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Chapter 1

Constitution and Administration

The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region was established in 1997 under the principle of 'one country, two systems', 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy, in accordance with the Basic Law.

Hong Kong has been part of the territory of China since ancient times. To uphold national unity and territorial integrity and to maintain the prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, and taking account of its history and realities, the People's Republic of China (PRC) decided that upon China's resumption of the exercise of sovereignty over Hong Kong, a Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) would be established in accordance with the provisions of Article 31 of the Constitution of the PRC, and that under the principle of 'one country, two systems', the socialist system and policies would not be practised in Hong Kong. On 1 July 1997, Hong Kong became a Special Administrative Region of the PRC and the Basic Law came into effect. The Basic Law is the constitutional document of the HKSAR. It enshrines within a legal document the important concepts of 'one country, two systems', 'Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong' and a high degree of autonomy. Under the Basic Law, the HKSAR exercises executive, legislative and independent judicial power, including that of final adjudication.

The HKSAR's executive authorities and legislature are composed of permanent residents of Hong Kong. The HKSAR remains a free port, a separate customs territory and an international financial centre and 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 organisations in the appropriate fields, including the economic, trade, financial and monetary, shipping, communications, tourism, cultural and sports fields.

Chief Executive

The Chief Executive, who is the head of the HKSAR and the HKSAR Government, leads the government. The Chief Executive is responsible for implementing the Basic Law, signing bills and budgets passed by the Legislative Council, promulgating laws, making decisions on