



**THE CONSTITUTION  
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

**THE BASIC LAW  
OF THE HONG KONG  
SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION  
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**

July 2020 edition

### **Important Notice**

The information contained in this booklet has no legal status, and is made available for information only and should not be relied on as an official version of the Basic Law and related constitutional instruments herein.

# Contents

## **The Constitution of the People's Republic of China**

Preamble .....	3
Chapter I    General Principles.....	7
Chapter II    Fundamental Rights and Obligations of Citizens .....	18
Chapter III    State Institutions .....	24
Section 1    The National People's Congress .....	24
Section 2    The President of the People's Republic of China .....	33
Section 3    The State Council .....	35
Section 4    The Central Military Commission .....	39
Section 5    Local People's Congresses at All Levels and Local People's Governments at All Levels.....	39
Section 6    Autonomous Organs of Ethnic Autonomous Areas .....	45
Section 7    Commissions of Supervision.....	47
Section 8    People's Courts and People's Procuratorates.....	49
Chapter IV    The National Flag, National Anthem, National Emblem and the Capital .....	52

## **The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China**

<b>Decree of the President of the People's Republic of China .....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.....</b>	<b>56</b>
Preamble .....	57
Chapter I    General Principles.....	58

Chapter II	Relationship between the Central Authorities and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region .....	61
Chapter III	Fundamental Rights and Duties of the Residents.....	66
Chapter IV	Political Structure.....	71
Section 1	The Chief Executive.....	71
Section 2	The Executive Authorities .....	77
Section 3	The Legislature.....	78
Section 4	The Judiciary .....	83
Section 5	District Organizations .....	87
Section 6	Public Servants .....	87
Chapter V	Economy .....	90
Section 1	Public Finance, Monetary Affairs, Trade, Industry and Commerce.....	90
Section 2	Land Leases.....	93
Section 3	Shipping .....	94
Section 4	Civil Aviation .....	95
Chapter VI	Education, Science, Culture, Sports, Religion, Labour and Social Services.....	99
Chapter VII	External Affairs .....	103
Chapter VIII	Interpretation and Amendment of the Basic Law .....	106
Chapter IX	Supplementary Provisions .....	108
Annex I	Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.....	109

Instrument 1	Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on Approving the “Amendment to Annex I to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China Concerning the Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region” (Adopted at the Sixteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People’s Congress on 28 August 2010).....	112
Instrument 2	Amendment to Annex I to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China Concerning the Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Approved at the Sixteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People’s Congress on 28 August 2010).....	114
Annex II	Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures.....	115
Instrument 3	Proclamation of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (Eleventh National People’s Congress) No. 15.....	118
Instrument 4	Amendment to Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China Concerning the Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures (Recorded at the Sixteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People’s Congress on 28 August 2010).....	119

Annex III	National Laws to be Applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.....	120
Instrument 5	Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on the Addition to or Deletion from the List of National Laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Adopted at the Twenty Sixth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People’s Congress on 1 July 1997) .....	121
Instrument 6	Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on the Addition to the List of National Laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Adopted on 4 November 1998).....	122
Instrument 7	Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on the Addition to the List of National Laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Adopted on 27 October 2005).....	123
Instrument 8	Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on the Addition to the List of National Laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Adopted on 4 November 2017).....	124
Instrument 9	Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on the Addition to the List of National Laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Adopted at the Twentieth Session of the Standing Committee of the Thirteenth National People’s Congress on 30 June 2020).....	125

Designs of the Regional Flag and Regional Emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.....	126
Instrument 10 Explanations on “The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Draft)” and Its Related Documents (Addressing the Third Session of the Seventh National People’s Congress on March 28, 1990) .....	127
Instrument 11 Decision of the National People’s Congress on the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh National People’s Congress on 4 April 1990).....	145
Instrument 12 Decision of the National People’s Congress on the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh National People’s Congress on 4 April 1990).....	146
Instrument 13 Order of the State Council of the People’s Republic of China No. 221 .....	147
Instrument 14 Decision of the National People’s Congress on the Method for the Formation of the First Government and the First Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh National People’s Congress on 4 April 1990).....	154

Instrument 15	Decision of the National People's Congress Approving the Proposal by the Drafting Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on the Establishment of the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (Adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh National People's Congress on 4 April 1990).....	157
Instrument 16	Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the English Text of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted on 28 June 1990) ...	159
Instrument 17	Explanations of Some Questions by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress Concerning the Implementation of the Nationality Law of the People's Republic of China in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Adopted at the Nineteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People's Congress on 15 May 1996) .....	160
Instrument 18	Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Treatment of the Laws Previously in Force in Hong Kong in Accordance with Article 160 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted at the Twenty Fourth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People's Congress on 23 February 1997).....	162
Instrument 19	The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Articles 22(4) and 24(2)(3) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted at the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Ninth National People's Congress on 26 June 1999).....	170



- Instrument 20 The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Adopted at the Eighth Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People’s Congress on 6 April 2004) ..... 173
- Instrument 21 Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on Issues Relating to the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2007 and for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2008 (Adopted at the Ninth Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People’s Congress on 26 April 2004)..... 176
- Instrument 22 Interpretation of Paragraph 2, Article 53 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (Adopted at the Fifteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People’s Congress on 27 April 2005)..... 180
- Instrument 23 Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on Issues Relating to the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2012 and on Issues Relating to Universal Suffrage (Adopted at the Thirty First Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People’s Congress on 29 December 2007) ..... 182

Instrument 24	Interpretation of Paragraph 1, Article 13 and Article 19 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (Adopted at the Twenty Second Session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People’s Congress on 26 August 2011).....	186
Instrument 25	Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016 (Adopted at the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People’s Congress on 31 August 2014) .....	191
Instrument 26	Explanations on the Draft Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016 (At the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People’s Congress on 27 August 2014).....	198
Instrument 27	Interpretation of Article 104 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress (Adopted by the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People’s Congress at its Twenty-fourth Session on 7 November 2016).....	212

# CONSTITUTION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Adopted at the Fifth Session of the Fifth National People's Congress and promulgated by the Announcement of the National People's Congress on December 4, 1982; amended in accordance with the *Amendment to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China* adopted at the First Session of the Seventh National People's Congress on April 12, 1988, the *Amendment to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China* adopted at the First Session of the Eighth National People's Congress on March 29, 1993, the *Amendment to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China* adopted at the Second Session of the Ninth National People's Congress on March 15, 1999, the *Amendment to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China* adopted at the Second Session of the Tenth National People's Congress on March 14, 2004, and the *Amendment to the Constitution of the People's Republic of China* adopted at the First Session of the Thirteenth National People's Congress on March 11, 2018



## **Preamble**

China is one of the countries with the longest histories in the world. The Chinese people of all ethnic groups jointly created its magnificent culture and have a proud revolutionary tradition.

After 1840, feudal China gradually became a semi-colonial, semi-feudal country. The Chinese people, wave upon wave, waged heroic struggles for national independence and liberation and for democracy and freedom.

In the 20th century, momentous historical changes took place in China.

The Revolution of 1911, led by Dr. Sun Yat-sen, abolished the feudal monarchy and gave birth to the Republic of China. However, the historic mission of the Chinese people to oppose imperialism and feudalism was not yet accomplished.

In 1949, after engaging in protracted, arduous and tortuous struggles, armed and in other forms, the Chinese people of all ethnic groups led by the Communist Party of China with Chairman Mao Zedong as its leader finally overthrew the rule of imperialism, feudalism and bureaucrat-capitalism, won a great victory in the New Democratic Revolution, and founded the People's Republic of China. The Chinese people thus secured power and became masters of their own country.

After the founding of the People's Republic of China, our country gradually achieved the transition from a new democratic society to a socialist society. The socialist transformation of private ownership of the means of production has been completed, the system of exploitation of man by man abolished, and a socialist system established. The people's democratic dictatorship led by the working class and based on an alliance of workers and peasants, which in essence is a dictatorship of the proletariat, has been consolidated and developed. The Chinese people and the Chinese People's Liberation Army have defeated imperialist and hegemonist aggression, sabotage and armed provocations, safeguarded national independence and security, and strengthened national defense.

Major achievements have been made in economic development. An independent and relatively complete socialist industrial system has now basically been established, and agricultural output has markedly increased. Significant advances have been made in education, science, culture and other fields, and education about socialist thought has made notable progress. The lives of the people have been considerably improved.

Both the victory in China's New Democratic Revolution and the successes in its socialist cause have been achieved by the Chinese people of all ethnic groups under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism and Mao Zedong Thought by upholding truth, correcting errors, and surmounting many difficulties and obstacles. Our country will long remain in the primary stage of socialism. The fundamental task for our country is to concentrate on achieving socialist modernization along the road of socialism with Chinese characteristics. We the Chinese people of all ethnic groups will continue, under the leadership of the Communist Party of China and the guidance of Marxism-Leninism, Mao Zedong Thought, Deng Xiaoping Theory, the Theory of Three Represents, the Scientific Outlook on Development and Xi Jinping Thought on Socialism with Chinese Characteristics for a New Era, to uphold the people's democratic dictatorship, stay on the socialist road, carry out reform and opening up, steadily improve the socialist institutions, develop the socialist market economy and socialist democracy, improve socialist rule of law, apply the new development philosophy, and work hard in a spirit of self-reliance to modernize step by step the country's industry, agriculture, national defense, and science and technology and promote coordinated material, political, cultural-ethical, social and ecological advancement, in order to build China into a great modern socialist country that is prosperous, strong, democratic, culturally advanced, harmonious and beautiful, and realize the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation.

In our country the exploiting class, as a class, has been eliminated, but class struggle will continue to exist within a certain scope for a long time to come. The people of China must fight against those domestic and foreign forces and elements that are hostile to and undermine our country's socialist system.

Taiwan is part of the sacred territory of the People's Republic of China. It is the sacred duty of all the Chinese people, including our fellow Chinese in Taiwan, to achieve the great reunification of the motherland.

The cause of building socialism must rely on workers, peasants and intellectuals and unite all forces that can be united. Through the long process of revolution, development and reform, a broad patriotic united front has formed under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, with the participation of other political parties and people's organizations and including all socialist working people, people involved in building socialism, patriots who support socialism, and patriots who support China's reunification and are dedicated to the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation. This united front will continue to be consolidated and developed. The Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference is a broadly representative organization of the united front, and has played a significant historical role. In the future, it will play an even more important role in the country's political and social life and its friendly foreign activities, in socialist modernization and in safeguarding the unity and solidarity of the country. The system of multiparty cooperation and political consultation under the leadership of the Communist Party of China will continue and develop long into the future.

The People's Republic of China is a unified multiethnic state founded by the Chinese people of all ethnic groups. Socialist ethnic relations of equality, unity, mutual assistance and harmony are established and will continue to be strengthened. In the struggle to safeguard ethnic unity, we should oppose major ethnic group chauvinism, which mainly refers to Han chauvinism, and local ethnic chauvinism. The state makes every effort to promote the shared prosperity of all the country's ethnic groups.

The achievements of China's revolution, development and reform would have been impossible without the support of the world's people. The future of China is closely bound up with the future of the world. China pursues an independent foreign policy, observes the five principles of mutual respect for sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual nonaggression, mutual noninterference in internal affairs, equality and mutual benefit, and peaceful coexistence, keeps to a path of peaceful development, follows a mutually beneficial strategy of opening up, works

to develop diplomatic relations and economic and cultural exchanges with other countries, and promotes the building of a human community with a shared future. China consistently opposes imperialism, hegemonism and colonialism, works to strengthen its solidarity with the people of all other countries, supports oppressed peoples and other developing countries in their just struggles to win and safeguard their independence and develop their economies, and strives to safeguard world peace and promote the cause of human progress.

This Constitution affirms, in legal form, the achievements of the struggles of the Chinese people of all ethnic groups and stipulates the fundamental system and task of the state. It is the fundamental law of the state and has supreme legal force. The people of all ethnic groups, all state organs and armed forces, all political parties and social organizations, and all enterprises and public institutions in the country must treat the Constitution as the fundamental standard of conduct; they have a duty to uphold the sanctity of the Constitution and ensure its compliance.



## **Chapter I General Principles**

### **Article 1**

The People's Republic of China is a socialist state governed by a people's democratic dictatorship that is led by the working class and based on an alliance of workers and peasants.

The socialist system is the fundamental system of the People's Republic of China. Leadership by the Communist Party of China is the defining feature of socialism with Chinese characteristics. It is prohibited for any organization or individual to damage the socialist system.

### **Article 2**

All power in the People's Republic of China belongs to the people.

The organs through which the people exercise state power are the National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at all levels.

The people shall, in accordance with the provisions of law, manage state affairs, economic and cultural undertakings, and social affairs through various channels and in various ways.

### **Article 3**

The state institutions of the People's Republic of China shall practice the principle of democratic centralism.

The National People's Congress and the local people's congresses at all levels shall be created through democratic election and shall be responsible to the people and subject to their oversight.

All administrative, supervisory, adjudicatory and procuratorial organs of the state shall be created by the people's congresses and shall be responsible to them and subject to their oversight.

The division of functions and powers between the central and local state institutions shall honor the principle of giving full play to the

initiative and motivation of local authorities under the unified leadership of the central authorities.

#### **Article 4**

All ethnic groups of the People's Republic of China are equal. The state shall protect the lawful rights and interests of all ethnic minorities and uphold and promote relations of equality, unity, mutual assistance and harmony among all ethnic groups. Discrimination against and oppression of any ethnic group are prohibited; any act that undermines the unity of ethnic groups or creates divisions among them is prohibited.

The state shall, in light of the characteristics and needs of all ethnic minorities, assist all ethnic minority areas in accelerating their economic and cultural development.

All areas inhabited by ethnic minorities shall practice regional autonomy, establish autonomous organs, and exercise the power to self-govern. All ethnic autonomous areas are inseparable parts of the People's Republic of China.

All ethnic groups shall have the freedom to use and develop their own spoken and written languages and to preserve or reform their own traditions and customs.

#### **Article 5**

The People's Republic of China shall practice law-based governance and build a socialist state under the rule of law.

The state shall safeguard the unity and sanctity of the socialist legal system.

No law, administrative regulation or local regulation shall be in conflict with the Constitution.

All state organs and armed forces, all political parties and social organizations, and all enterprises and public institutions must abide by the Constitution and the law. Accountability must be enforced for all acts that violate the Constitution or laws.

No organization or individual shall have any privilege beyond the Constitution or the law.

### **Article 6**

The foundation of the socialist economic system of the People's Republic of China is socialist public ownership of the means of production, that is, ownership by the whole people and collective ownership by the working people. The system of socialist public ownership has eradicated the system of exploitation of man by man, and practices the principle of "from each according to his ability, to each according to his work."

In the primary stage of socialism, the state shall uphold a fundamental economic system under which public ownership is the mainstay and diverse forms of ownership develop together, and shall uphold an income distribution system under which distribution according to work is the mainstay, while multiple forms of distribution exist alongside it.

### **Article 7**

The state sector of the economy, that is, the sector of the socialist economy under ownership by the whole people, shall be the leading force in the economy. The state shall ensure the consolidation and development of the state sector of the economy.

### **Article 8**

Rural collective economic organizations shall practice a two-tiered system of both unified and separate operations with household contract management as its basis. Rural economic cooperatives — producer, supply and marketing, credit and consumer cooperatives — are part of the socialist economy under collective ownership by the working people. Working people who belong to rural collective economic organizations shall have the right, within the scope prescribed by law, to farm cropland and hillsides allotted to them for their private use, engage in household sideline production, and raise privately owned livestock.

The various forms of cooperative economic activities in cities and towns, such as those in the handicraft, industrial, building, transport, commercial and service trades, shall all be part of the socialist economy under collective ownership by the working people.

The state shall protect the lawful rights and interests of urban and rural collective economic organizations and shall encourage, guide and assist the growth of the collective sector of the economy.

### **Article 9**

All mineral resources, waters, forests, mountains, grasslands, unreclaimed land, mudflats and other natural resources are owned by the state, that is, by the whole people, except for the forests, mountains, grasslands, unreclaimed land and mudflats that are owned by collectives as prescribed by law.

The state shall ensure the rational use of natural resources and protect rare animals and plants. It is prohibited for any organization or individual to seize or damage natural resources by any means.

### **Article 10**

Land in cities is owned by the state.

Land in rural and suburban areas is owned by collectives except for that which belongs to the state as prescribed by law; housing sites and cropland and hillsides allotted for private use are also owned by collectives.

The state may, in order to meet the demands of the public interest and in accordance with the provisions of law, expropriate or requisition land and furnish compensation.

No organization or individual shall unlawfully transfer land through seizure, sale and purchase, or in any other form. Land-use rights may be transferred in accordance with the provisions of law.

All organizations and individuals using land must use it in an appropriate manner.

## **Article 11**

Non-public economic sectors that are within the scope prescribed by law, such as individually owned and private businesses, are an important component of the socialist market economy.

The state shall protect the lawful rights and interests of non-public economic sectors such as individually owned and private businesses. The state shall encourage, support and guide the development of non-public economic sectors and exercise oversight and regulation over non-public economic sectors in accordance with law.

## **Article 12**

Socialist public property is sacred and inviolable.

The state shall protect socialist public property. It is prohibited for any organization or individual to seize or damage state or collective property by any means.

## **Article 13**

Citizens' lawful private property is inviolable.

The state shall protect the right of citizens to own and inherit private property in accordance with the provisions of law.

The state may, in order to meet the demands of the public interest and in accordance with the provisions of law, expropriate or requisition citizens' private property and furnish compensation.

## **Article 14**

The state shall continually raise labor productivity and improve economic performance to develop productive forces by increasing working people's motivation and level of technical skill, promoting advanced science and technology, improving the systems of economic management and enterprise operation and management, practicing different forms of socialist responsibility system and improving the organization of work.

The state shall practice strict economy and combat waste.

The state shall appropriately handle accumulation and consumption, give due consideration at once to the interests of the state, collectives and individuals and, based on the development of production, gradually improve the material and cultural wellbeing of the people.

The state shall establish a sound social security system compatible with the level of economic development.

### **Article 15**

The state shall practice a socialist market economy.

The state shall strengthen economic legislation and improve macro regulation.

The state shall, in accordance with law, prohibit disruption of the socioeconomic order by any organization or individual.

### **Article 16**

State-owned enterprises shall, within the scope prescribed by law, have the right to operate autonomously.

State-owned enterprises shall, in accordance with the provisions of law, practice democratic management through employee congresses and other means.

### **Article 17**

Collective economic organizations shall, on the condition that they abide by relevant laws, have the autonomy to independently conduct economic activities.

Collective economic organizations shall practice democratic management and shall, in accordance with the provisions of law, elect and remove their management personnel and decide on major issues concerning their operations and management.

## **Article 18**

The People's Republic of China shall permit foreign enterprises, other economic organizations and individuals, to invest in China and to enter into various forms of economic cooperation with Chinese enterprises or other economic organizations in accordance with the provisions of law of the People's Republic of China.

All foreign enterprises, other foreign economic organizations and Chinese-foreign joint ventures in the territory of China shall abide by the law of the People's Republic of China. Their lawful rights and interests shall be protected by the law of the People's Republic of China.

## **Article 19**

The state shall develop socialist education to raise the scientific and cultural level of the whole nation.

The state shall run schools of all types, provide universal compulsory primary education, develop secondary, vocational and higher education, and also develop preschool education.

The state shall develop different types of educational facilities, eliminate illiteracy, provide political, cultural, scientific, technical and field-specific education for workers, peasants, state employees and other working people, and encourage people to become accomplished individuals through self-study.

The state shall encourage collective economic organizations, state enterprises, public institutions and other social actors to run education programs of various types in accordance with the provisions of law.

The state shall promote the common speech — *putonghua* — used nationwide.

## **Article 20**

The state shall develop the natural and social sciences, disseminate scientific and technological knowledge, and commend and award research achievements and technological discoveries and inventions.

## **Article 21**

To protect the people's health, the state shall develop medical and health care, develop modern medicine and traditional Chinese medicine, encourage and support the running of various medical and health facilities by rural collective economic organizations, state enterprises, public institutions and neighborhood organizations, and promote public health activities.

To improve the people's physical fitness, the state shall develop sports and promote public sports activities.

## **Article 22**

The state shall develop art and literature, the press, radio and television broadcasting, publishing, libraries, museums and cultural centers, and other cultural undertakings that serve the people and socialism; and shall promote public cultural activities.

The state shall protect places of scenic beauty and historical interest, valuable cultural relics and other forms of important historical and cultural heritage.

## **Article 23**

The state shall train all kinds of specialized personnel to serve socialism, expand the ranks of intellectuals, and create the conditions for giving full play to their role in socialist modernization.

## **Article 24**

The state shall promote socialist cultural-ethical advancement through widely accessible education on ideals, morality, culture, discipline and law, and through the formulation and observance of different forms of rules of conduct and public pledges among different urban and rural populations.

The state shall champion core socialist values; advocate the civic virtues of love for the motherland, for the people, for work, for science and for socialism; educate the people in patriotism and collectivism, in internationalism and communism, and in dialectical and historical



materialism; and combat capitalist, feudal and other forms of decadent thought.

### **Article 25**

The state shall promote family planning to see that population growth is consistent with economic and social development plans.

### **Article 26**

The state shall protect and improve living environments and the ecological environment, and prevent and control pollution and other public hazards.

The state shall organize and encourage afforestation and protect forests.

### **Article 27**

All state organs shall practice the principle of lean and efficient administration, a work responsibility system, and a system of employee training and evaluation in order to keep improving the quality and efficiency of their work and combat bureaucratism.

All state organs and state employees must rely on the support of the people, stay engaged with them, listen to their opinions and suggestions, accept their oversight, and work hard to serve them.

State employees, when assuming office, should make a public pledge of allegiance to the Constitution in accordance with the provisions of law.

### **Article 28**

The state shall maintain public order, suppress treason and other criminal activities that jeopardize national security, punish criminal activities, including those that endanger public security or harm the socialist economy, and punish and reform criminals.

## **Article 29**

The armed forces of the People's Republic of China belong to the people. Their missions are to strengthen national defense, resist aggression, defend the motherland, safeguard the people's peaceful work, participate in national development, and work hard to serve the people.

The state shall make the armed forces more revolutionary, more modernized and better regulated in order to strengthen national defense capabilities.

## **Article 30**

The administrative areas of the People's Republic of China shall be delineated as follows:

- (1) The country consists of provinces, autonomous regions and cities directly under central government jurisdiction;
- (2) Provinces and autonomous regions consist of autonomous prefectures, counties, autonomous counties and cities; and
- (3) Counties and autonomous counties consist of townships, ethnic townships and towns.

Cities directly under central government jurisdiction and other large cities consist of districts and counties. Autonomous prefectures consist of counties, autonomous counties and cities.

All autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties are ethnic autonomous areas.

## **Article 31**

The state may establish special administrative regions when necessary. The systems instituted in special administrative regions shall, in light of specific circumstances, be prescribed by laws enacted by the National People's Congress.

**Article 32**

The People's Republic of China shall protect the lawful rights and interests of foreigners in the territory of China; foreigners in the territory of China must abide by the law of the People's Republic of China.

The People's Republic of China may grant asylum to foreigners who request it on political grounds.

## **Chapter II Fundamental Rights and Obligations of Citizens**

### **Article 33**

All persons holding the nationality of the People's Republic of China are citizens of the People's Republic of China.

All citizens of the People's Republic of China are equal before the law.

The state shall respect and protect human rights.

Every citizen shall enjoy the rights prescribed by the Constitution and the law and must fulfill the obligations prescribed by the Constitution and the law.

### **Article 34**

All citizens of the People's Republic of China who have reached the age of 18, regardless of ethnicity, race, gender, occupation, family background, religious belief, level of education, property status or length of residence, shall have the right to vote and stand for election; persons deprived of political rights in accordance with law shall be an exception.

### **Article 35**

Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall enjoy freedom of speech, the press, assembly, association, procession and demonstration.

### **Article 36**

Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall enjoy freedom of religious belief.

No state organ, social organization or individual shall coerce citizens to believe in or not to believe in any religion, nor shall they discriminate against citizens who believe in or do not believe in any religion.

The state shall protect normal religious activities. No one shall use religion to engage in activities that disrupt public order, impair the health of citizens or interfere with the state's education system.

Religious groups and religious affairs shall not be subject to control by foreign forces.

**Article 37**

The personal freedom of citizens of the People's Republic of China shall not be violated.

No citizen shall be arrested unless with the approval or by the decision of a people's procuratorate or by the decision of a people's court, and arrests must be made by a public security organ.

Unlawful detention, or the unlawful deprivation or restriction of a citizen's personal freedom by other means, is prohibited; the unlawful search of a citizen's person is prohibited.

**Article 38**

The personal dignity of citizens of the People's Republic of China shall not be violated. It is prohibited to use any means to insult, libel or falsely accuse citizens.

**Article 39**

The homes of citizens of the People's Republic of China are inviolable. The unlawful search of or unlawful intrusion into a citizen's home is prohibited.

**Article 40**

Freedom and confidentiality of correspondence of citizens of the People's Republic of China shall be protected by law. Except in cases necessary for national security or criminal investigation, when public security organs or procuratorial organs shall examine correspondence in accordance with procedures prescribed by law, no organization or individual shall infringe on a citizen's freedom and confidentiality of correspondence for any reason.

## **Article 41**

Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall have the right to criticize and make suggestions regarding any state organ or state employee, and have the right to file with relevant state organs complaints, charges or reports against any state organ or state employee for violations of the law or dereliction of duty, but they shall not fabricate or distort facts to make false accusations.

The state organ concerned must ascertain the facts concerning the complaints, charges or reports made by citizens and take responsibility for their handling. No one shall suppress such complaints, charges or reports or take retaliatory action.

Persons who have suffered losses resulting from infringement of their civil rights by any state organ or state employee shall have the right to receive compensation in accordance with the provisions of law.

## **Article 42**

Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall have the right and the obligation to work.

The state shall, in various ways, create employment opportunities, strengthen worker protections, improve working conditions and, based on the development of production, increase remuneration for work and work-related benefits.

Work is an honorable duty for every citizen who is able to work. All working people in state owned enterprises and in urban and rural collective economic organizations should approach their own work as masters of their country. The state shall encourage socialist work contests and commend and award model workers and advanced workers. The state shall encourage citizens to participate in voluntary work.

The state shall provide necessary pre-employment training for its citizens.

**Article 43**

Working people in the People's Republic of China shall have the right to rest.

The state shall develop rest and recuperation facilities for working people and stipulate systems for employee working hours and vacations.

**Article 44**

The state shall, in accordance with the provisions of law, implement a retirement system for employees of enterprises, public institutions and state organs. The livelihood of retirees shall be ensured by the state and society.

**Article 45**

Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall have the right to material assistance from the state and society when they are aged, ill or have lost the capacity to work. The state shall develop the social insurance, social relief, and medical and health services necessary for citizens to enjoy this right.

The state and society shall guarantee the livelihood of disabled military personnel, provide pensions to the families of martyrs, and give preferential treatment to the family members of military personnel.

The state and society shall assist arrangements for the work, livelihood and education of citizens who are blind, deaf, mute or have other disabilities.

**Article 46**

Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall have the right and the obligation to receive education.

