

28 November, 2006

By Fax & By Mail

The Hon Stephen Lam, JP
Secretary for Constitutional Affairs
Government of the HKSAR

Dear *Stephen,*

The BPF is dismayed by the decision of the Commission for Strategic Development to shelve the bicameral system in its study and discussion of political reform. The Federation reiterates its support for the bicameral system as a practical way to start constitutional change and does not agree with the obstacles cited:

- (i) Section III, Annex II stipulates that amendments to the method for forming the Legislative Council, its procedures for voting on bills and motions as set in the same Annex require a two-thirds majority of all members of the Council and the consent of the Chief Executive and they should be reported to the Standing Committee of the NPC. Amendment to the Basic Law is not required so long as one considers the Legislative Council as a collective description as at present.
- (ii) Most advanced democracies including all OECD countries (US, UK, France, Germany, Italy, Canada, Japan and Russia) have, many of them longstanding, bicameral system. The allegation that two chambers complicate legislative procedures and lead to ineffectiveness in formulating and implementing Government policies is at best misconceived.
- (iii) A bicameral system in, say, 2012 is only the first step. With a fully directly elected First Chamber, changes to the formation of the Second Chamber can be implemented not only in 2012 but in 2016 and thereafter until the latter is also constituted by universal suffrage. The bicameral system thus provides a road map, with clear destination.

Hong Kong's challenge is to progress gradually and orderly towards universal suffrage while continuing to maintain a legislative body which is representative of all sectors. This cannot be achieved by only reforming, let alone phasing out, the Functional Constituencies. The bicameral system is the practical way forward.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed)

Sir David Akers-Jones
President

(Signed)

Wilfred Wong
Chairman