

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)897/05-06
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by the Administration)

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Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services

Minutes of meeting
held on Monday, 28 November 2005 at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon Margaret NG (Chairman)
Hon LI Kwok-ying, MH (Deputy Chairman)
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon Miriam LAU Kin-ye, GBS, JP
Hon MA Lik, GBS, JP

Member attending : Hon CHIM Pui-chung

Members absent : Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee, SC, JP

Public Officers attending : Item IV
Department of Justice

Mr Stephen WONG
Deputy Solicitor General

Mr John Reading, SC
Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions

Legal Aid Department

Mr Benjamin CHEUNG
Director of Legal Aid

Mr William CHAN
Deputy Director of Legal Aid

Hong Kong Police Force

Mr WONG Pak-nin
Chief Superintendent (Crime HQ)

Item V

Department of Justice

Mr Stephen WONG
Deputy Solicitor General

Ms Kitty FUNG
Senior Government Counsel

**Attendance by
invitation** :

Item IV

The Hong Kong Bar Association

Mr Philip DYKES, SC

Item V

The Hong Kong Bar Association

Mr Philip DYKES, SC

Mr Anthony CHAN, SC

Ms Yvonne CHIU

The Law Society of Hong Kong

Mr Ludwig S. W. NG
Chairman of the Law Society Working Party of Recovery
Agents

Mr Patrick BURKE
Member of the Law Society Working Party of Recovery
Agents

Ms. Szwina S. K. PANG
Member of the Law Society Working Party of Recovery
Agents

Mr Patrick MOSS
Secretary General

Mr Francis CHAN
Messrs Or, Ng and Chan

Clerk in attendance : Mrs Percy MA
Chief Council Secretary (2)3

Staff in attendance : Mr Arthur CHEUNG
Senior Assistant Legal Adviser 2

Miss Lolita SHEK
Senior Council Secretary (2)7

Mrs Fanny TSANG
Legislative Assistant (2)3

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I. Confirmation of minutes of meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(2)499/05-06 – Minutes of the meeting on 24 October 2005)

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2005 were confirmed.

II. Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(2)169/05-06(01) – Submission from The Hong Kong Bar Association on Reciprocal enforcement of judgments in commercial matters between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Mainland

LC Paper No. CB(2)194/05-06(01) – Letter dated 24 October 2005 from Panel Chairman to the Administration on Reciprocal enforcement of judgments in commercial matters between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Mainland

LC Paper No. CB(2)260/05-06(01) – Letter dated 26 October 2005 from the Chairman of Legal Aid Services Council to the Director of Administration on "Review of criminal legal aid fees"

LC Paper No. CB(2)260/05-06(02) – Letter dated 27 October 2005 from the Panel Chairman to the Director of Administration on "Review of criminal legal aid fees"

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LC Paper No. CB(2)311/05-06(01) – Letter dated 3 November 2005 from the Chairman enclosing a set of key correspondence provided by Mr Rene Hout concerning the Claims Committee of the Qualifying Insurers Scheme

LC Paper No. CB(2)338/05-06(01) – Reply of the Law Society of Hong Kong to the Chairman's letter in Appendix VII to LC Paper No. CB(2)311/05-06(01)

LC Paper No. CB(2)391/05-06(01) – Correspondence between the Bar Association and the Administration concerning the role of the Criminal Procedure Rules Committee established under section 9A(1)(g) of the Criminal Procedure Ordinance in the decision-making process concerning adjustment of the level of fees payable to criminal legal aid lawyers)

2. Members noted that the above papers had been issued to the Panel.

III. Items for discussion at the next meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(2)484/05-06(01) – List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(2)484/05-06(02) – List of follow-up actions)

3. Members agreed that the following items should be discussed at the next meeting on 15 December 2005 –

- (a) Criminal legal aid fees system;
- (b) Transcript fees; and
- (c) Relocation of the Labour Tribunal to South Kowloon Magistrates Court Building.

IV. Issues relating to legal professional privilege arising from the Police attempts to execute search warrants in the Legal Aid Department offices

(LC Paper No. CB(2)470/05-06(01) – Paper provided by the Legal Aid Department on "Search Warrants"

LC Paper No. CB(2)484/05-06(03) – Paper provided by the Department of Justice on "Legal Professional Privilege and Search Warrants")

4. The Chairman said that this item had originally been scheduled for the Panel meeting on 27 June 2005 but postponed for discussion at the request of the Administration, pending conclusion of the judicial review proceedings.

