

Big-wigs fly in to discuss economics

By Michael Smith

HONG Kong's top "ambassadors", who represent the territory's trade and economic interests in major cities throughout the world, have arrived for a twice-yearly briefing session.

The delegation briefed Governor Chris Patten yesterday, before he left for London, and will address the Legislative Council's Trade and Industry Panel later this week.

The delegation will be briefed in Hong Kong before visiting Shanghai for meetings with Chinese officials.

They include Hong Kong's top "ambassador" and Commissioner of Economic and Trade Affairs to the US, Barrie Wiggham.

Mr Wiggham was appointed to the position last year, amid controversy and criticism by legislators of his US\$119,050 (HK\$928,590) monthly salary and US\$20 million home in Washington.

The director of Hong Kong's Toronto office, Stephen Lam, and former high-ranking civil servant and Hong Kong's special representative in Geneva, Joseph Wong, will also be among the party.

Mr Lam and Mr Wong, both civil service high-flyers who have hurtled to the top of the administration's ranking system, are tipped to be returning to work in Hong Kong in the near future.

Mr Lam was formerly assistant to the then Chief Secretary, Sir David Ford.