The state shall foster the all-round moral, intellectual and physical development of young adults, youths and children.

**Article 47**

Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall enjoy the freedom to engage in scientific research, literary and artistic creation, and other cultural pursuits. The state shall encourage and assist creative work that is beneficial to the people of citizens engaged in education, science, technology, literature, art and other cultural activities.

**Article 48**

Women in the People's Republic of China shall enjoy equal rights with men in all spheres of life: political, economic, cultural, social and familial.

The state shall protect the rights and interests of women, implement a system of equal pay for equal work, and train and select female officials.

**Article 49**

Marriage, families, mothers and children shall be protected by the state.

Both husband and wife shall have the obligation to practice family planning.

Parents shall have the obligation to raise and educate their minor children; adult children shall have the obligation to support and assist their parents.

Infringement of the freedom of marriage is prohibited; mistreatment of senior citizens, women and children is prohibited.

**Article 50**

The People's Republic of China shall protect the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese nationals overseas as well as the lawful rights and interests of Chinese nationals who have returned from overseas and of the family members in China of Chinese nationals overseas.



**Article 51**

When exercising their freedoms and rights, citizens of the People's Republic of China shall not undermine the interests of the state, society or collectives, or infringe upon the lawful freedoms and rights of other citizens.

**Article 52**

Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall have the obligation to safeguard national unity and the solidarity of all the country's ethnic groups.

**Article 53**

Citizens of the People's Republic of China must abide by the Constitution and the law, keep state secrets, protect public property, observe discipline in the workplace, observe public order, and respect social morality.

**Article 54**

Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall have the obligation to safeguard the security, honor and interests of the motherland; they must not behave in any way that endangers the motherland's security, honor or interests.

**Article 55**

It is the sacred duty of every citizen of the People's Republic of China to defend the motherland and resist aggression.

It is an honorable obligation of citizens of the People's Republic of China to perform military service or join the militia in accordance with law.

**Article 56**

Citizens of the People's Republic of China shall have the obligation to pay taxes in accordance with law.

## **Chapter III State Institutions**

### **Section 1 The National People's Congress**

#### **Article 57**

The National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China is the highest state organ of power. Its permanent organ is the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

#### **Article 58**

The National People's Congress and the National People's Congress Standing Committee exercise the legislative power of the state.

#### **Article 59**

The National People's Congress shall be composed of deputies elected from the provinces, autonomous regions, cities directly under central government jurisdiction, special administrative regions and armed forces. All ethnic minorities should have an appropriate number of deputies.

The election of deputies to the National People's Congress shall be presided over by the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

The number of deputies to the National People's Congress and the procedures for their election shall be prescribed by law.

#### **Article 60**

Each National People's Congress shall have a term of five years.

The National People's Congress Standing Committee must complete the election of deputies to the next National People's Congress two months prior to the completion of the term of office of the current National People's Congress. If extraordinary circumstances prevent an election from going ahead, the election may be postponed and the term of office of the current National People's Congress may be extended

by a resolution supported by at least two-thirds of the members of the current National People's Congress Standing Committee. The election of deputies to the next National People's Congress must be completed within one year of said extraordinary circumstances coming to an end.

#### **Article 61**

A session of the National People's Congress shall be held once every year and shall be convened by the National People's Congress Standing Committee. If the National People's Congress Standing Committee deems it necessary, or one-fifth or more of National People's Congress deputies so propose, a session of the National People's Congress may be convened in the interim.

When the National People's Congress holds a session, it shall elect a presidium to conduct that session.

#### **Article 62**

The National People's Congress shall exercise the following functions and powers:

- (1) amending the Constitution;
- (2) overseeing the enforcement of the Constitution;
- (3) enacting and amending criminal, civil, state institutional and other basic laws;
- (4) electing the president and the vice president of the People's Republic of China;
- (5) deciding, based on nomination by the president of the People's Republic of China, on the successful candidate for the premier of the State Council; deciding, based on nominations by the premier of the State Council, on the successful candidates for vice premiers, state councilors, ministers of ministries, ministers of commissions, the auditor general and the secretary general of the State Council;

- (6) electing the chairperson of the Central Military Commission and deciding, based on nominations by the chairperson of the Central Military Commission, on the successful candidates for other members of the Central Military Commission;
- (7) electing the chairperson of the National Commission of Supervision;
- (8) electing the president of the Supreme People's Court;
- (9) electing the procurator general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate;
- (10) reviewing and approving the plan for national economic and social development and the report on its implementation;
- (11) reviewing and approving the state budget and the report on its implementation;
- (12) changing or revoking inappropriate decisions of the National People's Congress Standing Committee;
- (13) approving the establishment of provinces, autonomous regions and cities directly under central government jurisdiction;
- (14) deciding on the establishment of special administrative regions and the systems to be instituted there;
- (15) deciding on issues concerning war and peace; and
- (16) other functions and powers that the highest state organ of power should exercise.

### **Article 63**

The National People's Congress shall have the power to remove from office the following personnel:

- (1) the president and the vice president of the People's Republic of China;

- (2) the premier, vice premiers, state councilors, ministers of ministries, ministers of commissions, the auditor general and the secretary general of the State Council;
- (3) the chairperson of the Central Military Commission and other members of the Central Military Commission;
- (4) the chairperson of the National Commission of Supervision;
- (5) the president of the Supreme People's Court; and
- (6) the procurator general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate.

#### **Article 64**

Amendments to the Constitution must be proposed by the National People's Congress Standing Committee or by one-fifth or more of National People's Congress deputies and be adopted by a vote of at least two-thirds of National People's Congress deputies.

Laws and other proposals shall be adopted by a majority vote of the National People's Congress deputies.

#### **Article 65**

The National People's Congress Standing Committee shall be composed of the following personnel:

a chairperson,  
vice chairpersons,  
a secretary general, and  
members.

There should be an appropriate number of ethnic minority deputies who sit as members on the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

The National People's Congress shall elect, and have the power to remove from office, the members of the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

Members of the National People's Congress Standing Committee shall not hold office in an administrative, supervisory, adjudicatory or procuratorial organ of the state.

#### **Article 66**

Each National People's Congress Standing Committee shall have the same term of office as that of the National People's Congress; it shall exercise its functions and powers until a new Standing Committee is elected by the next National People's Congress.

The chairperson and vice chairpersons of the Standing Committee shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

#### **Article 67**

The National People's Congress Standing Committee shall exercise the following functions and powers:

- (1) interpreting the Constitution and overseeing its enforcement;
- (2) enacting and amending laws other than those that should be enacted by the National People's Congress;
- (3) when the National People's Congress is out of session, partially supplementing and amending laws enacted by the National People's Congress but without conflicting with the basic principles of those laws;
- (4) interpreting laws;
- (5) when the National People's Congress is out of session, reviewing and approving partial adjustments to the plan for national economic and social development and the state budget that must be made in the course of implementation;
- (6) overseeing the work of the State Council, the Central Military Commission, the National Commission of Supervision, the Supreme People's Court and the Supreme People's Procuratorate;

- (7) revoking administrative regulations, decisions and orders formulated by the State Council that are in conflict with the Constitution or laws;
- (8) revoking local regulations and resolutions formulated by the state organs of power in provinces, autonomous regions and cities directly under central government jurisdiction that are in conflict with the Constitution, laws, or administrative regulations;
- (9) when the National People's Congress is out of session, deciding, based on nominations by the premier of the State Council, on successful candidates for ministers of ministries, ministers of commissions, the auditor general and the secretary general of the State Council;
- (10) when the National People's Congress is out of session, deciding, based on nominations by the chairperson of the Central Military Commission, on successful candidates for other members of the Central Military Commission;
- (11) appointing or removing, based on recommendations by the chairperson of the National Commission of Supervision, vice chairpersons and members of the National Commission of Supervision;
- (12) appointing or removing, based on recommendations by the president of the Supreme People's Court, vice presidents, judges and Adjudicatory Committee members of the Supreme People's Court, and the president of the Military Court;
- (13) appointing or removing, based on recommendations by the procurator general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, deputy procurators general, procurators and Procuratorial Committee members of the Supreme People's Procuratorate, and the chief procurator of the Military Procuratorate; and approving the appointment or removal of chief procurators of the people's procuratorates of provinces, autonomous regions and cities directly under central government jurisdiction;

- (14) deciding on the appointment or removal of plenipotentiary representatives abroad;
- (15) deciding on the ratification or abrogation of treaties and important agreements concluded with foreign countries;
- (16) stipulating systems of titles and ranks for military and diplomatic personnel and other field-specific title and ranking systems;
- (17) stipulating national medals and titles of honor and deciding on their conferment;
- (18) deciding on the granting of special pardons;
- (19) when the National People's Congress is out of session, in the event of an armed attack on the country or in fulfillment of international treaty obligations concerning common defense against aggression, deciding on declaring a state of war;
- (20) deciding on national or local mobilization;
- (21) deciding on entering a state of emergency nationwide or in particular provinces, autonomous regions or cities directly under central government jurisdiction; and
- (22) other functions and powers accorded to it by the National People's Congress.

## **Article 68**

The chairperson of the National People's Congress Standing Committee shall preside over the work of the National People's Congress Standing Committee and convene meetings of the National People's Congress Standing Committee. The vice chairpersons and the secretary general shall assist the chairperson in his or her work.



The chairperson, vice chairpersons and the secretary general constitute a Council of Chairpersons, which handles the important day-to-day work of the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

#### **Article 69**

The National People's Congress Standing Committee shall be responsible to the National People's Congress and shall report to the Congress on its work.

#### **Article 70**

The National People's Congress shall establish an Ethnic Affairs Committee, a Constitution and Law Committee, a Financial and Economic Committee, an Education, Science, Culture and Public Health Committee, a Foreign Affairs Committee, an Overseas Chinese Affairs Committee and such other special committees as are necessary. When the National People's Congress is out of session, all special committees shall work under the leadership of the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

The special committees shall research, discuss and draw up relevant proposals under the leadership of the National People's Congress and the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

#### **Article 71**

When the National People's Congress and the National People's Congress Standing Committee deem it necessary, they may organize investigation committees on specific issues and, based on investigation committee reports, adopt appropriate resolutions.

When an investigation committee is conducting an investigation, all state organs, social organizations and citizens concerned shall have the obligation to provide the committee with the necessary data.

#### **Article 72**

Deputies to the National People's Congress and members of the National People's Congress Standing Committee shall have the power, in accordance with procedures prescribed by law, to submit proposals

within the scope of the respective functions and powers of the National People's Congress and the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

### **Article 73**

Deputies to the National People's Congress, when the Congress is in session, and members of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, when the Standing Committee is meeting, shall have the power, in accordance with procedures prescribed by law, to submit inquiries to the State Council or the ministries and commissions under it. Organs that receive such inquiries must take responsibility for answering them.

### **Article 74**

Deputies to the National People's Congress shall not be arrested or placed on criminal trial without the consent of the presidium of the current session of the National People's Congress or, when the Congress is out of session, the consent of the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

### **Article 75**

The statements and votes of National People's Congress deputies at meetings of the National People's Congress shall not be subject to legal liability.

### **Article 76**

Deputies to the National People's Congress must play an exemplary role in abiding by the Constitution and the law and keeping state secrets and, in the production, work and public activities they participate in, assist in the enforcement of the Constitution and the law.

Deputies to the National People's Congress should maintain close contact with the organizations and people that elected them, listen to and convey the opinions and demands of the people, and work hard to serve them.

**Article 77**

Deputies to the National People's Congress shall be subject to the oversight of the organizations that elected them. Organizations that have elected deputies shall have the power to remove them from office in accordance with procedures prescribed by law.

**Article 78**

The organization and working procedures of the National People's Congress and the National People's Congress Standing Committee shall be prescribed by law.

**Section 2 The President of the People's Republic of China****Article 79**

The president and the vice president of the People's Republic of China shall be elected by the National People's Congress.

Citizens of the People's Republic of China who have the right to vote and stand for election and who have reached the age of 45 are eligible for election as president or vice president of the People's Republic of China.

The president and the vice president of the People's Republic of China shall have the same term of office as that of the National People's Congress.

**Article 80**

The president of the People's Republic of China, pursuant to decisions of the National People's Congress and the National People's Congress Standing Committee, promulgates laws, appoints or removes the premier, vice premiers, state councilors, ministers of ministries, ministers of commissions, the auditor general and the secretary general of the State Council, confers national medals and titles of honor, issues orders of special pardon, declares a state of emergency, declares a state of war, and issues mobilization orders.

### **Article 81**

The president of the People's Republic of China engages in affairs of state and receives foreign diplomatic envoys on behalf of the People's Republic of China and, pursuant to decisions of the National People's Congress Standing Committee, appoints or recalls plenipotentiary representatives abroad and ratifies or abrogates treaties and important agreements concluded with foreign countries.

### **Article 82**

The vice president of the People's Republic of China shall assist the president in his or her work.

The vice president of the People's Republic of China may, when so entrusted by the president, exercise part of the functions and powers of the president on his or her behalf.

### **Article 83**

The president and the vice president of the People's Republic of China shall exercise their functions and powers until the president and the vice president elected by the next National People's Congress assume office.

### **Article 84**

In the event that the office of president of the People's Republic of China becomes vacant the vice president shall succeed to the office of president.

In the event that the office of vice president of the People's Republic of China becomes vacant the National People's Congress shall elect a new vice president to fill the vacancy.

In the event that the offices of both president and vice president of the People's Republic of China become vacant the National People's Congress shall elect a new president and a new vice president; prior to their election, the chairperson of the National People's Congress Standing Committee shall temporarily act as the president.

### **Section 3 The State Council**

#### **Article 85**

The State Council of the People's Republic of China, namely, the Central People's Government, is the executive organ of the highest state organ of power; it is the highest state administrative organ.

#### **Article 86**

The State Council is composed of the following personnel:

- a premier,
- vice premiers,
- state councilors,
- ministers of ministries,
- ministers of commissions,
- an auditor general, and
- a secretary general.

The State Council shall practice a premier responsibility system. The ministries and commissions shall each practice a minister responsibility system.

The organization of the State Council shall be prescribed by law.

#### **Article 87**

The State Council shall have the same term of office as that of the National People's Congress.

The premier, vice premiers and state councilors shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

#### **Article 88**

The premier shall direct the work of the State Council. The vice premiers and state councilors shall assist the premier in his or her work.

The premier, vice premiers, state councilors and the secretary general shall attend State Council executive meetings.

The premier shall convene and preside over State Council executive meetings and State Council plenary meetings.

### **Article 89**

The State Council shall exercise the following functions and powers:

- (1) stipulating administrative measures, formulating administrative regulations and issuing decisions and orders in accordance with the Constitution and the law;
- (2) submitting proposals to the National People's Congress or the National People's Congress Standing Committee;
- (3) stipulating the missions and responsibilities of the ministries and commissions, exercising unified leadership over their work, and directing national administrative work that does not fall within the responsibilities of the ministries and commissions;
- (4) exercising unified leadership over the work of local state administrative organs at all levels nationwide and stipulating the detailed division of functions and powers between the Central Government and state administrative organs in provinces, autonomous regions and cities directly under central government jurisdiction;
- (5) drawing up and implementing plans for national economic and social development and state budgets;
- (6) directing and managing economic work, urban and rural development and ecological conservation;
- (7) directing and managing education, science, culture, health, sports and family planning work;
- (8) directing and managing work such as civil affairs, public security and judicial administration;

- (9) managing foreign affairs and concluding treaties and agreements with foreign countries;
- (10) directing and managing the development of national defense;
- (11) directing and managing ethnic affairs and protecting the equal rights of ethnic minorities and the power to self-govern of ethnic autonomous areas;
- (12) protecting the legitimate rights and interests of Chinese nationals overseas and protecting the lawful rights and interests of returned overseas Chinese nationals and the family members in China of Chinese nationals overseas;
- (13) changing or revoking inappropriate orders, directives and regulations issued by ministries or commissions;
- (14) changing or revoking inappropriate decisions and orders issued by local state administrative organs at all levels;
- (15) approving the geographic division of provinces, autonomous regions and cities directly under central government jurisdiction and approving the establishment and geographic division of autonomous prefectures, counties, autonomous counties and cities;
- (16) deciding, in accordance with the provisions of law, on entering a state of emergency in parts of provinces, autonomous regions and cities directly under central government jurisdiction;
- (17) reviewing and deciding on the staff size of administrative organs and, in accordance with the provisions of law, appointing or removing, training, evaluating, and awarding or punishing administrative personnel; and
- (18) other functions and powers accorded to it by the National People's Congress and the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

## **Article 90**

State Council ministers of ministries and ministers of commissions shall be responsible for the work of their departments, and shall convene and preside over ministerial meetings or general and executive commission meetings to discuss and decide on major issues in their departments' work.

Ministries and commissions shall, in accordance with the law and the administrative regulations, decisions and orders of the State Council, issue orders and directives and promulgate regulations within the scope of their authority.

## **Article 91**

The State Council shall establish an audit office to conduct auditing oversight over the revenue and expenditure of all State Council departments and local governments at all levels, and over the revenue and expenditure of all state financial institutions, enterprises and public institutions.

The audit office shall, under the leadership of the premier of the State Council, independently exercise the power to conduct auditing oversight in accordance with the provisions of law, and shall not be subject to interference from other administrative organs, social organizations or individuals.

## **Article 92**

The State Council shall be responsible to the National People's Congress and shall report to the Congress on its work; when the National People's Congress is out of session it shall be responsible to the National People's Congress Standing Committee and shall report to the Standing Committee on its work.



## **Section 4 The Central Military Commission**

### **Article 93**

The Central Military Commission of the People's Republic of China shall lead the country's armed forces.

The Central Military Commission is composed of the following personnel:

a chairperson,  
vice chairpersons, and  
members.

The Central Military Commission shall practice a chairperson responsibility system.

The Central Military Commission shall have the same term of office as that of the National People's Congress.

### **Article 94**

The chairperson of the Central Military Commission shall be responsible to the National People's Congress and the National People's Congress Standing Committee.

## **Section 5 Local People's Congresses at All Levels and Local People's Governments at All Levels**

### **Article 95**

Provinces, cities directly under central government jurisdiction, counties, cities, municipal districts, townships, ethnic townships and towns shall establish people's congresses and people's governments.

The organization of local people's congresses at all levels and local people's governments at all levels shall be prescribed by law.

Autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties shall establish autonomous organs. The organization and work of autonomous organs shall be prescribed by law in accordance with the basic principles laid down in Chapter III sections 5 and 6 of the Constitution.

#### **Article 96**

Local people's congresses at all levels are local state organs of power.

Local people's congresses at and above the county level shall establish standing committees.

#### **Article 97**

Deputies to the people's congresses of provinces, cities directly under central government jurisdiction and cities divided into districts shall be elected by the people's congresses at the next level down; deputies to the people's congresses of counties, cities not divided into districts, municipal districts, townships, ethnic townships and towns shall be directly elected by their constituencies.

The number of deputies to local people's congresses at all levels and the procedures of their election shall be prescribed by law.

#### **Article 98**

Local people's congresses at all levels shall have a term of five years.

#### **Article 99**

Local people's congresses at all levels shall, within their administrative areas, ensure the observance and enforcement of the Constitution, laws and administrative regulations; they shall, according to the authority invested in them as prescribed by law, adopt and issue resolutions, and review and decide on local economic, cultural and public service development plans.

Local people's congresses at and above the county level shall review and approve the economic and social development plans and budgets of their administrative areas as well as reports on their implementation; they

shall have the power to change or revoke inappropriate decisions made by their own standing committees.

The people's congresses of ethnic townships may, according to the authority invested in them as prescribed by law, take specific measures suited to ethnic characteristics.

### **Article 100**

The people's congresses of provinces and cities directly under central government jurisdiction and their standing committees may, provided there is no conflict with the Constitution, laws or administrative regulations, formulate local regulations, which shall be reported to the National People's Congress Standing Committee to be placed on record.

The people's congresses of cities divided into districts and their standing committees may, provided there is no conflict with the Constitution, laws or administrative regulations, or with the local regulations of their province or autonomous region, formulate local regulations in accordance with the provisions of law, which shall go into force after submission to the standing committee of the people's congress of their province or autonomous region and the receipt of approval.

### **Article 101**

Local people's congresses shall, at their respective levels, elect and have the power to remove from office governors and deputy governors, mayors and deputy mayors, county heads and deputy heads, municipal district heads and deputy heads, township heads and deputy heads, and town heads and deputy heads.

Local people's congresses at and above the county level shall elect, and have the power to remove from office, chairpersons of the commissions of supervision, presidents of the people's courts and chief procurators of the people's procuratorates at their respective levels. The election or removal of chief procurator of the people's procuratorate must be reported to the chief procurator of the people's procuratorate at the next level up for submission to the standing committee of the people's congress at that level for approval.

## **Article 102**

Deputies to the people's congresses of provinces, cities directly under central government jurisdiction and cities divided into districts shall be subject to oversight by the organizations that elected them; deputies to the people's congresses of counties, cities not divided into districts, municipal districts, townships, ethnic townships and towns shall be subject to oversight by their constituencies.

The organizations and constituencies that elect deputies to local people's congresses at all levels shall have the power to remove them from office in accordance with procedures prescribed by law.

## **Article 103**

The standing committees of local people's congresses at and above the county level shall be composed of a chairperson, vice chairpersons and members; they shall be responsible to the people's congresses at their respective levels and shall report to them on their work.

Local people's congresses at and above the county level shall elect, and have the power to remove from office, members of their standing committees.

Members of the standing committee of a local people's congress at or above the county level shall not hold office in an administrative, supervisory, adjudicatory or procuratorial organ of the state.

## **Article 104**

The standing committees of local people's congresses at and above the county level shall discuss and decide on major issues in all areas of work in their administrative areas; oversee the work of the people's government, the commission of supervision, the people's court and the people's procuratorate at their respective levels; revoke inappropriate decisions and orders made by the people's government at the same level; revoke inappropriate resolutions adopted by the people's congress at the next level down; decide on the appointment or removal of employees of state organs according to the authority invested in them as prescribed by law; and, when people's congresses at their level are out of session,

remove from office and elect to fill vacancies individual deputies to the people's congress at the next level up.

### **Article 105**

Local people's governments at all levels are the executive organs of the local state organs of power at their respective levels; they are the local state administrative organs at their respective levels.

Local people's governments at all levels shall practice a governor, mayor, county head, municipal district head, township head or town head responsibility system.

### **Article 106**

Local people's governments at all levels shall have the same term of office as that of the people's congresses at their respective levels.

### **Article 107**

Local people's governments at and above the county level shall, according to the authority invested in them as prescribed by law, manage administrative work related to the economy, education, science, culture, public health, sports, urban and rural development, finance, civil affairs, public security, ethnic affairs, judicial administration, family planning, etc., within their administrative areas; and shall issue decisions and orders, appoint or remove, train, evaluate, and award or punish administrative employees.

The people's governments of townships, ethnic townships and towns shall implement the resolutions of the people's congresses at their level and the decisions and orders of state administrative organs at the next level up; they shall manage the administrative work of their respective administrative areas.

The people's governments of provinces and cities directly under central government jurisdiction shall decide on the establishment of townships, ethnic townships and towns and their geographic division.

### **Article 108**

Local people's governments at and above the county level shall direct the work of their subordinate departments and of the people's governments at the next level down and shall have the power to change or revoke inappropriate decisions made by their subordinate departments and the people's governments at the next level down.

### **Article 109**

Local people's governments at and above the county level shall establish audit offices. Local audit offices at all levels shall, in accordance with the provisions of law, independently exercise the power to conduct auditing oversight; they shall be responsible to the people's government at their level and to the audit office at the next level up.

### **Article 110**

Local people's governments at all levels shall be responsible to the people's congresses at their levels and shall report to them on their work. Local people's governments at and above the county level shall, when the people's congresses at their level are out of session, be responsible to the standing committees of the people's congresses at their level and shall report to them on their work.

Local people's governments at all levels shall be responsible to state administrative organs at the next level up and shall report to them on their work. Local people's governments at all levels nationwide are state administrative organs under the unified leadership of the State Council; they shall all be subordinate to the State Council.

### **Article 111**

Residents committees and villagers committees, established among urban and rural residents on the basis of their place of residence, are primary-level people's organizations for self-governance. Residents committee and villagers committee chairpersons, vice chairpersons and members shall be elected by residents. The relations between residents committees and villagers committees and primary-level state bodies shall be prescribed by law.

Residents committees and villagers committees shall establish people's mediation, public security, public health and other subcommittees to handle public affairs and public services in the residential areas to which they belong, mediate civil disputes and help maintain public order; they shall convey residents' opinions and demands and make proposals to the people's government.

## **Section 6 Autonomous Organs of Ethnic Autonomous Areas**

### **Article 112**

The autonomous organs of ethnic autonomous areas are the people's congresses and the people's governments of autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties.

### **Article 113**

In the people's congresses of autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties, aside from deputies of the ethnic group that exercises regional autonomy, other ethnic groups resident in that administrative area should also have an appropriate number of deputies.

On the standing committees of people's congresses of autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties, there should be citizens of the ethnic group that exercises regional autonomy in office as chairperson or vice chairperson.

### **Article 114**

The offices of governor of an autonomous region, prefect of an autonomous prefecture and head of an autonomous county shall be filled by a citizen belonging to the ethnic group that exercises regional autonomy there.

### **Article 115**

The autonomous organs of autonomous regions, autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties shall exercise the functions and

powers of local state organs as specified in Chapter III Section 5 of the Constitution; at the same time, they shall exercise the power to self-govern according to the authority invested in them as prescribed by the Constitution and the Law on Regional Ethnic Autonomy and other laws, and, based on local circumstances, shall implement the laws and policies of the state.

**Article 116**

The people's congresses of ethnic autonomous areas shall have the power to formulate autonomous regulations and local-specific regulations in accordance with the political, economic and cultural characteristics of the ethnic groups in their areas. The autonomous regulations and local-specific regulations of autonomous regions shall go into effect after submission to the National People's Congress Standing Committee and receipt of approval. The autonomous regulations and local-specific regulations of autonomous prefectures and autonomous counties shall go into effect after submission to the standing committees of the people's congresses of their provinces or autonomous regions and receipt of approval, and shall be reported to the National People's Congress Standing Committee to be placed on record.

**Article 117**

Autonomous organs of ethnic autonomous areas shall have the autonomy to manage their local finances. All fiscal revenue which, according to the state financial system, belongs to an ethnic autonomous area should be autonomously allocated and used by the autonomous organs of that ethnic autonomous area.

**Article 118**

Autonomous organs of ethnic autonomous areas shall, under the guidance of state plans, autonomously plan for and manage local economic development.

When the state is exploiting resources or establishing enterprises in an ethnic autonomous area, it should be attentive to the interests of that area.



### **Article 119**

Autonomous organs of ethnic autonomous areas shall autonomously manage the educational, scientific, cultural, health and sports undertakings of their areas, protect and restore the cultural heritage of their ethnic groups, and promote the development and a thriving of ethnic cultures.

### **Article 120**

Autonomous organs of ethnic autonomous areas may, in accordance with the military system of the state and local needs, and with the approval of the State Council, organize local public security units to maintain public order.