5. Director of Legal Aid (DLA) and Deputy Director of Public Prosecutions (DDPP) briefed members on the background and facts of the case in which the Hong Kong Police Force and the Department of Justice (DOJ) attempted to execute search

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warrants in the office of the Legal Aid Department (LAD) at Queensway Government Offices and to seize certain documents on two occasions in April and May 2005, as detailed respectively in the papers provided by LAD and DOJ, as well as DDPP's speaking note (which was tabled at the meeting and issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)544/05-06(01) after the meeting).

6. DLA also clarified the stance of LAD in the case as summarised below –
 - (a) a solicitor and client relationship existed between LAD and the legally aided person;
 - (b) DLA was duty bound to preserve the confidentiality of information or communications passed between DLA and the applicants for legal aid/legally aided persons by holding and safeguarding the principle of legal professional privilege (LPP);
 - (c) DLA was mindful of the fact that LPP had its limit and did not apply to communications between a client and his lawyer for the purpose of furtherance of any crime; and
 - (d) LAD had made its best endeavours to uphold and safeguard the principle of LPP in the case and would continue to do so in future.

7. DDPP explained the position of DOJ and the Police as follows –
 - (a) LPP did not attach to communications between a client and his legal adviser in furtherance of any crime or fraud;
 - (b) it was revealed to the Police that the defendant in the case concerned had coerced some of his family members by threats of violence to provide false statements which he had faxed to his solicitor for use in his defence in the rape trial. The faxed copies of the documents, which had then been returned to LAD, were important evidence in respect of a prospective charge of doing acts tending and intended to pervert the course of public justice. LAD had possessed those documents without knowledge of their nature; and
 - (c) even where it was believed that the material was not subject to LPP, DOJ, the Police and ICAC had in place guidelines which ensured that if there was an issue of LPP, every opportunity was given to the person claiming such privilege to pursue such a claim before the material was inspected.

8. In response to the Chairman, Chief Superintendent (Crime HQ) added that the Police had coordinated with DOJ in handling this case. DOJ had presented the position of both DOJ and the Police to the Panel.

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9. The Chairman pointed out that as LAD was a government department and processed a large number of applications for legal aid each year, the public would be very concerned whether LPP could be properly safeguarded if LAD would hand over documents provided by its clients to the Police readily upon execution of a search warrant. Noting that DOJ had emphasised in its paper that LPP did not apply to communications between a client and his legal adviser in furtherance of any crime or fraud, the Chairman asked whether the Police had reasons to suspect that the defendant's lawyer appointed by LAD and acting for him in the rape trial had conspired with or had been used by the defendant as a vehicle in furtherance of any crime, resulting in the documents concerned not subject to LPP.

10. Mr CHIM Pui-chung said that he was not convinced of DDPP's explanation. Mr CHIM asked whether DOJ had evidence to suggest that the defendant's lawyer had been involved in furtherance of the crime given that the he was not aware that the statements concerned were false. Mr CHIM was of the view that as DOJ represented only one of the parties in the case, it did not have the right to make the judgment that LPP did not apply to the documents concerned, just because it suspected that those documents had been used in furtherance of a crime.

11. Mr CHIM asked whether LAD had ever been pressurised by the law enforcement authorities to provide documents in a similar manner in the past. He also asked whether LAD would insist on seeking legal advice before producing the materials sought by the law enforcement authorities under a search warrant in future, so as to safeguard the interests of the clients of LAD.

12. DLA confirmed that the defendant's lawyer in the rape trial or the staff concerned of LAD had not been charged for aiding any persons in furtherance of a crime. DLA reiterated that LAD would continue to maintain and protect the right of confidentiality of all legal aid applicants/aided persons under similar circumstances in future.

13. DDPP clarified that DOJ believed that the lawyer acting for the defendant in the rape case had been deceived and used by the defendant for using the false statements in his defence in the rape trial, in an attempt to pervert the course of public justice. Staff of DOJ had examined the case carefully and considered that LPP did not apply to the documents involved in the case.

