

CSO/ADM CR 14/3231/97

Tel No. : 2810 3838

Fax No. : 2804 6870

21 March 2002

The Hon Mrs Selina Chow Liang Shuk-ye, JP
Chairman of the House Committee
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Proposed Priority in the Scrutiny of Bills by Members

I am writing to suggest that priority be accorded by Members to the scrutiny of the Prevention of Child Pornography Bill and the Chemical Weapons (Convention) Bill.

Prevention of Child Pornography Bill

The Prevention of Child Pornography Bill, introduced into the Legislative Council on 23 January 2002, seeks to improve the existing protection to children against sexual exploitation to facilitate the implementation of the International Labour Convention No. 182 (ILC 182) in Hong Kong.

The ILC 182 aims to eliminate the worst form of child labour. It will soon be ratified by the Central People's Government and extended to Hong Kong. Early enactment of the Bill will enable us to comply with the requisite provisions of the Convention within the specified timeframe, i.e. 12 months after its extension to Hong Kong. We will also be able to prevent the problem of child pornography in Hong Kong, given the rapid advancement of technology which has made the

transmission and proliferation of child pornography much easier than ever.

Chemical Weapons (Convention) Bill

The Chemical Weapons (Convention) Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council on 7 November 2001. It provides for the necessary legal authority to fully implement the “Convention on the Prohibition of Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction” (the Chemical Weapons Convention) in Hong Kong.

The Chemical Weapons Convention was extended to Hong Kong in July 1997 by the Central People’s Government under Article 153 of the Basic Law. Although the import and export of the relevant chemicals are subject to licensing control and the provision of services intended to assist the development of chemical weapons is prohibited under existing legislation, these controls fall short of the full requirements of the Convention, e.g. the declaration requirements for the relevant toxic chemicals. Apart from discharging our international obligations, it is in the interest of the HKSAR to pass the Bill into law as early as possible to underline our commitment to internationally agreed arrangements on the ban of chemical weapons and on the monitoring of activities involving sensitive chemicals, particularly in the light of the global concern about the use of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists. This will help enhance Hong Kong’s international reputation in the area of strategic trade controls, ensure our continued access to a full range of chemicals needed for local industrial, medical, research, and trading purposes.

Given the foregoing, I am writing to suggest that priority be accorded by Members to the scrutiny of the two Bills. I should be most grateful if you would put forward our above suggestion for Members’ consideration at the coming House Committee meeting on 22 March 2002.

(Andrew H Y Wong)
Director of Administration