### **Article 121**

In performing their duties, autonomous organs of ethnic autonomous areas shall, in accordance with the autonomous regulations of that ethnic autonomous area, use the spoken and written language or languages commonly used in that area.

### **Article 122**

The state shall provide financial, material and technical assistance to ethnic minorities to accelerate their economic and cultural development.

The state shall assist ethnic autonomous areas in training on a large scale officials at all levels, different types of specialized personnel and technical workers from among that area's ethnic groups.

## **Section 7 Commissions of Supervision**

### **Article 123**

Commissions of supervision of the People's Republic of China at all levels are the supervisory organs of the state.

#### **Article 124**

The People's Republic of China shall establish a National Commission of Supervision and local commissions of supervision at all levels.

A commission of supervision shall be composed of the following personnel:

a chairperson,  
vice chairpersons, and  
members.

The chairperson of a commission of supervision shall have the same term of office as that of the people's congress at the same level. The chairperson of the National Commission of Supervision shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

The organization, functions and powers of the commissions of supervision shall be prescribed by law.

#### **Article 125**

The National Commission of Supervision of the People's Republic of China is the highest supervisory organ.

The National Commission of Supervision shall direct the work of local commissions of supervision at all levels; commissions of supervision at higher levels shall direct the work of those at lower levels.

#### **Article 126**

The National Commission of Supervision shall be responsible to the National People's Congress and the National People's Congress Standing Committee. Local commissions of supervision at all levels shall be responsible to the state organs of power that created them and to the commissions of supervision at the next level up.

#### **Article 127**

Commissions of supervision shall, in accordance with the provisions of law, independently exercise supervisory power, and shall not be subject

to interference from any administrative organ, social organization or individual.

The supervisory organs, in handling cases of duty-related malfeasance or crime, shall work together with adjudicatory organs, procuratorial organs and law enforcement departments; they shall act as a mutual check on each other.

## **Section 8 People's Courts and People's Procuratorates**

### **Article 128**

The people's courts of the People's Republic of China are the adjudicatory organs of the state.

### **Article 129**

The People's Republic of China shall establish a Supreme People's Court and local people's courts at all levels, military courts and other special people's courts.

The president of the Supreme People's Court shall have the same term of office as that of the National People's Congress and shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

The organization of the people's courts shall be prescribed by law.

### **Article 130**

Except in special circumstances as prescribed by law, all cases in the people's courts shall be tried in public. The accused shall have the right to defense.

### **Article 131**

The people's courts shall, in accordance with the provisions of law, independently exercise adjudicatory power, and shall not be subject to interference from any administrative organ, social organization or individual.

**Article 132**

The Supreme People's Court is the highest adjudicatory organ.

The Supreme People's Court shall oversee the adjudicatory work of local people's courts at all levels and of special people's courts; people's courts at higher levels shall oversee the adjudicatory work of those at lower levels.

**Article 133**

The Supreme People's Court shall be responsible to the National People's Congress and the National People's Congress Standing Committee. Local people's courts at all levels shall be responsible to the state organs of power that created them.

**Article 134**

The people's procuratorates of the People's Republic of China are the legal oversight organs of the state.

**Article 135**

The People's Republic of China shall establish a Supreme People's Procuratorate, local people's procuratorates at all levels, military procuratorates and other special people's procuratorates.

The procurator general of the Supreme People's Procuratorate shall have the same term of office as that of the National People's Congress and shall serve no more than two consecutive terms.

The organization of the people's procuratorates shall be prescribed by law.

**Article 136**

The people's procuratorates shall, in accordance with the provisions of law, independently exercise procuratorial power, and shall not be subject to interference from any administrative organ, social organization or individual.

**Article 137**

The Supreme People's Procuratorate is the highest procuratorial organ.

The Supreme People's Procuratorate shall direct the work of local people's procuratorates at all levels and of special people's procuratorates; people's procuratorates at higher levels shall direct the work of those at lower levels.

**Article 138**

The Supreme People's Procuratorate shall be responsible to the National People's Congress and the National People's Congress Standing Committee. Local people's procuratorates at all levels shall be responsible to the state organs of power that created them and to the people's procuratorates at higher levels.

**Article 139**

Citizens of all ethnic groups shall have the right to use their own ethnic group's spoken and written languages in court proceedings. The people's courts and the people's procuratorates should provide translation services for any party to court proceedings who does not have a good command of the spoken or written languages commonly used in the locality.

In areas inhabited by people of an ethnic minority or by a number of ethnic groups living together, court hearings should be conducted in the language or languages commonly used in the locality; indictments, judgments, notices and other documents should be written in the language or languages commonly used in the locality according to actual needs.

**Article 140**

In handling criminal cases, the people's courts, the people's procuratorates and public security organs should each be responsible for their respective tasks, work together with each other, and act as checks on each other to ensure the faithful and effective enforcement of the law.

## **Chapter IV The National Flag, National Anthem, National Emblem and the Capital**

### **Article 141**

The national flag of the People's Republic of China is a red flag with five stars.

The national anthem of the People's Republic of China is the *March of the Volunteers*.

### **Article 142**

The national emblem of the People's Republic of China consists of an image of Tiananmen Gate in the center illuminated by five stars and encircled by spikes of grain and a cogwheel.

### **Article 143**

The capital of the People's Republic of China is Beijing.

**THE BASIC LAW  
OF THE HONG KONG  
SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION  
OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA**





## **Decree of the President of the People's Republic of China**

No. 26

I hereby promulgate the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, including Annex I, Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Annex II, Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures, Annex III, National Laws to be Applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and designs of the regional flag and regional emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, which was adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on 4 April 1990 and shall be put into effect as of 1 July 1997.

(Signed)  
Yang Shangkun  
President of  
the People's Republic of China

4 April 1990

# THE BASIC LAW OF THE HONG KONG SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA\*

(Adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh  
National People's Congress on 4 April 1990  
Promulgated by Order No. 26 of the President of  
the People's Republic of China on 4 April 1990  
Effective as of 1 July 1997)

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Note:

\* Please also see—

- a. Decision of the National People's Congress on the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh National People's Congress on 4 April 1990) (see **Instrument 11**); and
- b. Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the English Text of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted on 28 June 1990) (see **Instrument 16**).

## **Preamble**

Hong Kong has been part of the territory of China since ancient times; it was occupied by Britain after the Opium War in 1840. On 19 December 1984, the Chinese and British Governments signed the Joint Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong, affirming that the Government of the People's Republic of China will resume the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong with effect from 1 July 1997, thus fulfilling the long-cherished common aspiration of the Chinese people for the recovery of Hong Kong.

Upholding national unity and territorial integrity, maintaining the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, and taking account of its history and realities, the People's Republic of China has decided that upon China's resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong, a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will be established in accordance with the provisions of Article 31 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, and that under the principle of "one country, two systems", the socialist system and policies will not be practised in Hong Kong. The basic policies of the People's Republic of China regarding Hong Kong have been elaborated by the Chinese Government in the Sino-British Joint Declaration.

In accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, the National People's Congress hereby enacts the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, prescribing the systems to be practised in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, in order to ensure the implementation of the basic policies of the People's Republic of China regarding Hong Kong.

## **Chapter I General Principles**

### **Article 1**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China.

### **Article 2**

The National People's Congress authorizes the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to exercise a high degree of autonomy and enjoy executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication, in accordance with the provisions of this Law.

### **Article 3**

The executive authorities and legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be composed of permanent residents of Hong Kong in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Law.

### **Article 4**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall safeguard the rights and freedoms of the residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and of other persons in the Region in accordance with law.

### **Article 5**

The socialist system and policies shall not be practised in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the previous capitalist system and way of life shall remain unchanged for 50 years.

### **Article 6**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall protect the right of private ownership of property in accordance with law.

## **Article 7**

The land and natural resources within the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be State property. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be responsible for their management, use and development and for their lease or grant to individuals, legal persons or organizations for use or development. The revenues derived therefrom shall be exclusively at the disposal of the government of the Region.

## **Article 8**

The laws previously in force in Hong Kong, that is, the common law, rules of equity, ordinances, subordinate legislation and customary law shall be maintained, except for any that contravene this Law, and subject to any amendment by the legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

## **Article 9**

In addition to the Chinese language, English may also be used as an official language by the executive authorities, legislature and judiciary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

## **Article 10**

Apart from displaying the national flag and national emblem of the People's Republic of China, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may also use a regional flag and regional emblem.

The regional flag of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is a red flag with a bauhinia highlighted by five star-tipped stamens.

The regional emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is a bauhinia in the centre highlighted by five star-tipped stamens and encircled by the words "Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China" in Chinese and "HONG KONG" in English.

**Article 11**

In accordance with Article 31 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, the systems and policies practised in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, including the social and economic systems, the system for safeguarding the fundamental rights and freedoms of its residents, the executive, legislative and judicial systems, and the relevant policies, shall be based on the provisions of this Law.

No law enacted by the legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall contravene this Law.

## **Chapter II Relationship between the Central Authorities and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

### **Article 12**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be a local administrative region of the People's Republic of China, which shall enjoy a high degree of autonomy and come directly under the Central People's Government.

### **Article 13**

\*The Central People's Government shall be responsible for the foreign affairs relating to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People's Republic of China shall establish an office in Hong Kong to deal with foreign affairs.

The Central People's Government authorizes the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to conduct relevant external affairs on its own in accordance with this Law.

### **Article 14**

The Central People's Government shall be responsible for the defence of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be responsible for the maintenance of public order in the Region.

Military forces stationed by the Central People's Government in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for defence shall not interfere in the local affairs of the Region. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may, when necessary, ask the Central People's Government for assistance from the garrison in the maintenance of public order and in disaster relief.

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Note:

- \* See Interpretation of Paragraph 1, Article 13 and Article 19 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (Adopted at the Twenty Second Session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress on 26 August 2011) (see **Instrument 24**)

In addition to abiding by national laws, members of the garrison shall abide by the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Expenditure for the garrison shall be borne by the Central People's Government.

#### **Article 15**

The Central People's Government shall appoint the Chief Executive and the principal officials of the executive authorities of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in accordance with the provisions of Chapter IV of this Law.

#### **Article 16**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be vested with executive power. It shall, on its own, conduct the administrative affairs of the Region in accordance with the relevant provisions of this Law.

#### **Article 17**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be vested with legislative power.

Laws enacted by the legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region must be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for the record. The reporting for record shall not affect the entry into force of such laws.

If the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, after consulting the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under it, considers that any law enacted by the legislature of the Region is not in conformity with the provisions of this Law regarding affairs within the responsibility of the Central Authorities or regarding the relationship between the Central Authorities and the Region, the Standing Committee may return the law in question but shall not amend it. Any law returned by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress shall immediately be invalidated. This invalidation shall not have retroactive effect, unless otherwise provided for in the laws of the Region.



## **Article 18**

The laws in force in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be this Law, the laws previously in force in Hong Kong as provided for in Article 8 of this Law, and the laws enacted by the legislature of the Region.

National laws shall not be applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region except for those listed in Annex III to this Law. The laws listed therein shall be applied locally by way of promulgation or legislation by the Region.

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress may add to or delete from the list of laws in Annex III after consulting its Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the government of the Region. Laws listed in Annex III to this Law shall be confined to those relating to defence and foreign affairs as well as other matters outside the limits of the autonomy of the Region as specified by this Law.

In the event that the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress decides to declare a state of war or, by reason of turmoil within the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region which endangers national unity or security and is beyond the control of the government of the Region, decides that the Region is in a state of emergency, the Central People's Government may issue an order applying the relevant national laws in the Region.

## **Article 19**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be vested with independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication.

The courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall have jurisdiction over all cases in the Region, except that the restrictions on their jurisdiction imposed by the legal system and principles previously in force in Hong Kong shall be maintained.

\*The courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall have no jurisdiction over acts of state such as defence and foreign affairs. The courts of the Region shall obtain a certificate from the Chief Executive on questions of fact concerning acts of state such as defence and foreign affairs whenever such questions arise in the adjudication of cases. This certificate shall be binding on the courts. Before issuing such a certificate, the Chief Executive shall obtain a certifying document from the Central People's Government.

## **Article 20**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may enjoy other powers granted to it by the National People's Congress, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress or the Central People's Government.

## **Article 21**

Chinese citizens who are residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be entitled to participate in the management of state affairs according to law.

In accordance with the assigned number of seats and the selection method specified by the National People's Congress, the Chinese citizens among the residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall locally elect deputies of the Region to the National People's Congress to participate in the work of the highest organ of state power.

## **Article 22**

No department of the Central People's Government and no province, autonomous region, or municipality directly under the Central Government may interfere in the affairs which the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region administers on its own in accordance with this Law.

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Note:

- \* See Interpretation of Paragraph 1, Article 13 and Article 19 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (Adopted at the Twenty Second Session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress on 26 August 2011) (see **Instrument 24**)

If there is a need for departments of the Central Government, or for provinces, autonomous regions, or municipalities directly under the Central Government to set up offices in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, they must obtain the consent of the government of the Region and the approval of the Central People's Government.

All offices set up in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by departments of the Central Government, or by provinces, autonomous regions, or municipalities directly under the Central Government, and the personnel of these offices shall abide by the laws of the Region.

\*For entry into the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, people from other parts of China must apply for approval. Among them, the number of persons who enter the Region for the purpose of settlement shall be determined by the competent authorities of the Central People's Government after consulting the government of the Region.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may establish an office in Beijing.

### **Article 23**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, subversion against the Central People's Government, or theft of state secrets, to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies.

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Note:

\* See The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Articles 22(4) and 24(2)(3) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted at the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Ninth National People's Congress on 26 June 1999) (see **Instrument 19**)

## Chapter III Fundamental Rights and Duties of the Residents

### Article 24

Residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“Hong Kong residents”) shall include permanent residents and non-permanent residents.

The permanent residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be:

- (1) Chinese citizens born in Hong Kong before or after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region;
- (2) Chinese citizens who have ordinarily resided in Hong Kong for a continuous period of not less than seven years before or after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region;
- \* (3) Persons of Chinese nationality born outside Hong Kong of those residents listed in categories (1) and (2);
- (4) Persons not of Chinese nationality who have entered Hong Kong with valid travel documents, have ordinarily resided in Hong Kong for a continuous period of not less than seven years and have taken Hong Kong as their place of permanent residence before or after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region;
- (5) Persons under 21 years of age born in Hong Kong of those residents listed in category (4) before or after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; and

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Note:

- \* See The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of Articles 22(4) and 24(2)(3) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Adopted at the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Ninth National People’s Congress on 26 June 1999) (see **Instrument 19**)

- (6) Persons other than those residents listed in categories (1) to (5), who, before the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, had the right of abode in Hong Kong only.

The above-mentioned residents shall have the right of abode in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and shall be qualified to obtain, in accordance with the laws of the Region, permanent identity cards which state their right of abode.

The non-permanent residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be persons who are qualified to obtain Hong Kong identity cards in accordance with the laws of the Region but have no right of abode.

#### **Article 25**

All Hong Kong residents shall be equal before the law.

#### **Article 26**

Permanent residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall have the right to vote and the right to stand for election in accordance with law.

#### **Article 27**

Hong Kong residents shall have freedom of speech, of the press and of publication; freedom of association, of assembly, of procession and of demonstration; and the right and freedom to form and join trade unions, and to strike.

#### **Article 28**

The freedom of the person of Hong Kong residents shall be inviolable.

No Hong Kong resident shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful arrest, detention or imprisonment. Arbitrary or unlawful search of the body of any resident or deprivation or restriction of the freedom of the person shall be prohibited. Torture of any resident or arbitrary or

unlawful deprivation of the life of any resident shall be prohibited.

**Article 29**

The homes and other premises of Hong Kong residents shall be inviolable. Arbitrary or unlawful search of, or intrusion into, a resident's home or other premises shall be prohibited.

**Article 30**

The freedom and privacy of communication of Hong Kong residents shall be protected by law. No department or individual may, on any grounds, infringe upon the freedom and privacy of communication of residents except that the relevant authorities may inspect communication in accordance with legal procedures to meet the needs of public security or of investigation into criminal offences.

**Article 31**

Hong Kong residents shall have freedom of movement within the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and freedom of emigration to other countries and regions. They shall have freedom to travel and to enter or leave the Region. Unless restrained by law, holders of valid travel documents shall be free to leave the Region without special authorization.

**Article 32**

Hong Kong residents shall have freedom of conscience.

Hong Kong residents shall have freedom of religious belief and freedom to preach and to conduct and participate in religious activities in public.

**Article 33**

Hong Kong residents shall have freedom of choice of occupation.

**Article 34**

Hong Kong residents shall have freedom to engage in academic research, literary and artistic creation, and other cultural activities.

**Article 35**

Hong Kong residents shall have the right to confidential legal advice, access to the courts, choice of lawyers for timely protection of their lawful rights and interests or for representation in the courts, and to judicial remedies.

Hong Kong residents shall have the right to institute legal proceedings in the courts against the acts of the executive authorities and their personnel.

**Article 36**

Hong Kong residents shall have the right to social welfare in accordance with law. The welfare benefits and retirement security of the labour force shall be protected by law.

**Article 37**

The freedom of marriage of Hong Kong residents and their right to raise a family freely shall be protected by law.

**Article 38**

Hong Kong residents shall enjoy the other rights and freedoms safeguarded by the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

**Article 39**

The provisions of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and international labour conventions as applied to Hong Kong shall remain in force and shall be implemented through the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents shall not be restricted unless as prescribed by law. Such restrictions shall not contravene the provisions of the preceding paragraph of this Article.

**Article 40**

The lawful traditional rights and interests of the indigenous inhabitants of the “New Territories” shall be protected by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

**Article 41**

Persons in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region other than Hong Kong residents shall, in accordance with law, enjoy the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents prescribed in this Chapter.

**Article 42**

Hong Kong residents and other persons in Hong Kong shall have the obligation to abide by the laws in force in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.



## **Chapter IV Political Structure**

### **Section 1 The Chief Executive**

#### **Article 43**

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be the head of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and shall represent the Region.

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be accountable to the Central People's Government and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in accordance with the provisions of this Law.

#### **Article 44**

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be a Chinese citizen of not less than 40 years of age who is a permanent resident of the Region with no right of abode in any foreign country and has ordinarily resided in Hong Kong for a continuous period of not less than 20 years.

#### **Article 45**

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be selected by election or through consultations held locally and be appointed by the Central People's Government.

The method for selecting the Chief Executive shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures.

The specific method for selecting the Chief Executive is prescribed in Annex I "Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region".

**Article 46**

The term of office of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be five years. He or she may serve for not more than two consecutive terms.

**Article 47**

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region must be a person of integrity, dedicated to his or her duties.

The Chief Executive, on assuming office, shall declare his or her assets to the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. This declaration shall be put on record.

**Article 48**

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- (1) To lead the government of the Region;
- (2) To be responsible for the implementation of this Law and other laws which, in accordance with this Law, apply in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region;
- (3) To sign bills passed by the Legislative Council and to promulgate laws;

To sign budgets passed by the Legislative Council and report the budgets and final accounts to the Central People's Government for the record;

- (4) To decide on government policies and to issue executive orders;

- (5) To nominate and to report to the Central People's Government for appointment the following principal officials: Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries of Departments, Directors of Bureaux, Commissioner Against Corruption, Director of Audit, Commissioner of Police, Director of Immigration and Commissioner of Customs and Excise; and to recommend to the Central People's Government the removal of the above-mentioned officials;
- (6) To appoint or remove judges of the courts at all levels in accordance with legal procedures;
- (7) To appoint or remove holders of public office in accordance with legal procedures;
- (8) To implement the directives issued by the Central People's Government in respect of the relevant matters provided for in this Law;
- (9) To conduct, on behalf of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, external affairs and other affairs as authorized by the Central Authorities;
- (10) To approve the introduction of motions regarding revenues or expenditure to the Legislative Council;
- (11) To decide, in the light of security and vital public interests, whether government officials or other personnel in charge of government affairs should testify or give evidence before the Legislative Council or its committees;
- (12) To pardon persons convicted of criminal offences or commute their penalties; and
- (13) To handle petitions and complaints.

#### **Article 49**

If the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region considers that a bill passed by the Legislative Council is not compatible with the overall interests of the Region, he or she may return it to the Legislative Council within three months for reconsideration. If the Legislative Council passes the original bill again by not less than a two-thirds majority of all the members, the Chief Executive must sign and promulgate it within one month, or act in accordance with the provisions of Article 50 of this Law.

#### **Article 50**

If the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region refuses to sign a bill passed the second time by the Legislative Council, or the Legislative Council refuses to pass a budget or any other important bill introduced by the government, and if consensus still cannot be reached after consultations, the Chief Executive may dissolve the Legislative Council.

The Chief Executive must consult the Executive Council before dissolving the Legislative Council. The Chief Executive may dissolve the Legislative Council only once in each term of his or her office.

#### **Article 51**

If the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region refuses to pass the budget introduced by the government, the Chief Executive may apply to the Legislative Council for provisional appropriations. If appropriation of public funds cannot be approved because the Legislative Council has already been dissolved, the Chief Executive may, prior to the election of the new Legislative Council, approve provisional short-term appropriations according to the level of expenditure of the previous fiscal year.

#### **Article 52**

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region must resign under any of the following circumstances:

- (1) When he or she loses the ability to discharge his or her duties as a result of serious illness or other reasons;
- (2) When, after the Legislative Council is dissolved because he or she twice refuses to sign a bill passed by it, the new Legislative Council again passes by a two-thirds majority of all the members the original bill in dispute, but he or she still refuses to sign it; and
- (3) When, after the Legislative Council is dissolved because it refuses to pass a budget or any other important bill, the new Legislative Council still refuses to pass the original bill in dispute.

### **Article 53**

If the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is not able to discharge his or her duties for a short period, such duties shall temporarily be assumed by the Administrative Secretary, Financial Secretary or Secretary of Justice in this order of precedence.

\*In the event that the office of Chief Executive becomes vacant, a new Chief Executive shall be selected within six months in accordance with the provisions of Article 45 of this Law. During the period of vacancy, his or her duties shall be assumed according to the provisions of the preceding paragraph.

### **Article 54**

The Executive Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be an organ for assisting the Chief Executive in policy-making.

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\* See Interpretation of Paragraph 2, Article 53 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (Adopted at the Fifteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress on 27 April 2005) (see **Instrument 22**)

**Article 55**

Members of the Executive Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be appointed by the Chief Executive from among the principal officials of the executive authorities, members of the Legislative Council and public figures. Their appointment or removal shall be decided by the Chief Executive. The term of office of members of the Executive Council shall not extend beyond the expiry of the term of office of the Chief Executive who appoints them.

Members of the Executive Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be Chinese citizens who are permanent residents of the Region with no right of abode in any foreign country.

The Chief Executive may, as he or she deems necessary, invite other persons concerned to sit in on meetings of the Council.

**Article 56**

The Executive Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be presided over by the Chief Executive.

Except for the appointment, removal and disciplining of officials and the adoption of measures in emergencies, the Chief Executive shall consult the Executive Council before making important policy decisions, introducing bills to the Legislative Council, making subordinate legislation, or dissolving the Legislative Council.

If the Chief Executive does not accept a majority opinion of the Executive Council, he or she shall put the specific reasons on record.

**Article 57**

A Commission Against Corruption shall be established in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It shall function independently and be accountable to the Chief Executive.

**Article 58**

A Commission of Audit shall be established in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It shall function independently and be accountable to the Chief Executive.

## **Section 2 The Executive Authorities**

### **Article 59**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be the executive authorities of the Region.

### **Article 60**

The head of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be the Chief Executive of the Region.

A Department of Administration, a Department of Finance, a Department of Justice, and various bureaux, divisions and commissions shall be established in the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

### **Article 61**

The principal officials of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be Chinese citizens who are permanent residents of the Region with no right of abode in any foreign country and have ordinarily resided in Hong Kong for a continuous period of not less than 15 years.

### **Article 62**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- (1) To formulate and implement policies;
- (2) To conduct administrative affairs;
- (3) To conduct external affairs as authorized by the Central People's Government under this Law;
- (4) To draw up and introduce budgets and final accounts;

- (5) To draft and introduce bills, motions and subordinate legislation; and
- (6) To designate officials to sit in on the meetings of the Legislative Council and to speak on behalf of the government.

### **Article 63**

The Department of Justice of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall control criminal prosecutions, free from any interference.

### **Article 64**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region must abide by the law and be accountable to the Legislative Council of the Region: it shall implement laws passed by the Council and already in force; it shall present regular policy addresses to the Council; it shall answer questions raised by members of the Council; and it shall obtain approval from the Council for taxation and public expenditure.

### **Article 65**

The previous system of establishing advisory bodies by the executive authorities shall be maintained.

## **Section 3 The Legislature**

### **Article 66**

The Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be the legislature of the Region.

### **Article 67**

The Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be composed of Chinese citizens who are permanent residents of the Region with no right of abode in any foreign country. However, permanent residents of the Region who are not of Chinese



nationality or who have the right of abode in foreign countries may also be elected members of the Legislative Council of the Region, provided that the proportion of such members does not exceed 20 percent of the total membership of the Council.

#### **Article 68**

The Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be constituted by election.

The method for forming the Legislative Council shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the election of all the members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage.

The specific method for forming the Legislative Council and its procedures for voting on bills and motions are prescribed in Annex II: “Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures”.

#### **Article 69**

The term of office of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be four years, except the first term which shall be two years.

#### **Article 70**

If the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is dissolved by the Chief Executive in accordance with the provisions of this Law, it must, within three months, be reconstituted by election in accordance with Article 68 of this Law.

#### **Article 71**

The President of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be elected by and from among the members of the Legislative Council.

The President of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be a Chinese citizen of not less than 40 years of age, who is a permanent resident of the Region with no right of abode in any foreign country and has ordinarily resided in Hong Kong for a continuous period of not less than 20 years.

**Article 72**

The President of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- (1) To preside over meetings;
- (2) To decide on the agenda, giving priority to government bills for inclusion in the agenda;
- (3) To decide on the time of meetings;
- (4) To call special sessions during the recess;
- (5) To call emergency sessions on the request of the Chief Executive; and
- (6) To exercise other powers and functions as prescribed in the rules of procedure of the Legislative Council.

**Article 73**

The Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall exercise the following powers and functions:

- (1) To enact, amend or repeal laws in accordance with the provisions of this Law and legal procedures;
- (2) To examine and approve budgets introduced by the government;
- (3) To approve taxation and public expenditure;

- (4) To receive and debate the policy addresses of the Chief Executive;
- (5) To raise questions on the work of the government;
- (6) To debate any issue concerning public interests;
- (7) To endorse the appointment and removal of the judges of the Court of Final Appeal and the Chief Judge of the High Court;
- (8) To receive and handle complaints from Hong Kong residents;
- (9) If a motion initiated jointly by one-fourth of all the members of the Legislative Council charges the Chief Executive with serious breach of law or dereliction of duty and if he or she refuses to resign, the Council may, after passing a motion for investigation, give a mandate to the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal to form and chair an independent investigation committee. The committee shall be responsible for carrying out the investigation and reporting its findings to the Council. If the committee considers the evidence sufficient to substantiate such charges, the Council may pass a motion of impeachment by a two-thirds majority of all its members and report it to the Central People's Government for decision; and
- (10) To summon, as required when exercising the above-mentioned powers and functions, persons concerned to testify or give evidence.

