

AGREEMENT BETWEEN
THE GOVERNMENT OF HONG KONG
AND
THE GOVERNMENT OF _____
CONCERNING
MUTUAL LEGAL ASSISTANCE IN
CRIMINAL MATTERS

The Government of Hong Kong, having been duly authorised by the sovereign government responsible for its foreign affairs, and the Government of _____

Desiring to improve the effectiveness of law enforcement of both Parties in the investigation, prosecution and prevention of crime and the confiscation of criminal proceeds; have agreed as follows:

ARTICLE I

SCOPE OF ASSISTANCE

- (1) The Parties shall provide, in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement, mutual assistance in the investigation and prosecution of criminal offences and in proceedings related to criminal matters.
- (2) Assistance shall include:
 - (a) identifying and locating persons;
 - (b) serving of documents;
 - (c) the obtaining of evidence, articles or documents, including the execution of letters rogatory;
 - (d) executing requests for search and seizure;
 - (e) facilitating the personal appearance of witnesses;
 - (f) effecting the temporary transfer of persons in custody to appear as witnesses;
 - (g) obtaining production of judicial or official records;
 - (h) tracing, restraining, forfeiting and confiscating the proceeds and instrumentalities of criminal activities;
 - (i) providing information, documents and records; and

(j) delivery of property, including lending of exhibits.

(3) Proceedings relating to criminal matters do not include proceedings related to the regulations involving the imposition, calculation or collection of taxes.

(4) This Agreement is intended solely for mutual assistance between the Parties. The provisions of this Agreement shall not give rise to any right on the part of any private person to obtain, suppress or exclude any evidence or to impede the execution of a request.

ARTICLE II

CENTRAL AUTHORITY

(1) Each Party shall establish a Central Authority.

(2) The Central Authority of Hong Kong shall be the Attorney General or his duly authorized officer. The Central Authority for _____ shall be _____.

(3) Requests under this Agreement shall be made by the Central Authority of the Requesting Party to the Central Authority of the Requested Party.

ARTICLE III

OTHER ASSISTANCE

The Parties may provide assistance pursuant to other agreements, arrangements or practices.

ARTICLE IV

LIMITATIONS ON COMPLIANCE

(1) The Requested Party shall refuse assistance if:

(a) the request for assistance impairs the sovereignty, security or public order of _____ or, in the case of the Government of Hong Kong, the State which is responsible for its foreign affairs;

(b) the request for assistance relates to an offence of a political character;

(c) the request for assistance relates to an offence only under military law;

(d) there are substantial grounds for believing that the request for assistance will result in a person being prejudiced on account of his race, religion, nationality or political opinions;

(e) the request for assistance relates to the prosecution of a person for an offence

in respect of which the person has been convicted, acquitted or pardoned in the Requested Party or for which the person could no longer be prosecuted by reason of lapse of time if the offence had been committed within the jurisdiction of the requested Party;

- (f) if it is of the opinion that the granting of the request would seriously impair its essential interests;
- (g) the Requesting Party cannot comply with any conditions in relation to confidentiality or limitation as to the use of material provided; and
- (h) if the acts or omission alleged to constitute the offence would not, if they had taken place within the jurisdiction of the Requested Party, have constituted an offence.

(2) For the purpose of paragraph (1)(f) the Requested Party may include in its consideration of essential interests whether the provision of assistance could prejudice the safety of any person or impose an excessive burden on the resources of the Requested Party.

(3) The Requested Party may refuse assistance if the request relates to an offence which carries the death penalty in the Requesting Party but in respect of which the death penalty is either not provided for in the Requested Party or not normally carried out unless the Requesting Party gives such assurances as the Requested Party considers sufficient that the death penalty will not be imposed or, if imposed, not carried out.

(4) The Requested Party may postpone assistance if execution of the request would interfere with an ongoing investigation or prosecution in the Requested Party.

(5) Before denying or postponing assistance pursuant to this Article, the Requested Party, through its Central Authority -

- (a) shall promptly inform the Requesting Party of the reason for considering denial or postponement; and
- (b) shall consult with the Requesting Party to determine whether assistance may be given subject to such terms and conditions as the Requested Party deems necessary.

(6) If the Requesting Party accepts assistance subject to the terms and conditions referred to in paragraph (5)(b), it shall comply with those terms and conditions.

ARTICLE V

REQUESTS

- (1) Requests shall be made in writing except in urgent cases. In urgent cases, requests may be made orally, but shall be confirmed in writing within 10 days thereafter.
- (2) Requests for assistance shall include:
 - (a) the name of the authority on behalf of which the request is made;
 - (b) a description of the purpose of the request and the nature of the assistance requested;
 - (c) a description of the nature of the investigation, prosecution, offence or criminal matter and whether or not proceedings have been instituted;
 - (d) where proceedings have been instituted, details of the proceedings;
 - (e) a summary of the relevant fact and laws;
 - (f) any requirements for confidentiality;
 - (g) details of any particular procedure the Requesting Party wishes to be followed; and
 - (h) details of the period within which the request should be complied with.
- (3) The Requested Party shall use its best efforts to keep confidential a request and its contents except when otherwise authorized by the Requesting Party.
- (4) All documents submitted in support of a request shall be accompanied by a translation in the language of the Requested Party.