14. DDPP assured members that checks and balances, and proper guidelines were in place to safeguard public interest. Law enforcement authorities would seek legal advice from DOJ before applying for a search warrant. The case would be handled by counsel at a very senior level in DOJ. The authority would apply to a Magistrate for a search warrant only when there were sufficient justifications.

15. Mr CHIM Pui-chung noted from the newspaper reports that in a recent case, both the defendant and his lawyer were charged for conspiring in perverting the course of public justice. The legal profession had expressed grave concern that lawyers would be charged for committing such offence in performing their job to

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assist in the defence of their clients. Mr CHIM was of the view that there should be a clear definition of the offence in the legislation.

16. Deputy Solicitor General (DSG) responded that the definition of the offence of perverting the course of public justice in the relevant ordinance was very clear. It was not necessary to introduce legislative amendment to make further clarification.

17. Mr Philip DYKES of the Hong Kong Bar Association agreed with DOJ that LPP did not apply to communications between a client and his legal adviser in furtherance of any crime or fraud. However, Mr DYKES was of the view that it was not necessary for the Police to execute the search warrants in the case in question, as the documents concerned could be obtained by other means or were not necessary evidence to prove that the defendant had attempted to pervert the course of public justice.

18. Mr DYKES pointed out that in most cases where search warrants were executed under similar circumstances to obtain certain documents, the lawyers concerned were innocent of any illegal activities. In the present case, witness summons could be issued to the lawyer acting for the defendant in the rape trial or the LAD staff concerned, and the documents concerned would then be presented to the court without the need for a search warrant. The further statements given by the family members would also be sufficient evidence of the defendant's attempt to pervert the course of public justice. Mr DYKES considered that the Police should not have resorted to coercive process by executing the search warrants to obtain the faxed copies of statements, with little regard to the position of the defendant's lawyer and the principle of LPP that might be applicable to the documents concerned.

19. Ms Miriam LAU shared the view that it was not necessary to execute the search warrants as the documents concerned might not be necessary for bringing a prosecution against the defendant. The documents could be obtained through other means. Ms LAU opined that it would be more appropriate for the Police to adopt a more practical approach to obtain the documents by issuing witness summons. Ms LAU pointed out that the confidentiality of the information provided to a solicitor by his client was a very sensitive issue. The Police should not execute the search warrants in the offices of LAD or solicitors if there were other means to obtain evidence. Even if search warrants were executed, the documents seized had to be sealed and could not be examined by the law enforcement authority until seven days later, or after the issue of LPP was settled. Ms LAU hoped that the law enforcement authorities would not execute search warrants in similar cases in future.

20. The Chairman said that if the defendant's lawyer did not know that his communications with his client was used in furtherance of a crime, and in order to protect his client's interest, he would refuse to produce the documents sought by the law enforcement authority under a search warrant. The Chairman asked how this problem could be tackled from the legal policy angle.

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21. DSG reiterated that the law enforcement authorities were required to apply for a search warrant in order to seize documents from the office of a lawyer. DOJ had to convince the Magistrate that there was evidence to prove that LPP did not apply to the documents concerned. DSG stressed that the Police and DOJ had not acted improperly in the present case, as the defendant had subsequently pleaded guilty to four counts of doing acts tending and intended to pervert the course of public justice. The defendant had also admitted that the coerced false statements had been faxed to his lawyer for use in his rape trial.

22. Mr James TO, however, expressed concern that the approach of the Police and DOJ towards the case had restricted the application of LPP. This could undermine the good administration of justice in Hong Kong and the confidence of legal aid applicants/aided persons in LAD. Mr TO considered that LPP was so important that the law enforcement authorities and DOJ should ensure that the principle of LPP should be upheld and safeguarded, when making an application for a search warrant. LPP was one of the very important fundamental principles in the legal system in Hong Kong and should prevail over other legal considerations. Mr TO suggested that the Administration should introduce legislative amendments to clarify such requirement in the relevant ordinance.

