



To: All Senior Partners and Sole Practitioners
Dear Colleague,

PRESS RELEASE

I am enclosing a copy of the press release on the new policies announced by the Ministry of Justice on 24th July 2000 which was provided to the reporters at yesterday's press conference.

Although the details of the provisions are yet to be defined, the Law Society will be organizing briefing sessions to brief members on these new policies.

Kindly pass this circular to the Law Society members in your firm.

Yours sincerely,
Herbert Tsoi
President

Encl.

PRESS RELEASE

MAINLAND LEGAL PROFESSION WIDENS ITS DOOR

After months of extensive lobbying by the Law Society, a delegation of solicitors led by its former President, Mr. Anthony Chow, were invited to meet with the Ministry of Justice, the State Council and Hong Kong & Macao Affairs Office in Beijing yesterday. The delegation comprised the President of the Law Society, Mr. Herbert Tsoi, and the Presidents of three major law organizations: Association of China-Appointed Attesting Officers Ltd.; Hong Kong Federation of Women Lawyers; and Young Legal Professionals Association.

At the meeting, Mr. Duan Zhengkun, the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Justice, announced the following new policies:

1. In relation to the establishment of law offices by foreign law firms (including Hong Kong law firms) in the Mainland, the following restrictions will be lifted:
 - (a) the number of foreign law offices that may be established in the Mainland;

(b) the locality of foreign law offices; and

(c) the “one-firm, one-office” rule.

2. Hong Kong lawyers will be allowed to be employed by Mainland law firms to practise Hong Kong law and upon receiving appropriate training, will then be permitted to enter into partnership with their employer.
3. As from next year, Hong Kong residents will be eligible to sit for PRC lawyers' qualification examinations with a view to practising law in the Mainland after completing law courses recognised by the Mainland.
4. The All China Lawyers Association will create a new category of membership for Hong Kong lawyers.

Details of the new policies and their implementation will be announced in due course.

The delegates were also received by State Councillor Madam Wu Yi at Zhongnanhai and Mr. Liu Ming-qi, Deputy Director of Hong Kong & Macao Affairs Office, both of whom endorsed the new policies.

The Law Society and the participating Associations welcome these new policies which have long been sought after by the Hong Kong legal profession. The leader of the delegation Mr. Anthony Chow remarks “I am extremely thrilled by the new policies which will create an additional and exciting dimension of legal practice for Hong Kong lawyers, the young ones in particular.”