

Action urged on Basic Law rift

By CHRIS YEUNG

THIRTY Basic Law Consultative Committee members have teamed up to demand a formal debate on the relationship between the consultative committee and the Basic Law Drafting Committee.

They want the issue aired at the upcoming third general meeting next month.

The militant members are dissatisfied with what they describe as a breakdown in communications between the two committees since they were formed in 1985 to deliberate on the Basic Law.

The collective action follows the statement by the consultative group's 19-member executive committee after the last general meeting that called for a "strengthening of communications and exchanges" between the two bodies.

But the strongly-worded statement denied that the drafting committee had been "leading the consultative

committee by the nose" and that the consultative committee was still discussing issues that had already been decided by the drafters.

The executive arm has also initially decided a five-item agenda for the coming full meeting on March 28.

The meeting will look at replacement of members who have either resigned or died; confirm the minutes of the first two general meetings; study a work report from the executive committee as well as the work plan for this year; and look at possible improvements in the consultative committee's work.

Any proposed agenda supported by at least 30 members is automatically valid, under the committee's working guidelines.

An executive committee member, who wished not to be named, said he welcomed the debate demand, adding that members' aspirations for closer co-ordination with

the drafting committee should be made known to the drafters.

"Some of us do feel there have been some problems over mutual communications between the two committees. But the responsibility should rest with them (the drafting committee.) We have done all we can," he said.

One of the 30 members told the *South China Morning Post* that one improvement in communications being sought was the provision of the latest reports by the drafting committee's sub-groups to consultative committee members.

"We have yet to receive the progress reports of the BLDC's five sub-groups (which have already been reported in newspapers)," he said.

"It is unreasonable that we have to rely on press reports that are not necessarily accurate."