

Abolishing death penalty should be our gift to future of the territory

THANK you for the editorial (*South China Morning Post*, August 22nd) concerning the abolition of the death penalty in Hongkong.

Capital punishment is an issue with many arguments put forward on both sides, but we should not let this deter us from making the decisions that are needed for a progressive society. Every major social reform has had to undergo challenge and debate before proving its way.

There need to be moments when history moves forward, and the abolition of the death penalty would help to bring to Hongkong the strength and dignity of being a humane society encouraging confidence within and a new sense of the contribution we can make to the world around us.

Of course, a society needs to maintain the elements of order and justice but civilisation needs the foundation of a strong rever-

ence for life and must have room for the possibilities of reform and of hope as well as guarding against the kind of irreversible decisions as mentioned in your article.

In such matters as this, some people are always looking over their shoulder to see what other people and places are doing before making up their minds, but there are times when only a willingness to stand by what is right for its own sake will enable the good to prevail and progress to be won.

As we move towards 1997, there may be many things we would hope for Hongkong. Not all will be possible, but if the abolition of the death penalty is within our gift to the future of the territory, then let us resolve to take this step in the name of civilisation and humanity while we can still do so.

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