

Press Release

 [Email this article](#) | [Government Homepage](#)

CE sets out legislative directions on Basic Law Article 23

Following is the transcript of the media session given today (January 28) by the Chief Executive, Mr Tung Chee Hwa, on the outcome of the consultation exercise on Article 23 of the Basic Law at the Central Government Offices Conference Hall.

This morning the Executive Council discussed the outcome of the consultation exercise on implementing Article 23 of the Basic Law. The response from various sectors of the community was overwhelming. We have listened closely to their views and fully grasped the views of the public on this issue. We know that the majority of the public agree that we have a responsibility to safeguard our national security. They also realise the need to legislate under Article 23 of the Basic Law. However, some members of the public have expressed doubts and worries about certain legislative proposals. In short, all issues, major or otherwise, have been thoroughly and enthusiastically discussed during the three-month consultation period.

After an in-depth analysis and examination of the views received, we have today clarified the legislative proposals and set out a number of clear directions for the drafting work to start. I have personally considered the proposals and discussed them with colleagues many times before taking a final decision. During this process, I have told colleagues that the legislative work must be done properly. In addition, we must take into account the concerns and worries of the public.

Let me give you an example. Press freedom is the foundation for Hong Kong's success. We must safeguard it. The media have expressed worries during the consultation exercise. We must allay their worries because we have no intention of undermining press freedom. Nor would we allow any damage to press freedom. Since the media are concerned about the possession of seditious publications, for instance, we have proposed to abolish the offence.

I give you another example. In order to safeguard freedom of the press and free flow of information, we would limit the definition of "unauthorised access" to protected information to access through criminal means such as hacking, theft or bribery.

The Secretary for Security will explain to you in greater detail the legislative directions later on at her press conference.

We will complete the drafting work in accordance with the above directions as soon as possible. I would like to emphasise though during this drafting period, we will continue to listen to the views of

various sectors. And indeed we will continue to do so throughout the legislative process.

I have full confidence that after the law is enacted, the public will find that their freedoms, including the freedom of speech, press, procession and assembly etc which they currently enjoy, will remain fully protected.

(Please see the [Chinese](#) portion of the Chief Executive's remarks)

End/Tuesday, January 28, 2003

NNNN

