

Acting Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs' concluding remarks at ICESCR hearing

Following is the concluding remarks by the Acting Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Stephen Fisher, at the hearing of the United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights this afternoon (April 29 Geneva time):

Madam Chair, distinguished Members,

I would like to thank you and Ambassador Sha for the opportunity to introduce our report and to exchange views with Members on economic, social and cultural rights issues concerning the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR).

The promotion and protection of human rights is an arduous task. It is like rowing a boat against the current, if you don't move forward, you drift back. We will be forever vigilant in the protection of human rights.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the human rights NGOs in the Hong Kong SAR for their work. Some of them are here today. We regard our friends in the NGOs as allies.

To facilitate dialogue between the Government and civil society organizations, we have established a Human Rights Forum, an Ethnic Minorities Forum and a Sexual Minorities Forum to provide formal channels of communication with NGOs and representatives of ethnic and sexual minorities. We will continue to develop this network.

Madam Chair, I would like to thank Members for their useful comments on the human rights situation in the Hong Kong SAR. We will carefully consider the advice and suggestions Members have given us.

Finally, I wish to confirm once again our commitment to the Covenant.

Thank you.

Ends/Saturday, April 30, 2005

NNNN