ARTICLE VI

EXECUTION OF REQUESTS

- (1) The Central Authority of the Requested Party shall promptly execute the request or arrange for its execution through its competent authorities.
- (2) A request shall be executed in accordance with the law of the Requested Party and, to the extent not prohibited by the law of the Requested Party, in accordance with the directions stated in the request so far as practicable.
- (3) The Requested Party shall promptly inform the Requesting Party of any circumstances which are likely to cause a significant delay in responding to the request.
- (4) The Requested Party shall promptly inform the Requesting Party of a decision not to

comply in whole or in part with a request for assistance and the reasons for that decision.

ARTICLE VII

REPRESENTATION AND EXPENSES

- (1) The Requested Party shall make all necessary arrangements for the representation of the Requesting Party in any proceeding arising out of a request for assistance and shall otherwise represent the interests of the Requesting Party.
- (2) The Requested Party shall assume all ordinary expenses of executing a request within its boundaries, except:
 - (a) fees of counsel retained at the request of the Requesting Party;
 - (b) fees of experts;
 - (c) expenses of translation; and
 - (d) travel expenses and allowances of persons.
- (3) If during the execution of the request it becomes apparent that expenses of an extraordinary nature are required to fulfil the request, the Parties shall consult to determine the terms and conditions under which the execution of the request may continue.

ARTICLE VIII

LIMITATIONS OF USE

- (1) The Requested Party may require, after consultation with the Requesting Party, that information or evidence furnished be kept confidential or be disclosed or used only subject to such terms and conditions as it may specify.
- (2) The Requesting Party shall not disclose or use information or evidence furnished for purposes other than those stated in the request without the prior consent of the Central Authority of the Requested Party.

ARTICLE IX

OBTAINING OF EVIDENCE, ARTICLES OR DOCUMENTS

- (1) Where a request is made that evidence be taken, for the purpose of a proceeding in relation to a criminal matter in the jurisdiction of the Requesting Party the Requested Party shall arrange to have such evidence taken.
- (2) For the purposes of this Agreement, the giving or taking of evidence shall include the production of documents, records or other material.

(3) For the purposes of requests under this Article, the Requesting Party shall specify the questions to be put to the witness or the subject matter about which they are to be examined.

(4) Where, pursuant to a request for assistance, a person is to give evidence for the purpose of proceedings in the Requesting Party, the parties to the relevant proceedings in the Requesting Party, their legal representatives or representatives of the Requesting Party may, subject to the laws of the requested Party, appear and question the person giving that evidence.

(5) A person who is required to give evidence in the Requested Party pursuant to a request for assistance may decline to give evidence where either:

(a) the law of the Requested Party would permit that witness to decline to give evidence in similar circumstances in proceedings which originated in the Requested Party; or

(b) where the law of the Requesting Party would permit him to decline to give evidence in such proceedings in the Requesting Party.

(6) If any person claims that there is a right to decline to give evidence under the law of the Requesting Party, the Requested Party shall with respect thereto rely on a certificate of the Central Authority of the Requesting Party.

ARTICLE X

OBTAINING STATEMENTS OF PERSONS

Where a request is made to obtain the statement of a person for the purpose of an investigation or proceeding in relation to a criminal matter in the Requesting Party, the Requested Party shall endeavour to obtain such statement.

ARTICLE XI

LOCATION OR IDENTITY OF PERSONS

The Requested Party shall, if requested, endeavour to ascertain the location or identity of any person specified in the request.

ARTICLE XII

SERVICE OF DOCUMENTS

- (1) The Requested Party shall serve any document transmitted to it for the purpose of service.
- (2) The Requesting Party shall transmit a request for the service of a document pertaining to a response or appearance in the Requesting Party within a reasonable time before the scheduled response or appearance.
- (3) A request for the service of a document pertaining to an appearance in the Requesting Party shall include such notice as the Central Authority of the Requesting Party is reasonably able to provide of outstanding warrants or other judicial orders in criminal matters against the person to be served.
- (4) The Requested Party shall, subject to its law, return a proof of service in the manner required by the Requesting Party.
- (5) A person who fails to comply with any process served on him shall not thereby be liable to any penalty or coercive measure pursuant to the law of the Requesting Party or Requested Party.

ARTICLE XIII

PUBLICLY AVAILABLE AND OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS

- (1) Subject to its law the Requested Party shall provide copies of publicly available documents.
- (2) The Requested Party may provide copies of any document, record or information in the possession of a government department or agency, but not publicly available, to the same extent and under the same conditions as such document, record or information would be available to its own law enforcement and judicial authorities.

