

**For discussion
on 4 January 2018**

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

**An outline of the topics in the fourth report of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the light of
the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

Purpose

This paper seeks Members' comments on the proposed outline of the topics to be included in the fourth report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) in the light of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Application of the ICCPR in the HKSAR

2. The ICCPR was extended to Hong Kong in 1976. The provisions of the Covenant as applied to Hong Kong remain in force after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on 1 July 1997.

Reporting to the United Nations in the light of the ICCPR

3. The HKSAR's reports in the light of the ICCPR are submitted to the United Nations (UN) through the Central People's Government. The first report was submitted to the UN in January 1999 and was considered by the UN Human Rights Committee (the Committee) in November 1999. The second report was submitted to the UN in January 2005 and was considered by the Committee in March 2006. The third report was submitted to the UN in May 2011 and was considered by the Committee in March 2013.

4. The Committee, in its previous Concluding Observations in 2013, set 30 March 2018 as the date for the submission of the HKSAR's fourth report in the light of the ICCPR. Accordingly, the HKSAR Government is preparing its fourth report.

Public Consultation

5. In accordance with the established practice, we have prepared for public consultation an outline of the topics for inclusion in the report at **Appendix**. It covers developments in the HKSAR since the Committee last examined the HKSAR's report in 2013. The purpose of the consultation is to invite members of the public to submit views on the implementation of the ICCPR in the HKSAR in respect of those topics and to suggest any additional topics that should be included in the report.

6. The public consultation on the report outline has started on 1 December 2017. We have issued the outline to relevant non-governmental organisations and other concerned groups to invite their views. The outline is also available at Home Affairs Enquiry Centres of District Offices, and in electronic form on the website of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau at <http://www.cmab.gov.hk>.

7. The public consultation will close on 12 January 2018. We will consider the comments received in drafting the HKSAR report. The comments will be made available to members of the public on request, unless the contributors have specifically asked us to keep their views confidential.

Comments Sought

8. Members are invited to comment on the outline. We will carefully consider the views and suggestions received, including those of Members, in drafting the HKSAR Report. The report will be disseminated to the public and copies will be sent to Members.

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
December 2017

**An outline of the topics to be covered in the fourth report of the
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the light of
the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**

Introduction

The Government is preparing for the fourth report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to be submitted in the light of the United Nations International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (the Covenant).

2. In accordance with the established practice, we have prepared an outline of the report. It sets out the broad subject headings and individual topics that we plan to cover in the report. We invite members of the public to submit their views on the implementation of the Covenant in respect of those topics, and to suggest any additional topics that should be included in the report.

3. We will carefully consider all the comments and suggestions received. Any persons or organisations wishing to offer views are invited to send them to the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau (CMAB) on or before 12 January 2018:

by post: Team 5
Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
Central Government Offices
12/F, East Wing
2 Tim Mei Avenue, Tamar, Hong Kong

by fax: 2840 0657

by e-mail: iccpr_consultation@cmab.gov.hk

4. It is voluntary for members of the public to supply their personal data upon providing views on this outline. The submissions and personal data collected may be transferred to the relevant Government bureaux and departments for purposes directly related to the preparation of the report and subsequent follow-up actions relevant to the report. The Government bureaux and departments receiving the data may only use the data for such purposes.

5. The names and views of individuals and organisations who/which put forth submissions in response to this outline

("respondents") may be published for public viewing or otherwise made available for public inspection, including being uploaded to the Internet. We may, either in discussion with others, whether privately or publicly, or in any subsequent report, cite comments submitted in response to this outline.

6. To safeguard respondents' data privacy, we will remove respondents' relevant data (other than names), such as residential/return addresses, email addresses, identity card numbers, telephone numbers, facsimile numbers and signatures, where provided, when publishing their submissions.

7. We will respect the wish of respondents to remain anonymous and/or keep the views confidential in part or in whole. If the respondents request anonymity in the submissions, their names will be removed when publishing their views. If the respondents request confidentiality, their submissions will not be published. If the respondents do not request anonymity or confidentiality in their submissions, it will be assumed that the respondents can be named and the views can be published in their entirety.

