

From: Hong Kong Blind Union
To : Bills Committee on Copyright (Amendment) Bill 2001
Date: 26 August, 2002
Re: Comments on the Copyright (Amendment) Bill 2001

We are a self-help organization formed and run by visually impaired people. Promoting equal opportunities in the society has long been a prime concern for us. Our members include people with different levels of visual impairment, the support of computer equipment and software for them to access information is very important. With reference to the consultation paper relating to the civil and criminal liabilities of the parallel importation of and subsequent dealings in computer software under the Copyright Ordinance of computer software, our opinion is as follows:

We supports the removal of the civil and criminal liabilities related to parallel importation of and the subsequent dealings in computer software under the Copyright Ordinance. We believe that allowing parallel importation of computer software could increase market competition, and most importantly, offer equal opportunities for people from all walks of life to enjoy the achievement in the development of information technology. It is because the lower prices for computer software products through parallel importation are generally more affordable for especially small and medium enterprises, NGOs and the general public. People with visual impairment generally belongs to low income groups. People with disabilities of ages over 15 who are economically inactive accounted for 39.5% of total population (ref. pg.48, Special Topics Report No. 28, Persons with disabilities and chronic diseases). The support of computer equipment and software is very important for the visually impaired. Parallel importation of computer software can help to break the digital divide, such that poverty would never be an obstacle for obtaining the world of information.