#### **Article 74**

Members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may introduce bills in accordance with the provisions of this Law and legal procedures. Bills which do not relate to public expenditure or political structure or the operation of the government may be introduced individually or jointly by members of the Council. The written consent of the Chief Executive shall be required before bills relating to government policies are introduced.

**Article 75**

The quorum for the meeting of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be not less than one half of all its members.

The rules of procedure of the Legislative Council shall be made by the Council on its own, provided that they do not contravene this Law.

**Article 76**

A bill passed by the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may take effect only after it is signed and promulgated by the Chief Executive.

**Article 77**

Members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be immune from legal action in respect of their statements at meetings of the Council.

**Article 78**

Members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall not be subjected to arrest when attending or on their way to a meeting of the Council.

**Article 79**

The President of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall declare that a member of the Council is no longer qualified for the office under any of the following circumstances:

- (1) When he or she loses the ability to discharge his or her duties as a result of serious illness or other reasons;
- (2) When he or she, with no valid reason, is absent from meetings for three consecutive months without the consent of the President of the Legislative Council;

- (3) When he or she loses or renounces his or her status as a permanent resident of the Region;
- (4) When he or she accepts a government appointment and becomes a public servant;
- (5) When he or she is bankrupt or fails to comply with a court order to repay debts;
- (6) When he or she is convicted and sentenced to imprisonment for one month or more for a criminal offence committed within or outside the Region and is relieved of his or her duties by a motion passed by two-thirds of the members of the Legislative Council present; and
- (7) When he or she is censured for misbehaviour or breach of oath by a vote of two-thirds of the members of the Legislative Council present.

## **Section 4 The Judiciary**

### **Article 80**

The courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region at all levels shall be the judiciary of the Region, exercising the judicial power of the Region.

### **Article 81**

The Court of Final Appeal, the High Court, district courts, magistrates' courts and other special courts shall be established in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The High Court shall comprise the Court of Appeal and the Court of First Instance.

The judicial system previously practised in Hong Kong shall be maintained except for those changes consequent upon the establishment

of the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

**Article 82**

The power of final adjudication of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be vested in the Court of Final Appeal of the Region, which may as required invite judges from other common law jurisdictions to sit on the Court of Final Appeal.

**Article 83**

The structure, powers and functions of the courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region at all levels shall be prescribed by law.

**Article 84**

The courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall adjudicate cases in accordance with the laws applicable in the Region as prescribed in Article 18 of this Law and may refer to precedents of other common law jurisdictions.

**Article 85**

The courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall exercise judicial power independently, free from any interference. Members of the judiciary shall be immune from legal action in the performance of their judicial functions.

**Article 86**

The principle of trial by jury previously practised in Hong Kong shall be maintained.

**Article 87**

In criminal or civil proceedings in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the principles previously applied in Hong Kong and the rights previously enjoyed by parties to proceedings shall be maintained.

Anyone who is lawfully arrested shall have the right to a fair trial by the judicial organs without delay and shall be presumed innocent until convicted by the judicial organs.

### **Article 88**

Judges of the courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be appointed by the Chief Executive on the recommendation of an independent commission composed of local judges, persons from the legal profession and eminent persons from other sectors.

### **Article 89**

A judge of a court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may only be removed for inability to discharge his or her duties, or for misbehaviour, by the Chief Executive on the recommendation of a tribunal appointed by the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal and consisting of not fewer than three local judges.

The Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may be investigated only for inability to discharge his or her duties, or for misbehaviour, by a tribunal appointed by the Chief Executive and consisting of not fewer than five local judges and may be removed by the Chief Executive on the recommendation of the tribunal and in accordance with the procedures prescribed in this Law.

### **Article 90**

The Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal and the Chief Judge of the High Court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be Chinese citizens who are permanent residents of the Region with no right of abode in any foreign country.

In the case of the appointment or removal of judges of the Court of Final Appeal and the Chief Judge of the High Court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Chief Executive shall, in addition to following the procedures prescribed in Articles 88 and 89 of this Law,

obtain the endorsement of the Legislative Council and report such appointment or removal to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for the record.

#### **Article 91**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall maintain the previous system of appointment and removal of members of the judiciary other than judges.

#### **Article 92**

Judges and other members of the judiciary of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be chosen on the basis of their judicial and professional qualities and may be recruited from other common law jurisdictions.

#### **Article 93**

Judges and other members of the judiciary serving in Hong Kong before the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may all remain in employment and retain their seniority with pay, allowances, benefits and conditions of service no less favourable than before.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall pay to judges and other members of the judiciary who retire or leave the service in compliance with regulations, including those who have retired or left the service before the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, or to their dependants, all pensions, gratuities, allowances and benefits due to them on terms no less favourable than before, irrespective of their nationality or place of residence.

#### **Article 94**

On the basis of the system previously operating in Hong Kong, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may make provisions for local lawyers and lawyers from outside Hong Kong to work and practise in the Region.



### **Article 95**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may, through consultations and in accordance with law, maintain juridical relations with the judicial organs of other parts of the country, and they may render assistance to each other.

### **Article 96**

With the assistance or authorization of the Central People's Government, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may make appropriate arrangements with foreign states for reciprocal juridical assistance.

## **Section 5 District Organizations**

### **Article 97**

District organizations which are not organs of political power may be established in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, to be consulted by the government of the Region on district administration and other affairs, or to be responsible for providing services in such fields as culture, recreation and environmental sanitation.

### **Article 98**

The powers and functions of the district organizations and the method for their formation shall be prescribed by law.

## **Section 6 Public Servants**

### **Article 99**

Public servants serving in all government departments of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region must be permanent residents of the Region, except where otherwise provided for in Article 101 of this Law

regarding public servants of foreign nationalities and except for those below a certain rank as prescribed by law.

Public servants must be dedicated to their duties and be responsible to the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

#### **Article 100**

Public servants serving in all Hong Kong government departments, including the police department, before the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, may all remain in employment and retain their seniority with pay, allowances, benefits and conditions of service no less favourable than before.

#### **Article 101**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may employ British and other foreign nationals previously serving in the public service in Hong Kong, or those holding permanent identity cards of the Region, to serve as public servants in government departments at all levels, but only Chinese citizens among permanent residents of the Region with no right of abode in any foreign country may fill the following posts: the Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries of Departments, Directors of Bureaux, Commissioner Against Corruption, Director of Audit, Commissioner of Police, Director of Immigration and Commissioner of Customs and Excise.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may also employ British and other foreign nationals as advisers to government departments and, when required, may recruit qualified candidates from outside the Region to fill professional and technical posts in government departments. These foreign nationals shall be employed only in their individual capacities and shall be responsible to the government of the Region.

#### **Article 102**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall pay to public servants who retire or who leave the service in

compliance with regulations, including those who have retired or who have left the service in compliance with regulations before the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, or to their dependants, all pensions, gratuities, allowances and benefits due to them on terms no less favourable than before, irrespective of their nationality or place of residence.

### **Article 103**

The appointment and promotion of public servants shall be on the basis of their qualifications, experience and ability. Hong Kong's previous system of recruitment, employment, assessment, discipline, training and management for the public service, including special bodies for their appointment, pay and conditions of service, shall be maintained, except for any provisions for privileged treatment of foreign nationals.

### **Article 104**

\*When assuming office, the Chief Executive, principal officials, members of the Executive Council and of the Legislative Council, judges of the courts at all levels and other members of the judiciary in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region must, in accordance with law, swear to uphold the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and swear allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

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Note:

- \* See Interpretation of Article 104 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (Adopted by the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress at its Twenty-fourth Session on 7 November 2016) (see **Instrument 27**)

## **Chapter V Economy**

### **Section 1 Public Finance, Monetary Affairs, Trade, Industry and Commerce**

#### **Article 105**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, in accordance with law, protect the right of individuals and legal persons to the acquisition, use, disposal and inheritance of property and their right to compensation for lawful deprivation of their property.

Such compensation shall correspond to the real value of the property concerned at the time and shall be freely convertible and paid without undue delay.

The ownership of enterprises and the investments from outside the Region shall be protected by law.

#### **Article 106**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall have independent finances.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall use its financial revenues exclusively for its own purposes, and they shall not be handed over to the Central People's Government.

The Central People's Government shall not levy taxes in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

#### **Article 107**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall follow the principle of keeping expenditure within the limits of revenues in drawing up its budget, and strive to achieve a fiscal balance, avoid deficits and keep the budget commensurate with the growth rate of its gross domestic product.

**Article 108**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall practise an independent taxation system.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, taking the low tax policy previously pursued in Hong Kong as reference, enact laws on its own concerning types of taxes, tax rates, tax reductions, allowances and exemptions, and other matters of taxation.

**Article 109**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall provide an appropriate economic and legal environment for the maintenance of the status of Hong Kong as an international financial centre.

**Article 110**

The monetary and financial systems of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be prescribed by law.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate monetary and financial policies, safeguard the free operation of financial business and financial markets, and regulate and supervise them in accordance with law.

**Article 111**

The Hong Kong dollar, as the legal tender in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, shall continue to circulate.

The authority to issue Hong Kong currency shall be vested in the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The issue of Hong Kong currency must be backed by a 100 percent reserve fund. The system regarding the issue of Hong Kong currency and the reserve fund system shall be prescribed by law.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may authorize designated banks to issue or continue to issue Hong Kong currency under statutory authority, after satisfying itself that any issue of

currency will be soundly based and that the arrangements for such issue are consistent with the object of maintaining the stability of the currency.

**Article 112**

No foreign exchange control policies shall be applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The Hong Kong dollar shall be freely convertible. Markets for foreign exchange, gold, securities, futures and the like shall continue.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall safeguard the free flow of capital within, into and out of the Region.

**Article 113**

The Exchange Fund of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be managed and controlled by the government of the Region, primarily for regulating the exchange value of the Hong Kong dollar.

**Article 114**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall maintain the status of a free port and shall not impose any tariff unless otherwise prescribed by law.

**Article 115**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall pursue the policy of free trade and safeguard the free movement of goods, intangible assets and capital.

**Article 116**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be a separate customs territory.

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may, using the name “Hong Kong, China”, participate in relevant international organizations and international trade agreements (including preferential trade

arrangements), such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and arrangements regarding international trade in textiles.

Export quotas, tariff preferences and other similar arrangements, which are obtained or made by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region or which were obtained or made and remain valid, shall be enjoyed exclusively by the Region.

**Article 117**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may issue its own certificates of origin for products in accordance with prevailing rules of origin.

**Article 118**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall provide an economic and legal environment for encouraging investments, technological progress and the development of new industries.

**Article 119**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall formulate appropriate policies to promote and co-ordinate the development of various trades such as manufacturing, commerce, tourism, real estate, transport, public utilities, services, agriculture and fisheries, and pay regard to the protection of the environment.

**Section 2 Land Leases**

**Article 120**

All leases of land granted, decided upon or renewed before the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region which extend beyond 30 June 1997, and all rights in relation to such leases, shall continue to be recognized and protected under the law of the Region.

### **Article 121**

As regards all leases of land granted or renewed where the original leases contain no right of renewal, during the period from 27 May 1985 to 30 June 1997, which extend beyond 30 June 1997 and expire not later than 30 June 2047, the lessee is not required to pay an additional premium as from 1 July 1997, but an annual rent equivalent to 3 per cent of the rateable value of the property at that date, adjusted in step with any changes in the rateable value thereafter, shall be charged.

### **Article 122**

In the case of old schedule lots, village lots, small houses and similar rural holdings, where the property was on 30 June 1984 held by, or, in the case of small houses granted after that date, where the property is granted to, a lessee descended through the male line from a person who was in 1898 a resident of an established village in Hong Kong, the previous rent shall remain unchanged so long as the property is held by that lessee or by one of his lawful successors in the male line.

### **Article 123**

Where leases of land without a right of renewal expire after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, they shall be dealt with in accordance with laws and policies formulated by the Region on its own.

## **Section 3 Shipping**

### **Article 124**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall maintain Hong Kong's previous systems of shipping management and shipping regulation, including the system for regulating conditions of seamen.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, define its specific functions and responsibilities in respect of shipping.



**Article 125**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be authorized by the Central People's Government to continue to maintain a shipping register and issue related certificates under its legislation, using the name "Hong Kong, China".

**Article 126**

With the exception of foreign warships, access for which requires the special permission of the Central People's Government, ships shall enjoy access to the ports of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in accordance with the laws of the Region.

**Article 127**

Private shipping businesses and shipping-related businesses and private container terminals in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may continue to operate freely.

**Section 4 Civil Aviation****Article 128**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall provide conditions and take measures for the maintenance of the status of Hong Kong as a centre of international and regional aviation.

**Article 129**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall continue the previous system of civil aviation management in Hong Kong and keep its own aircraft register in accordance with provisions laid down by the Central People's Government concerning nationality marks and registration marks of aircraft.

Access of foreign state aircraft to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall require the special permission of the Central People's Government.

### **Article 130**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be responsible on its own for matters of routine business and technical management of civil aviation, including the management of airports, the provision of air traffic services within the flight information region of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the discharge of other responsibilities allocated to it under the regional air navigation procedures of the International Civil Aviation Organization.

### **Article 131**

The Central People's Government shall, in consultation with the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, make arrangements providing air services between the Region and other parts of the People's Republic of China for airlines incorporated in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and having their principal place of business in Hong Kong and other airlines of the People's Republic of China.

### **Article 132**

All air service agreements providing air services between other parts of the People's Republic of China and other states and regions with stops at the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and air services between the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and other states and regions with stops at other parts of the People's Republic of China shall be concluded by the Central People's Government.

In concluding the air service agreements referred to in the first paragraph of this Article, the Central People's Government shall take account of the special conditions and economic interests of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and consult the government of the Region.

Representatives of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may, as members of the delegations of the Government of the People's Republic of China, participate in air service consultations conducted by the Central People's Government with

foreign governments concerning arrangements for such services referred to in the first paragraph of this Article.

### **Article 133**

Acting under specific authorizations from the Central People's Government, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may:

- (1) renew or amend air service agreements and arrangements previously in force;
- (2) negotiate and conclude new air service agreements providing routes for airlines incorporated in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and having their principal place of business in Hong Kong and providing rights for over-flights and technical stops; and
- (3) negotiate and conclude provisional arrangements with foreign states or regions with which no air service agreements have been concluded.

All scheduled air services to, from or through Hong Kong, which do not operate to, from or through the mainland of China shall be regulated by the air service agreements or provisional arrangements referred to in this Article.

### **Article 134**

The Central People's Government shall give the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region the authority to:

- (1) negotiate and conclude with other authorities all arrangements concerning the implementation of the air service agreements and provisional arrangements referred to in Article 133 of this Law;
- (2) issue licences to airlines incorporated in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and having their principal place of business in Hong Kong;

- (3) designate such airlines under the air service agreements and provisional arrangements referred to in Article 133 of this Law; and
- (4) issue permits to foreign airlines for services other than those to, from or through the mainland of China.

**Article 135**

Airlines incorporated and having their principal place of business in Hong Kong and businesses related to civil aviation functioning there prior to the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may continue to operate.

## **Chapter VI Education, Science, Culture, Sports, Religion, Labour and Social Services**

### **Article 136**

On the basis of the previous educational system, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies on the development and improvement of education, including policies regarding the educational system and its administration, the language of instruction, the allocation of funds, the examination system, the system of academic awards and the recognition of educational qualifications.

Community organizations and individuals may, in accordance with law, run educational undertakings of various kinds in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

### **Article 137**

Educational institutions of all kinds may retain their autonomy and enjoy academic freedom. They may continue to recruit staff and use teaching materials from outside the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Schools run by religious organizations may continue to provide religious education, including courses in religion.

Students shall enjoy freedom of choice of educational institutions and freedom to pursue their education outside the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

### **Article 138**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies to develop Western and traditional Chinese medicine and to improve medical and health services. Community organizations and individuals may provide various medical and health services in accordance with law.

### **Article 139**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies on science and technology and protect by law achievements in scientific and technological research, patents, discoveries and inventions.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, decide on the scientific and technological standards and specifications applicable in Hong Kong.

### **Article 140**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies on culture and protect by law the achievements and the lawful rights and interests of authors in their literary and artistic creation.

### **Article 141**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall not restrict the freedom of religious belief, interfere in the internal affairs of religious organizations or restrict religious activities which do not contravene the laws of the Region.

Religious organizations shall, in accordance with law, enjoy the rights to acquire, use, dispose of and inherit property and the right to receive financial assistance. Their previous property rights and interests shall be maintained and protected.

Religious organizations may, according to their previous practice, continue to run seminaries and other schools, hospitals and welfare institutions and to provide other social services.

Religious organizations and believers in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may maintain and develop their relations with religious organizations and believers elsewhere.

## **Article 142**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on the basis of maintaining the previous systems concerning the professions, formulate provisions on its own for assessing the qualifications for practice in the various professions.

Persons with professional qualifications or qualifications for professional practice obtained prior to the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may retain their previous qualifications in accordance with the relevant regulations and codes of practice.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall continue to recognize the professions and the professional organizations recognized prior to the establishment of the Region, and these organizations may, on their own, assess and confer professional qualifications.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may, as required by developments in society and in consultation with the parties concerned, recognize new professions and professional organizations.

## **Article 143**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies on sports. Non-governmental sports organizations may continue to exist and develop in accordance with law.

## **Article 144**

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall maintain the policy previously practised in Hong Kong in respect of subventions for non-governmental organizations in fields such as education, medicine and health, culture, art, recreation, sports, social welfare and social work. Staff members previously serving in subvented organizations in Hong Kong may remain in their employment in accordance with the previous system.

**Article 145**

On the basis of the previous social welfare system, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, formulate policies on the development and improvement of this system in the light of the economic conditions and social needs.

**Article 146**

Voluntary organizations providing social services in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may, on their own, decide their forms of service, provided that the law is not contravened.

**Article 147**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall on its own formulate laws and policies relating to labour.

**Article 148**

The relationship between non-governmental organizations in fields such as education, science, technology, culture, art, sports, the professions, medicine and health, labour, social welfare and social work as well as religious organizations in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and their counterparts on the mainland shall be based on the principles of non-subordination, non-interference and mutual respect.

**Article 149**

Non-governmental organizations in fields such as education, science, technology, culture, art, sports, the professions, medicine and health, labour, social welfare and social work as well as religious organizations in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may maintain and develop relations with their counterparts in foreign countries and regions and with relevant international organizations. They may, as required, use the name “Hong Kong, China” in the relevant activities.



## Chapter VII External Affairs

### Article 150

Representatives of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may, as members of delegations of the Government of the People's Republic of China, participate in negotiations at the diplomatic level directly affecting the Region conducted by the Central People's Government.

### Article 151

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may on its own, using the name "Hong Kong, China", maintain and develop relations and conclude and implement agreements with foreign states and regions and relevant international organizations in the appropriate fields, including the economic, trade, financial and monetary, shipping, communications, tourism, cultural and sports fields.

### Article 152

Representatives of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may, as members of delegations of the People's Republic of China, participate in international organizations or conferences in appropriate fields limited to states and affecting the Region, or may attend in such other capacity as may be permitted by the Central People's Government and the international organization or conference concerned, and may express their views, using the name "Hong Kong, China".

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may, using the name "Hong Kong, China", participate in international organizations and conferences not limited to states.

The Central People's Government shall take the necessary steps to ensure that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall continue to retain its status in an appropriate capacity in those international organizations of which the People's Republic of China is a member and in which Hong Kong participates in one capacity or another.

The Central People's Government shall, where necessary, facilitate the continued participation of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in an appropriate capacity in those international organizations in which Hong Kong is a participant in one capacity or another, but of which the People's Republic of China is not a member.

### **Article 153**

The application to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of international agreements to which the People's Republic of China is or becomes a party shall be decided by the Central People's Government, in accordance with the circumstances and needs of the Region, and after seeking the views of the government of the Region.

International agreements to which the People's Republic of China is not a party but which are implemented in Hong Kong may continue to be implemented in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The Central People's Government shall, as necessary, authorize or assist the government of the Region to make appropriate arrangements for the application to the Region of other relevant international agreements.

### **Article 154**

The Central People's Government shall authorize the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to issue, in accordance with law, passports of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China to all Chinese citizens who hold permanent identity cards of the Region, and travel documents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China to all other persons lawfully residing in the Region. The above passports and documents shall be valid for all states and regions and shall record the holder's right to return to the Region.

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may apply immigration controls on entry into, stay in and departure from the Region by persons from foreign states and regions.

**Article 155**

The Central People's Government shall assist or authorize the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to conclude visa abolition agreements with foreign states or regions.

**Article 156**

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may, as necessary, establish official or semi-official economic and trade missions in foreign countries and shall report the establishment of such missions to the Central People's Government for the record.

**Article 157**

The establishment of foreign consular and other official or semi-official missions in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall require the approval of the Central People's Government.

Consular and other official missions established in Hong Kong by states which have formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China may be maintained.

According to the circumstances of each case, consular and other official missions established in Hong Kong by states which have no formal diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China may be permitted either to remain or be changed to semi-official missions.

States not recognized by the People's Republic of China may only establish non-governmental institutions in the Region.

## **Chapter VIII Interpretation and Amendment of the Basic Law**

### **Article 158**

The power of interpretation of this Law shall be vested in the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress shall authorize the courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to interpret on their own, in adjudicating cases, the provisions of this Law which are within the limits of the autonomy of the Region.

The courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may also interpret other provisions of this Law in adjudicating cases. However, if the courts of the Region, in adjudicating cases, need to interpret the provisions of this Law concerning affairs which are the responsibility of the Central People's Government, or concerning the relationship between the Central Authorities and the Region, and if such interpretation will affect the judgments on the cases, the courts of the Region shall, before making their final judgments which are not appealable, seek an interpretation of the relevant provisions from the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress through the Court of Final Appeal of the Region. When the Standing Committee makes an interpretation of the provisions concerned, the courts of the Region, in applying those provisions, shall follow the interpretation of the Standing Committee. However, judgments previously rendered shall not be affected.

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress shall consult its Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region before giving an interpretation of this Law.

### **Article 159**

The power of amendment of this Law shall be vested in the National People's Congress.

The power to propose bills for amendments to this Law shall be vested in the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the State Council and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Amendment bills from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be submitted to the National People's Congress by the delegation of the Region to the National People's Congress after obtaining the consent of two-thirds of the deputies of the Region to the National People's Congress, two-thirds of all the members of the Legislative Council of the Region, and the Chief Executive of the Region.

Before a bill for amendment to this Law is put on the agenda of the National People's Congress, the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall study it and submit its views.

No amendment to this Law shall contravene the established basic policies of the People's Republic of China regarding Hong Kong.

## **Chapter IX Supplementary Provisions**

### **Article 160**

Upon the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the laws previously in force in Hong Kong shall be adopted as laws of the Region except for those which the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress declares to be in contravention of this Law. If any laws are later discovered to be in contravention of this Law, they shall be amended or cease to have force in accordance with the procedure as prescribed by this Law.

Documents, certificates, contracts, and rights and obligations valid under the laws previously in force in Hong Kong shall continue to be valid and be recognized and protected by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, provided that they do not contravene this Law.

**Annex I: Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region^@**

1. The Chief Executive shall be elected by a broadly representative Election Committee in accordance with this Law and appointed by the Central People’s Government.

#2. The Election Committee shall be composed of 800 members from the following sectors:

Industrial, commercial and financial sectors	200
The professions	200
Labour, social services, religious and other sectors	200
Members of the Legislative Council, representatives of district-based organizations, Hong Kong deputies to the National People’s Congress, and representatives of Hong Kong members of the National Committee of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference	200

The term of office of the Election Committee shall be five years.

3. The delimitation of the various sectors, the organizations in each sector eligible to return Election Committee members and the number of such members returned by each of these organizations shall be prescribed by an electoral law enacted by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in accordance with the principles of democracy and openness.

Corporate bodies in various sectors shall, on their own, elect members to the Election Committee, in accordance with the number of seats allocated and the election method as prescribed by the electoral law.

Members of the Election Committee shall vote in their individual capacities.

#4. Candidates for the office of Chief Executive may be nominated jointly by not less than 100 members of the Election Committee. Each member may nominate only one candidate.

5. The Election Committee shall, on the basis of the list of nominees, elect the Chief Executive designate by secret ballot on a one-person-one-vote basis. The specific election method shall be prescribed by the electoral law.

6. The first Chief Executive shall be selected in accordance with the Decision of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on the Method for the Formation of the First Government and the First Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

\*7. If there is a need to amend the method for selecting the Chief Executives for the terms subsequent to the year 2007, such amendments must be made with the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Legislative Council and the consent of the Chief Executive, and they shall be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for approval.

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Note:

# For amendments to this Article, please see the Amendment to Annex I to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China Concerning the Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Approved at the Sixteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress on 28 August 2010) (see **Instrument 1** and **Instrument 2**).

\* See The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted at the Eighth Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress on 6 April 2004) (see **Instrument 20**).

^ See Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016 (Adopted at the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress on 31 August 2014) (see **Instrument 25**).

@ See Explanations on the Draft Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the



Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016 (At the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress on 27 August 2014) (see **Instrument 26**).

**\* Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Approving the "Amendment to Annex I to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China Concerning the Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region"**

(Adopted at the Sixteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress on 28 August 2010)

The Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress at its Sixteenth Session decides as follows:

Pursuant to Annex I to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, "The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China" and the "Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2012 and on Issues Relating to Universal Suffrage", the "Amendment to Annex I to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China Concerning the Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region proposed by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" is approved.

The “Amendment to Annex I to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China Concerning the Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region” comes into effect on the date of approval.

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Note:

- \* This English translation is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\* Amendment to Annex I to the Basic Law  
of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
of the People's Republic of China Concerning the  
Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

(Approved at the Sixteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the  
Eleventh National People's Congress on 28 August 2010)

1. The Election Committee to elect the fourth term Chief Executive  
in 2012 shall be composed of 1200 members from the following sectors:

Industrial, commercial and financial sectors	300
The professions	300
Labour, social services, religious and other sectors	300
Members of the Legislative Council, representatives of members of the District Councils, representatives of the Heung Yee Kuk, Hong Kong deputies to the National People's Congress, and representatives of Hong Kong members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference	300

The term of office of the Election Committee shall be five years.

2. Candidates for the office of Chief Executive may be nominated  
jointly by not less than 150 members of the Election Committee. Each  
member may nominate only one candidate.

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Note:

\* This English translation is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no  
legislative effect.

**Annex II: Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures<sup>^</sup>@**

I. Method for the formation of the Legislative Council

#1. The Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be composed of 60 members in each term. In the first term, the Legislative Council shall be formed in accordance with the Decision of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China on the Method for the Formation of the First Government and the First Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The composition of the Legislative Council in the second and third terms shall be as follows:

Second term

Members returned by functional constituencies	30
Members returned by the Election Committee	6
Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections	24

Third term

Members returned by functional constituencies	30
Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections	30

2. Except in the case of the first Legislative Council, the above-mentioned Election Committee refers to the one provided for in Annex I of this Law. The division of geographical constituencies and the voting method for direct elections therein; the delimitation of functional sectors and corporate bodies, their seat allocation and election methods; and the method for electing members of the Legislative Council by the Election Committee shall be specified by an electoral law introduced by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and passed by the Legislative Council.

