

PRESIDENT'S

會 STATEMENT

長
報
告



The year 2001 saw some significant events that will go down in the history of the Society. These events have marked the conclusion of important consultations and opened up new ways of communication between the Society and its membership.

It is also a year when the Organising Committee of the World Congress of Accountants and its six sub-committees have put in a great deal of effort to prepare for the official launch of the Congress to the local and world media this November.

During the year Hong Kong's business environment and the outlook for accountants generally have become more pessimistic as inward investment, the capital market and the GDP growth rate have slackened. While the market for traditional tax, accounting and audit work, the bread and butter of most of our small and medium-sized practitioners, remains stable, there are increasing pressures for fees and other add-ons.

The difficult times the profession faces today will not quickly disappear tomorrow as the process of economic restructuring must necessarily take its normal course. Hence the challenge for members of our profession in both public and private practice is to take the lead in helping our business organisations and clients change so as to become more efficient and competitive.

Recent events around the world are having an impact on the way we think and how we position ourselves in anticipation of these changes. The Mainland's accession to the WTO will create opportunities for Hong Kong accountants but, as many of our fellow members will know, there are still a number of issues our counterparts in the Mainland have to address and the Society has a definite role to play in helping our members overcome these barriers. The '911 air attacks' have changed our sense of security and forced us to reassess our risk management systems. Accountants can contribute as companies address these issues.



Andy S.C. Lee 李兆銓

二零零一年發生了不少對公會具有重大歷史意義的事件。在這段期間，公會順利完成了數份重要的公開諮詢，同時也開拓了與會員溝通的新渠道。

在這一年間，世界會計師大會籌備委員會及其六個小組委員會努力不懈，準備於本年十一月向本港和世界各地的傳媒正式宣布大會的舉行。

年內，由於外來投資萎縮、資本市場不振、本地生產總值增長放緩，香港的商業環境和會計行業的前景並不樂觀。雖然與大部分中小型執業所業務息息相關的稅務、會計、核數等傳統服務市場尚算平穩，但各種服務的收費水平及客戶對其他有關服務的要求卻不斷受到壓力。

在此經濟轉形期間，會計專業所面對的困境不會驟然消失。因此，我們的專業會計師無論執業與否，均應負起積極領導角色，協助我們所服務的商業機構和客戶，順應時勢革新改變，以提高其效率和競爭能力。

最近發生的世界大事對我們的想法和定位影響深遠。首先，中國大陸即將進入世貿，為香港會計師帶來不少機遇。但相信不少會員都知道，要開拓內地的會計服務市場，仍有若干問題有待解決。然而，公會將責無旁貸，盡力為會員清除這些障礙。「九一一」空襲事件令我們頓失安全感，迫使我們重新評估現行的風險管理系統。我們的會計師正可在此方面出一分力，協助解決有關問題。

Turning to the business of the Society, we have made some important decisions and spearheaded the development of several projects during the year.

Following consultation, the Council decided to endorse the recommendations contained in the White Paper proposed by the task force led by Past President David Gairns. Our decision to proceed with the proposed changes to the self-regulatory system was announced in a press conference in July. Subject to changes to the Professional Accountants Ordinance, we hope to have in place next year a much more open and transparent system of dealing with disciplinary hearings. A task force has been formed to study and establish sentencing guidelines and the Society will publish an explanatory leaflet explaining the Society's process of dealing with complaints and the rights and obligations of the members involved.

In light of many years of operating experience and feedback from members, the secretariat has begun to address the methodology for tackling complaints and referrals and for selecting auditors to be subject to a practice review. Our current thinking is to adopt a risk-based approach concentrating on practices with a high risk profile so that resources are directed to those practices that have clients with a wider public interest. When the proposals are ready, the Council will deliberate and consult before deciding on any future direction.

The most significant development of the year was the publication of a consultation paper on rebranding of the Society's name, member designations and membership structure. Having regard to the long-lasting impact of the proposed changes, we decided to seek members' feedback through a referendum and a members' forum. The referendum results showed clear majority support for both the name change and a new three collegiate structure. When reviewing the feedback received, the Council noted the concerns of some members and after careful consideration of their views, the Council decided to modify the original proposals that were announced in early July to our general membership.

公會會務方面，我們年內作出了一些重大決定，同時也開展了數個項目的工作。

理事會在諮詢結束後，決定採納由前會長簡大偉帶領的專責小組所提出的白皮書內所載建議。公會於七月舉行新聞發布會，表示決定對行業自我監管制度實施建議的修訂。公會希望，在《專業會計師條例》作出有關修訂後，可於明年正式推行這個更為開放、更具透明度的紀律聆訊制度。公會並已成立專責小組，研究及制訂紀律處分指引。此外，公會亦會刊發資料單張，闡述公會處理投訴的程序及所涉會員的權利和責任。

公會秘書處基於多年的運作經驗及會員的意見，開始就處理投訴以及選擇執業審核對象的方法進行檢討。目前，公會有意採用以風險為本的方法，將資源集中，對風險因素較高及對公眾利益影響較為廣泛的執業事務所進行審核。待有關的檢討完成後，理事會將進行諮詢，始行決定其應採取的方案。

