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President 11 September 2012
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By E-mail
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Dear Ms. Tai,

**Re : Panel on Administration of Justice and Legal Services ("Panel")
– Use of Chinese in Court Proceedings**

I refer to the information provided in my letters of 27 January and 19 March 2012.

I also refer to your telephone conversation with Ms. Vivien Lee, Director of Standards & Development on 18 July 2012 in which you confirmed the Society could submit further information to the Panel for its consideration.

I write to advise the Civil Litigation Committee, the Criminal Law and Procedure Committee, the Standing Committee on Practitioners Affairs and the Legal Education Committee (collectively the "Committees") considered the letters dated 22 December 2011 and 20 January 2012 from the Panel and the enclosures to those letters.

The Committees are of the view that there are sufficient number of bilingual solicitors who are able to discharge their professional duties as advocates in courts and in their daily legal practice. Of the 7,264 solicitors currently holding practising certificates, it is estimated over 6,000, about 83% are bilingual and about 30% of the bilingual solicitors practise litigation.

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The Committees believe that not only are there sufficient bilingual solicitors, those practising litigation are well equipped to conduct proceedings in Courts in Chinese. As the Society explained in its letter of 27 January 2012, the Society has, in the last 16 years, since the Territory returned to Chinese sovereignty, invested considerable amount of resources in promoting a bilingual legal system, and in providing legal education and training to enhance the bilingual skills of solicitors. The Society will continue to invest resources to further develop the skills of solicitors to meet the growing demand for legal practice in Chinese.

That said, the Committees do not believe that the availability of bilingual practitioners is the cause or the panacea to the problem of the growing number of unrepresented litigants. The Society has already submitted on various other occasions its view on the expansion of legal aid to increase access to justice to deal with unrepresented litigants.

I should be grateful if you could circulate the above comments to the Panel Members for their consideration.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Heidi Chu', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Heidi Chu
Secretary General