23. Mr TO further said that the Police and DOJ had not handled the case properly. In the absence of evidence that the lawyer acting for the defendant in the rape trial was a party to the furtherance of a crime, the Police should not have executed the search warrants simply because it suspected that the lawyer had been used by the defendant in his attempt to pervert the course of public justice. As DOJ was responsible for ensuring the upholding of justice, it should have advised against the execution of the search warrants. Mr TO stressed that the law enforcement authorities should not execute search warrants in similar cases in future so as to safeguard the confidentiality of legal aid applicants/aided persons and restore their confidence in LAD.

24. Mr TO added that it was very difficult to establish whether a witness had given a false statement, and the statements given by the same witnesses at different stages could be inconsistent. Moreover, a client could always revise his instructions to his lawyer. Given that it was an offence to furnish false information in a legal aid application under the Legal Aid Ordinance (Cap. 91), he was of the view that it was unnecessary for the Police and DOJ to apply for the search warrants in order to seize the false statements as evidence to prosecute the defendant.

25. DDPP clarified that DOJ had not suggested that the lawyer acting for the defendant in the rape trial had acted improperly but considered that LPP did not apply to the documents involved in the case. DDPP explained that the Police and DOJ understood that LAD had to protect its clients' confidentiality and that LPP might be asserted or claimed. They had therefore prepared to ensure that the documents seized in the execution of the search warrant would be sealed and kept sealed for seven days in case LAD might institute legal proceedings to establish its claim of privilege. The documents would not be inspected by law enforcement officers during this period. DDPP added that such guidelines had been in place for many years to safeguard the interests of clients of solicitors.

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26. The Chairman said that the execution of the search warrants in the office of LAD had aroused wide public concern. There was also concern whether a solicitor's office would be searched if the Police suspected that the solicitor was in possession of documents in furtherance of a crime. The Chairman added that members and the Hong Kong Bar Association considered that the law enforcement authorities should not exercise the power to execute search warrants in a law office unnecessarily.

V. Recovery agents

(LC Paper No. CB(2)453/05-06(01) – Paper provided by the Administration on "Recovery agents"

LC Paper No. CB(2)453/05-06(02) – Background brief prepared by the LegCo Secretariat on "Recovery agents"

LC Paper No. CB(2)1516/04-05(01) – A summary and a report on "Recovery Agents" from the Special Committee on Recovery Agents of the Hong Kong Bar Association

LC Paper No. CB(2)517/05-06(01) – Submission from the Working Party on Recovery Agents of the Law Society of Hong Kong

LC Paper No. CB(2)1609/04-05(01) – A circular on "Recovery Agents" issued by the Law Society of Hong Kong to its members on 17 May 2005)

Presentation of views by various parties

27. Mr Patrick BURKE, Member of the Law Society Working Party of Recovery Agents, highlighted the salient points in the submission of the Working Party as follows –

- (a) as recovery agents (RAs) provided their services on a “no win no fee” basis, they were desperate to settle claims as quickly as possible, and very often advised clients to accept low offers of settlement well below the true value of the claims;
- (b) claim cases brought by RAs were not properly prepared, and the solicitors and counsel used were not experienced in conducting claims;
- (c) litigants had to pay 20% to 30% of the damages recovered to RAs;
- (d) RAs provided incorrect advice on their clients' eligibility for legal aid. Some RAs abused legal aid by arranging for their clients to apply for legal aid so that they could get their fee “for nothing” and were no longer liable for payment of legal costs;

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- (e) the agreements between litigants and RAs, which amounted to champerty and/or maintenance, were illegal and unenforceable;
- (f) the public should be educated on the proper way to pursue claims and the disadvantages and risks of using RAs in order to tackle the problem of RAs;
- (g) prosecution should be brought against RAs;
- (h) professional disciplinary action should be taken against solicitors who knowingly acted for a client being assisted by a RA; and
- (i) support from the Legislative Council was requested to tackle the problem of RAs which affected the proper administration of justice.

28. Mr Anthony CHAN of the Hong Kong Bar Association presented the views of the Associations as follows –

- (a) the propriety and desirability of RAs had been assessed by the Bar Association;
- (b) regarding the propriety of RAs, the activities of RA were illegal;
- (c) regarding the desirability of RAs, RAs did not serve public interest. Most of the clients of RAs were eligible for legal aid and could pursue their claims with legal aid. RAs had an interest in settling cases quickly with the minimal costs, and there were conflicts of interests between RAs and their clients that could not be mitigated. RAs also charged a disproportionate fee of about 25% of the recovered damages; and
- (d) the Bar Association was concerned that the Administration had not taken active steps to investigate into the activities of RAs and to uphold the law.

