



PARLIAMENT OF AUSTRALIA

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

MEDIA RELEASE
Issued: 31 October 2011

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

Human rights talks face scrutiny

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.

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

The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will be asked about the role of the dialogues in improving human rights standards in the region, as well as the need for parliamentary participation and whether the program should be expanded to other countries.

The committee will also focus on the involvement of non-government organisations, the roles of participating agencies, reporting requirements and the evaluation of outcomes and exploring options for alternative human rights mechanisms.

Details of the public hearing are as follows:

**Tuesday, 1 November 2011
11.35 am to 12.30 pm
Committee Room 1R6
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/HRdialoguechinavietnam/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>