## II. Procedures for voting on bills and motions in the Legislative Council

Unless otherwise provided for in this Law, the Legislative Council shall adopt the following procedures for voting on bills and motions:

The passage of bills introduced by the government shall require at least a simple majority vote of the members of the Legislative Council present.

The passage of motions, bills or amendments to government bills introduced by individual members of the Legislative Council shall require a simple majority vote of each of the two groups of members present: members returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections and by the Election Committee.

\*III. Method for the formation of the Legislative Council and its voting procedures subsequent to the year 2007

With regard to the method for forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and its procedures for voting on bills and motions after 2007, if there is a need to amend the provisions of this Annex, such amendments must be made with the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Council and the consent of the Chief Executive, and they shall be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for the record.

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Note:

# See the Amendment to Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China Concerning the Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures (Recorded at the Sixteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress on 28 August 2010) (see **Instrument 3** and **Instrument 4**).

\* See The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted at the Eighth Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress on 6 April 2004) (see **Instrument 20**).

- <sup>^</sup> See Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016 (Adopted at the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress on 31 August 2014) (see **Instrument 25**).
- <sup>@</sup> See Explanations on the Draft Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016 (At the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress on 27 August 2014) (see **Instrument 26**).

**\* Proclamation of the  
Standing Committee of the National People's Congress  
(Eleventh National People's Congress) No. 15**

It is promulgated that pursuant to Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, "The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China" and the "Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2012 and on Issues Relating to Universal Suffrage", the "Amendment to Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China Concerning the Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures" is recorded by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

The "Amendment to Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China Concerning the Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures" comes into effect on the date of promulgation.

This proclamation is hereby made.

Standing Committee of the National People's Congress  
28 August 2010

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Note:

\* This English translation is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.



**\* Amendment to Annex II to the Basic Law  
of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
of the People's Republic of China Concerning the Method  
for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong  
Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures**

(Recorded at the Sixteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the  
Eleventh National People's Congress on 28 August 2010)

The fifth term Legislative Council in the year 2012 shall be composed  
of 70 members, and the composition shall be as follows:

Members returned by functional constituencies	35
Members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections	35

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Note:

\* This English translation is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no  
legislative effect.

### **Annex III: National Laws to be Applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region\***

The following national laws shall be applied locally with effect from 1 July 1997 by way of promulgation or legislation by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region:

1. Resolution on the Capital, Calendar, National Anthem and National Flag of the People's Republic of China
2. Resolution on the National Day of the People's Republic of China
3. Order on the National Emblem of the People's Republic of China Proclaimed by the Central People's Government  
Attached: Design of the national emblem, notes of explanation and instructions for use
4. Declaration of the Government of the People's Republic of China on the Territorial Sea
5. Nationality Law of the People's Republic of China
6. Regulations of the People's Republic of China Concerning Diplomatic Privileges and Immunities

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Note:

\* For addition to and deletion from the list of laws in Annex III, please see:

- a. Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the addition to or deletion from the list of national laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted at the Twenty Sixth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People's Congress on 1 July 1997) (see **Instrument 5**);
- b. Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the addition to the list of national laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted on 4 November 1998) (see **Instrument 6**);
- c. Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the addition to the list of national laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted on 27 October 2005) (see **Instrument 7**); and
- d. Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the addition to the list of national laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted on 4 November 2017) (see **Instrument 8**).
- e. Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the addition to the list of national laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (Adopted at the Twentieth Session of the Standing Committee of the Thirteenth National People's Congress on 30 June 2020) (see **Instrument 9**).

**\* Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the Addition to or Deletion from the List of National Laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China**

(Adopted at the Twenty Sixth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People's Congress on 1 July 1997)

I. The following national laws are added to the list of laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China:

- (1) Law of the People's Republic of China on the National Flag;
- (2) Regulations of the People's Republic of China concerning Consular Privileges and Immunities;
- (3) Law of the People's Republic of China on the National Emblem;
- (4) Law of the People's Republic of China on the Territorial Sea and the Contiguous Zone;
- (5) Law of the People's Republic of China on the Garrisoning of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The above national laws shall be applied with effect from 1 July 1997 by way of promulgation or legislation by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

II. The following national law is deleted from Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region:

Order on the National Emblem of the People's Republic of China Proclaimed by the Central People's Government.

Attached: Design of the national emblem, notes of explanation and instructions for use.

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Note:

\* This English translation is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\* Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the Addition to the List of National Laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China**

(Adopted on 4 November 1998)

The Fifth meeting of the Standing Committee of the Ninth National People's Congress decides: the national law being the "Law of the People's Republic of China on the Exclusive Economic Zone and the Continental Shelf" is added to the list of laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

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Note:

\* This English translation is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\* Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the Addition to the List of National Laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China**

(Adopted on 27 October 2005)

The Eighteenth meeting of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress decides: the national law being the "Law of the People's Republic of China on Judicial Immunity from Compulsory Measures Concerning the Property of Foreign Central Banks" is added to the list of laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

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Note:

\* This English translation is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\* Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the Addition to the List of National Laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China**

(Adopted on 4 November 2017)

The Thirtieth meeting of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress decides: the national law being the "Law of the People's Republic of China on the National Anthem" is added to the list of laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

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Note:

\* This English translation is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\* Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the Addition to the List of National Laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China**

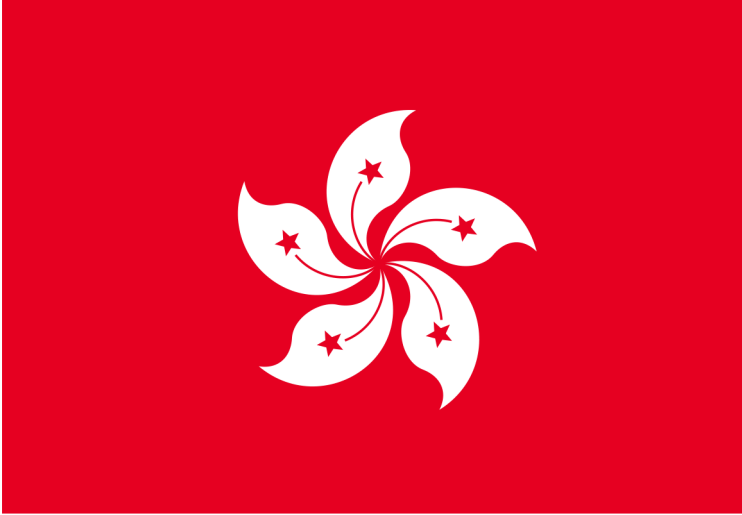
(Adopted at the Twentieth Session of the Standing Committee of the Thirteenth National People's Congress on 30 June 2020)

In accordance with the “Decision of the National People's Congress on Establishing and Improving the Legal System and Enforcement Mechanism for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to Safeguard National Security”, the Twentieth Session of the Standing Committee of the Thirteenth National People's Congress decides: the national law being the “Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region” is added to the list of laws in Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, and shall be applied locally by way of promulgation by the Region.

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Note:

- \* This English translation is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.



The Design of the Regional Flag of the Hong Kong  
Special Administrative Region



The Design of the Regional Emblem of the Hong Kong  
Special Administrative Region



**\* Explanations on “The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Draft)” and Its Related Documents**

(Addressing the Third Session of the Seventh National People’s Congress on March 28, 1990)

Ji Pengfei

Chairman of the Drafting Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China

Fellow Deputies,

Through four years and eight months of effort, the Drafting Committee for The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China has completed the work of drafting the Basic Law. The Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress has submitted to the current session of the National People’s Congress for examination “The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Draft)” and three annexes; the draft designs of the regional flag and regional emblem for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region: “The Decision of the National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China on the Method for the Formation of the First Government and the First Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (Draft),” which has been worked out by the Drafting Committee on behalf of the National People’s Congress; and “The Proposal by the Drafting Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on the Establishment of the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress.” I have been entrusted by the Drafting Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to make the following explanations concerning this legal document.

In accordance with “The Decision of the Third Session of the

Sixth National People's Congress on the Establishment of the Drafting Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China," at its 11th session the Standing Committee of the Sixth National People's Congress appointed the members of the Hong Kong Basic Law Drafting Committee. On July 1, 1985, the Drafting Committee was officially established and began its work. After mapping out its work plans and deciding upon the structure of the Basic Law, the Drafting Committee set up five special groups consisting of committee members from both the mainland and Hong Kong. The five groups, namely, the Special Group Concerned with the Relationship between the Central Authorities and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; the Special Group Concerned with Fundamental Rights and Duties of Residents; the Special Group Concerned with the Political Structure; the Special Group Concerned with the Economy; and the Special Group Concerned with Education, Science, Technology, Culture, Sports and Religion, were responsible for the drafting work. After these special groups worked out their first draft of provisions of the Basic Law, the General Working Group was set up to make overall adjustment and revision of the draft provisions. In April 1988, the seventh plenary session of the Hong Kong Basic Law Drafting Committee issued "The Draft Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China for Solicitation of Opinions." In the next five months, the Committee widely collected opinions from Hong Kong and the provinces, autonomous regions, municipalities directly under the Central Government and relevant departments on the mainland and, based on the collected opinions, the Committee made more than 100 revisions in the draft version. In January 1989, at its eighth plenary session, the Drafting Committee voted by secret ballot on the draft Hong Kong Basic Law and its annexes and related documents to be submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, article by article and document by document. Except for Article 19 in the draft Basic Law, all other provisions, annexes and related documents were adopted by a two-thirds majority. At its sixth session held in February 1989, the Standing Committee of the Seventh National People's Congress decided to promulgate the Hong Kong Basic Law (Draft), its annexes and other related documents to widely solicit opinions from Hong Kong; from the provinces, autonomous regions and municipalities directly under the Central Government on the mainland; and from central government

departments, democratic parties, mass organizations and experts as well as from the general departments of the People's Liberation Army. After an eight-month opinion-soliciting period followed by a careful study of the opinions collected from all circles, the special groups jointly put forward 24 amendment bills, including the one regarding Article 19 in the Hong Kong Basic Law (Draft). At the ninth plenary session of the Drafting Committee in February this year, those amendment bills were voted upon by secret ballot one by one and all of them were passed by an over two-thirds majority. Then, all relevant provisions in the original draft were replaced by provisions recommended by the amendment bills. With this, the work of drawing up the Hong Kong Basic Law (Draft), its annexes and other related documents was complete.

The collection and selection of designs for the regional flag and regional emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was the responsibility of the Committee for Selecting Designs for the Regional Flag and Regional Emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, consisting of five drafters of the Basic Law and six experts from both Hong Kong and the mainland. After the selecting committee conducted the first and second rounds of selection from the 7,147 contributed designs, the Basic Law Drafting Committee examined and appraised the candidates recommended by the selecting committee. Since the Drafting Committee failed to decide upon a single set of designs for the regional flag and regional emblem to be submitted to the National People's Congress for examination, the selecting committee again worked out three sets of candidate designs of the regional flag and regional emblem for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region through collective modification of certain contributed designs. The draft designs of the regional flag and regional emblem to be submitted to the National People's Congress for examination were finally selected at the ninth plenary session of the Basic Law Drafting Committee through a secret ballot. Also at the session, the second and third paragraphs under Article 10 of the draft Basic Law regarding the regional flag and regional emblem of the Special Administrative Region were passed.

Over this period of more than four years, the Drafting Committee has held nine plenary sessions, 25 meetings of the Chairman and Vice-Chairmen and two enlarged meetings of the Chairman and Vice-

Chairmen; the General Working Group held three meetings; the Special Groups met 73 times; and even the Committee for Selecting Designs for the Regional Flag and Regional Emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region held five meetings.

In reviewing the work done over this period of more than four years, we must say that drafting of this legal document was conducted in a very democratic and open manner. During the process of drafting the Basic Law, members of the Drafting Committee worked together with one heart and pooled their wisdom and efforts; and each and every article of the document was worked out after investigation, study and full discussion in which views of the majority were followed and those of the minority respected. After every meeting, reporters covering the event were briefed and the Consultative Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was immediately informed of its proceedings. The work of drafting the Basic Law was completed with the close attention and broad participation of the entire nation, especially the compatriots and people from all circles in Hong Kong. What is especially noteworthy here is that the Hong Kong Basic Law Consultative Committee, formed by people from all walks of life in Hong Kong, collected a great amount of opinions and suggestions in Hong Kong on the Basic Law and promptly referred them to the Drafting Committee and has rendered active and effective assistance to the work of drafting the Basic Law from the very beginning. The work of the Consultative Committee has been praised by the drafters.

Fellow Deputies,

The draft Basic Law that has been submitted to the current session of the National People's Congress for examination includes a Preamble and 160 articles in nine chapters. The nine chapters are: Chapter I, General Principles; Chapter II, Relationship Between the Central Authorities and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; Chapter III, Fundamental Rights and Duties of the Residents; Chapter IV, Political Structure; Chapter V, Economy; Chapter VI, Education, Science, Culture, Sports, Religion, Labour and Social Services; Chapter VII, External Affairs; Chapter VIII, Interpretation and Amendment of the Basic Law; and Chapter IX, Supplementary Provisions. There are also

three annexes, namely, Annex I: Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region; Annex II: Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures; and Annex III: National Laws to be Applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

### **I. On the Guiding Principle of Drafting the Hong Kong Basic Law**

“One country, two systems” is the fundamental policy of the Chinese Government for bringing about the country’s reunification. In line with this policy, the Chinese Government has formulated a series of principles and policies regarding Hong Kong. The main point is to establish a special administrative region directly under the Central People’s Government when China resumes its sovereignty over Hong Kong. Except for national defence and foreign affairs, which are to be administered by the Central Government, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will exercise a high degree of autonomy; no socialist system or policies will be practiced in the Region, the original capitalist society, economic system and way of life will remain unchanged and the laws previously in force in Hong Kong will remain basically the same; Hong Kong’s status as an international financial centre and free port will be maintained; and the economic interests of Britain and other countries in Hong Kong will be taken into consideration. The Chinese Government has written the above principles and policies into the Sino-British Joint Declaration on the Question of Hong Kong and proclaimed that all the principles and policies regarding Hong Kong will remain unchanged for 50 years, which is to be codified in the Basic Law. The concept of “one country, two systems” and all the principles and policies regarding Hong Kong formulated on the basis of this concept provide the fundamental guarantee for the resumption of China’s sovereignty over Hong Kong and the maintenance of Hong Kong’s stability and prosperity; they also conform to the basic interests of the Chinese people, particularly those of the Hong Kong compatriots.

Article 31 of China’s Constitution stipulates that “the state may establish special administrative regions when necessary. The systems to be instituted in special administrative regions shall be prescribed by law

enacted by the National People's Congress in the light of the specific conditions." China is a socialist country and socialism is China's basic system. To realize China's reunification, however, another kind of social system, namely, the capitalist system, may be practiced in individual regions of the country. It is on the basis of China's Constitution and with "one country, two systems" as the guiding principle that all the state principles and policies regarding Hong Kong have been established in the draft Hong Kong Basic Law, which has been submitted to the present session of the National People's Congress for examination.

## **II. On the relationship between the Central Authorities and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

The relationship between the Central Authorities and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is one of the important issues defined by the Basic Law and is touched upon not only in Chapter II but also in Chapter I, Chapter VII, Chapter VIII and other chapters.

Article 12 of the draft stipulates, "The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be a local administrative region of the People's Republic of China, which shall enjoy a high degree of autonomy and come directly under the Central People's Government." This stipulation defines the legal status of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and constitutes the basis for specifying the Region's limits of power and its relationship with the Central Authorities. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, as an inalienable part of the People's Republic of China, will be a local administrative region directly under the Central People's Government and at the same time, it will be a special administrative region enjoying a high degree of autonomy and practicing a system and executing policies different from those of the mainland. Therefore, the draft Basic Law contains both provisions embodying the unity and sovereignty of the country and provisions empowering the Special Administrative Region with a high degree of autonomy in the light of Hong Kong's special circumstances.

The power to be exercised by, or the affairs which are the responsibility of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress or the Central People's Government, as prescribed in the draft

law, is indispensable to maintaining the state sovereignty. For example, the Central People's Government will be responsible for the Special Administrative Region's defence and foreign affairs and the Chief Executive and other principal officials of the Special Administrative Region will be appointed by the Central People's Government; a small number of national laws relating to defence and foreign affairs as well as other matters beyond the limits of the autonomy of the Special Administrative Region will be applied locally by way of promulgation or legislation by the Special Administrative Region; and in the event that the National People's Congress Standing Committee decides to declare a state of war or, by reason of turmoil within the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region which endangers national unity or security and is beyond the control of the Special Administrative Region Government, decides that the Region is in a state of emergency, the Central People's Government may issue an order applying the relevant national laws in Hong Kong. The draft law also stipulates that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall enact laws on its own to prohibit any act of treason, secession, sedition, or subversion against the Central People's Government, or theft of state secret, to prohibit foreign political organizations or bodies from conducting political activities in the Region, and to prohibit political organizations or bodies of the Region from establishing ties with foreign political organizations or bodies. These stipulations are entirely necessary for maintaining the state sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity as well as for preserving Hong Kong's long-term stability and prosperity.

The high degree of autonomy to be enjoyed by the Special Administrative Region, as stipulated in the draft, embodies executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication. The Special Administrative Region, authorized by the Central People's Government, also has the power to conduct relevant external affairs on its own. This shows that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will enjoy extensive autonomy.

Regarding the executive power, the draft law, while stipulating that the Special Administrative Region shall, on its own, conduct the administrative affairs of Hong Kong in accordance with the Basic Law, specifically defines the Special Administrative Region's autonomy in

areas such as finance, economy, industry and commerce, trade, transport and communications, development and management of land and natural resources, education, science and technology, culture, sports, public order and control of entry and exit activities. For instance, the draft law stipulates that the Special Administrative Region shall have independent finances, its revenues shall not be handed over to the Central Government, and the Central Government shall not levy taxes in the Region; and the Special Administrative Region may, on its own, formulate monetary and financial policies, the Hong Kong dollar shall be the legal tender in the Region, and the authority to issue Hong Kong currency shall be vested in the Special Administrative Region Government. Also, the draft stipulates that representatives of the Special Administrative Region Government may act as members of delegations of the Chinese Government to participate in negotiations at the diplomatic level affecting Hong Kong; the Special Administrative Region may on its own, using the name “Hong Kong, China,” maintain and develop relations and conclude and implement agreements with foreign states and regions and relevant international organizations in economic, trade, financial and monetary, shipping, communications, tourism, cultural, sports and other appropriate fields.

Regarding the legislative power, the draft stipulates that laws enacted by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region legislature shall take effect upon the signature and promulgation by the Chief Executive. The laws shall be reported to the National People’s Congress Standing Committee for the record, but they will go into force without being affected by this reporting. The draft also stipulates that only when it considers that any law enacted by the Special Administrative Region legislature is not in conformity with the provisions of the Basic Law regarding affairs within the responsibility of the Central Authorities or regarding the relationship between the Central Authorities and the Region, shall the National People’s Congress Standing Committee return the law in question; the Standing Committee shall not amend it. Any law returned by the National People’s Congress Standing Committee shall immediately be invalidated. These stipulations not only conform with the “one country, two systems” principle and are in line with provisions of the Constitution, but also take into full consideration the need for Hong Kong to enjoy a high degree of autonomy.



According to the Constitution, interpretation of laws is among the powers and functions of the National People's Congress Standing Committee. To take into account Hong Kong's special circumstances, the draft Basic Law, while stipulating that the power of interpretation of the Basic Law shall be vested in the National People's Congress Standing Committee, provides that the National People's Congress Standing Committee shall authorize the courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to interpret on their own, in adjudicating cases, the provisions of the Basic Law which are within the limits of the autonomy of the Region. This stipulation will guarantee the power of the National People's Congress Standing Committee and also facilitate the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in exercising its autonomy. According to the draft, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region courts may also interpret other provisions of the Basic Law in adjudicating cases. However, if the courts, in adjudicating cases, need to interpret the provisions of the Basic Law concerning affairs which are the responsibility of the Central People's Government, or the relationship between the Central Authorities and the Region, and if such interpretation will affect their final judgements on the cases, the courts shall seek an interpretation of the relevant provisions from the National People's Congress Standing Committee through the Court of Final Appeal of the Region. The courts, in applying those provisions, shall follow the interpretation of the National People's Congress Standing Committee. This stipulation will provide the basis for the Region's courts, in adjudicating cases, to comprehend the provisions of the Basic Law concerning affairs which are the responsibility of the Central Government or the relationship between the Central Authorities and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and prevent the courts from making erroneous judgements due to inaccurate understanding.

The draft vests the courts of the Special Administrative Region with independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication. This is certainly a very special situation wherein courts in a local administrative region enjoy the power of final adjudication. Nevertheless, in view of the fact that Hong Kong will practise social and legal systems different from the mainland's, this provision is necessary. Under the current judicial system and principles, the Hong Kong authorities have never exercised jurisdiction over acts of state such as defence and foreign affairs. While

preserving the above principle, the draft stipulates that the courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall obtain a certificate from the Chief Executive on questions of fact concerning acts of state such as defence and foreign affairs wherever such questions arise in the adjudication of cases. This certificate shall be binding on the courts. However, before issuing such a certificate, the Chief Executive shall obtain a certifying document from the Central People's Government. This stipulation not only appropriately solves the question of jurisdiction over acts of state, but also guarantees that the courts of the Region can conduct their functions in a normal way.

In addition, in order to enable the National People's Congress Standing Committee to heed fully the opinions of the people from all walks of life in Hong Kong when it makes decisions on whether a law enacted by the Special Administrative Region legislature conforms to the provisions concerning affairs within the responsibility of the Central Authorities or to the provisions concerning the relationship between the Central Authorities and the Special Administrative Region, decisions on adding to or deleting from the list of national laws which are applicable in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in Annex III and decisions on the interpretation of and amendment to the Basic Law, the drafters have recommended that when the Basic Law comes into force, a working committee be set up under the National People's Congress Standing Committee to submit its views regarding the above questions to the National People's Congress Standing Committee. The working committee shall be composed of people from the mainland and Hong Kong. To this end, the Hong Kong Basic Law Drafting Committee has drafted the "Proposal by the Drafting Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on the Establishment of the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress."

### **III. On the Fundamental Rights and Duties of Hong Kong Residents**

The extensive rights and freedoms enjoyed by the residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and other people residing in the Region as prescribed in Chapter III of the draft Basic Law include

political, economic, cultural, social and family rights and freedoms and the freedom of person. The special features in the provisions concerning Hong Kong residents' rights and freedoms in the draft Basic Law boil down to the following two basic points:

(1) The draft provides multi-level protection for Hong Kong residents' rights and freedoms. In accordance with the characteristics of the composition of Hong Kong residents, the draft stipulates not only the general rights and freedoms enjoyed by Hong Kong residents, but also the rights of the permanent residents and Chinese citizens living among them. It also stipulates that people other than Hong Kong residents also enjoy the rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents in accordance with the law. In addition, while stipulating in explicit terms the fundamental rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents, the draft also stipulates that Hong Kong residents shall enjoy the other rights and freedoms safeguarded by the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. In view of the application in Hong Kong of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and international labour conventions, the draft stipulates that those provisions shall remain in force and be implemented through the laws of the Special Administrative Region. In addition to a chapter specially devoted to Hong Kong residents' rights and freedoms, there are also provisions concerning the issue in other relevant chapters and articles. Thus, extensive, comprehensive and multi-level protection is provided for safeguarding Hong Kong residents' rights and freedoms.

(2) The rights, freedoms and duties of Hong Kong residents are prescribed in the draft in accordance with the principle of "one country, two systems" and in the light of Hong Kong's actual situation. They include such specific provisions as protection of private ownership of property, the freedom of movement and freedom to enter or leave the Region, the right to raise a family freely and protection of private persons' and legal entities' property. The draft also provides that the systems to safeguard the fundamental rights and freedoms of Hong Kong residents shall all be based on the Basic Law.

#### **IV. On the Political Structure**

Chapter IV of the draft Basic Law mainly defines the formation and powers of and inter-relationship among the executive, legislature and judiciary, as well as the qualifications, powers and functions of and relevant policies regarding the Chief Executive, principal officials, members of the executive and legislative councils, judges of the courts at all levels and other members of the judiciary, and public servants of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It also provides that district organizations which are not organs of political power may be established in the Region.

The political structure of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region should accord with the principle of “one country, two systems” and aim to maintain stability and prosperity in Hong Kong in line with its legal status and actual situation. To this end, consideration must be given to the interests of the different sectors of society and the structure must facilitate the development of the capitalist economy in the Region. While the part of the existing political structure proven to be effective will be maintained, a democratic system that suits Hong Kong’s reality should gradually be introduced. In accordance with this principle, Chapter IV and Annexes I and II of the Basic Law contain the following major provisions concerning the political structure of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region:

(1) The relationship between the executive authorities and the legislature. The executive authorities and the legislature should regulate each other as well as co-ordinate their activities. To maintain Hong Kong’s stability and administrative efficiency, the Chief Executive must have real power which, at the same time, should be subject to some restrictions. The draft provides for the Chief Executive to be the head of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and accountable to the Central People’s Government and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. He or she is to lead the government of the Region, sign bills and budgets and promulgate laws. If the Chief Executive considers a bill passed by the Legislative Council to be not compatible with the overall interests of the Region, he or she may return it to the Legislative Council for reconsideration. If the Chief Executive refuses to sign a bill passed

the second time by the Legislative Council, or the Legislative Council refuses to pass a budget or any other important bill introduced by the government, and if consensus still cannot be reached after consultations, the Chief Executive may dissolve the Legislative Council. On the other hand, the Basic Law provides that the government of the Region must abide by the law and be accountable to the Legislative Council. It must implement laws passed by the Legislative Council and already in force, present regular policy addresses to the Council, answer questions raised by members of the Council and obtain approval from the Council for taxation and public expenditure. The Chief Executive must consult the Executive Council before making important policy decisions, introducing bills to the Legislative Council, enacting subordinate legislation, or dissolving the Legislative Council. The Basic Law also stipulates that if the bill returned by the Chief Executive is passed again by the Legislative Council with at least a two-thirds majority, the Chief Executive must sign and promulgate it within one month, unless he or she dissolves the Legislative Council. If the newly elected Legislative Council, after the old one has been dissolved, again passes by a two-thirds majority the original bill in dispute, or it still refuses to pass the original budget or any other important bill introduced by the government, the Chief Executive must resign. If the Chief Executive is found to have committed a serious breach of law or dereliction of duty and if he or she still refuses to resign, the Legislative Council may pass a motion of impeachment through the specified procedures and refer it to the Central People's Government for decision. The provisions mentioned above embody the relationship of regulation and co-ordination between the executive authorities and the legislature.

(2) The method for the selection of the Chief Executive. The draft stipulates that the Chief Executive shall be selected by election or through consultations and be appointed by the Central People's Government. The method for selecting the Chief Executive shall be worked out in the light of the actual situation in Hong Kong and applied in a gradual and orderly way. The ultimate goal is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures. Based on these provisions, Annex I provides specific rules on selecting the Chief Executive. In the ten years between 1997 and 2007, the Chief

Executive will be elected by a broadly representative election committee. If there is need to amend this method of election after that period, such amendments must be made with the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Legislative Council and the consent of the Chief Executive, and they must be submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for approval. The method for selecting the Chief Executive is provided in an annex to make it more amenable to revision when necessary.