8. Any respondent providing personal data in the submission to this Bureau will have rights of access and correction with respect to such personal data. Any requests for data access or correction of personal data should be made in writing through the channels mentioned in paragraph 3 above to Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (5A).

9. The text of the Covenant and the relevant declarations and reservations are available on the CMAB website: http://www.cmab.gov.hk/doc/en/documents/policy_responsibilities/iccpr.doc

10. References to "the previous report" are to the third report of the HKSAR submitted by the Central People's Government in May 2011 and considered by the United Nations Human Rights Committee (the Committee) in March 2013. A copy of the previous report is available on the CMAB website: http://www.cmab.gov.hk/en/issues/prc_4.htm. References to "the second report" are to the report of the HKSAR submitted in January 2005 and considered by the Committee in March 2006, available at: http://www.cmab.gov.hk/en/issues/prc_2.htm. References to "the initial report" are to the report of the HKSAR

submitted in January 1999 and considered by the Committee in November 1999, available at: <http://www.cmab.gov.hk/en/issues/prc.htm>.

The Report

11. The fourth report will consist mainly of –
 - (a) information/explanations about any significant developments since the submission of the previous report in 2011;
 - (b) updates of developments that were ongoing at the time the Committee considered the previous report in 2013 and in respect of which we have undertaken to inform the Committee of future progress or outcome; and
 - (c) responses to the concerns and recommendations raised in the Committee's Concluding Observations on the previous report (the Concluding Observations) (reproduced at the **Annex**) and updates on our responses to the Committee's follow-up to the Concluding Observations.

12. In suggesting additional topics to be included in the report, please indicate why those issues are significant and relevant to the application of the Covenant in Hong Kong. Respondents may also set out their views on the Government's handling of such issues.

Part I: Common Core Document of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

13. The “Common Core Document” part follows the standard format, form and content as prescribed by the Harmonized Guidelines on Reporting under the International Human Rights Treaties of the United Nations. The Guidelines are available at http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/HRBodies/TB/HRI-GEN-2-REV-6_en.doc. This part of the report contains information of a general and factual nature relating to the implementation of the human right treaties in the HKSAR. The Common Core Document was last updated as part of the Fourteenth to Seventeenth Reports of the People's Republic of China under the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD) in April 2017 (available at http://www.cmab.gov.hk/doc/en/documents/policy_responsibilities/Racial_Discrimination/3rdReport/11.Core-document-e.pdf)

Part II: Information in relation to each of the Articles in the Covenant

14. This part of the report contains specific information relating to the implementation of Articles 1 to 27 in Parts I, II and III of the Covenant in the HKSAR as required by the Committee's Guidelines for the treaty-specific document to be submitted by States parties under Article 40 of the Covenant (available at http://tbinternet.ohchr.org/_layouts/treatybodyexternal/TBSearch.aspx?Lang=en&SymbolNo=CCPR/C/2009/1).

Article 1: Progress and development of democracy

15. We will inform the Committee of the implementation of the "one country, two systems" and the independence of the Judiciary in the HKSAR. We will inform the Committee of the progress and development of democracy in the HKSAR under Article 25.

Article 2: Ensuring to all individuals the rights recognised in the Covenant

16. We will update the Committee on significant developments in respect of the Article, including –

- Human rights institution
- The Equal Opportunities Commission
- The Ombudsman
- Independent Police Complaints Council
- Human rights education

17. In particular, we will respond to paragraphs 7 and 12 of the Concluding Observations concerning the Committee's recommendation on the establishment of an independent human rights institution and an independent body to investigate complaints against the Police under the above headings.

Article 3: Equal rights of men and women

18. We will inform the Committee of developments in respect of –

- Equal pay for work of equal value
- Women in advisory and statutory bodies
- Women in public office
- Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW)
- Women's Commission
- Legislation against sex discrimination

Article 4: Public emergencies

19. We will inform the Committee that the position for Article 4 remains as explained in paragraphs 88 to 92 of the initial report.

