

'By the locals for the locals'

URBAN Council Chairman Hilton Cheong-Leen has begun his Legislative Council election campaign with a call to have Hongkong run locally instead of by outsiders.

That thought was contained in a personal letter sent to all his colleagues in Urbco.

The letter also asks for their support for his candidacy in the elections this autumn.

"I shall fight for the highest possible level of autonomy, as stated in the Joint Declaration, for the Hongkong people," he announced.

Mr Cheong-Leen said that his style of leadership may not be to everyone's liking.

But, he added, his leadership approach is rooted in the "consensus approach" which is the Chinese way of doing things.

As such, he would go for minimum rhetoric and for unity and effective results.

"But I know when to stand up and be counted," he added.

He further pointed out that the Urban Council is today governed by its select committees, coordinated by the standing committee of the whole council and is not a "one man show."

"Today, the Urban Council, as never before, is given the recognition that is its due by the man in the street, by the District Boards, and by the government itself," he said.

Mr Cheong-Leen said that for the benefit of the council, he will put to good use his ability to get direct access to all levels of the community, from the grass-roots right up to the top of the government administration.

He gave the pledge that he has firm ideas of what he will accomplish in unity with other elected and nominated Legco members, if elected to Legco.

He also gave the assurance that everything will be done to forge in Legco a united local leadership before 1997 and make sure that the future basic law will be what the people of Hongkong want and are prepared to accept.

Mr Cheong-Leen said that he would also use his background, which includes ties with all levels of the local community, to stand up for the rights and life-styles of the local people.

The Urbco chairman, who was born in Guyana in 1922, declared that he belongs to Hongkong and is without the right of permanent residence in the United Kingdom.

He has been living here for the past 50 years.

Referring to the 28 years he has spent as an elected Urban Councillor, Mr Cheong-Leen said that he wants, now more than ever before, to be involved in the coming 12-year transition period leading up to the territory becoming a Special Administrative Region of China.