公會年內最重要的工作就是發表了建議更改公會名稱、會員稱銜及會員架構的諮詢文件。由於該建議影響深遠，公會決定透過全體會員表決和會員論壇，收集會員的意見。表決結果顯示，更改名稱和設立三層化會員架構的建議獲得了大多數回應會員的支持。理事會經審閱會員所提交的意見，並留意到部分會員對諮詢文件中部分建議所表達的關注。理事會在審慎考慮這些意見後，決定就其七月初向全體會員發表的原有建議作出修訂。

The revised changes included:

- The name of the Society is to be changed to The Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA);
- For those members from IFAC member bodies joining us, they will be referred to as International Affiliates of the HKICPA. This category of membership will have access to the Society's information and services exclusive to members, professional training and educational opportunities but will not have voting rights; and
- The membership granting powers of Accounting Technician graduates will be entrusted to the Society's wholly owned subsidiary, the Hong Kong Association of Accounting Technicians, instead of the Society granting such membership directly. Our intention is to ensure that this college of membership will not be confused with our core CPA membership.

However, in light of the concerns raised by some of our practising members over the potential loss of goodwill and misconception of their role by their clients and the public if they share with the non-practising members a common CPA designation, the Council has decided to discuss with these members and work out a designation that can distinguish between the practising and non-practising members. The Council has also undertaken to work together with these members to ensure that their clients and the public are not misguided by the common designation since the intention of the Society is to promote the professionalism required in statutory and non-statutory practices.

We believe that this issue will be resolved and that the revised proposals will gain even greater support from our membership. An extraordinary general meeting will then be organised to formally endorse the above changes and the consequential changes to the By-laws under the Ordinance.

有關修訂如下：

- 公會的英文名稱將更改為The Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants (HKICPA)；
- 國際會計師聯會屬會會員如擬加入本會，將稱為香港會計師公會國際附屬會員。此類會員將可享受本會的會員資訊、服務、專業培訓和專業進修機會，但並無投票權；及
- 公會的全資附屬機構香港專業會計員協會將獲授權向專業會計員畢業生授出會籍。此項安排之目的，是避免此類別會員與公會的CPA會員有所混淆。

然而，部分執業會員指出，與非執業會員共用一個CPA稱銜，可能會影響其商譽及令客戶和公眾對其角色產生誤解。有見及此，理事會決定與這些會員進行商討，冀能提出一個易於分辨執業與非執業會員的稱銜。公會建議執業和非執業會員共用一個CPA稱銜，原意只是強調，公會會員無論是否從事法定專業會計事務，均需要達致一定的專業水平。因此，公會已承諾與這些會員合作，防止客戶和公眾因統一稱銜而引致誤解。

公會深信上述問題將可解決，令修訂後的建議獲得更多會員支持。屆時，公會將召開特別會員大會，正式通過有關修訂和因而需要對《專業會計師附例》所作出的相應修訂。

On the subjects of technical and professional development, the Council decided to revise its standard-setting strategy during the year. We have a clear commitment to harmonise with International Accounting Standards and should complete this process on the 30 core IASs before the end of 2002. With respect to auditing and ethical standards, our plan is to keep pace with international developments and work with local regulators and government bureaux and/or departments in making Hong Kong's financial markets more efficient and competitive. Work on a small GAAP is nearing completion but there are still residual issues we have to address before its formal promulgation.

The formal launch of the WebTrust licensing service in February marked a new era in the Society's efforts to help members move towards diversification of assurance services in the increasingly technology-driven world of business. The accountancy profession worldwide is addressing issues related to technical innovation and how they can offer business opportunities in a knowledge-based economy. The Society is mindful of these trends and it is in this spirit that we have joined the international movement to develop an Extensible Business Reporting Language, or XBRL.

The publication of the sixth *Guide on Best Practice in Corporate Governance* has been widely acclaimed by users and represents another major effort to promote transparency in a director's roles and obligations in financial reporting, particularly for listed companies. The second annual Best Corporate Governance Disclosure Awards, with prizes being given to the winners at the Annual Dinner by the Financial Secretary in October, reflects the importance we attach to recognising those firms and organisations that lead the industry in this area.

在專業技術發展方面，理事會經於年內決定修訂其準則制訂策略，並已訂下明確目標，致力於二零零二年底前完成與30條主要國際會計準則的接軌工作。在審計及專業操守準則方面，公會計劃保持與國際有關準則同步發展，並與本港各監管機構和政府部門攜手合作，致力提高香港金融市場的效率和競爭能力。目前公會快將完成小型企業會計準則的草擬工作，但在正式實施前仍有若干問題有待解決。

公會於二月正式推出網譽認證發牌服務，標誌著公會對會員在日益倚重科技的商業社會中，多元化推展核證服務工作所提供的協助，開創了新的紀元。全球的會計專業人員均在面對科技創新發展所帶來的挑戰，及由此而在知識型經濟體系中締造的商機。公會經已注意到這種趨勢，並因而參與Extensible Business Reporting Language (XBRL) 的全球開發工作。

公會刊發的第六份最佳公司管治準則指引廣受歡迎。該指引更代表公會在推廣及加強公司董事(尤其是上市公司董事)於財務申報所扮演的角色與責任的透明度方面的另一重要工作。此外，公會認為在公司管治資料披露方面表現出色的公司和機構應受到表揚，因而舉辦第二屆最佳公司管治資料披露大獎比賽，並於十月的周年晚宴上，敦請財政司司長頒發獎項。

During the year, we completed a survey on Continuing Professional Development (CPD), the last one having been done in 1998, and a sample audit of compliance with CPD requirements. It is clear from the survey results that we are on the right track in the administration of CPD courses, with e-Manager and e-Seminar/Conference courses introduced on the Society's homepage since February and May 2001 respectively. These web-based courses are the first of its kind for professional bodies in Hong Kong.