Article 5: Prohibition on the destruction of any rights and freedoms recognised in the Covenant

20. We will inform the Committee that the position for Article 5 remains as reported in paragraph 93 of the initial report. In short, Article 5 has been implemented by section 2(4) and (5) of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance (Cap. 383).

Article 6: Right to life

21. We will report to the Committee the number of deaths in custody of the four disciplinary forces, namely the Police, the Correctional Services Department, the Customs and Excise Department and the Immigration Department, as well as of the Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC). We will also report to the Committee on child fatality.

Article 7: No torture or inhuman treatment and no experimentation without consent

22. We will update the Committee in respect of information regarding –

- Instances of the alleged use of torture or other forms of ill-treatment
- Training of disciplinary forces and ICAC
- Screening of claims for non-refoulement protection

23. In particular, we will respond to paragraphs 8, 9 and 11 of the Concluding Observations, which concerns the scope of the offence of torture created by the Crimes (Torture) Ordinance (Cap. 427), the treatment of persons seeking non-refoulement protection and the use of force by the Police.

Article 8: No slavery or servitude; no forced or compulsory labour

24. We will advise the Committee that Articles 4(1) and (2) of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights prohibit slavery and the slave trade in all forms as well as holding any person in servitude, and Article 4(3) of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights prohibits forced or compulsory labour. We will update the Committee on developments in respect of -

- Protection of foreign domestic helpers
- Minimum Allowable Wage and Employees Retraining Levy on employers
- Overall regime on combating trafficking in person and victim protection

25. In particular, we will provide an update on our follow-up to paragraph 21 of the Concluding Observations on protection of the basic rights of foreign domestic helpers which was submitted to the Committee in December 2015. In response to paragraph 20 of the Concluding Observations concerning human trafficking, we will advise the Committee our robust measures in combatting trafficking in persons, the improvement made over the years, including but not limited to victim identification and victim protection.

Article 9: Liberty and security of person

26. We will update the Committee on developments in respect of –

- Immigration detention in respect of foreign illegal migrants

Article 10: Right of persons deprived of their liberty

27. We will update the Committee on development in respect of –

- The rights of persons in custody
- Regulation and management of penal establishments
- Rehabilitation of juvenile offenders and other offenders
- Assistance for Hong Kong residents detained in Mainland China

Article 11: No imprisonment for non-fulfilment of contract

28. We will advise the Committee that the position in relation to this Article remains the same as explained in the initial report.

Article 12: Liberty of movement

29. We will update the Committee on significant developments in respect of –

- Legal protection of liberty of movement
- Travel documents for permanent residents and non-permanent residents
- Immigration control on entry into Hong Kong by visitors
- Assistance for Hong Kong residents in distress outside Hong Kong

30. We will also respond to paragraph 17 of the Concluding Observations, which concerns with the right of movement of Falun Gong practitioners.

Article 13: Restrictions on expulsion from Hong Kong

31. We will update the Committee on the statistics on deportation and removal, as well as appeal against removal order by the Immigration Tribunal.

Article 14: Equality before courts and right to fair and public hearing

32. We will update the Committee on significant developments in respect of –

- Right of access to the legal system
- Legal representation for children

33. We will respond to paragraph 5 of the Concluding Observations, which concerns the impact of the interpretations of the Basic Law by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary.

Article 15: No retrospective criminal offences or penalties

34. We will inform the Committee that there is no significant update in relation to this Article.

Article 16: Right to recognition as person before law

35. We will advise the Committee that the position in respect of this Article remains as reported in the second report.

Article 17: Protection of privacy, family, home, correspondence, honour and reputation

36. We will update the Committee on significant developments in the following areas –

- Interception of Communications and Surveillance Ordinance (Cap. 589)

- Protection of data privacy

Article 18: Freedom of thought, conscience and religion

37. We will include updated information on religious freedom of individuals and religious bodies under this Article.

Article 19: Freedom of opinion and expression

38. We will inform the Committee on significant developments concerning freedom of opinion and expression, including the issues set out below. We will also respond to paragraphs 13 and 14 of the Concluding Observations, which expressed concerns on the restrictions on freedom of expression in particular for the media and academia, and the definition of the offences of treason and sedition in the Crimes Ordinance (Cap. 200).

