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\$20m target for political foundation

By SHIRLEY YAM

THE Hongkong Democratic Foundation plans to raise \$20 million for its establishment fund and for campaign expenses for the 1991 elections, one of its founding members, Dr Leong Che-hung, said yesterday.

The political party of businessmen and professionals, which began recruiting members last December and is scheduled to be inaugurated on June 24, has already secured annual donations of \$5 million.

The group's newly-appointed executive administrator, Miss Corinna Mok Lai-chiu, said that amount would cover the costs of running the 200-member foundation.

Its members include several elected district board members and some people affiliated to the Hongkong Alliance in Support of the Patriotic Democratic Movement in China, which the Beijing authorities consider "subversive".

Miss Mok, who resigned as a senior executive of the left-wing *Wen Wei Po* newspaper after the June 4 Beijing massacre, said: "As a graduate in history, I want to play a part in the coming important years of Hongkong."

"I'm not worried about the political risk."

The foundation's secretariat will have two other



Corinna Mok

full-time staff and will be headed by a secretary-general.

Dr Leong was optimistic that the interest generated by the \$20 million fund would be enough to pay for the group to field candidates in next year's district board, municipal councils and Legislative Council elections.

They are discussing the possibility of co-operating in the elections with another liberal group, the United Democrats of Hongkong.

Dr Leong said: "We may support candidates who share our views. We don't want any cut-throat competition." He added that different political groups should settle their differences outside of the legislature.

"Hongkong still has to face a lot of problems during the transition period. We need a legislature which should aim to be supportive

[to the Government] in all positive ways," Dr Leong said.

"Negotiations before the council sittings can avoid unnecessary confrontation and facilitate better understanding among different groups. It will not do Hongkong any good if various parties insist on their own stance."

He was adamant that such a consensus approach, which he conceded was similar to that of the formerly fully government-appointed legislature, would not reduce the legislature to a rubber stamp.

"The council after 1991 will have more elected members. Public opinion will be better represented."

Dr Leong said he expected the 1991 legislature to be divided into five camps: the pro-China Federation of Trade Unions, the conservative business groups led by legislators Mr Stephen Cheong Kam-chuen and Miss Maria Tam Wai-chu, the United Democrats, and the foundation.

Another founding member, legislator Mr Jimmy McGregor, said he expected the foundation to play a mediating role among the emerging political groups.

"I see the foundation as a centre group with a role similar to that of a mediator between unionists and employers in labour disputes," Mr McGregor said.