29. Mr Francis CHAN briefed members on his views as detailed in his submission (which was tabled at the meeting and issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)545/05-06 after the meeting) –

- (a) litigants had to use a large portion of the damages recovered to pay for RAs;
- (b) RAs did not do their job properly resulting in the litigants getting less damages than they were entitled to;
- (c) RAs encouraged litigants to borrow loans at high rates of interest up to about 42%;

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- (d) RAs persuaded litigants not to apply for legal aid or Comprehensive Social Security Assistance by giving them incorrect information;
- (e) RAs tried to obtain business through inappropriate means such as misleading advertisements, but the Administration had not taken any action against those advertisements;
- (f) the Administration should provide clear guidelines on whether the agreements between RAs and their clients were legal and enforceable, and if these agreements were illegal, should explain this clearly to the public;
- (g) the Administration should raise the financial eligibility limit for the Supplementary Legal Aid Scheme (SLAS); and
- (h) the Administration should formulate policy to provide the necessary support and assistance to victims in pursuing their claims for damages and employee compensations.

Discussion

30. The Chairman said that the two legal professional bodies had been very concerned about the problems caused by RAs. The Chairman pointed out that not only would litigants suffer losses from hiring the services of RAs, RA activities would also adversely affect the development of the legal profession.

31. DSG thanked the legal professionals for their views on the activities of RAs. He said that the Administration had been cooperating with the two legal professional bodies in studying the matter. He added that the matter should be considered from the point of view of the public and the legal profession.

32. Referring to paragraph 10 of the Administration's paper on RAs, DSG said that the Consumer Council had commented that if the service of RAs was widely accepted by the public, this might signify that the existing legal services market could not meet the needs of the general public. The major clientele of RAs were those neither eligible to apply for legal aid nor able to afford the high legal cost.

33. DSG added that at common law, it was both a civil wrong and a criminal offence to assist or encourage a party to litigation in circumstances that amounted to maintenance or champerty. The Administration also noted that there might be abuse of the claim procedure or the legal aid scheme. However, only two complaints against RAs, one from the Consumer Council and another from the Law Society, had been received so far.

34. DSG explained that the Administration's approach to RA activities fell into the following three categories –

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- (a) the public should be educated on the possible risks involved in using the services of RAs, and the availability of legal aid;
- (b) DOJ would consider bringing a prosecution against a RA if there was sufficient evidence that it had committed any offence. So far, there had been no case in which sufficient evidence of an offence by a RA was produced to DOJ to warrant a prosecution. DOJ had advised the two legal professional bodies and the Consumer Council that, if they discovered any evidence of criminal conduct by RAs, the cases could be referred to the Police for investigation; and
- (c) DOJ would keep under consideration whether legislation should be introduced to regulate RAs. So far, there was insufficient justification for legislating on the subject.

35. DSG said that the Administration noted that in the United Kingdom (UK), the introduction of conditional fee arrangement and the increase in the number of RAs had created a lot of problems in recent years. The Administration also noted that conditional fee was allowed in UK. This had given rise to the vast increase in numbers in RAs. The problem with RAs in UK was much more serious than that in Hong Kong. In Hong Kong, the Conditional Fees Sub-committee of the Law Reform Commission (LRC) had released its Consultation Paper on “Conditional fees” in September 2005 which was still at the public consultation stage. In view of the current developments in UK and the on-going consultation regarding conditional fees in Hong Kong, DOJ proposed to continue to monitor the situation in Hong Kong and UK before deciding the way forward. The Administration hoped that with more evidence and time, it could be determined whether active steps would need to be taken.

36. Ms Miriam LAU pointed out that the problems relating to the activities of RAs had existed for a long time. The two legal professional bodies had conducted detailed research on RAs. They had both concluded that the activities of RAs were illegal, and they would monitor the conduct of the legal profession in this respect. Under the circumstances, it was unacceptable for the Administration to refuse to take action to regulate the activities of RAs on the excuse of insufficient justification.