- Press freedom
- Prevention and protection against intimidation and harassment of legislators and media personnel
- Freedom of expression
- Regulation and licensing of the broadcast media
- Radio Television Hong Kong
- Film classification system
- Appeals against the decision of the Film Censorship Authority and the censors
- Regulation of obscene and indecent articles
- Access to Government information
- Management of libraries and museums

Article 20: Prohibition on propaganda for war

39. We will inform the Committee that the position for Article 20 remains as explained in paragraph 373 of the initial report.

Article 21: Right of peaceful assembly

40. We will update the Committee on various aspects relating to the Public Order Ordinance (Cap. 245) under this Article including:

- The operation of the Public Order Ordinance
- The confiscation of exhibits under public entertainment laws
- Stalls for fund raising / collecting signatures during processions
- Public meetings outside Central Government Offices

41. We will also respond to paragraph 10 of the Concluding Observations which expressed concerns on the implementation of the Public Order Ordinance and the treatment of demonstrators.

Article 22: Freedom of association

42. We will inform the Committee of the latest position in respect of –

- Societies Ordinance (Cap. 151)
- Regulation of trade union activities
- Organisations for the promotion of human rights

Article 23: The family – a vital component of society

43. We will update the Committee on significant developments of the following topics. In particular, we will address the concern raised in paragraph 15 of the Concluding Observations on family issues arising from the right of abode policy and practices –

- Family welfare services
- Split families
- Amendments to the Matrimonial Causes Rules

- New arrivals from the Mainland of China
- Statutory paternity leave

Article 24: Rights of children

44. We will inform the Committee of developments regarding rights of children. In particular, we will respond to paragraph 16 of the Concluding Observations on prevention of corporal punishment, and paragraph 18 on domestic violence. Topics under this Article include -

- Children's Commission
- Services for the child
- Child abuse and domestic violence
- Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Promotion of the rights of the child
- Corporal punishment
- Representation of children in care or protection cases
- Sexual offences records check

Article 25: Right to participate in public life

45. We will update the Committee on significant developments in respect of –

- Constitutional development
- Chief Executive election
- Legislative Council election
- District Council elections
- Rural elections

- Government advisory bodies and statutory bodies

Article 26: Right to equal protection before the law

46. We will advise the Committee of latest developments on the following topics. We will also address the Committee's recommendations in paragraphs 19, 23 and 24 of the Concluding Observations concerning the application of RDO to the Government in the exercise of its public functions, introducing comprehensive anti-discrimination laws including prohibiting discrimination on ground of sexual orientation and gender identity, and preventing discrimination against persons with disabilities in the exercise of their right to vote.

- Discrimination Law Review
- Legislation against racial discrimination
- Discrimination on the ground of age
- Discrimination on the grounds of sexual orientation and gender identity
- Gender recognition
- Disability discrimination
- Discrimination against rehabilitated persons
- Residence requirements under social security schemes

Article 27: Right of ethnic minorities

47. With reference to the third report of the HKSAR under the ICERD (<http://www.cmab.gov.hk/en/issues/report3A.htm>), we will set out the overall legal framework and policy initiatives in support of ethnic minorities in Hong Kong. We will also update the Committee on significant developments in respect of the following topics such as measures to support non-Chinese speaking students (notably ethnic minority students) to learn the Chinese language to facilitate their early adaptation to the local education system and integration into the community since our follow-up to paragraph 22 of the Concluding Observations on education support for non-Chinese speaking students in December 2015 –

- Public education and publicity
- Administrative guidelines and support services for ethnic minorities
- Access to public sector employment
- Education for non-Chinese speaking students

**Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
December 2017**

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Human Rights Committee**Concluding observations on the third periodic report of Hong
Kong, China, adopted by the Committee at its 107th session
(11 – 28 March 2013)**

1. The Human Rights Committee considered the third periodic report of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, (Hong Kong, China,) (CCPR/C/CHN-HKG/3) at its 2954th and 2955th meetings (CCPR/C/SR.2954 and 2955), held on 12 and 13 March 2013. This report is the third submitted by the People's Republic of China after the return of Hong Kong, China, to Chinese sovereignty on 1 July 1997. At its 2974th meeting (CCPR/C/SR.2974), held on 26 March 2013, the Committee adopted the following concluding observations.

A. Introduction

2. The Committee welcomes the submission of Hong Kong, China's third periodic report and expresses its satisfaction with the constructive dialogue with the delegation of the Government of Hong Kong, China. It appreciates the written replies (CCPR/C/CHN-HKG/Q/3/Add.1) to the Committee in response to its list of issues, while regretting that they were only provided a few days before the 107th session. The Committee thanks the delegation for the additional detailed information provided orally during the consideration of the report.

B. Positive aspects

3. The Committee welcomes the ratification of the following international instruments:

- (a) The Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the involvement of children in armed conflict, on 20 February 2008;
- (b) The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, on 1 August 2008.

4. The Committee welcomes the following legislative and other measures taken since the consideration of Hong Kong, China's second periodic report:

- (a) The adoption of the Immigration (Amendment) Ordinance (2012);
- (b) The amendments to the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (2012);
- (c) The amendments to the Domestic Violence Ordinance (Cap. 189) (2009).

C. Principal subjects of concern and recommendations

5. The Committee takes note of Hong Kong, China's view that the power of interpretation of the Basic Law by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) is "in general and unqualified terms" and the principle is fully acknowledged and respected by Hong Kong, China's courts (CCPR/C/CHN-HKG/3, para. 322). However, the Committee remains concerned that a mechanism of binding constitutional interpretation by a non-judicial body may weaken and undermine the rule of law and the independence of judiciary (arts. 2 and 14).

Hong Kong, China, should ensure the proper functioning of judicial structures in accordance with the Covenant and with principles governing the rule of law. As previously recommended (CCPR/C/HKG/CO/2, para.18), it should also ensure that all interpretations of the Basic Law, including on electoral and public affairs issues, are in full compliance with the Covenant.

6. The Committee notes Hong Kong, China's indication that universal and equal suffrage for the Chief Executive elections in 2017 and for the Legislative Council elections in 2020 may be granted. The Committee expresses concern about the lack of a clear plan to institute universal suffrage and to ensure the right of all persons to vote and to stand for election without unreasonable limitations, as well as Hong Kong, China's position in maintaining its reservation to article 25(b) of the Covenant (arts. 2, 25 and 26).

Hong Kong, China, should take all necessary measures to implement universal and equal suffrage in conformity with the Covenant as a matter of priority for all future elections. It should outline clear and detailed plans on how universal and equal suffrage might be instituted and ensure enjoyment by all its citizens, under the new electoral system, of the right to vote and to stand for election in compliance with article 25 of the Covenant, taking due account of the Committee's general comment No. 25 (1996) on the right to participate in public affairs, voting rights and the right of equal access to public service. It is recommended to consider steps leading to withdrawing the reservation to article 25(b) of the Covenant.

7. The Committee regrets that there is no independent statutory body to investigate and monitor violations of human rights guaranteed by the Covenant in a comprehensive manner. The Committee is moreover concerned that the proliferation of bodies focusing on the rights of specific groups may militate against greater effectiveness on the part of Hong Kong, China, in fulfilling its obligations under the Covenant and against greater clarity in its overall policy on human rights (art. 2).

