

Letterhead of THE HONG KONG GENERAL CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Our Ref:HR:444/98

16 September 1998

Ms Flora Tai
Clerk to LegCo Panel on Home Affairs
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Building
8 Jackson Road
Central
Hong Kong

Via mail & fax 2509 9055

Dear Ms Tai,

Racial Discrimination

Thank you for inviting the Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce to attend a Special Meeting of the Panel on 22 September 1998 and to discuss the subject of racial discrimination in Hong Kong.

The Chamber's view on the subject, as stated in our submission to Government on 21 April 1997, can be summarized as follows:

1. The Chamber supports equal opportunity practices in employment which will provide a level playing field for employees and attract the best available person to do the job.
2. We are of the view that racial discrimination in society and in employment is not of a serious concern in Hong Kong. This view is confirmed by the opinions of most Consuls-General being surveyed in a study by government in early 1997.
3. The sort of racial harmony we currently enjoy is achieved not because of any legislation on anti-racial discrimination, but rather through education, market forces and the international exposure of Hong Kong.
4. This is of particular importance to Hong Kong. We are perceived as one of the more "equal" cities in the world, even though we do not have any legislative framework on discrimination until recently.

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5. The Chamber supported the introduction of the first two pieces of equal opportunities legislation on sex and disability in 1995/96 with the understanding that discrimination law is new to Hong Kong and it needs time to test its full impact on various sectors of the community, including employer-employee relations.
6. We oppose most strongly the introduction of other discrimination legislation at this stage without first assessing more fully the implementation of the Sex and Disability Discrimination Ordinances and the operation of the Equal Opportunities Commission.
7. For these reasons, the Chamber opposes the legislative approach, at present, on further equal opportunity issues, especially when there is no substantive evidence of discrimination in the community.
8. We support educating the public and the promotion of equal opportunities in the community. The Chamber will strive to do the same amongst its members to encourage good employment practices amongst employers.

Yours faithfully,

Y S Cheung

Assistant Director, Operations

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