

Concluding statement by Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs at United Nations hearing on child rights

Following is the concluding statement by the Deputy Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Stephen Fisher, at the United Nations hearing under the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Geneva today (September 20, Geneva time):

Mr Chairman, 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 children's rights issues concerning the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China.

We in the HKSAR attach the greatest importance to the well-being of children. Our children are our future. The best interests of the child will be our general and guiding principle in all matters relating to the welfare and development of children.

We have a vibrant civil society in the HKSAR. Non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working for the promotion of children's rights are particularly active. A few of them are here today. I would like to take this opportunity to thank children's rights NGOs in the HKSAR for their dedication and hard work. We work with our friends in the NGOs as partners in promoting the well-being of our children.

To promote dialogue and co-operation between the Government, children and civil society organisations, we will shortly establish a Children's Rights Forum and a funding scheme for the promotion of children's rights education. The forum will provide a platform for discussion between Government officials, children's representatives and members of human rights and children's rights NGOs.

I wish to reassure Members that we have every intention to apply the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography to the HKSAR. We will work diligently towards that goal.

Mr Chairman, I would like to thank Members for their valuable comments and suggestions on the children's rights situation in the HKSAR. We will carefully

consider the advice and recommendations Members have given us.

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

Thank you.

Ends/Wednesday, September 21, 2005

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