

Building Bridges Across The Divide - Evolving our future partnerships and sharing responsibilities – by the Hon. Bernard CHAN, Chairperson, The Hong Kong Council of Social Service

- Over the years, Hong Kong has seen a major expansion of government involvement in welfare provision, and the business sector has had little contact with the NGOs
- There is a big gap in understanding. And in the long run, I think this could mean trouble
- We all know that there are people who are being left out and we will all suffer in the long run if we don't do something about it
- We encourage the private sector to build genuine partnerships with NGOs, and to help in their own small ways to create a more inclusive society
- We can't push a button and create instant social unity. But we can encourage people from each sector to get in contact with each other across dividing lines, and start working together
- Business – NGOs partnership is a movement to build a less-divided and more united society
- The government should not only trust the potential strength of the civil society, but also actively encourage and promote a stronger civil society
- The remaining question is: “What is the role of Government in building the future partnership?” Voluntary cooperation among Government, Business and the Third Sector requires a shared understanding of socio-economic opportunities and challenges. Collaboration is built through non-confrontational, effective dialogue. The role of the Government is to provide more space for Tripartite Partnership to flourish. The government should not only trust the potential strength of the civil society, but also actively encourage and promote a stronger civil society. The Government may promote the value of the civil society both within and outside government; create the necessary policy framework for the civil society to better participate, and use financial instruments to strengthen the capacity of the Third Sector.