

**Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs
Progress Report on 2003 Policy Agenda**

Introduction

The 2004 Policy Agenda already issued sets out Government's new and on-going initiatives for the next three and a half years. This report gives the position on initiatives in the 2003 Policy Agenda not featuring or not elaborated in the new version, affecting the Constitutional Affairs Bureau (CAB).

Effective Governance

Initiative

Review the Accountability System for Principal Officials after its first year of implementation and report to the Legislative Council.

Progress Made/Present Position

We conducted a review of the accountability system one year after its implementation and submitted the Twelve-month Report on Implementation of the Accountability System for Principal Officials to the Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs for discussion at its meeting on 21 July 2003.

Initiative

Make practical arrangements to ensure that the 2003 District Council elections are conducted in a fair, open and honest manner following the expansion in the number of elected seats.

Progress Made/Present Position

We have enacted legislation and made practical arrangements for the 2003 District Council elections which were successfully conducted on 23 November 2003.

Initiative

Enact legislation to provide for the delineation of geographical constituencies and functional constituencies for the 2004 Legislative Council elections.

Progress Made/Present Position

We have enacted legislation to provide for the delineation of geographical constituencies and functional constituencies for the 2004 Legislative Council elections.

Initiative

Continue to implement “One Country, Two Systems” and to demonstrate its success.

Progress Made/Present Position

Ensuring the implementation of the Basic Law and facilitating further development of cordial and constructive working relationship with the Central People's Government and other Mainland authorities.

In the past year, we have advised colleagues in other bureaux and departments of the HKSAR Government on the implementation of the Basic Law in their respective areas of work, and assisted them in developing a cordial and effective working relationship with the Central People's Government and other Mainland authorities in accordance with the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" and the Basic Law.

We have provided secretariat support for the Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference (Joint Conference). Starting from the sixth plenary of the Joint Conference held in August 2003, the annual meeting is co-chaired by the Chief Executive and the Governor of Guangdong Province. We have also provided support for the Hong Kong/Shanghai Economic & Trade Co-operation Conference set up in October 2003. The Conference is co-chaired by the Chief Executive and the Mayor of Shanghai Municipality.

We have continued to facilitate the promotion of the Basic Law through providing support for the Basic Law Promotion Steering Committee. We have also launched various publicity activities in conjunction with other government departments and

community organisations to increase public awareness of the Basic Law. We have briefed visitors from the Mainland, Taiwan and overseas on the latest developments of Hong Kong and the implementation of “One Country, Two Systems”.

Facilitating HKSAR’s development of external relations and participation in international fora

HKSAR participates actively in the international arena. For example, representatives of the HKSAR Government have taken part in more than 7,400 international conferences not limited to states since the reunification. We have, in the past year, continued to advise bureaux and departments on the conduct of the HKSAR's external affairs to ensure consistency with the provisions in the Basic Law and the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

We have also continued to act as the focal point of contact between the HKSAR Government and the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the HKSAR (MFA Office), maintaining a good working relationship with the MFA Office on matters relating to the HKSAR's external affairs. We will further enhance communication with the MFA Office.

Co-ordinating liaison with Taiwan organisations in Hong Kong

CAB has taken an active role in enhancing exchanges between Hong Kong and Taiwan. In the past year, we facilitated visits by

Taiwan's business sector and journalists from Taiwan's newspapers/electronic media. We arranged for them to meet government bureaux/departments and visit major infrastructural projects in Hong Kong. We met also Taiwan visitors from the Alliance for the Reunification of China and briefed them on the latest developments in Hong Kong and the implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" here.

CAB has been maintaining an effective communication channel with the Chung Hwa Travel Service (CHTS) on matters relating to Hong Kong/Taiwan relations in a pragmatic manner. During the outbreak of SARS in Hong Kong in 2003, we relayed effectively to Taiwan the situation over SARS in Hong Kong. We also arranged for a medical professor from Taiwan University to exchange views on SARS with professionals from the Department of Health and universities in Hong Kong.

The communication link CAB has been maintaining with Taiwan organisations in Hong Kong has facilitated the handling of emergency matters. CAB liaised with CHTS and took prompt action in arranging a chartered flight to Taipei to bring back a Hong Kong tour group with one suspected SARS case in April last year. The communication network has also contributed to assistance rendered in July 2002 to a group of Hong Kong fishermen who encountered typhoon near Taiwan and required shelter, as well as the rescue operation in December 2003 where a group of Hong Kong fishermen in distress near Dongsha Qundao were safely brought home through coordination of the Maritime Rescue Cooperation

Centre.

Other Initiatives in 2003 Policy Agenda

2. There are two initiatives under CAB's portfolio in the 2003 Policy Agenda, which are not covered in this paper. They are :

- (a) Begin to make suitable preparations for the review of constitutional developments after 2007.
- (b) Put in place new electoral managements for the 2004 Legislative Council elections, adopt measures to facilitate the development of political parties and political groups, and support independent candidates in these elections.

These initiatives have been rolled over to the 2004 Policy Agenda. We will provide more details about these initiatives in another paper on the 2004 Policy Agenda to be issued to the Panel shortly.

Constitutional Affairs Bureau
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