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Academic's time-scale for change

There should be no basic change to the existing political system for at least one to two years after agreement is reached on Hongkong's future, says Dr Victor Sit of the University of Hongkong.

He told members of Kowloon Central Lions Club at a dinner yesterday that the people of Hongkong should be given up to two years to adjust to the agreement.

During this time, he said, the elected members of district boards should help stabilise society.

And the voting rights of appointed district board members should be taken away, he added.

He said that during the 13 years leading up to 1997 the Government should aim at achieving two goals:

- Maintenance of the territory's prosperity and stability.

- A smooth changeover from colonial rule to rule by the people of Hongkong.

Dr Sit suggested what he described as a "five-five-three" (in terms of years) transitional plan to achieve these ends:

- From now until 1988, the main policy should be to develop the economy and to maintain prosperity.

- From 1988 until 1994, there should be a political reform.

- In the last three years before 1997, the basic law for a future Hongkong government should be enacted.

Dr Sit said there should be reform both to the central and district administrations.

He thought there should be no fundamental change in the Executive Council's jurisdiction and composition.

"But all questions raised by Unofficials members should be discussed."

And there should be no fundamental change in the Legislative Council's function either, although the Queen's powers to veto laws passed by Legco should be abolished and the British laws should only come into force here after approval by Legco.

Dr Sit said the composition of Legco should be: one third ex-officio members, another third appointed members and the rest elected members.

He said the Urban Council should be the organisation responsible for urban services and cultural and recreational activities.

The council should comprise one-half appointed members and the other half elected members.