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18-month grace period 'barely enough notice'

By Lily Mak

HONG KONG Alliance of Chinese and Expatriates chairman Guy Lam Kwok-hung says the nationality and right of abode policy announced by the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office is acceptable but could be better.

Mr Lam said the 18-month grace period after 30 June in which returning emigrants could retain permanent residency was "barely sufficient".

"We have been advocating a 2½-year grace period so as to enable those who

have emigrated overseas to observe whether there are unfair laws passed by the first SAR legislature for emigrants. Now the 18-month period is barely enough for us to do so," he said.

Mr Lam described as "loose" the three-year limit whereby a non-Chinese permanent resident who left Hong Kong would risk losing permanent residency.

Mr Lam said it was necessary that the right of abode legislation be passed by the Provisional Legislative Council before 1 July.