(3) The method for forming the Legislative Council and its procedures for voting on bills and motions. According to the draft Basic Law, the Legislative Council will be constituted by election. The method for forming the Legislative Council will be worked out in the light of the actual situation in Hong Kong and applied in a gradual and orderly way. The ultimate goal is the election of all the members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage. In accordance with these provisions, Annex II provides specific rules on formation of the Legislative Council. The first and second Legislative Council will be formed by members elected by functional constituencies, by the Election Committee or by geographical constituencies through direct elections. During the first 10 years after the Special Administrative Region is established, the number of seats in the Legislative Council for members elected by geographical constituencies through direct elections will be increased with each passing council, and the number of seats elected by the Election Committee will be gradually reduced. When the third Legislative Council is formed, members elected by functional constituencies and geographical constituencies through direct elections will each share half the seats of the Legislative Council. These rules accord with the principle of developing the election system in a gradual and orderly way. Annex II also stipulates that different voting procedures shall be adopted by the Legislative Council in handling bills introduced by the government and motions and bills introduced by individual members of the Legislative Council. The passage of bills introduced by the government requires a simple majority vote of the members of the Legislative Council present. The passage of motions, bills or amendments to government bills introduced by individual members of the Legislative Council requires at least a simple majority vote by each of the two groups of members present, i.e., members returned by functional constituencies and those returned by geographical constituencies through

direct elections and by the Election Committee. Such provisions take into consideration the interests of all social strata and will prevent endless debates over government bills, thus helping the government work with efficiency. Ten years after the establishment of the Special Administrative Region, if there is a need to improve the method for forming the Legislative Council and its procedures for voting on bills and motions, such improvements shall be made with the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Legislative Council and the consent of the Chief Executive, and they must be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for the record. The method for forming the Legislative Council and the Council's procedures for voting on bills and motions are provided in an annex because it is more amenable to revision when necessary.

(4) Qualifications for the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, members of the Executive Council, the President of the Legislative Council, principal government officials, the chief justice of the Court of Final Appeal and the chief judges of the High Court, as well as Hong Kong members of the Basic Law Committee. Relevant provisions in the draft Basic Law stipulate that these posts must be held by Chinese citizens who are permanent residents of the Region with no right of abode in any foreign country. This helps define state sovereignty and reflects the principle of managing Hong Kong by the Hong Kong people. Only in this way can those maintaining the posts mentioned above hold themselves responsible to the State, the Region and the residents of Hong Kong. Based on the same considerations, relevant articles stipulate that the Region's Legislative Council must be composed of Chinese citizens who are permanent residents of the Region with no right of abode in any foreign country. However, in view of Hong Kong's specific conditions, permanent residents of the Region who are not of Chinese nationality or who have the right of abode in foreign countries may also be elected members of the Legislative Council of the Region, provided that the proportion of such members does not exceed 20 per cent of the total membership of the Council.

(5) The method for the formation of the first Government and the first Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. In line with the principles of state sovereignty and for the benefit

of smooth transition, the establishment of the Special Administrative Region will be presided over by a Preparatory Committee set up by the National People's Congress. Since preparations must be made before the establishment of the first Government and the first Legislative Council and since the Basic Law will not go into effect until July 1, 1997, the Drafting Committee has suggested that the National People's Congress make a special decision on the method for the formation of the first Government and Legislative Council and that the decision be made public together with the Basic Law. The Drafting Committee has therefore worked out a draft of the decision on behalf of the National People's Congress. According to this decision, the candidate for the first Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will be recommended by a selection committee composed entirely of Hong Kong residents and then referred to the Central People's Government for appointment. If the composition of the last Hong Kong Legislative Council before the establishment of the Special Administrative Region is in conformity with the provisions of the decision made by the National People's Congress on the method for the formation of the first Government and the first Legislative Council, those of its members who uphold the Basic Law and pledge allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and who meet the requirements set forth in the Basic Law may, upon confirmation by the Preparatory Committee, become members of the first Legislative Council of the Region. This arrangement is designed to ensure stability throughout the transition period and make the two governments dovetail without a hitch.

According to the decision, when assuming office, the Chief Executive, principal officials, members of the Executive Council and the Legislative Council, judges of the courts at all levels and other members of the judiciary must swear to uphold the Basic Law and swear allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

## **V. On Economy, Education, Science, Culture, Sports, Religion, Labour and Social Services**

Chapter V of the Basic Law contains stipulations on the economic system and policies of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region,



divided into eight fields of endeavour: public finance, monetary affairs, trade, industry, commerce, land leases, shipping and civil aviation. These stipulations are indispensable to ensuring the normal operation of Hong Kong's capitalist economic mechanism and maintaining its status as an international financial centre and free port. Concerning monetary affairs, for instance, the draft Basic Law stipulates that no foreign exchange control policies shall be applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and that markets for foreign exchange, gold, securities, futures and the like shall continue. The free flow of capital within, into and out of Region as well as the free operation of financial businesses and financial markets are safeguarded. It also stipulates that the Hong Kong dollar is the legal tender in the Region and shall be freely convertible and that the authority for its issuance shall be vested in the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. As for foreign trade, the draft Basic Law stipulates that all investments from outside the Region shall be protected by law, and the free movement of goods, intangible assets and capital shall be safeguarded. Unless otherwise prescribed by law, no tariff shall be imposed. As a separate customs territory, the Region may, using the name "Hong Kong, China," participate in relevant international organizations and trade agreements (including preferential trade arrangements), such as the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and arrangements regarding international trade in textiles. Export quotas, tariff preferences and other similar arrangements obtained or made by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be enjoyed exclusively by the Region. The draft Basic Law also stipulates that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall strive to achieve a fiscal balance and avoid deficits in drawing up its budget. The Region may also enact laws on its own concerning the taxation system, using the previously pursued low tax policy as reference. The draft Basic Law also carries detailed stipulations concerning the major trades, land leases, shipping, civil aviation and the like.

Chapter VI of the draft Basic Law carries stipulations on the maintenance and development of Hong Kong's current systems and policies concerning education, science, culture, sports, religion, labour and social services. These stipulations involve the interests of Hong Kong residents in many aspects of public life and are important for social stability and development.

There are quite a number of articles concerning policies in Chapter V and VI of the draft Basic Law. The Chinese Government has undertaken, in the Sino-British Joint Declaration, to write its basic principles and policies on Hong Kong and their detailed explanations as given in Annex I of the Joint Declaration into Basic Law, and Hong Kong residents from all walks of life have a strong desire for the Basic Law to reflect and protect their interests. Therefore, it was decided in the end that these articles concerning policies should remain in the draft Basic Law, despite the differing opinions expressed over the brevity of articles during the drafting of the law.

Finally, I should like to explain a few points about the draft designs of the regional flag and regional emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The regional flag carries a design of five bauhinia petals, each with a star in the middle, on a red background. The red flag represents the motherland and the bauhinia represents Hong Kong. The design implies that Hong Kong is an inalienable part of China and prospers in the embrace of the motherland. The five stars on the flower symbolize the fact that all Hong Kong compatriots love their motherland, while the red and white colours embody the principle of “one country, two systems.” The regional emblem is round and bears a design similar to the one on the flag, with five red stars on a white bauhinia against a red background, which also symbolizes the principle of “one country, two systems” by the use of red and white. The outer ring of the emblem carries the words “Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China” in Chinese, and “HONG KONG” in English.

Fellow Deputies,

I hereby present my explanations concerning “The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China (Draft),” its annexes and other relevant documents and concerning the draft designs of the regional flag and regional emblem of the Special Administrative Region, to the National People’s Congress for examination.

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Note:

\* This is an English translation of the original instrument in Chinese and is published for information.

**\* Decision of the National People's Congress on the  
Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
of the People's Republic of China**

(Adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh National  
People's Congress on 4 April 1990)

The Third Session of the Seventh National People's Congress adopts the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, including Annex I: Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Annex II: Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures, Annex III: National Laws to be Applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the designs of the regional flag and regional emblem of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Article 31 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China provides: "The State may establish special administrative regions when necessary. The systems to be instituted in special administrative regions shall be prescribed by law enacted by the National People's Congress in the light of the specific conditions." The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is constitutional as it is enacted in accordance with the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and in the light of the specific conditions of Hong Kong. The systems, policies and laws to be instituted after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be based on the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

The Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China shall be put into effect as of July 1, 1997.

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Note:

\* This English translation text is reproduced from "The Laws of the People's Republic of China 1990-1992" compiled by the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\* Decision of the National People's Congress  
on the Establishment of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

(Adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh National  
People's Congress on 4 April 1990)

In accordance with the provisions of Article 31 and sub-paragraph 13 of Article 62 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, the Third Session of the Seventh National People's Congress decides:

1. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is to be established on July 1, 1997.

\*\*2. The area of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region covers the Hong Kong Island, the Kowloon Peninsula, and the islands and adjacent waters under its jurisdiction. The map of the administrative division of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will be published by the State Council separately.

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Note:

\* This English translation text is reproduced from "The Laws of the People's Republic of China 1990-1992" compiled by the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

\*\* See Order of the State Council of the People's Republic of China No. 221 (see **Instrument 13**)

**\* Order of the State Council  
of the People's Republic of China No. 221**

It is hereby promulgated that in accordance with the Decision of the National People's Congress on the Establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh National People's Congress on 4 April 1990, the map of the administrative division of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China was approved at the 56th Executive Meeting of the State Council on 7 May 1997.

Appendix: Description of the boundary of the administrative division of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China

LI Peng  
Premier  
1 July 1997

## Appendix

### **Description of the Boundary of the Administrative Division of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China**

The boundary comprises a land and sea sector.

#### **I. The Land Sector**

The land sector comprises three sections as follows:

##### **(1) Sha Tau Kok Town**

1. The boundary starts at the eastern corner of the base of the Sha Tau Kok pier ("Point 1", Latitude 22°32'37.21" North, Longitude 114°13'34.85" East). From there, it runs directly to the mouth of the ditch running along the eastern side of San Lau Street. It then follows the centre line of the ditch, as far as the point where that line meets the centre line of Chung Ying Street ("Point 2", Latitude 22°32'45.42" North, Longitude 114°13'32.40" East).

2. From Point 2, the boundary follows the centre line of Chung Ying Street as far as the point where that line meets the centre line of Bubu Street ("Point 3", Latitude 22°32'52.26" North, Longitude 114°13'36.91" East).

3. From Point 3, the boundary follows a straight line to the western tip of the base of the foundation of Sha Tau Kok River Bridge in the middle of the river ("Point 4", Latitude 22°32'52.83" North, Longitude 114°13'36.86" East).

##### **(2) Sha Tau Kok Town to Pak Kung Au**

From Point 4, the boundary runs upstream along the centre line of the Sha Tau Kok River and thence along the bottom line of the valley east of Pak Kung Au until it reaches the middle of the Pak Kung Au saddle point ("Point 5", Latitude 22°33'23.49" North, Longitude 114°12'24.25" East).

### **(3) Pak Kung Au to the Mouth of the Shenzhen River**

The boundary runs from Point 5 along the bottom line of the main valley west of Pak Kung Au as far as the source of the Shenzhen River at Pak Kung Au. It continues along the centre line of the Shenzhen River to the mouth of the river at Shenzhen Bay (otherwise known as Deep Bay).

After the realignment of the Shenzhen River, the boundary will follow the new centre line of the river.

## **II. The Sea Sector**

The sea sector comprises three sections as follows:

### **(1) Shenzhen Bay**

From the mouth of the Shenzhen River, the boundary runs along the middle of the southern navigable channel as far as Beacon 84 (otherwise known as "B" Beacon) ("Point 6", Latitude 22°30'36.23" North, Longitude 113°59'42.20" East). From there, it follows straight lines in sequence through the following two points:

1. Beacon 83 (otherwise known as "A" Beacon) in Shenzhen Bay ("Point 7", Latitude 22°28'20.49" North, Longitude 113°56'52.10" East); and

2. "Point 8", (Latitude 22°25'43.7" North, Longitude 113°52'08.8" East), defined as the point where the line between Point 7 and Dongjiaozui at the southernmost tip of Neilingding Island intersects the meridian line of Longitude 113°52'08.8" East.

### **(2) Southern Sea Section**

From Point 8, the boundary follows a series of straight lines sequentially through the following thirteen points:

1. The boundary first runs southwards along the meridian line of Longitude 113°52'08.8" East until it reaches Latitude 22°20' North ("Point

9", Latitude 22°20' North, Longitude 113°52'08.8" East). The boundary runs thence in sequence to:

2. "Point 10" (Latitude 22°16'23.2" North, Longitude 113°50'50.6" East), defined as the point one nautical mile northwest of the most northerly point on the coastline of Tai O;

3. "Point 11" (Latitude 22°16'03.8" North, Longitude 113°50'20.4" East), defined as the point one nautical mile northwest of the most westerly point on the coastline of Tai O;

4. "Point 12" (Latitude 22°14'21.4" North, Longitude 113°49'35.0" East), defined as the point one nautical mile northwest of the tip of the protruding point on the Lantau coastline southwest of Kai Kung Shan;

5. "Point 13" (Latitude 22°13'01.4" North, Longitude 113°49'01.6" East), defined as the point one nautical mile west of the most westerly point on Kai Yet Kok off Lantau Island;

6. "Point 14" (Latitude 22°11'01.9" North, Longitude 113°49'56.6" East), defined as the point one nautical mile southwest of the most southwesterly point on the coastline at Fan Lau Kok on Lantau Island;

7. "Point 15" (Latitude 22°08'33.1" North, Longitude 113°53'47.6" East), defined as the mid-point of a straight line between the most southerly point on the coastline of Tai A Chau in the Soko Islands and the tip of the protruding point at Yinjiaozui on the northern coastline of Dazhizhou;

8. "Point 16" (Latitude 22°08'12.2" North, Longitude 113°55'20.6" East), defined as the point one nautical mile south of the most southerly point on the coastline of Tau Lo Chau in the Soko Islands;

9. "Point 17" (Latitude 22°08'54.5" North, Longitude 113°56'22.4" East), defined as the eastern point of intersection between the parallel of Latitude 22°08'54.5" North and an arc sector of one nautical mile radius centred on the most southerly point on the coastline of Tau Lo Chau in the Soko Islands;



10. "Point 18" (Latitude 22°08'54.5" North, Longitude 114°14'09.6" East), defined as the western point of intersection between the parallel of Latitude 22°08'54.5" North and an arc sector of one nautical mile radius centred on the most southwesterly point on the coastline of Mat Chau in the Po Toi Islands;

11. "Point 19" (Latitude 22°08'18.8" North, Longitude 114°15'18.6" East), defined as the point one nautical mile due south of Nam Kok Tsui on Po Toi Island;

12. "Point 20" (Latitude 22°08'54.5" North, Longitude 114°17'02.4" East), defined as the eastern point of intersection between the parallel of Latitude 22°08'54.5" North and an arc sector of one nautical mile radius centred on the most southeasterly point at Tai Kok Tau on Po Toi Island;

13. "Point 21", defined by the coordinates Latitude 22°08'54.5" North, Longitude 114°30'08.8" East.

### **(3) Mirs Bay**

From Point 21, the boundary then runs in sequential straight lines through the following ten points, then back to Point 1:

1. "Point 22", defined by the coordinates Latitude 22°21'54.5" North, Longitude 114°30'08.8" East;

2. "Point 23" (Latitude 22°28'07.4" North, Longitude 114°27'17.6" East), defined as the mid-point of a straight line between the tip of the protruding point on the coastline north of Daluwan and the beacon on Shek Ngau Chau;

3. "Point 24" (Latitude 22°32'41.9" North, Longitude 114°27'18.5" East), defined as the mid-point of a straight line between the tip of the protruding point on the coastline southwest of Shuitousha and Kang Lau Shek on Ping Chau Island;

4. "Point 25" (Latitude 22°33'43.2" North, Longitude 114°26'02.3" East), defined as the mid-point of a straight line between Chengtoujiao and Chau Mei Kok on Ping Chau Island;

5. "Point 26" (Latitude 22°34'06.0" North, Longitude 114°19'58.7" East), defined as the mid-point of a straight line between the tip of the protruding point on the coastline at Beizaijiao and the most northerly point on the coastline of Round Island;

6. "Point 27" (Latitude 22°34'00.0" North, Longitude 114°18'32.7" East), defined as the mid-point of a straight line between the tip of the protruding point on the coastline at Zhengjiaozui and the most easterly point on the coastline at Kai Kung Tau on Crooked Island;

7. "Point 28" (Latitude 22°33'55.8" North, Longitude 114°16'33.7" East), defined as the mid-point of a straight line between the tip of the protruding point on the coastline at Tangyuanchong and the most northerly point on the coastline of Crooked Island;

8. "Point 29" (Latitude 22°33'20.6" North, Longitude 114°14'55.2" East), defined as the mid-point of a straight line between the point where the stream south of Enshang meets the sea and Cheung Pai Tau;

9. "Point 30" (Latitude 22°33'02.6" North, Longitude 114°14'13.4" East), defined as the mid-point of a straight line between the point where the stream at Guanluxia meets the sea and Sam Kuk Tsui; and

10. "Point 31" (Latitude 22°32'37.2" North, Longitude 114°14'01.1" East), defined as the mid-point of a straight line running due east from Point 1 to the opposite shoreline.

Note: The above geographical co-ordinates are represented by WGS84.

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Note:

\* This English translation text is prepared by Security Bureau, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.



**\* Decision of the National People's Congress  
on the Method for the Formation of the First  
Government and the First Legislative Council of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region**

(Adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh National  
People's Congress on 4 April 1990)

1. The first Government and the first Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be formed in accordance with the principles of State sovereignty and smooth transition.

2. Within the year 1996, the National People's Congress shall establish a Preparatory Committee for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, which shall be responsible for preparing the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and shall prescribe the specific method for the formation of the first Government and the first Legislative Council in accordance with this Decision. The Preparatory Committee shall be composed of mainland members and of Hong Kong members who shall constitute not less than 50 per cent of its membership. Its chairman and members shall be appointed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

3. The Preparatory Committee for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be responsible for preparing the establishment of the Selection Committee for the First Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (hereinafter referred to as the Selection Committee).

The Selection Committee shall be composed entirely of permanent residents of Hong Kong and must be broadly representative. It shall include Hong Kong deputies to the National People's Congress, representatives of Hong Kong members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, persons with practical experience who have served in Hong Kong's executive, legislative and advisory organs prior to the establishment of the Hong Kong Special

Administrative Region, and persons representative of various strata and sectors of society.

The Selection Committee shall be composed of 400 members in the following proportions:

Industrial, commercial and financial sectors	25 per cent
The professions	25 per cent
Labour, grass-roots, religious and other sectors	25 per cent
Former political figures, Hong Kong deputies to the National People's Congress, and representatives of Hong Kong members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference	25 per cent

4. The Selection Committee shall recommend the candidate for the first Chief Executive through local consultations or through nomination and election after consultations, and report the recommended candidate to the Central People's Government for appointment. The term of office of the first Chief Executive shall be the same as the regular term.

5. The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be responsible for preparing the formation of the first Government of the Region in accordance with the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

6. The first Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be composed of 60 members, with 20 members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, 10 members returned by an election committee, and 30 members returned by functional constituencies. If the composition of the last Hong Kong Legislative Council before the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is in conformity with the relevant provisions of this Decision and the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, those of its members who uphold the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and pledge allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, and who meet

the requirements set forth in the Basic Law of the Region may, upon confirmation by the Preparatory Committee, become members of the first Legislative Council of the Region.

The term of office of members of the first Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be two years.

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Note:

\* This English translation text is reproduced from “The Laws of the People’s Republic of China 1990-1992” compiled by the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of the People’s Republic of China. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\* Decision of the National People's Congress Approving the Proposal by the Drafting Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on the Establishment of the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress**

(Adopted at the Third Session of the Seventh National People's Congress on 4 April 1990)

The Third Session of the Seventh National People's Congress decides:

1. to approve the proposal by the Drafting Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on the Establishment of the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress; and

2. to establish the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress when the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China is put into effect.

## Appendix

### **Proposal by the Drafting Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on the Establishment of the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress**

1. Name: The Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

2. Affiliation: To be a working committee under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

3. Function: To study questions arising from the implementation of Articles 17, 18, 158 and 159 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and submit its views thereon to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

4. Composition: Twelve members, six from the mainland and six from Hong Kong, including persons from the legal profession, appointed by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for a term of office of five years. Hong Kong members shall be Chinese citizens who are permanent residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region with no right of abode in any foreign country and shall be nominated jointly by the Chief Executive, President of the Legislative Council and Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal of the Region for appointment by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

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Note:

\* This English translation text is reproduced from "The Laws of the People's Republic of China 1990-1992" compiled by the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.



**\* Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the English Text of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China**

(Adopted on 28 June 1990)

The 14th Meeting of the Standing Committee of the Seventh National People's Congress decides: the English translation of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, examined and approved under the aegis of the Law Committee of the National People's Congress, shall be the official English text and shall be equally authentic as the Chinese text. In case of any discrepancy in the meaning of wording between the English text and the Chinese text, the Chinese text shall prevail.

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Note:

\* This English translation text is reproduced from "The Laws of the People's Republic of China 1990-1992" compiled by the Legislative Affairs Commission of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of the People's Republic of China. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\* Explanations of Some Questions by the Standing  
Committee of the National People's Congress Concerning the  
Implementation of the Nationality Law of the People's  
Republic of China in the Hong Kong  
Special Administrative Region**

(Adopted at the Nineteenth Session of the Standing Committee of  
the Eighth National People's Congress on 15 May 1996)

According to Article 18 of and Annex III to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, the Nationality Law of the People's Republic of China shall be applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region from 1 July 1997. Taking account of the historical background and the existing circumstances of Hong Kong, the Standing Committee gives the following explanations concerning the implementation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the Nationality Law of the People's Republic of China-

1. Where a Hong Kong resident is of Chinese descent and was born in the Chinese territories (including Hong Kong), or where a person satisfies the criteria laid down in the Nationality Law of the People's Republic of China for having Chinese nationality, he is a Chinese national.

2. All Hong Kong Chinese compatriots are Chinese nationals, whether or not they are holders of the "British Dependent Territories Citizens passport" or "British Nationals (Overseas) passport". With effect from 1 July 1997, Chinese nationals mentioned above may, for the purpose of travelling to other countries and territories, continue to use the valid travel documents issued by the Government of the United Kingdom. However, they shall not be entitled to British consular protection in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and other parts of the People's Republic of China on account of their holding the above mentioned British travel documents.

3. According to the Nationality Law of the People's Republic of China, the British Citizenship acquired by Chinese nationals in Hong Kong through the "British Nationality Selection Scheme" will not be recognised. They are still Chinese nationals and will not be entitled to British consular protection in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and other parts of the People's Republic of China.

4. Chinese nationals of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region with right of abode in foreign countries may, for the purpose of travelling to other countries and territories, use the relevant documents issued by the foreign governments. However, they will not be entitled to consular protection in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and other parts of the People's Republic of China on account of their holding the above mentioned documents.

5. If there is a change in the nationality of a Chinese national of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, he may, with valid documents in support, make a declaration at the authority of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region responsible for nationality applications.

6. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is authorised to designate its Immigration Department as the authority of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region responsible for nationality applications. The Immigration Department of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall handle all nationality applications in accordance with the Nationality Law of the People's Republic of China and the foregoing provisions.

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Note:

\* This English translation text is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\* Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Treatment of the Laws Previously in Force in Hong Kong in Accordance with Article 160 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China**

(Adopted at the Twenty Fourth Session of the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People's Congress on 23 February 1997)

Article 160 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (hereinafter referred to as "the Basic Law") stipulates:

"Upon the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the laws previously in force in Hong Kong shall be adopted as laws of the Region except for those which the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress declares to be in contravention of this Law. If any laws are later discovered to be in contravention of this Law, they shall be amended or cease to have force in accordance with the procedure as prescribed by this Law."

Article 8 stipulates:

"The laws previously in force in Hong Kong, that is, the common law, rules of equity, ordinances, subordinate legislation and customary law shall be maintained, except for any that contravene this Law, and subject to any amendment by the legislature of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region."

In accordance with the above provisions, the Standing Committee of the Eighth National People's Congress examined the proposals made by the Preparatory Committee of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region on treatment of issues relating to the laws previously in force in Hong Kong, and decides at its Twenty Fourth Session as follows:

1. The laws previously in force in Hong Kong, which include the common law, rules of equity, ordinances, subordinate legislation and customary law, except for those which are in contravention of the Basic Law, are adopted as the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

2. Such of the ordinances and subordinate legislation previously in force in Hong Kong as set out in Annex 1 to this Decision are in contravention of the Basic Law and are not adopted as the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

3. Such provisions of the ordinances and subordinate legislation previously in force in Hong Kong as set out in Annex 2 to this Decision are in contravention of the Basic Law and those provisions are not adopted as the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

4. Such of the laws previously in force in Hong Kong which have been adopted as the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, as from 1 July 1997, be applied subject to such modifications, adaptations, limitations or exceptions as are necessary so as to bring them into conformity with the status of Hong Kong after resumption by the People's Republic of China of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong as well as to be in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Basic Law. For example, the New Territories Land (Exemption) Ordinance should conform with the above principles in its application.

Apart from conforming with the above principles, the following shall be observed, that is to say, in the ordinances and subordinate legislation previously in force:

(1) laws relating to foreign affairs in respect of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region which are inconsistent with the national laws applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be subject to the national laws and shall be consistent with the international rights and obligations of the Central People's Government;

(2) provisions conferring privileges on the United Kingdom or other Commonwealth countries or territories, other than provisions relating to reciprocal arrangements between Hong Kong and the United Kingdom or other Commonwealth countries or territories, are not retained;

(3) provisions relating to the rights, exemptions and obligations of military forces stationed in Hong Kong by the United Kingdom are retained subject to the provisions of the Basic Law and the Law of the People's Republic of China on the Garrisoning of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, and shall apply to the military forces stationed in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China;

(4) provisions relating to the superior legal status of the English language as compared with the Chinese language shall be construed as providing that both the Chinese and English languages are to be official languages;

(5) provisions applying any English law may continue to be applicable by reference thereto as a transitional arrangement pending their amendment by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, provided that they are not prejudicial to the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China and do not contravene the provisions of the Basic Law.

5. Subject to the provisions of paragraph 4, the names or expressions appearing in the laws previously in force in Hong Kong that are adopted as the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, unless the context otherwise requires, be construed or applied in accordance with the principles of substitution provided for in Annex 3 to this Decision.

6. If any laws previously in force in Hong Kong which have been adopted as the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region are later discovered to be in contravention of the Basic Law, they shall be amended or shall cease to have force in accordance with the procedure as prescribed by the Basic Law.

