

## INTRODUCTION

On July 1, 1997, Hong Kong will revert to Chinese sovereignty after more than 150 years of British rule. The principles governing the transition are found in the Sino-British Joint Declaration, an agreement signed by the governments of China and the United Kingdom in 1984. While most of the specific arrangements for the transition are now known, discussions are continuing on a number of issues.

Hundreds of thousands of Canadians have close and substantial ties with Hong Kong. In recent years, thousands of Hong Kong residents have immigrated to Canada, studied in Canada or established close economic links with this country. More than 100 000 Canadian citizens live in Hong Kong on a permanent or semi-permanent basis, and thousands more visit regularly.

To assist in understanding the changes that are about to occur and to provide advice and guidance, the Consular Service of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade has prepared this booklet.

Every effort has been made to provide accurate and current information. In some instances, however, the arrangements and policies associated with the transition and with subsequent governmental and administrative structures are still evolving. The Travel Information Report for Hong Kong and an electronic version of this booklet, both available on the Department's home page on the World Wide Web, will advise of additional developments. Canadians may check with those sources for up-to-date information.