

## **Report of the Special Committee on Legal Aid Reform**

1. There has been little opportunity for further progress because the Legco Panel on the Administration of Justice etc. has only met once as far as I can remember. Usually, these have been a good opportunity for dialogue and ensuring progress. I hope more meetings can be encouraged in the next year so as to facilitate progress.
2. One improvement was the improved Declaration form to be signed by Legal Aid applicants so as to reduce the incidents of touting and the use of solicitors ostensibly chosen by the applicant but where there may be other unknown connections.
3. A substantial submission was made to the LASC responding to their suggestions for reforms of the Supplemental Legal Aid Scheme (SLAS). There is not much new here, we are repeating and amplifying our position and arguments developed over the last 10 years. However, we are now optimistic that some further improvements may be supported.
4. This is a slow process, over decades. Hence, further dialogue through the Legco Panel meetings is useful.
5. I am very grateful to my committee who provide examples of the need for further reform on a regular basis. The members are: Neville Sarony SC; Raymond Leung SC; Nicholas Pirie; Valentine Yim and Ashok Sakhrani.

Ruy Barretto SC  
Chairman  
Special Committee on Legal Aid Reform

3 December 2015