## **Annex 1**

The following ordinances and subordinate legislation previously in force in Hong Kong, which contravene the Basic Law, are not adopted as the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region:

1. Trustees (Hong Kong Government Securities) Ordinance (Cap 77, Laws of Hong Kong);
2. Application of English Law Ordinance (Cap 88, Laws of Hong Kong);
3. Foreign Marriage Ordinance (Cap 180, Laws of Hong Kong);
4. Chinese Extradition Ordinance (Cap 235, Laws of Hong Kong);
5. Colony Armorial Bearings (Protection) Ordinance (Cap 315, Laws of Hong Kong);
6. Secretary of State for Defence (Succession to Property) Ordinance (Cap 193, Laws of Hong Kong);
7. Royal Hong Kong Regiment Ordinance (Cap 199, Laws of Hong Kong);
8. Compulsory Service Ordinance (Cap 246, Laws of Hong Kong);
9. Army and Royal Air Force Legal Services Ordinance (Cap 286, Laws of Hong Kong);
10. British Nationality (Miscellaneous Provisions) Ordinance (Cap 186, Laws of Hong Kong);
11. British Nationality Act 1981 (Consequential Amendments) Ordinance (Cap 373, Laws of Hong Kong);
12. Electoral Provisions Ordinance (Cap 367, Laws of Hong Kong);

13. Legislative Council (Electoral Provisions) Ordinance (Cap 381, Laws of Hong Kong);
14. Boundary and Election Commission Ordinance (Cap 432, Laws of Hong Kong).

## **Annex 2**

The following provisions in ordinances and subordinate legislation previously in force in Hong Kong, which are in contravention of the Basic Law, are not adopted as the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region:

1. the definition of “Hong Kong permanent resident” in section 2 of the Immigration Ordinance (Cap 115, Laws of Hong Kong) and the provisions relating to “Hong Kong permanent residents” in Schedule 1 to that Ordinance;
2. any provision giving effect to the British Nationality Act as applied in Hong Kong;
3. provisions relating to election in the Urban Council Ordinance (Cap 101, Laws of Hong Kong);
4. provisions relating to election in the Regional Council Ordinance (Cap 385, Laws of Hong Kong);
5. provisions relating to election in the District Boards Ordinance (Cap 366, Laws of Hong Kong);
6. the Urban Council, Regional Council and District Board Election Expenses Order (sub. leg. A) and the Resolution of the Legislative Council (sub. leg. C) made under the Corrupt and Illegal Practices Ordinance (Cap 288, Laws of Hong Kong);
7. provisions relating to the interpretation and application of the Ordinance in section 2(3), the effect on pre-existing legislation in section 3 and the interpretation of subsequent legislation in



section 4 of the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance (Cap 383, Laws of Hong Kong);

8. provisions relating to the overriding status of the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance (Cap. 486, Laws of Hong Kong) in section 3(2) of that Ordinance;
9. major amendments to the Societies Ordinance (Cap 151, Laws of Hong Kong) since 17 July 1992;
10. major amendments to the Public Order Ordinance (Cap 245, Laws of Hong Kong) since 27 July 1995.

### **Annex 3**

Names or expressions in the laws previously in force in Hong Kong that are adopted as the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall generally be construed or applied in accordance with the following principles of substitution:

1. In the case of any provision in which any reference is made to “Her Majesty”, “the Crown”, “the British Government” or “the Secretary of State” or to a similar name or expression, where the content of the provision relates to title to land in Hong Kong or involves affairs provided for in the Basic Law for which the Central People’s Government is responsible or involves the relationship between the Central People’s Government and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the name or expression shall be construed as the Central People’s Government or other competent authorities of the People’s Republic of China. In other cases, the name or expression shall be construed as the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.
2. In the case of any provision in which any reference is made to “Her Majesty in Council” or “the Privy Council”, where the content of the provision relates to appellate jurisdiction, the name or expression shall be construed as the Court of Final

Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. In other cases, the name or expression shall be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of paragraph 1 hereof.

3. In the case of a Government agency or a semi-official agency bearing a name with the word “Royal”, the word “Royal” shall be removed from its name and the agency shall be construed as the corresponding agency of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.
4. Any reference to “the Colony” shall be construed as a reference to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and any description of the territories of Hong Kong shall be construed and applied by reference to the map of the administrative division of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region published by the State Council.
5. Any reference to such name or expression as “the Supreme Court” or “the High Court” shall be construed respectively as a reference to the High Court or the Court of First Instance of the High Court.
6. Any reference to such name or expression as “the Governor”, “the Governor in Council”, “the Chief Secretary”, “the Attorney General”, “the Chief Justice”, “the Secretary for Home Affairs”, “the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs”, “the Commissioner of Customs and Excise” and “Justice” shall be construed respectively as a reference to the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Chief Executive in Council, the Administrative Secretary, the Secretary for Justice, the Chief Justice of the Court of Final Appeal or Chief Judge of the High Court, the Secretary for Home Affairs, the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, the Commissioner of Customs and Excise or Judge of the High Court.
7. Any reference in the Chinese text of any law previously in force in Hong Kong to such name or expression as the Legislative Council, the Judiciary or the Executive Authorities or the

officers of those bodies shall be construed and applied in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Basic Law.

8. In the case of any provision in which any reference is made to “the People’s Republic of China” or “China” or to a similar name or expression, such reference shall be construed as a reference to the People’s Republic of China as including Taiwan, Hong Kong and Macau; and in the case of any provision in which any reference is made to such name or expression as the Mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macau, whether separately or concurrently, such reference shall be construed respectively as a reference to the Mainland, Taiwan, Hong Kong or Macau, as a part of the People’s Republic of China.
9. In the case of any provision in which any reference is made to “foreign state” or “foreign country” or to a similar term or expression, such reference shall be construed as a reference to any state, country or territory other than the People’s Republic of China, or as a reference to “any place other than the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region”, as the context of the relevant law or provision requires; and in the case of any provision in which any reference is made to “alien” or to a similar term or expression, such reference shall be construed as a reference to a person other than a citizen of the People’s Republic of China.
10. Any reference in any provision to “nothing in this Ordinance shall affect or be deemed to affect the rights of Her Majesty the Queen, Her heirs or successors” shall be construed as a reference to “nothing in this Ordinance shall affect or be deemed to affect the rights of the Central People’s Government or the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Basic law or other laws”.

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Note:

\* This English translation text is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\* The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Articles 22(4) and 24(2)(3) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China**

(Adopted at the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Ninth National People's Congress on 26 June 1999)

The Standing Committee of the Ninth National People's Congress examined at its Tenth Session the "Motion Regarding the Request for an Interpretation of Articles 22(4) and 24(2)(3) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China" submitted by the State Council. The motion of the State Council was submitted upon the report furnished by the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the relevant provisions of Articles 43 and 48(2) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. The issue raised in the Motion concerns the interpretation of the relevant provisions of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China by the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in its judgment dated 29 January 1999. Those relevant provisions concern affairs which are the responsibility of the Central People's Government and concern the relationship between the Central Authorities and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Before making its judgment, the Court of Final Appeal had not sought an interpretation of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in compliance with the requirement of Article 158(3) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. Moreover, the interpretation of the Court of Final Appeal is not consistent with the legislative intent. Therefore, having consulted the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has decided to make, under the provisions of Article 67(4) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and Article 158(1) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, an interpretation of the provisions of

Articles 22(4) and 24(2)(3) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China as follows:

1. The provisions of Article 22(4) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China regarding "For entry into the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, people from other parts of China must apply for approval" mean as follows: People from all provinces, autonomous regions, or municipalities directly under the Central Government, including those persons of Chinese nationality born outside Hong Kong of Hong Kong permanent residents, who wish to enter the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region for whatever reason, must apply to the relevant authorities of their residential districts for approval in accordance with the relevant national laws and administrative regulations, and must hold valid documents issued by the relevant authorities before they can enter the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is unlawful for people from all provinces, autonomous regions, or municipalities directly under the Central Government, including persons of Chinese nationality born outside Hong Kong of Hong Kong permanent residents, to enter the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region without complying with the appropriate approval procedure prescribed by the relevant national laws and administrative regulations.

2. It is stipulated in the first three categories of Article 24(2) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China that the "permanent residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be:

- (1) Chinese citizens born in Hong Kong before or after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region;
- (2) Chinese citizens who have ordinarily resided in Hong Kong for a continuous period of not less than seven years before or after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region;
- (3) Persons of Chinese nationality born outside Hong Kong of those residents listed in categories (1) and (2);".

The provisions of category (3) regarding the “persons of Chinese nationality born outside Hong Kong of those residents listed in categories (1) and (2)” mean both parents of such persons, whether born before or after the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, or either of such parents must have fulfilled the condition prescribed by category (1) or (2) of Article 24(2) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China at the time of their birth. The legislative intent as stated by this Interpretation, together with the legislative intent of all other categories of Article 24(2) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China, have been reflected in the “Opinions on the Implementation of Article 24(2) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China” adopted at the Fourth Plenary Meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the National People’s Congress on 10 August 1996.

As from the promulgation of this Interpretation, the courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, when referring to the relevant provisions of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China, shall adhere to this Interpretation. This Interpretation does not affect the right of abode in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region which has been acquired under the judgment of the Court of Final Appeal on the relevant cases dated 29 January 1999 by the parties concerned in the relevant legal proceedings. Other than that, the question whether any other person fulfils the conditions prescribed by Article 24(2)(3) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China shall be determined by reference to this Interpretation.

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Note:

\* This is an English translation of the original instrument in Chinese, and is published for information.

**\* The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China**

(Adopted at the Eighth Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress on 6 April 2004)

The Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress examined at its Eighth Session the motion regarding the request for examination of "The Draft Interpretation of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China" submitted by the Council of Chairmen. Having consulted the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has decided to make, under the provisions of Article 67(4) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and Article 158(1) of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, an interpretation of the provisions of Article 7 of Annex I "Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region" to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China regarding "If there is a need to amend the method for selecting the Chief Executives for the terms subsequent to the year 2007, such amendments must be made with the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Legislative Council and the consent of the Chief Executive, and they shall be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for approval" and the provisions of Article III of Annex II "Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Its Voting Procedures" regarding "With regard to the method for forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and its procedures for voting on bills and motions after 2007, if there is a need to amend the provisions of this Annex, such amendments must be made with the endorsement of a two-

thirds majority of all the members of the Council and the consent of the Chief Executive, and they shall be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for the record" as follows:

1. The phrases "subsequent to the year 2007" and "after 2007" stipulated in the two above-mentioned Annexes include the year 2007.

2. The provisions in the two above-mentioned Annexes that "if there is a need" to amend the method for selecting the Chief Executives for the terms subsequent to the year 2007 or the method for forming the Legislative Council and its procedures for voting on bills and motions after 2007 mean they may be amended or remain unamended.

3. The provisions in the two above-mentioned Annexes that any amendment must be made with the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Legislative Council and the consent of the Chief Executive and shall be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for approval or for the record mean the requisite legislative process through which the method for selecting the Chief Executive and the method for forming the Legislative Council and its procedures for voting on bills and motions are amended. Such an amendment may take effect only if it has gone through the said process, including the approval or recording ultimately given or made by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in accordance with law. The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall make a report to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress as regards whether there is a need to make an amendment; and the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress shall, in accordance with the provisions of Articles 45 and 68 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, make a determination in the light of the actual situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The bills on the amendments to the method for selecting the Chief Executive and the method for forming the Legislative Council and its procedures for voting on bills and motions and the proposed amendments to such bills shall be introduced by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region into the Legislative Council.



4. If no amendment is made to the method for selecting the Chief Executive, the method for forming the Legislative Council and its procedures for voting on bills and motions as stipulated in the two above-mentioned Annexes, the provisions relating to the method for selecting the Chief Executive in Annex I will still be applicable to the method for selecting the Chief Executive, and the provisions relating to the method for forming the third term of the Legislative Council in Annex II and the provisions relating to its procedures for voting on bills and motions in Annex II will still be applicable to the method for forming the Legislative Council and its procedures for voting on bills and motions.

This Interpretation is hereby proclaimed.

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Note:

- \* This English translation text is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\* Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2007 and for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2008**

(Adopted at the Ninth Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress on 26 April 2004)

The Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress examined at its Ninth Session the "Report on whether there is a need to amend the methods for selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 2007 and for forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 2008" submitted by Tung Chee-hwa, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, on 15 April 2004 and, before the Session, had consulted the Hong Kong deputies to the National People's Congress, the Hong Kong members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, different sectors of Hong Kong, the Hong Kong members of the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, and the Constitutional Development Task Force of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and had also sought the views of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council. The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress was, in the course of the examination, fully aware of the recent concerns of the Hong Kong society about the methods for selecting the Chief Executive and for forming the Legislative Council after the year 2007, including the views of some bodies and people that they wish to see the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage in the year 2007 and the election of all the members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage in the year 2008.

The Session is of the view that Articles 45 and 68 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic

of China (hereinafter referred to as “Hong Kong Basic Law”) already expressly provide that the methods for selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and for forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress, and that the ultimate aims are the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures and the election of all the members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage. The methods for selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and for forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall conform to the above principles and provisions of the Hong Kong Basic Law. Any change relating to the methods for selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and for forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall conform to principles such as being compatible with the social, economic, political development of Hong Kong, being conducive to the balanced participation of all sectors and groups of the society, being conducive to the effective operation of the executive-led system, being conducive to the maintenance of the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong.

The Session is of the view that since the establishment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, Hong Kong residents have enjoyed democratic rights that they have never had before. The first Chief Executive was elected by the Selection Committee, which was composed of 400 members. The second Chief Executive was elected by the Election Committee, which was composed of 800 members. Out of the 60 members of the Legislative Council, the number of members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections increased from 20 in the Legislative Council in the first term to 24 in the Legislative Council in the second term and will reach 30 in the Legislative Council in the third term to be formed this September. Hong Kong does not have a long history of practising democratic elections. Until now, Hong Kong residents have exercised the democratic right to participate in the selection of the Chief Executive of the Special Administrative Region for less than

7 years. Since the reunification of Hong Kong with the motherland, the number of members of the Legislative Council returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections has already substantially increased. When the set-up is such that half of the members are returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections and half of the members are returned by functional constituencies, the impact on the operation of the Hong Kong society as a whole, especially the impact on the executive-led system, remains to be examined through practice. Further, at present, different sectors of the Hong Kong society still have considerable differences on how to determine the methods for selecting the Chief Executive and for forming the Legislative Council after the year 2007 and have not come to a broad consensus. In the circumstances, conditions do not exist for the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures as provided for in Article 45 of the Hong Kong Basic Law and the election of all the members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage as provided for in Article 68 of the Hong Kong Basic Law.

In the light of the above and pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Hong Kong Basic Law and “The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China”, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress makes the following decision on the methods for selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2007 and for forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2008:

1. The election of the third Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to be held in the year 2007 shall not be by means of universal suffrage. The election of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the fourth term in the year 2008 shall not be by means of an election of all the members by universal suffrage. The ratio between members returned by functional constituencies and members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, who shall respectively occupy half of the seats, is

to remain unchanged. The procedures for voting on bills and motions in the Legislative Council are to remain unchanged.

2. Subject to Article 1 of this Decision not being contravened, appropriate amendments that conform to the principle of gradual and orderly progress may be made to the specific method for selecting the third Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2007 and the specific method for forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the fourth term in the year 2008 according to the provisions of Articles 45 and 68 of the Hong Kong Basic Law and the provisions of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Hong Kong Basic Law.

The Session is of the view that developing democracy in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the light of the actual situation and in a gradual and orderly manner according to the provisions of the Hong Kong Basic Law has all along been the resolute and firm stance of the Central Authorities. With the development and progress in all aspects of the Hong Kong society and through the joint endeavours of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Hong Kong residents, the democratic system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will certainly be able to progress forward incessantly, and ultimately attain the aims of selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures and electing all the members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage provided for in the Hong Kong Basic Law.

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Note:

\* This is an English translation of the original instrument in Chinese and is published for information.

**\* Interpretation of Paragraph 2, Article 53 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress**

(Adopted at the Fifteenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress on 27 April 2005)

The Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress at its 15th session deliberated the State Council's Proposal on Requesting Interpretation of Paragraph 2, Article 53 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. In accordance with Item 4, Article 67 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and Paragraph 1, Article 158 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, and after consulting the Committee for the Basic Law of the HKSAR under the NPC Standing Committee, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress hereby makes the following interpretation on Paragraph 2, Article 53 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

Paragraph 2, Article 53 of the Basic Law stipulates, "In the event that the office of Chief Executive becomes vacant, a new Chief Executive shall be selected within six months in accordance with the provisions of Article 45 of this Law." The phrase "a new Chief Executive shall be selected ... in accordance with the provisions of Article 45 of this Law" implies that both the method of selecting and the term of office of the new Chief Executive shall be as prescribed and determined by the said Article.

Paragraph 3, Article 45 of the Basic Law stipulates, "The specific method for selecting the Chief Executive is prescribed in Annex I 'Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region'." Clause 1 of Annex I stipulates, "The Chief Executive shall be elected by a broadly representative Election Committee in accordance with this Law and appointed by the Central People's Government." Clause 2 of Annex I stipulates, "The term of office of the

Election Committee shall be five years.” Clause 7 of Annex I stipulates, “If there is a need to amend the method for selecting the Chief Executives for the terms subsequent to the year 2007, such amendments must be made with the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Legislative Council and the consent of the Chief Executive, and they shall be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress for approval.” These provisions make it clear that prior to the year 2007, when the Chief Executive is selected by the Election Committee with a five-year term of office, in the event that the office of Chief Executive becomes vacant as he (she) fails to serve the full term of office of five years as prescribed by Article 46 of the Basic Law, the term of office of the new Chief Executive shall be the remainder of the previous Chief Executive; and that after 2007, the above-mentioned method for selecting the Chief Executives could be amended, and should the office of the Chief Executive then become vacant, the term of office of the new Chief Executive shall be determined in accordance with the amended method for the selection of the Chief Executive.

This Interpretation is hereby announced.

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Note:

- \* This English translation text is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

**\* Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2012 and on Issues Relating to Universal Suffrage**

(Adopted at the Thirty First Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress on 29 December 2007)

The Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress considered at its Thirty-first Session the "Report on the Public Consultation on Constitutional Development and on whether there is a need to amend the methods for selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and for forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 2012" submitted by Tsang Yam-kuen, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, on 12 December 2007. The Session is of the view that appropriate amendments may be made to the specific method for selecting the fourth Chief Executive and the specific method for forming the fifth term Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2012; that the election of the fifth Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2017 may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage; that after the Chief Executive is selected by universal suffrage, the election of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may be implemented by the method of electing all the members by universal suffrage. Pursuant to the relevant provisions of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and "The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China", the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress hereby makes the following decision:

1. The election of the fourth Chief Executive of the Hong



Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2012 shall not be implemented by the method of universal suffrage. The election of the fifth term Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2012 shall not be implemented by the method of electing all the members by universal suffrage. The half-and-half ratio between members returned by functional constituencies and members returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections shall remain unchanged. The procedures for voting on bills and motions in the Legislative Council shall remain unchanged. Subject to the aforementioned, appropriate amendments conforming to the principle of gradual and orderly progress may be made to the specific method for selecting the fourth Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2012 and the specific method for forming the fifth term Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2012 in accordance with the provisions of Articles 45 and 68, and those of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

2. At an appropriate time prior to the selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by universal suffrage, the Chief Executive shall make a report to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress as regards the issue of amending the method for selecting the Chief Executive in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Hong Kong Basic Law and "The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China"; a determination thereon shall be made by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. The bills on the amendments to the method for selecting the Chief Executive and the proposed amendments to such bills shall be introduced by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to the Legislative Council; such amendments must be made with the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Legislative Council and the consent of the Chief Executive and they shall be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for approval.

3. At an appropriate time prior to the election of all the members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by universal suffrage, the Chief Executive shall make a report to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress as regards the issue of amending the method for forming the Legislative Council and the issue of whether any corresponding amendment should be made to the procedures for voting on bills and motions in the Legislative Council in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Hong Kong Basic Law and "The Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China"; a determination thereon shall be made by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. The bills on the amendments to the method for forming the Legislative Council and its procedures for voting on bills and motions and the proposed amendments to such bills shall be introduced by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to the Legislative Council; such amendments must be made with the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Legislative Council and the consent of the Chief Executive and they shall be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for the record.

4. If no amendment is made to the method for selecting the Chief Executive, the method for forming the Legislative Council or its procedures for voting on bills and motions in accordance with the legal procedures, the method for selecting the Chief Executive used for the preceding term shall continue to apply, and the method for forming the Legislative Council and the procedures for voting on bills and motions used for the preceding term shall continue to apply.

The Session is of the view that in accordance with the provisions of Article 45 of the Hong Kong Basic Law, in selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by the method of universal suffrage, a broadly representative nominating committee shall be formed. The nominating committee may be formed with reference to the current provisions regarding the Election Committee in Annex I to the Hong Kong Basic Law. The nominating committee shall in accordance with democratic procedures nominate a certain number of

candidates for the office of the Chief Executive, who is to be elected through universal suffrage by all registered electors of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and to be appointed by the Central People's Government.

The Session is of the view that with the joint efforts of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the people of Hong Kong, the democratic system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region will definitely make progress continuously, and that the aim of the selection of the Chief Executive and the election of all the members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage will be realized in accordance with the Hong Kong Basic Law and this Decision.

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Note:

- \* This English translation is prepared by the Department of Justice, Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It is for reference purposes and has no legislative effect.

**\*Interpretation of Paragraph 1, Article 13 and Article 19 of  
the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative  
Region of the People's Republic of China by the Standing  
Committee of the National People's Congress**

(Adopted at the Twenty Second Session of the Standing Committee of  
the Eleventh National People's Congress on 26 August 2011)

The Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress examined at its Twenty-second Session the motion regarding the request for examination of *The Draft Interpretation of Paragraph 1, Article 13 and Article 19 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress* submitted by the Council of Chairmen. The motion of the Council of Chairmen was submitted upon the report by the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region requesting the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress to interpret the relevant provisions of *the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 3, Article 158 of *the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*.

The Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region needs to ascertain, in adjudicating a case involving the Democratic Republic of the Congo, whether the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region should apply the rules or policies on state immunity as determined by the Central People's Government. For this purpose, in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 3, Article 158 of *the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, seeks an interpretation from the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on the following questions: "(1) whether on the true interpretation of Paragraph 1, Article 13, the Central People's Government has the power to determine the rule or policy of the People's Republic of China on state immunity; (2)

if so, whether, on the true interpretation of Paragraph 1, Article 13 and Article 19, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), including the courts of the HKSAR: ① is bound to apply or give effect to the rule or policy on state immunity determined by the Central People's Government under Paragraph 1, Article 13; or ② on the other hand, is at liberty to depart from the rule or policy on state immunity determined by the Central People's Government under Paragraph 1, Article 13 and to adopt a different rule; (3) whether the determination by the Central People's Government as to the rule or policy on state immunity falls within 'acts of state such as defence and foreign affairs' in the first sentence of Paragraph 3, Article 19 of the Basic Law; and (4) whether, upon the establishment of the HKSAR, the effect of Paragraph 1, Article 13, Article 19 and the status of Hong Kong as a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China upon the common law on state immunity previously in force in Hong Kong (that is, before 1 July 1997), to the extent that such common law was inconsistent with the rule or policy on state immunity as determined by the Central People's Government pursuant to Paragraph 1, Article 13, was to require such common law to be applied subject to such modifications, adaptations, limitations or exceptions as were necessary to ensure that such common law is consistent with the rule or policy on state immunity as determined by the Central People's Government, in accordance with Articles 8 and 160 of *the Basic Law and the Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress* dated 23 February 1997 made pursuant to Article 160." The above request for interpretation by the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region complies with the provisions of Paragraph 3, Article 158 of *the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*.

In accordance with Subparagraph (4), Article 67 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and Article 158 of *the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, and after consulting the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, in relation to the request for interpretation by the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, hereby makes the following interpretation of the provisions of Paragraph 1,

Article 13 and Article 19 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* and related issues:

1. On question (1) on which an interpretation is sought by the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. According to Subparagraph (9), Article 89 of the *Constitution of the People's Republic of China*, the State Council as the Central People's Government exercises the function and power to conduct the foreign affairs of the State; as the rules or policies on state immunity fall within diplomatic affairs in the realm of the foreign affairs of the state, the Central People's Government has the power to determine the rules or policies of the People's Republic of China on state immunity to be given effect to uniformly in the territory of the People's Republic of China. Based on the above, in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 1, Article 13 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* that "[t]he Central People's Government shall be responsible for the foreign affairs relating to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region", the conduct of the foreign affairs relating to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region falls within the power of the Central People's Government. The Central People's Government has the power to determine the rules or policies on state immunity to be applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

2. On question (2) on which an interpretation is sought by the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. According to the provisions of Paragraph 1, Article 13 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* and Article 1 of this Interpretation, the Central People's Government has the power to determine the rules or policies on state immunity to be applied in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. According to the provision of Article 19 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* and Article 3 of this Interpretation, the courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region have no jurisdiction over the act of the Central People's Government in determining the rules or policies on state immunity. Therefore, when questions of immunity from jurisdiction and immunity from execution of foreign states and their properties

arise in the adjudication of cases, the courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region must apply and give effect to the rules or policies on state immunity determined by the Central People's Government as being applicable to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Based on the above, in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 1, Article 13 and Article 19 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, including the courts of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, is under a duty to apply or give effect to the rules or policies on state immunity that the Central People's Government has determined, and must not depart from the abovementioned rules or policies nor adopt a rule that is inconsistent with the abovementioned rules or policies.

3. On question (3) on which an interpretation is sought by the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. State immunity concerns whether the courts of a state have jurisdiction over foreign states and their properties and whether foreign states and their properties enjoy immunity in the courts of a state. It directly relates to the state's foreign relations and international rights and obligations. Therefore, the determination as to the rules or policies on state immunity is an act of state involving foreign affairs. Based on the above, "acts of state such as defence and foreign affairs" as stipulated in Paragraph 3, Article 19 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* includes the act of determination by the Central People's Government as to the rules or policies on state immunity.

4. On question (4) on which an interpretation is sought by the Court of Final Appeal of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. According to the provisions of Articles 8 and 160 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, the laws previously in force in Hong Kong shall be maintained only if there is no contravention of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. In accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 4 of the *Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Treatment of the Laws Previously in Force in Hong Kong in accordance with Article*

*160 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, such of the laws previously in force in Hong Kong which have been adopted as the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall, as from 1 July 1997, be applied subject to such modifications, adaptations, limitations or exceptions as are necessary so as to bring them into conformity with the status of Hong Kong after resumption by the People's Republic of China of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong as well as to be in conformity with the relevant provisions of the Basic Law. The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, as a local administrative region of the People's Republic of China that enjoys a high degree of autonomy and comes directly under the Central People's Government, must give effect to the rules or policies on state immunity as determined by the Central People's Government. The laws previously in force in Hong Kong relating to the rules on state immunity may continue to be applied after 1 July 1997 only if they comply with the above requirements. Based on the above, in accordance with the provisions of Paragraph 1, Article 13 and Article 19 of *the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, such of the laws previously in force in Hong Kong concerning the rules on state immunity which have been adopted as the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region according to the *Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Treatment of the Laws Previously in Force in Hong Kong in accordance with Article 160 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, when applied as from 1 July 1997, must be subject to such modifications, adaptations, limitations or exceptions as are necessary so as to be consistent with the rules or policies on state immunity that the Central People's Government has determined.