Hong Kong, China, should strengthen the mandate and the independence of the existing bodies, including the Ombudsman and the Equal Opportunities Commission. It is also recommended to revise the multiplicity of the existing bodies whose mandate does not afford effective protection of all Covenant rights. Furthermore, the Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (CCPR/C/HKG/CO/2, para. 8) that Hong Kong, China, consider establishing a human rights institution, in accordance with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (Paris Principles), with adequate financial and human resources, with a broad mandate covering all international human rights standards accepted by Hong Kong, China, and with competence to consider and act on individual complaints of human rights violations by public authorities and to enforce the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance.

8. While noting the view of Hong Kong, China, that the definition of the crime of torture under the Crimes (Torture) Ordinance is consistent with international standards, the Committee shares the concerns raised by the Committee against Torture in 2008 that the

terms contained in Sections 2(1) and 3(4) of the Ordinance in practice contain loopholes that might prevent effective prosecution of torture and allow possible defences for acts of torture (art. 7).

Hong Kong, China, should bring its legislation in line with international standards, in particular, it should recognize the non-derogable character of the prohibition of torture and should therefore eliminate any possible defences for the crime of torture in accordance with article 7 of the Covenant.

9. While noting with appreciation the Hong Kong, China's cooperation with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to ensure protection of refugees and asylum seekers, the Committee regrets that Hong Kong, China, maintains a position not to seek the extension of the 1951 United Nations Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol, and that persons facing deportation proceedings are not always covered by safeguards established in the Covenant. The Committee expresses concern about allegations that deportation operations are not properly monitored by the relevant oversight bodies (arts. 2, 6, 7 and 13).

In light of the Committee's previous recommendations (CCPR/C/HKG/CO/2, para.10), Hong Kong, China, should ensure that all persons in need of international protection receive appropriate and fair treatment at all stages, in compliance with the Covenant. The Hong Kong, China, authorities should recognize the absolute character of prohibition of return to a location where the individual faces a real risk of torture or cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, also emphasized in the judgement of the Court of Final Appeal in *Ubamaka v. Secretary for Security and Anor* (FACV 15/2011, 21 December 2012). Hong Kong, China, is urged not to set an inappropriate high threshold for recognizing a real risk of ill-treatment on return.

10. The Committee is concerned about (a) the application in practice of certain terms contained in the Public Order Ordinance, inter alia, "disorder in public places" or "unlawful assembly", which may facilitate excessive restriction to the Covenant rights, (b) the increasing number of arrests of, and prosecutions against, demonstrators, and (c) the use of camera and video-recording by police during demonstrations (arts. 17 and 21).

Hong Kong, China, should ensure that the implementation of the Public Order Ordinance is in conformity with the Covenant. It should also establish clear guidelines for police and for records for the use of video-recording devices and make such guidelines accessible to the public.

11. The Committee expresses concern about reports of excessive use of force by members of the police force, not compatible with the United Nations Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials, in particular by the inappropriate use of pepper spray to break up demonstrations to restore order, notably with regard to demonstrations surrounding the annual Hong Kong march on 1 July 2011, the visits of Vice-Premier and President of China, respectively in August 2011 and July 2012 (arts. 7, 19 and 21).

Hong Kong, China, should increase its efforts to provide training to the police with regard to the principle of proportionality when using force, taking due account of the United Nations Principles on the Use of Force and Firearms by Law Enforcement Officials.

12. While noting that the statutory framework has reinforced the role of the Independent Police Complaint Council (IPCC), the Committee remains concerned that investigations of police misconduct are still carried out by the police themselves through the Complaints Against Police Office (CAPO) and that IPCC has only advisory and oversight functions to

monitor and review the activities of the CAPO and that the members of IPCC are appointed by the Chief Executive (arts. 2 and 7).

Hong Kong, China, should take necessary measures to establish a fully independent mechanism mandated to conduct independent, proper and effective investigation into complaints about the inappropriate use of force or other abuse of power by the police and empowered to formulate binding decisions in respect of investigations conducted and findings regarding such complaints.

13. The Committee is concerned about reports that Hong Kong, China, has seen deterioration in media and academic freedom, including arrests, assaults and harassment of journalists and academics (arts. 19 and 25).

