

Panel on Constitutional Affairs

List of issues to be considered

1. Mechanism for amending the Basic Law

The subject was discussed at a number of meetings. On timetable, the Administration advised that it would require about 15 - 22 months for those steps in the process not involving discussions with the Central authorities. Members were disappointed at the slow progress made by the Administration in devising a mechanism for amending the Basic Law. Members urged the Administration to formulate preliminary proposals for procedures which the HKSAR had full autonomy and revert to the Panel within a reasonable time.

2. Ministerial system of government (proposed by Hon Andrew WONG on 20 July 1998)

At the Panel meeting on 18 January 1999, the Administration advised that it would be impossible for a detailed discussion paper to be prepared for consideration of the Panel before the completion of the 2000 LegCo election.

3. Relationship between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Central People's Government

At the 1999 Policy Address, the Chief Executive advised that the Constitutional Affairs Bureau would continue to assist bureaux and departments to establish new channels of communication and develop an effective working relationship with the relevant Mainland authorities. Members agreed at the meeting on 7 October 1999 that the Administration should brief members on the issue at a future meeting.

4. Articles 50 and 51 of the Basic Law

The issue was discussed at the Panel meeting on 19 July 1999. The Panel accepted the Administration's interpretation that the word "budget" in the context of Articles 50 and 51 of the Basic Law referred to the Appropriation Bill only. A report was made to the House Committee on 8 October 1999. The House Committee considered that the Panel should further deliberate the matter as it involved important and complex issues.