

**Legislative Council Constitutional Affairs Panel Meeting
30 October 2001**

**Policy Objective of Constitutional Affairs Bureau
Speech by the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs**

Introduction

The Policy Objective for the Constitutional Affairs Bureau (CAB) is to maintain confidence in the constitutional arrangements of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). We will work on the following areas in the coming year:

- (a) continue to facilitate the implementation of the Basic Law and promote understanding of the Basic Law, to secure community confidence in the principle of “One Country, Two Systems” and the full and faithful implementation of the Basic Law;
- (b) continue to facilitate the maintenance of cordial and constructive working relationships with the Central People’s Government (CPG), other Mainland authorities and the Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) Government;
- (c) continue to facilitate the HKSAR’s active participation in the international arena;
- (d) ensure continual development of the electoral systems; and
- (e) study the system of accountability.

2. In the past year, we endeavoured to implement the initiatives that we pledged in 2000 and before. I am pleased to inform Members that of the 25 targets set by CAB, seven have been completed. The remaining 18 items are our on-going commitments. We will report progress to the Legislative Council and the community on a regular basis. Now, I would like to outline the focus of CAB's work in the coming year.

Implement the Basic Law and promote understanding of the Basic Law

3. CAB plays the role of co-ordinator in the implementation of the Basic Law. We will continue to assist other bureaux and departments in the implementation of the Basic Law in their respective areas of work. We will continue to provide quality and effective secretariat support to the Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee.

4. We will conduct systematic surveys regularly to evaluate the effectiveness of past efforts to promote the Basic Law and identify better means to do so. The next survey will be conducted in 2002. In order to enhance public awareness of the Basic Law, we are in the process of producing a series of TV APIs to publicize, in a light-hearted manner, the Basic Law provisions that are of interest to individuals and the community. We will also improve and enrich the contents of the Basic Law Homepage to provide the local and overseas communities with Basic Law related information on the internet.

Facilitate the maintenance of cordial and constructive working relationships with the CPG, other Mainland authorities and the MSAR Government

5. CAB seeks to maintain cordial working relationships with the CPG, other Mainland authorities and the MSAR Government, and to foster exchanges and contacts, in accordance with the principle of "One Country, Two Systems".

Facilitate the HKSAR's continued and active participation in the international arena

6. In the past year, the HKSAR continued to participate actively in the international arena thereby enhancing its status as an international trade, financial, aviation and shipping centre.

7. In the coming year, CAB will continue to provide advice to other bureaux and departments to ensure that the HKSAR continues to participate actively in international organizations and conferences, host international conferences and conclude agreements with foreign states in accordance with the Basic Law. We will co-ordinate the work of other bureaux and departments to implement in Hong Kong the Central People's Government's international obligations arising from international agreements and resolutions passed by the United Nations.

Ensure continual development of the electoral systems

8. On the political development front, the Basic Law sets out the blueprint for the future political development of Hong Kong, and lays down the principle of gradual and orderly progress for democratisation. In order to facilitate the conduct of the second term Chief Executive election in March 2002, we have proceeded with the preparation of subsidiary legislation to provide for the practical arrangements for the Election Committee subsector by-elections and the Chief Executive election. We will ensure that the Chief Executive election is fair, open and honest.

9. In considering the political structure of Hong Kong after 2007, we will take into account the experience of two milestones in our political development, ie. the Chief Executive election in 2002 and the Legislative

Council election in 2004. We will make a decision after extensive consultation with various sectors.

10. In order to increase the transparency of political parties and facilitate their healthy development, we are now studying the feasibility and desirability of introducing a political party law. We will explain to Members the stance of the government upon the completion of our study.

11. In the past year, we have examined problems associated with the automatic voter registration system and identified practical measures to solve those problems. We will submit our implementation plan to the LegCo Panel on Constitutional Affairs as soon as possible. We have also completed a study to examine the feasibility of upgrading the computer system in the Registration and Electoral Office. We aim to work out an action plan to carry out the recommendations of the study.

Constitutional Affairs Bureau

October 2001