

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

14 November 1989

The consultation period for the Basic Law (Draft) which lasted for eight months from late February to 31 October this year has concluded. During this second consultation period, there were times of difficulties and complications and we faced new trials.

In late February this year, the staff of the typesetting company and the printer, as well as the staff of our Secretariat, worked extremely hard for the publication of the Basic Law (Draft). Despite the technical problems encountered, the Basic Law (Draft) was published right on schedule. With the help of more than 800 branches and sub-branches of the local banks, copies of the Draft and reference papers were distributed to the general public for reference. With the assistance of some of our members and the banks, copies of the Draft were later despatched to many foreign cities with a large Chinese population for distribution. Our indebtedness is herein acknowledged to those organizations and bodies which helped us publish and distribute the Draft.

At the same time when the Basic Law (Draft) was published, an advertising agency was kind enough to render us assistance in the designing and production of publicity slogans, posters and television promos. With the support of the Hong Kong Government, these publicity materials were broadcast free of charge by various radio and television stations. During that time, the radio and television stations, and all major newspapers had extensive coverage on the Basic Law. The call on the public to "get to know the Basic Law" was propagated through every possible channel. We have to thank a number of newspapers and the Mass Transit Railway Corporation for giving us free media space or discounted rates for the advertisements on the Basic Law. We also have to thank our friends — the hard working reporters — who shuffed from places to places to cover the Basic Law. Especially during the mainland drafters' visit to Hong Kong in April this year, they had to cover all the drafters' activities in Hong Kong so that news could be promptly released. They hence contributed a great deal to the exchange of views between the drafters and people in Hong Kong.

To facilitate the publicity on the contents of the Basic Law (Draft), our Secretariat organized a territory-wide itinerant exhibition. A number of real estate developers were kind enough to provide the sites for the exhibition. Without their assistance, the exhibition could have never been a success. Also during this second round of consultations, our Secretariat organized a number of public seminars and discussion sessions on special issues. We were honoured to have well qualified academics and experts to chair those seminars and discussion sessions. They not only gave us their valuable time and shared with us their precious knowledge of the Basic Law, but also benefited us with their invaluable insights into those special issues relating to the Basic Law. Our heartfelt gratitude is herein acknowledged to these academics and experts.

The events that took place between May and June this year on mainland China evoked great repercussions in Hong Kong, thus making it difficult for the consultations on the Basic Law to proceed as scheduled. Consequently on 7 June, we announced that all activities were to be suspended. The consultations did not resume until 20 July. During that time, despite the extra pressure exerted on the consultative work by the anxiety of people in Hong Kong about their future, our one hundred and seventy odd members continued with their effort. After the consultations were fully resumed, members of our Executive Committee went to Beijing several

times to exchange opinions with the leaders of the Drafting Committee. Subsequently, with the consent of the authorities concerned, the consultation period was extended to the end of October. Following that, the special groups of our Committee called their own meetings to discuss in depth the contents of the Basic Law (Draft) in the light of the new circumstances.

An international symposium was initially scheduled as part of the programme for this second consultation exercise. But owing to inadequate time caused by the suspension of the consultative work between June and July, it had to be cancelled with reluctance. Nevertheless, we would still like to extend our gratitude to those internationally renowned scholars who agreed to present their papers at this symposium. It is most unfortunate that the Hong Kong public have been denied a chance to meet these scholars.

In the whole process of drafting the Basic Law, the drafters are naturally the ones who contribute the most and work the hardest. Likewise in the consultations on the Basic Law, our advisers and members are the ones who contribute the most. This is especially true with the second round of consultations, during which they vowed to adhere to their duties and continued to strive for a better Basic Law. I believe those who have been and are still following the development on the Basic Law will not dispute that. My indebtedness is herein acknowledged to our advisers and members.

During this consultation period, people from various sectors submitted to us all sorts of opinions which covered almost everything and were expressed in all forms. We herein thank them sincerely for their concern for the Basic Law (Draft). Our Secretariat is at the moment processing these opinions so that they can be compiled into the consultation report which, apart from being submitted to the Drafting Committee for reference, will be made available to the public as in the previous round of consultations. Although the second consultation period has concluded, we still welcome various organizations and people from various sectors to continue to express their opinions before the meetings to be held in December by the various subgroups of the Drafting Committee for the Basic Law. Even though the opinions received between now and the December meetings will not be included in the consultation report, they will be forwarded directly to the Drafting Committee.

As a result of the publicity campaign which was strengthened after having drawn lessons from the previous round of consultations, and the extension of the consultation period, the non-recurment expenses for this period have exceeded our budget. Fortunately this major problem has been resolved by generous donations to our Fund. Our indebtedness is herein acknowledged once again to those who have donated so generously.

Many organizations, bodies and individuals have rendered us support and assistance in this second round of consultations. Owing to limited space, we are unable to thank them individually. We can only extend once more our most sincere thanks to all of you.

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