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Views sought on proposed legislative amendments for
implementation of Civil Justice Reform

The Steering Committee on Civil Justice Reform issued today (April 12) a Consultation Paper to seek views from the legal profession and other interested parties on proposed legislative amendments for the implementation of Civil Justice Reform ("CJR").

The Steering Committee was appointed by the Chief Justice in March 2004 to oversee the implementation of the recommendations made in the Final Report on CJR.

Chaired by the Hon Mr Justice Ma, Chief Judge of the High Court, the Steering Committee has so far focused its work on the necessary amendments to relevant primary and subsidiary legislation.

"The Steering Committee has identified that, of the 150 recommendations in the Final Report on CJR, 21 require amendments to primary legislation, and 84 require amendments to subsidiary legislation," the Judiciary spokesman said.

These proposed amendments are now contained in the (i) draft Civil Justice (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill and (ii) draft Rules of the High Court (Amendment) Rules 2007, and (iii) draft High Court Fees (Amendment) Rules 2007 annexed to the Consultation Paper.

"Whilst the proposed amendments relate primarily to the recommendations in the Final Report on CJR, they have also taken into account developments and various other matters deliberated on by the Steering Committee since the publication of the Final Report as highlighted in the Consultation Paper," the spokesman said.

Since December 2005, with the assistance of Judges of the District Court and the Lands Tribunal, the Steering Committee has identified the legislative amendments required for the extension of the CJR recommendations to the District Court, the Lands Tribunal and in Employees' Compensation proceedings. These are also set out in the Consultation Paper for comments.

The Consultation Paper can be downloaded at <http://www.civiljustice.gov.hk/cppla>.

"The Steering Committee looks forward to receiving comments from the legal profession and interested parties during the 3-month consultation period which will end on 12 July 2006," the spokesman said.

Views can be sent by e-mail (secretary@civiljustice.gov.hk), fax (2501 4636) or by post (LG2, High Court Building).

In the light of the comments received, the Steering Committee will revise and refine the draft legislation as appropriate before their introduction into the Legislative Council.

The Final Report on CJR was published by the Working Party on CJR on March 3, 2004. Having studied in detail the comments received on its Interim Report and Consultative Paper published in November 2001, the Working Party made a total of 150 recommendations in the Final Report. Most of the recommendations attracted considerable support from those who responded in the consultation exercise. On March 19, 2004, the Chief Justice announced his acceptance of the recommendations in the Final Report and the establishment of the Steering Committee on CJR.

Ends/Wednesday, April 12, 2006

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