37. Ms LAU added that LRC’s proposed conditional fee arrangement was very controversial and might not be able to solve the problem of RAs. Its implementation was yet to be decided. She further pointed out that many years ago, legislative amendments were introduced to criminalise acts of touting and commission-taking by “submarines” who were not legally trained persons and not employed by any lawyer firm, but they acted as go-between of a client and a barrister. Since the Administration had criminalised the activities of “submarines”, RAs which charged even much higher fees than those “submarines”, should also be regulated to protect the public interest. The Chairman concurred with Ms LAU.

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38. DSG stressed that the Administration was not unwilling to tackle the problem of RAs. He pointed out that the interests of the public and the legal profession had to be safeguarded. DSG explained that as it was not within DOJ's terms of reference to investigate possible offences, it had requested the two legal professional bodies to refer cases to the Administration, and the Police would conduct investigation. So far, there had been no case with sufficient evidence to warrant a prosecution or justification for legislating on the subject. The Administration would enlist the assistance of the two legal professional bodies to continue monitoring the situation.

39. Referring to the comments of the Consumer Council quoted by DSG (paragraph 32 above), Mr Patrick BURKE expressed doubt that the clients of RAs were not eligible for legal aid. According to his 25 years of lawyer experience involved in personal injury cases, most of the victims concerned were eligible for legal aid, and hence could receive better legal service from more experienced lawyers appointed under the legal aid scheme. The middle class could also obtain legal aid through SLAS to pursue claims for compensation.

40. Mr BURKE pointed out that the activities of RAs had created widespread problems. However, as RAs might not refer cases to law firms, they were not operated within the legal system. It was therefore difficult for the Law Society to conduct investigation and obtain relevant statistics.

41. Mr LI Kwok-ying informed members that as indicated from his contact with victims of accidents and injuries, most of the victims concerned were not eligible for legal aid. He quoted the recent mini-bus accident in Sha Tau Kok as an example. As most of the victims were landowners, they were not eligible for legal aid, despite the fact that they could hardly afford the high legal cost of litigation. As a result, these victims had to rely on the service of RAs to pursue their claims, even though they were aware of the risks and costs in hiring the service of RAs. Mr LI therefore considered that public education might not be able to solve this problem.

42. Mr LI further pointed out that those victims would not lodge complaints against RAs which were the only means they could use to pursue their claims. He also noted from paragraph 18(iii) of the Administration's paper that the Administration considered that there was no evidence to show that RAs were causing a real problem in Hong Kong. Mr LI sought clarification on the definition of "real problem".

43. Mr James TO said that some of the RAs touted business for law firms of which they were employees or shareholders. Mr TO considered that the Administration and the Law Society should examine whether such activity was illegal under the laws of Hong Kong. He also expressed concern that the autonomy of the legal profession would be undermined if it was controlled by non-legal professionals to whom the professional code of conduct and rules would not apply. The standard of the legal profession was bound to be adversely affected.

44. DSG responded that the Law Society would monitor the conduct of solicitors in accordance with the Solicitor's Guide to Professional Conduct. He reiterated that

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as stated in the Administration's paper, a solicitor could not act in contentious proceedings on the basis of a contingency fee arrangement under the Guide and the Legal Practitioners Ordinance (Cap. 159). The Bar's Code of Conduct also prohibited barristers from accepting any brief or instructions on a contingency fee basis. DSG said that the Administration would discuss with the two legal professional bodies the enforcement of the relevant ordinance and code of conduct. DSG also requested the two legal professional bodies to refer cases concerning the activities of RAs, if any, to the Administration.

Way forward

45. The Chairman concluded that the Panel considered that the Administration should tackle the problem of RAs which had affected the interests of the public and the operation of the legal profession, and that the Panel should follow up this subject at its future meetings. In the light of the discussion, the Chairman requested DOJ to respond to the concerns and suggestions raised by members and the legal profession, and the legal professional bodies to examine their professional rules and code of conduct, with a view to discussing the item with the Panel in about two months' time.

Adm

VI. Any other business

46. Members agreed that as there was not sufficient time to discuss item VI "Issues relating to the imposition of criminal liabilities on the Government" on the agenda, discussion on this item should be postponed to a future meeting of the Panel.

47. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:35 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
20 January 2006