

PSHA's closing remarks at United Nations hearing on ICCPR

Following are the closing remarks by the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs, Mrs Carrie Lam, at the United Nations hearing of Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's second report in light of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights in New York today (March 21, New York time):

Madam Chair, distinguished Members,

Thank you very much for the hearing and the very constructive six hours that we have spent in this chamber with the distinguished members of the committee.

As I have told the Chairlady, my immediately preceding job before I became the Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs was to head the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region's Economic and Trade Office in London. My task then was to promote to the international community not only in the United Kingdom, but also in 16 other central and eastern European countries about the trade and economic opportunities in Hong Kong including of course, inward investment into Hong Kong.

Time and again in those 18 months that I was in that particular job, it was put back to me abundantly clear that Hong Kong's unique strengths and attractions to investors alike lie in our rule of law, our independent judiciary, freedom of speech, freedom of expression, a clean and efficient Government and level playing field.

I am happy to say that with the support of the implementation of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as applied to Hong Kong and guaranteed under the Basic Law, all these rights and freedoms are really the cornerstone of Hong Kong's success and prosperity.

I want to assure Members that in order to continue the successful implementation of "One country, Two systems" and a "high degree of autonomy" in the HKSAR, and for the benefit of the seven million people of Hong Kong, the Central Government and the SAR Government will do its utmost to maintain and strengthen the rights and freedoms that I have just referred to.

We look forward to continuing this very constructive dialogue and working relationship with this Committee. And we look forward to receiving the Committee's concluding observations in due course.

Ends/Wednesday, March 22, 2006