

\$15m Viet aid passed amid serious doubts

A \$15 million injection into a Vietnamese returnees reintegration program, which sceptical legislators described as a "bottomless pit", has been narrowly passed by the Finance Committee.

United Democrats voted against the funding, saying the British government should shoulder half the cost.

United Democrats of Hongkong chairman Martin Lee doubted the cost-effectiveness of the \$10 million contributed last year to Vietnamese government and non-government organisations for infrastructure and agricultural programs.

Other legislators were concerned about the money owed by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to the Hongkong government.

Refugee Co-ordinator Brian Bresnihan said endeavours to recover the debts were continuing.

Independent legislator Vincent Cheng urged legislators to be more generous, given that Hongkong received international aid decades ago.

Bresnihan said the donation was vital to nurture a good relationship with the Hanoi regime to fully implement a repatriation agreement signed in October 1991.