Hong Kong, China, should, in line with the Committee's general comment No. 34 (2011) on freedoms of opinion and expression, take vigorous measures to repeal any unreasonable direct or indirect restrictions on freedom of expression, in particular for the media and academia, to take effective steps including investigation of attacks on journalists and to implement the right of access to information by public bodies.

14. The Committee notes Hong Kong, China's intention to deal with the offences of treason and sedition in the context of the new legislation implementing article 23 of the Basic Law. However, it remains concerned at the broad wording of the definition of the offences of treason and sedition currently in Hong Kong, China's Crimes Ordinance (arts. 19, 21 and 22).

Hong Kong, China, should amend its legislation regarding the offences of treason and sedition to bring it into full conformity with the Covenant and ensure that the foreseen new legislation under article 23 of the Basic Law is fully consistent with the provisions of the Covenant.

15. The Committee notes the information provided by Hong Kong, China, that the Director of Immigration may exercise her or his discretion on a case-by-case basis to grant permission to the applicants to enter Hong Kong from the Mainland China, as dependants if there are exceptional humanitarian or compassionate considerations. However, the Committee is concerned that many families, reportedly nearly a hundred thousand families composed of parents and their children, remain separated between Mainland China, and Hong Kong, as a result of the right of abode policies (arts. 23 and 24).

The Committee reiterates its previous recommendations (CCPR/C/HKG/CO/2, para. 15) that Hong Kong, China, review its policies and practices regarding the right of abode in accordance with its obligations with regard to the right of families and children to protection under articles 23 and 24 of the Covenant.

16. The Committee notes the efforts made to prevent corporal punishment by parents. However, it is concerned about the continual practice of corporal punishment in the home (art.7).

Hong Kong, China, should take practical steps to put an end to corporal punishment in all settings. It should encourage non-violent forms of discipline as alternatives to corporal punishment, and should conduct public information campaigns to raise awareness about its harmful effects. Hong Kong, China, should take steps to initiate a full public discussion on corporal punishment by parents on children.

17. While noting that Falun Gong in Hong Kong is a legally registered organization, the Committee regrets restrictions on Falun Gong practitioners in Hong Kong, in particular in relation to the right of movement (arts. 12, 18 and 19).

Hong Kong, China, should ensure that its policies and practices relating to the Falun Gong practitioners conform fully to the requirements of the Covenant.

18. The Committee notes with appreciation a variety of measures and programmes intended to combat domestic violence, but remains concerned at the high incidence of domestic violence in Hong Kong, China, including domestic violence against women and girls with disabilities (arts. 3, 7 and 26).

Hong Kong, China, should increase its efforts to combat domestic violence by, inter alia, ensuring effective implementation of the Domestic and Cohabitation Relationships Violence Ordinance (DCRVO). In this regard, Hong Kong, China, should ensure the provision of assistance and protection to victims, the criminal prosecution of perpetrators of such violence, and the sensitization of society as a whole to this matter.

19. The Committee notes with concern that, unlike the other Discrimination Ordinances, the Race Discrimination Ordinance (RDO) does not specifically apply to the Government in the exercise of its public functions such as the operations of the Hong Kong Police Forces and Correctional Services Department (art. 26).

The Committee recommends that Hong Kong, China, rectify a key gap in the current Race Discrimination Ordinance, in close consultation with the Equal Opportunities Commission, in order to ensure full compliance with article 26 of the Covenant. Hong Kong, China, should also consider introducing comprehensive anti-discrimination laws, in accordance with the Covenant. Such legislation should impose obligations on the authorities to promote equality and to eradicate discrimination.

20. The Committee is concerned about the persistence of the phenomenon of trafficking in persons in Hong Kong, China, and reports that Hong Kong, China, is a source, destination, and transit point for men, women, and teenage girls from Hong Kong, the mainland of China, and elsewhere in Southeast Asia, subjected to human trafficking and forced labour. The Committee is concerned about the reluctance of Hong Kong, China, to take steps which could lead to the extension of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol) to Hong Kong, China, (art. 8).

