



**RTHK Programme Staff Union Statement on the removal of two phone-in radio presenters, Robert Chow and Ng Chi-sum**

1. This incident has led the public to question RTHK's credibility and whether our station has changed its editorial direction. They question whether RTHK is "avoiding being political and having an angle", and whether – to some degree - we are blurring the line between right and wrong and going toward the road of self-censorship. The Programme Staff Union considers this unfortunate.

2. Credibility takes time to build, and is not easy to come by. However, it takes very little to destroy it. RTHK has long been regarded as a highly credible media organization in the hearts of the public. Staff at the station all cherish this reputation dearly.

3. Some have described the decision to remove the two radio presenters to make room for programme reform as a "bottom up" decision. The Programme Staff Union does not want to speculate on conspiracy theories. It is not unusual for a programme to reform to meet public demand. However, given the controversy that has been caused, there was certainly room for improvement in the handling of the matter. The Programme Staff Union accepts the explanation that this is a programme decision, and we respect it as such.

4. Having said that, the public still has many doubts about the decision. The public is particularly worried that radio presenters like Ng Chi-sum, outspoken and critical of the establishment, are an endangered species in today's Hong Kong. Fearless voices like his have become marginalized in our society. The Programme Staff Union urges the RTHK management, Director of Broadcasting Roy Tang, and Deputy Director of Broadcasting Tai Keen-man, to explain the matter clearly to the public with particular respect to the expressed doubts and concerns: why has the service of the two radio presenters been discontinued? What form will the programme reform take? Although the decision was said to be from the bottom up, the public is concerned about what was discussed between the Director of Broadcasting, Deputy Director of Broadcasting, and the involved colleagues? How was the current outcome arrived at and what are the arrangements? To what extent were public interest and concerns and the overall editorial independence of RTHK taken into consideration in the decision? And finally, is RTHK moving away from its former editorial direction?

5. The Programme Staff Union understands clearly that RTHK is a government department. Yet our primary obligation is to do PUBLIC broadcasting. Public broadcasting means we



broadcast for the public. The public is our “boss”. Without public support, programme reform will be very hard to implement. The Union expresses its wish that the colleagues executing the programme reform, and indeed all of our staff, can mutually support and remind each other to do our best not to fail that public.

Janet Mak / RTHK Programme Staff Union Chairperson (12.12.2011)