong Kong to regulate religion.

41. Miss Cyd HO stressed that politics should not have any bearing on religion. She asked whether the Administration had ever considered enacting legislation to strengthen regulation on the grounds that the activities of individual organisations had affected public peace and order. Miss CHOY So-yuk said that she very much shared the view of some deputations that unless the

Action

Government intended to enact legislation on religion, there was no need for the Panel to hold discussions on the definition of religious bodies. DS/HA(1) reiterated that there was currently no legislation in Hong Kong to regulate religious belief.

42. In conclusion, the Chairman reiterated the importance of respecting freedom of religion. He hoped that the Administration would consider the views of the deputations and members and would not intervene in the legitimate activities of religious bodies in Hong Kong.

III. Any other business

43. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:40 pm.

Legislative Council Secretariat
1 June 2001