



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

**Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Human Rights Sub Committee**

MEDIA RELEASE
Issued: 23 November 2011

*Chair: Hon Laurie Ferguson MP
Deputy: Hon Philip Ruddock MP*

Human rights talks in the spotlight

The Human Rights Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade will review the impact of Australia's ongoing human rights dialogues with China and Vietnam at a public hearing in Canberra.

Human Rights Sub-Committee chair Laurie Ferguson said the dialogue process is now well established, with 13 rounds of talks between Australia and China and eight with Vietnam since 1997. "This inquiry is a chance to examine the effectiveness of the dialogue process to date," he said.

The Human Rights Sub-Committee will discuss the involvement of non-government organisations and the roles of participating agencies with the Attorney-General's Department.

The committee will also focus on the role of the dialogues in improving human rights standards in the region, whether the program should be expanded to other countries, as well as the need for parliamentary participation.

And it will look at reporting requirements and the evaluation of outcomes and exploring options for alternative human rights mechanisms.

Details of the public hearing are as follows:

**Thursday, 24 November 2011
10.05 am to 11.00 am
Committee Room 1R2
Parliament House, CANBERRA**

This hearing will be audio webcast live on: <http://webcast.aph.gov.au/livebroadcasting/>

Members of the public are welcome to attend. For a program and more details, visit the Committee's website:

<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/jfadt/HRdialoguechinvietnam/index.htm>

There is still an opportunity to contribute to this inquiry as the Committee will continue to accept submissions.

For media comment: please contact the Sub-Committee Chair, the Hon Laurie Ferguson MP on (02) 6621 9909 (Electorate Office) or (02) 6277 4323 (Parliament House)

For further information: please contact the Committee secretariat on (02) 6277 2313, via email at jscfadt@aph.gov.au or visit the inquiry website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/jfadt>