The interpretation is hereby announced.

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Note:

\* This is an English translation of the original instrument in Chinese and is published for information.



**\*Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016**

(Adopted at the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress on 31 August 2014)

The Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress considered at its Tenth Session the *Report on whether there is a need to amend the methods for selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 2017 and for forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 2016* submitted by Leung Chun-ying, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, on 15 July 2014. In the course of deliberation, the relevant views and suggestions of the Hong Kong community were given full consideration.

The Session points out that according to the *Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2012 and on Issues Relating to Universal Suffrage* adopted by the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress at its Thirty-first Session on 29 December 2007, the election of the fifth Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2017 may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage; at an appropriate time prior to the selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by universal suffrage, the Chief Executive shall make a report to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress as regards the issue of amending the method for selecting the Chief Executive in accordance with the relevant provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and the *Interpretation*

by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, and a determination thereon shall be made by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. From 4 December 2013 to 3 May 2014, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region conducted an extensive and in-depth public consultation on the methods for selecting the Chief Executive in 2017 and for forming the Legislative Council in 2016. In the course of consultation, the Hong Kong community generally expressed the hope to see the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage in 2017, and broad consensus was reached on important principles such as: the method for selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage shall comply with the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and the relevant *Decisions* of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress and the Chief Executive shall be a person who loves the country and loves Hong Kong. With respect to the methods for selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage in 2017 and for forming the Legislative Council in 2016, the Hong Kong community put forward various views and suggestions. It was on this basis that the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region made a report to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on issues relating to amending the methods for selecting the Chief Executive in 2017 and for forming the Legislative Council in 2016. The Session is of the view that the report complies with the requirements of the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, the *Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Hong Kong Basic Law* and the relevant *Decisions* of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, and reflects comprehensively and objectively the views collected during the public consultation; and is thus a positive, responsible and pragmatic report.

The Session is of the view that implementing universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive represents a historic progress in Hong Kong's democratic development and a significant change in the political structure of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Since the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and the sovereignty, security and development interests of the country are

at stake, there is a need to proceed in a prudent and steady manner. The selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by universal suffrage has its origin in Paragraph 2 of Article 45 of the *Hong Kong Basic Law*: “The method for selecting the Chief Executive shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures.” The formulation of the method for selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage must strictly comply with the relevant provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, accord with the principle of “one country, two systems”, and befit the legal status of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It must meet the interests of different sectors of the society, achieve balanced participation, be conducive to the development of the capitalist economy, and make gradual and orderly progress in developing a democratic system that suits the actual situation in Hong Kong. Given the divergent views within the Hong Kong community on how to implement the *Hong Kong Basic Law* provisions on universal suffrage for selecting the Chief Executive, and in light of the constitutional responsibility of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress for the proper implementation of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and for deciding on the method for the selection of the Chief Executive, the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress finds it necessary to make provisions on certain core issues concerning the method for selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage, so as to facilitate the building of consensus within the Hong Kong community and the attainment of universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive smoothly and in accordance with law.

The Session is of the view that since the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be accountable to both the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Central People’s Government in accordance with the provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, the principle that the Chief Executive has to be a person who loves the country and loves Hong Kong must be upheld. This is a basic requirement of the policy of “one country, two systems”. It

is determined by the legal status as well as important functions and duties of the Chief Executive, and is called for by the actual need to maintain long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and uphold the sovereignty, security and development interests of the country. The method for selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage must provide corresponding institutional safeguards for this purpose.

The Session is of the view that the amendments made to the method for forming the fifth term Legislative Council in 2012 represented major strides towards the direction of enhancing democracy. The existing formation method and voting procedures for the Legislative Council as prescribed in Annex II to the *Hong Kong Basic Law* will not be amended, and will continue to apply in respect of the sixth term Legislative Council in 2016. This is consistent with the principle of gradual and orderly progress in developing a democratic system that suits Hong Kong's actual situation and conforms to the majority view in the Hong Kong community. It also helps the various sectors of the Hong Kong community to focus their efforts on addressing the issues concerning universal suffrage for selecting the Chief Executive first, thus creating the conditions for attaining the aim of electing all the members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage after the implementation of universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive.

Accordingly, pursuant to the relevant provisions of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, the *Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* and the *Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2012 and on Issues Relating to Universal Suffrage*, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress makes the following decision:

I. Starting from 2017, the selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage.

II. When the selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is implemented by the method of universal suffrage:

(1) A broadly representative nominating committee shall be formed. The provisions for the number of members, composition and formation method of the nominating committee shall be made in accordance with the number of members, composition and formation method of the Election Committee for the Fourth Chief Executive.

(2) The nominating committee shall nominate two to three candidates for the office of Chief Executive in accordance with democratic procedures. Each candidate must have the endorsement of more than half of all the members of the nominating committee.

(3) All eligible electors of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region have the right to vote in the election of the Chief Executive and elect one of the candidates for the office of Chief Executive in accordance with law.

(4) The Chief Executive-elect, after being selected through universal suffrage, will have to be appointed by the Central People's Government.

III. The specific method of universal suffrage for selecting the Chief Executive shall be prescribed in accordance with legal procedures through amending Annex I to the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*: The Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. The bill on the amendments and the proposed amendments to such bill shall be introduced by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in accordance with the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and the provisions of this *Decision*. Such

amendments shall obtain the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Legislative Council and the consent of the Chief Executive before being submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for approval.

IV. If the specific method of universal suffrage for selecting the Chief Executive is not adopted in accordance with legal procedures, the method used for selecting the Chief Executive for the preceding term shall continue to apply.

V. The existing formation method and voting procedures for the Legislative Council as prescribed in Annex II to the *Hong Kong Basic Law* will not be amended. The formation method and procedures for voting on bills and motions of the fifth term Legislative Council will continue to apply to the sixth term Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 2016. After the election of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage, the election of all the members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage. At an appropriate time prior to the election of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage, the Chief Executive elected by universal suffrage shall submit a report to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress in accordance with the relevant provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and the *Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* as regards the issue of amending the method for forming the Legislative Council. A determination thereon shall be made by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress.

The Session stresses that it is the consistent position of the central authorities to implement resolutely and firmly the principles of “one country, two systems”, “Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong” and a high degree of autonomy, strictly adhere to the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and steadily take forward the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage in 2017. It is hoped that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government and all sectors of the Hong Kong

community will act in accordance with the provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and this *Decision* and jointly work towards the attainment of the aim of selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage.

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Note:

- \* This is an English translation of the original instrument in Chinese and is published for information.

**\*Explanations on the Draft Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016**

At the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress on 27 August 2014

Li Fei  
Deputy Secretary General of  
The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress,

At the request of the Chairmen's Council, I hereby provide Explanations on the *Draft Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016*.

In accordance with the provisions of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* (hereinafter referred to as the "Hong Kong Basic Law") and the *Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, Leung Chun-ying, Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, submitted the *Report on whether there is a need to amend the methods for selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 2017 and for forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 2016* (hereinafter referred to as the "Report



by the Chief Executive”) to the NPC Standing Committee on 15 July 2014. On 18 August, the Chairmen’s Council decided to include the consideration of the Report by the Chief Executive in the agenda of the Tenth Session of the Standing Committee of the Twelfth NPC, and entrusted the responsible officials of the relevant departments of the central authorities to listen to the views of the NPC deputies and members of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference from the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the Hong Kong members of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Basic Law Committee under the NPC Standing Committee, and people from various sectors of the Hong Kong community. Opinions of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council were also solicited. On 26 August, the NPC Standing Committee held group discussions on the Report by the Chief Executive.

The members of the NPC Standing Committee pointed out that, as stipulated in Paragraph 2 of Article 45 of the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, “The method for selecting the Chief Executive shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures.” The *Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on Issues Relating to the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2012 and on Issues Relating to Universal Suffrage* adopted on 29 December 2007 expressly states, “that the election of the fifth Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2017 may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage; that after the Chief Executive is selected by universal suffrage, the election of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may be implemented by the method of electing all the members by universal suffrage.” The *Decision* also reaffirms the relevant provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and its *Interpretation* that at an appropriate time prior to the selection of the Chief Executive

of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by universal suffrage, the Chief Executive shall make a report to the NPC Standing Committee as regards the issue of amending the method for selecting the Chief Executive, and a determination thereon shall be made by the NPC Standing Committee. The members of the NPC Standing Committee believe that since the year 2017 is approaching, it is now necessary to make a decision on issues relating to the methods for selecting the Chief Executive in 2017 and for forming the Legislative Council in 2016. The Report submitted by the Chief Executive to the NPC Standing Committee is necessary and timely. The Report reflects in a comprehensive and objective manner the views and wishes of the Hong Kong community regarding the methods for selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage and for forming the Legislative Council in 2016, which include both consensus and differences. It is a positive, responsible and pragmatic report.

The members of the Standing Committee are of the view that implementing universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region represents a historic progress in Hong Kong's democratic development and a significant change in the political structure of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. Since the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and the sovereignty, security and development interests of the country are at stake, there is a need to proceed in a prudent and steady manner, so as to prevent all sorts of possible risks that may arise therefrom. Since the selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by universal suffrage has its origin in the provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, the formulation of the method for selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage must strictly comply with the relevant provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, accord with the principle of "one country, two systems", and befit the legal status of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. It must meet the interests of different sectors of the society, achieve balanced participation, and be conducive to the development of the capitalist economy, with a view to making gradual and orderly progress in developing a democratic system that suits the actual

situation in Hong Kong. The members of the Standing Committee take the view that when formulating the basic policies on Hong Kong, the central authorities have already clearly defined the scope and criteria for the principle of “Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong”, that is, Hong Kong must be administered by the Hong Kong people, with patriots being the mainstay. According to the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is the head of both the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government, and shall be accountable to both the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and the Central People’s Government. The Chief Executive must swear to uphold the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China* and swear allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China. Therefore, the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region must be a person who loves the country and loves Hong Kong. This is a basic requirement of the policy of “one country, two systems”. It is determined by the legal status and important functions and duties of the Chief Executive as stipulated in the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, and called for by the actual need to maintain long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong and uphold the sovereignty, security and development interests of the country. The method for selecting the Chief Executive by universal suffrage should provide corresponding institutional safeguards for this purpose.

The members of the NPC Standing Committee take the view that although 17 years have passed since the return of Hong Kong to the motherland, there is still a small number of people in the Hong Kong community who do not properly understand the policy of “one country, two systems”, do not abide by the *Hong Kong Basic Law* or acknowledge the Central Government’s governing power over Hong Kong. On the issue of universal suffrage for the Chief Executive, there are divergent views within the Hong Kong community. A small number of people have even raised views that are contrary to the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and openly advocated illegal activities. Such developments will inevitably undermine the rule of law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, the interests of Hong

Kong residents and foreign investors and the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, and hence merit close attention. The members of the NPC Standing Committee take the view that given its constitutional responsibility for the proper implementation of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and for making decision on the method for selecting the Chief Executive, it is necessary for the NPC Standing Committee to make provisions on certain core issues concerning the method of universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive, so as to facilitate the building of consensus within the Hong Kong community and ensure that the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage will proceed on the right track as laid down by the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and the relevant *Decisions* of the NPC Standing Committee.

The Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council takes the view that although the views are quite divergent in the Hong Kong community with regard to the specific method of universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive, various sectors of the Hong Kong community generally hope to see the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage in 2017. Therefore, in accordance with the relevant *Decision* of the NPC Standing Committee adopted on 29 December 2007, the implementation of the selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by universal suffrage in 2017 may be approved. At the same time, it is necessary to make provisions on the core issues concerning the method of universal suffrage for selecting the Chief Executive, which will be conducive to building further consensus in the Hong Kong community. The method for forming the Legislative Council in 2016 may remain unchanged.

Acting in accordance with the provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and the views of the members of the NPC Standing Committee on the Report by the Chief Executive, and having taken into full account the views of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council and the views of the Report by the Chief Executive, the Chairmen's Council has introduced the *Draft Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong*

*Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016* (Draft Decision). I will now provide Explanations on the *Draft Decision* as follows.

1. On the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage starting from 2017

In accordance with the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, the relevant *Decision* of the NPC Standing Committee on 29 December 2007 and the views of the members of the NPC Standing Committee, Article I of the *Draft Decision* provides that: “Starting from 2017, the selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage.” The major considerations with regard to this provision are:

First, the wording in the *Draft Decision* is “Starting from 2017, the selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage”, meaning that the selection of the fifth Chief Executive in 2017 and all the Chief Executives thereafter may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage.

Second, Article 45 of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* provides that the ultimate aim is the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage. The relevant *Decision* of the NPC Standing Committee on 29 December 2007 further provides that “the election of the fifth Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the year 2017 may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage”. Article I of the *Draft Decision* has made it clear that the selection of the Chief Executive in 2017 and of all the Chief Executives thereafter may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage, which accords with the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and the above-mentioned *Decision* of the NPC Standing Committee.

Third, as a result of years of discussion on the issue of universal suffrage for selecting the Chief Executive, the Hong Kong community has reached consensus on four points, i.e., the Hong Kong community generally hopes to see the implementation of universal suffrage for

the selection of the Chief Executive in 2017; it generally agrees that the method of universal suffrage for the Chief Executive should be formulated in accordance with the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and the relevant *Interpretation* and *Decisions* of the NPC Standing Committee; it generally agrees that the successful implementation of universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive will bring about positive impact on the sustained development and the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong; and it generally agrees that Chief Executive candidates should be persons who love the country and love Hong Kong. The implementation of the election of the Chief Executive by the method of universal suffrage as of 2017 meets the common aspiration of the Hong Kong community.

## 2. On the provisions on the core issues of universal suffrage for the Chief Executive

Article 45 of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* has already set out quite clear provisions on universal suffrage for selecting the Chief Executive. In accordance with the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, the views of the members of the NPC Standing Committee and those from others, Article II of the *Draft Decision* has made the following provisions on the core issues of universal suffrage for the Chief Executive:

### (1) On the composition of the nominating committee

Paragraph (1) of Article II of the *Draft Decision* provides that: “The provisions for the number of members, composition and formation method of the nominating committee shall be made in accordance with the number of members, composition and formation method of the Election Committee for the Fourth Chief Executive.” According to this provision, the nominating committee to be defined by amendments to Annex I to the *Hong Kong Basic Law* shall follow the current composition of the Election Committee, which consists of 1,200 members from four major sectors in equal proportions, and keep the existing method for selecting the members as provided for by Annex I to the *Hong Kong Basic Law*. The major considerations with regard to this provision are:

First, considering the legislative intent of the *Hong Kong Basic*

*Law*, the expression “broadly representative” in the context of “a broadly representative nominating committee”, as provided in Paragraph 2 of Article 45 of the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, carries the same meaning as that in “a broadly representative Election Committee”, as provided in Annex I to the *Hong Kong Basic Law*. That is, the committee shall be composed of members from four sectors in equal proportions, the delimitation of the various sectors, the organizations in each sector eligible to return members and the number of such members to be returned by each of these organizations shall be prescribed by the electoral law enacted by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and the committee members shall be elected by corporate bodies in various sectors on their own in accordance with the number of seats allocated and the election method as prescribed by law. The provision in the relevant *Decision* of the NPC Standing Committee on 29 December 2007 that “the nominating committee may be formed with reference to the current provisions regarding the Election Committee in Annex I to the *Hong Kong Basic Law*”, indicates clearly the common theme between the nominating committee and the Election Committee as regards formation. Since there remains different understanding in the Hong Kong community on this issue, it is necessary to make further clarifications with a view to properly implementing the provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law*.

Second, the method for forming the Election Committee to elect the Chief Executive was based on the consensus forged during the extensive consultations and discussions when drafting the *Hong Kong Basic Law*. Past elections for the Chief Executive since the return of Hong Kong have proven that the Election Committee has covered representative figures from all sectors of the Hong Kong community and achieved balanced participation of all sectors, and is therefore in conformity with the actual situation of Hong Kong. Composing the nominating committee in line with the formation of the current Election Committee meets the requirements of both the relevant provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and the objective need to ensure balanced participation and fend off various risks during election of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage.

Third, there are relatively more views in the Hong Kong community that the composition of the nominating committee should be decided with reference to the existing method for forming the Election Committee. There are considerable views that the number of members, composition and formation method of the nominating committee should be determined by following the existing provisions of the Election Committee. Bearing in mind that the provisions regarding the Election Committee for the fourth Chief Executive were made in 2010 alongside amendments to the method for selecting the Chief Executive and approved by the NPC Standing Committee, and that the total number of seats of the Election Committee was increased from 800 to 1,200, with such increase being made in equal proportions for all four sectors, and with the endorsement and support from all sides, it is relatively appropriate to provide for the nominating committee to have the same number of members, composition and formation method as the Election Committee.

(2) On the number of Chief Executive candidates

Paragraph (2) of Article II of the *Draft Decision* stipulates that “The nominating committee shall nominate two to three candidates for the office of Chief Executive in accordance with democratic procedures”. The major considerations with regard to this provision are:

First, the stipulation to have two to three candidates for the office of the Chief Executive is made to ensure a truly competitive election and present voters with real choices. It could also serve to avoid problems such as complicated electoral procedures and high election costs caused by having too many candidates.

Second, since the return of Hong Kong, almost all elections for the Chief Executive were conducted each with a candidacy of two to three. It fits relatively well with the experience gained from previous elections in Hong Kong to set the number of candidates at two to three.

(3) On the need of a Chief Executive candidate to have the



endorsement of more than half of the members of the nominating committee

Paragraph (2) of Article II of the *Draft Decision* stipulates that “Each candidate must have the endorsement of more than half of all the members of the nominating committee”. The major considerations with regard to this provision are:

First, the nominating committee as provided for by the *Hong Kong Basic Law* is a specialized institution for nomination. It collectively exercises the power to nominate Chief Executive candidates as an institution, and must therefore reflect the collective will of the institution. The “democratic procedures” stipulated in Paragraph 2 of Article 45 of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* should follow the democratic principle of majority rule so as to reflect the requirement that the nominating committee exercises power in a collective manner. Hence, it is appropriate to stipulate that a person contending for nomination as the Chief Executive candidate must obtain the support of more than half of the members of the nominating committee.

Second, the nominating committee will comprise members from the four sectors in equal proportions. The stipulation that contenders for nomination as the Chief Executive candidates must obtain the support of more than half of the members of the nominating committee means that candidates need to obtain a certain extent of support from each sector of the nominating committee. This will help fulfill the principle of balanced participation and meet the interests of various sectors of the Hong Kong community.

Third, the Report by the Chief Executive indicates considerable views of the Hong Kong community that a person contending for nomination as the Chief Executive candidate has to obtain support from a certain proportion of members of the nominating committee. Among the views heard by the General Office of the NPC Standing Committee, quite a number of people called for the proportion to be specified. Therefore, the further clarification that a person contending for nomination as the Chief Executive candidate must obtain the endorsement of more than half of the members of the nominating committee, is consistent with the provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, and will facilitate consensus building in the Hong Kong

community.

(4) On the method for voting in the election for the Chief Executive

Article 26 of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* stipulates that “Permanent residents of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall have the right to vote and the right to stand for election in accordance with law”. On that basis, Paragraph (3) of Article II of the *Draft Decision* stipulates that “All eligible electors of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region have the right to vote in the election of the Chief Executive and elect one of the candidates for the office of Chief Executive in accordance with law”. According to this provision, each and every eligible elector shall have the right to directly participate in electing the Chief Executive. It fulfills the principle of universal and equal electoral right and marks a historic step forward in Hong Kong’s democratic development.

(5) On appointment of the Chief Executive

Paragraph 1 of Article 45 of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* provides that “The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region shall be selected by election or through consultations held locally and be appointed by the Central People’s Government.” Based on this provision, Paragraph (4) of Article II of the *Draft Decision* stipulates that “The Chief Executive-elect, after being selected through universal suffrage, will have to be appointed by the Central People’s Government”. The central authorities, in formulating the basic policies with respect to Hong Kong and the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, already clearly pointed out that the power of the Central People’s Government to appoint the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is a substantive one. The Central People’s Government has the right to make the final decision on whether to appoint or not to appoint the Chief Executive returned by election held locally in Hong Kong.

3. On proposing amendments to the method for selecting the Chief Executive

The specific method for selecting the Chief Executive is stipulated in Annex I to the *Hong Kong Basic Law*. To amend the method for selecting the Chief Executive, a bill on amending the method for selecting the Chief Executive as well as relevant amendments to such bill shall be proposed by the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in accordance with the relevant *Decisions* of the NPC Standing Committee. Accordingly, Article III of the *Draft Decision* stipulates that “The specific method of universal suffrage for the Chief Executive shall be prescribed in accordance with legal procedures through amending Annex I to the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China: The Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region*. The bill on the amendments and the proposed amendments to such bill shall be introduced by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government to the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in accordance with the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and the provisions of this *Decision*. Such amendments shall obtain the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Legislative Council and the consent of the Chief Executive before being submitted to the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress for approval.”

4. On continued application of existing provisions relating to the method for selecting the Chief Executive if no amendment is made to the method

Pursuant to the *Interpretation* made by the NPC Standing Committee in 2004, if no amendment is made to the method, existing provisions relating to the method for selecting the Chief Executive, the method for forming the Legislative Council and the procedures for voting on bills and motions will remain applicable. In 2007, the NPC Standing Committee reaffirmed the above position in its *Decision on Issues Relating to the Methods for Selecting the Chief Executive and Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2012 and on Issues Relating to Universal Suffrage*. In the premises, Article IV of the *Draft Decision* stipulates that “If the specific method of universal suffrage for selecting the Chief Executive is not adopted in accordance with legal

procedures, the method used for selecting the Chief Executive for the preceding term shall continue to apply.”

#### 5. On the issue of amending the method for forming the Legislative Council in 2016

As pointed out by the Report by the Chief Executive, the Hong Kong community generally agrees that efforts should now be focused on the proper handling of the election of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage; and that as relatively substantial amendments were made to the method for forming the Legislative Council in 2012, there is no need to amend Annex II to the *Hong Kong Basic Law* regarding the method for forming the Legislative Council in 2016. Upon deliberation, the members of the NPC Standing Committee are of the view that the amended method for forming the fifth term Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in 2012 already marked a major step towards greater democracy, and no amendment shall be made to the existing method for forming the Legislative Council and to the procedures for voting as prescribed in Annex II to the *Hong Kong Basic Law*, which is to say that the current formation method and procedures for voting will continue to apply to the sixth term Legislative Council in 2016. This is consistent with the principle of gradual and orderly progress in developing a democratic system that suits the actual situation of Hong Kong, in conformity with the majority view in the Hong Kong community, and conducive to the efforts of all sectors of the community to first focus on properly handling the selection of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage, and it will create conditions for the attainment of the aim of electing all members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage after the implementation of universal suffrage for the selection of the Chief Executive. In accordance with the deliberations of the members of the NPC Standing Committee and the views of various sides, Article V of the *Draft Decision* stipulates that “The existing formation method and voting procedures for the Legislative Council as prescribed in Annex II to the *Hong Kong Basic Law* will not be amended. The formation method and procedures for voting on bills and motions of the fifth term Legislative Council will continue to apply to the sixth term Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

in 2016.” To reflect the consistent position of the central authorities to resolutely and firmly develop the democratic system in Hong Kong, and to push for the attainment of the aim of electing all the members of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage, this article further stipulates that “After the election of the Chief Executive by universal suffrage, the election of all the members of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region may be implemented by the method of universal suffrage. At an appropriate time prior to the election of the Legislative Council by universal suffrage, the Chief Executive elected by universal suffrage shall submit a report to the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress in accordance with the relevant provisions of the *Hong Kong Basic Law* and the *Interpretation by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of Article 7 of Annex I and Article III of Annex II to the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China* as regards the issue of amending the method for forming the Legislative Council. A determination thereon shall be made by the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress.”

You are kindly requested to consider whether the *Draft Decision of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress on Issues Relating to the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region by Universal Suffrage and on the Method for Forming the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Year 2016* and the above Explanations are in order.

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Note:

\* This is an English translation of the original instrument in Chinese and is published for information.

**\*Interpretation of Article 104 of the Basic Law of the  
Hong Kong Special Administrative Region  
of the People's Republic of China by the Standing Committee  
of the National People's Congress**

(Adopted by the Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's  
Congress at its Twenty-fourth Session on 7 November 2016)

The Standing Committee of the Twelfth National People's Congress examined at its Twenty-fourth Session the motion regarding the request for examination of the *Draft Interpretation of Article 104 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* submitted by the Council of Chairmen. Having consulted the Committee for the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region under the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress has decided to make, under the provisions of Article 67(4) of the *Constitution of the People's Republic of China* and Article 158(1) of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, an interpretation of the provisions of Article 104 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* regarding "When assuming office, the Chief Executive, principal officials, members of the Executive Council and of the Legislative Council, judges of the courts at all levels and other members of the judiciary in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region must, in accordance with law, swear to uphold the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and swear allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China" as follows:

1. "To uphold the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China" and to bear "allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China" as stipulated in Article 104 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, are not only the legal content which must be included

in the oath prescribed by the Article, but also the legal requirements and preconditions for standing for election in respect of or taking up the public office specified in the Article.

2. The provisions in Article 104 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* that “When assuming office”, the relevant public officers “must, in accordance with law, swear” bear the following meaning:

(1) Oath taking is the legal prerequisite and required procedure for public officers specified in the Article to assume office. No public office shall be assumed, no corresponding powers and functions shall be exercised, and no corresponding entitlements shall be enjoyed by anyone who fails to lawfully and validly take the oath or who declines to take the oath.

(2) Oath taking must comply with the legal requirements in respect of its form and content. An oath taker must take the oath sincerely and solemnly, and must accurately, completely and solemnly read out the oath prescribed by law, the content of which includes “will uphold the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, bear allegiance to the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China”.

(3) An oath taker is disqualified forthwith from assuming the public office specified in the Article if he or she declines to take the oath. An oath taker who intentionally reads out words which do not accord with the wording of the oath prescribed by law, or takes the oath in a manner which is not sincere or not solemn, shall be treated as declining to take the oath. The oath so taken is invalid and the oath taker is disqualified forthwith from assuming the public office specified in the Article.

(4) The oath must be taken before the person authorized by law to administer the oath. The person administering the oath has the duty to ensure that the oath is taken in a lawful manner. He or she shall determine that an oath taken in compliance with this Interpretation and the requirements under the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is valid, and that an oath which is not taken in

compliance with this Interpretation and the requirements under the laws of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region is invalid. If the oath taken is determined as invalid, no arrangement shall be made for retaking the oath.

3. The taking of the oath stipulated by Article 104 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China* is a legal pledge made by the public officers specified in the Article to the People's Republic of China and its Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, and is legally binding. The oath taker must sincerely believe in and strictly abide by the relevant oath prescribed by law. An oath taker who makes a false oath, or, who, after taking the oath, engages in conduct in breach of the oath, shall bear legal responsibility in accordance with law.

This Interpretation is hereby announced.

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Note:

\* This is an English translation of the original instrument in Chinese and is published for information.