ARTICLE XIV

CERTIFICATION AND AUTHENTICATION

Documents, transcripts, records, statements or other material which are to be transmitted to the Requesting Party shall only be certified or authenticated if the Requesting Party so requests. Material shall be certified or authenticated by consular or diplomatic officers only if the law of the Requesting Party specifically so requires.

ARTICLE XV

TRANSFER OF PERSONS IN CUSTODY

- (1) A person in custody in the Requested Party whose presence is requested in the Requesting Party for the purposes of providing assistance pursuant to this Agreement shall if the Requesting Party consents be transferred from the Requested Party to the Requesting Party for that purpose, provided the person consents and the Requesting Party has guaranteed the maintenance in custody of the person and his subsequent return to the Requested Party.
- (2) Where the sentence of imprisonment of a person transferred pursuant to this Article expires whilst the person is in the Requesting Party the Requested Party shall so advise the Requesting Party which shall ensure the person's release from custody.

ARTICLE XVI

TRANSFER OF OTHER PERSONS

- (1) The Requesting Party may request the assistance of Requested Party in making a person available for the purpose of providing assistance pursuant to this Agreement.
- (2) The Requested Party shall, if satisfied that satisfactory arrangements for that person's security will be made by the Requesting Party, request the person to travel to the Requesting Party to provide assistance.

ARTICLE XVII

SAFE CONDUCT

- (1) A person who consents to provide assistance pursuant to Articles XV or XVI shall not be prosecuted, detained, or restricted in his personal liberty in the Requesting Party for any criminal offence or civil matter which preceded his departure from the Requested Party.
- (2) Paragraphs (1) shall not apply if the person, not being a person in custody transferred under Article XV, and being free to leave, has not left the Requesting Party within a period of 15 days after being notified that his presence is no longer required, or having left the Requesting Party, has returned.
- (3) A person who consents to give evidence under Articles XV or XVI shall not be subject to prosecution based on his testimony, except for perjury.
- (4) A person who consents to provide assistance pursuant to Articles XV or XVI shall not be required to give evidence in any proceedings other than the proceedings to which the request relates.
- (5) A person who does not consent to give evidence pursuant to Articles XV or XVI shall not by reason thereof be liable to any penalty or coercive measure by the courts of the Requesting or Requested Party.

ARTICLE XVIII

SEARCH AND SEIZURE

- (1) The Requested Party shall, insofar as its law permits, carry out requests for search, seizure and delivery of any material to the Requesting Party which is relevant to a proceeding or investigation in relation to a criminal matter.
- (2) The Requested Party shall provide such information as may be required by the Requesting Party concerning the result of any search, the place of seizure, the circumstances of seizure, and the subsequent custody of the property seized.
- (3) The Requesting Party shall observe any conditions imposed by the Requested Party in relation to any seized property which is delivered to the Requesting Party.

ARTICLE XIX

PROCEEDS OF CRIME

- (1) The Requested Party shall, upon request, endeavour to ascertain whether any proceeds of a crime against the law of the Requesting Party are located within its jurisdiction and shall notify the Requesting Party of the result of its inquiries. In making the request, the Requesting Party shall notify the Requested Party of the basis of its belief that such proceeds may be located in its jurisdiction.
- (2) Where pursuant to paragraph (1) suspected proceeds of crime are found the Requested Party shall take such measures as are permitted by its law to prevent any dealing in, transfer or disposal of, those suspected proceeds of crime, pending a final determination in respect of those proceeds by a Court of the Requesting Party.
- (3) Where a request is made for assistance in securing the confiscation of proceeds such assistance shall be given by whatever means are appropriate. This may include enforcing an order made by a court in the Requesting Party and initiating or assisting in proceedings in relation to the proceeds to which the request relates.
- (4) Proceeds confiscated pursuant to this Agreement shall be retained by the Requested Party unless otherwise agreed upon between the Parties.

ARTICLE XX

SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

Any dispute arising out of the interpretation, application or implementation of this Agreement shall be resolved through diplomatic channels if the Central Authorities are themselves unable to reach agreement.

ARTICLE XXI

ENTRY INTO FORCE AND TERMINATION

(1) This Agreement shall enter into force thirty days after the date on which the Parties have notified each other in writing that their respective requirements for the entry into force of the Agreement have been complied with.

(2) Each of the Parties may terminate this Agreement at any time by giving notice to the other. In that event the Agreement shall cease to have effect on receipt of that notice. Requests for assistance which have been received prior to termination of the Agreement shall nevertheless be processed in accordance with the terms of the Agreement as if the Agreement was still in force.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto by their respective Governments, have signed this Agreement.

DONE at this day of 19..

[MLA_model text_JLG_e.DOC]