Hong Kong, China, should intensify its efforts to identify victims of trafficking and ensure the systematic collection of data on trafficking flows to and in transit through the region, review its sentencing policy for perpetrators of trafficking-related crimes, support private shelters offering protection to victims, strengthen victim assistance by ensuring interpretation, medical care, counselling, legal support for claiming unpaid wages and compensation, long-term support for rehabilitation and stability of legal status to all victims of trafficking. The Committee recommends the inclusion of certain practices regarding foreign domestic workers in the definition of the crime of human trafficking. Hong Kong, China, should consider taking steps which could lead to the extension of the Palermo Protocol to Hong Kong, China, in order to strengthen its commitment to fight trafficking in persons in the region.

21. The Committee is concerned about the discriminatory and exploitation suffered by a large number of migrant domestic workers and the lack of adequate protection and redress provided for them (arts. 2 and 26).

Hong Kong, China, should adopt measures to ensure that all workers enjoy their basic rights, independently of their migrant status, and establish affordable and effective mechanisms to ensure that abusive employers are held accountable. It is also recommended to consider repealing the “two-weeks rule” (whereby domestic migrant workers have to leave Hong Kong within two weeks upon termination of contract) as well as the live-in requirement.

22. The Committee is concerned that ethnic minorities are underrepresented in higher education and that no official education policy for teaching Chinese as a second language for non-Chinese speaking students with an immigrant background in Hong Kong has been adopted. The Committee also notes with concern the report of the Equal Opportunities Commission that non-Chinese speaking migrants face discrimination and prejudice in employment due to the requirement of written Chinese language skills, even for manual jobs (art. 26).

In light of the recommendation made by the Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination (CERD/C/CHN/CO/10-13, para. 31), Hong Kong, China, should intensify its efforts to improve the quality of Chinese language education for ethnic minorities and non-Chinese speaking students with an immigrant background, in collaboration with the Equal Opportunities Commission and other groups concerned. Hong Kong, China, should further intensify its efforts to encourage the integration of students of ethnic minorities in public school education.

23. The Committee is concerned about the absence of legislation explicitly prohibiting discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and reported discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender persons in the private sector (arts. 2 and 26).

Hong Kong, China, should consider enacting legislation that specifically prohibits discrimination on ground of sexual orientation and gender identity, take the necessary steps to put an end to prejudice and social stigmatization of homosexuality and send a clear message that it does not tolerate any form of harassment, discrimination or violence against persons based on their sexual orientation or gender identity. Furthermore, Hong Kong, China, should ensure that benefits granted to unmarried cohabiting opposite-sex couples are equally granted to unmarried cohabiting same-sex couples, in line with article 26 of the Covenant.

24. The Committee is concerned about the disqualification from voting of all persons who are found to be incapable, by reason of their mental, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities of managing and administering their property and affairs under section 31(1) of the Legislative Council Ordinance and section 30 of the District Councils Ordinance (arts. 2, 25 and 26).

Hong Kong, China, should revise its legislation to ensure that it does not discriminate against persons with mental, intellectual or psychosocial disabilities by denying them the right to vote on bases that are disproportionate or that have no reasonable and objective relation to their ability to vote, taking account of article 25, of the Covenant and article 29 of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

25. Hong Kong, China, should widely disseminate the Covenant, the text of the third periodic report, the written responses it has provided in response to the list of issues drawn up by the Committee, and the present concluding observations so as to increase awareness among the judicial, legislative and administrative authorities, civil society and non-governmental organizations operating in the region, as well as the general public. The Committee also requests Hong Kong, China, when preparing its fourth periodic report, to broadly consult with civil society and non-governmental organizations.

26. In accordance with rule 71, paragraph 5, of the Committee's rules of procedure Hong Kong, China, should provide, within one year, relevant information on its implementation of the Committee's recommendations made in paragraphs 6, 21 and 22 above.

27. The Committee requests Hong Kong, China, in its next periodic report, due by 30 March 2018, to provide, specific, up-to-date information on all its recommendations and on the Covenant as a whole.