The Society's Qualification Programme to train a new generation of 'forward thinking accountants' is gaining wider recognition among major employers and the registered student population. By October enrolment numbers had doubled from the same time last year. We need to continue to further promote this qualification among the academic institutions that prepare students for accountancy degrees and among major employers in both the public and private sectors. During the year we were proud to register our first group of members who were trained under the Qualification Programme.

On the subject of the international mutual recognition of our professional qualifications, the Council has commissioned a review team from the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Scotland to come to Hong Kong in November to review our Qualification Programme and the regulatory environment that supports it. If the review results are positive, graduates from the Qualification Programme will be internationally recognised by more first-tier accountancy bodies for the training they have obtained from the Society.

The Council has endorsed the recommendations put forward by a practical experience task force to introduce a competency-based model of assessing the specific skill-sets for membership admission purposes. We are working out the implementation details with a view to introducing it in early 2002.

繼一九九八年進行專業進修調查後，公會年內再度進行有關調查，並抽樣查核會員對專業進修規定的遵守情況。調查結果顯示，公會推行專業進修課程的方向正確，因其分別於今年二月和五月在網站推出的網上管理課程和網上講座／研討會，備受會員歡迎。該等課程是全港專業團體首度推出的類似課程。

以培養具備遠見的新一代會計師為宗旨的專業資格課程，逐漸得到主要聘用會計人才的機構和註冊學生的廣泛認同，報讀人數至今年十月已達去年同期的兩倍。然而，公會仍需繼續向授出會計學位的大專院校和主要聘請會計人才的公共及私營機構大力推廣此項專業資格。公會欣然宣布，年內已有首批專業資格課程畢業生註冊成為公會會員。

在與國際會計團體訂立相互認可協議方面，理事會已委任蘇格蘭特許會計師公會於十一月派出評審小組來港，評審公會的專業資格課程及有關監管架構。假如評審結果理想，公會專業資格課程畢業生的專業資格將備受更多國際頂級會計團體的認可。

理事會通過會計實務經驗專責小組提出的建議，決定在入會審批方面採用以勝任能力為基礎的實務經驗評估措施。公會現正制訂有關實施細節，預期在二零零二年初開始推行。

One of the most significant developments in the Society's effort to improve communication with the general membership is the revamping of the Society's homepage. The new website is now interactive, allowing secure access for members and registered students to update their personal particulars, chat with their fellow members in different chat rooms and update new SSAPs and other types of information in the Members' Handbook. If members choose to update their information in the Handbook via the Society's homepage, they will be eligible for a one-off reimbursement of \$200 in their membership dues for 2002.

The Society is proud to play host to the 16th World Congress of Accountants in November next year. Preparations for this milestone event are under way. The Organising Committee under Past President Peter H. Y. Wong and its six subcommittees have been making headway in preparations for the exhibition, finance and sponsorship, logistics, promotion and publicity, social events and technical programme.

I would like to extend our warm congratulations to member Dr. the Honourable Li Kwok-po, David, for being awarded the Gold Bauhinia Star by the Hong Kong SAR Government. Congratulations also go to member Lau Mo-kaye for receiving the Medal of Honour.

I am very honoured to be able to serve as President in the first Millennium year. I would like to record my thanks to all Council members, committee members and staff of the secretariat for their support and team work, particularly the two Vice-Presidents, Alvin Wong and David Sun. Together we have achieved a lot and I expect next year to be even more eventful as we implement the important decisions taken this year.

Lastly, I have to record with deep regret the passing away of our Past President Felix Chow, who contributed tremendously to the development of the accountancy profession and the Society. His death is a great loss to the profession.

Andy S.C. Lee

30 October 2001

公會網站經已重整，在加強公會與會員溝通方面踏出重要一步。新的網站更具互動性，以便會員和註冊學生在網上更改個人資料、在各會員網上聊天室與其他會員交流，以及更新會計實務準則和《會員手冊》其他部分的資料。選擇透過公會網頁更新《會員手冊》資料的會員，其二零零二年度會費，可獲減免200元。

公會榮獲來年十一月第十六屆世界會計師大會的主辦權，目前正在進行這項盛事的籌備工作。在前會長黃匡源的領導下，大會籌備委員會及其六個小組委員會在展覽、財務及贊助、後勤、推廣宣傳、交流活動及大會程序等籌備方面均取得了一定的進展。

本人謹藉此機會，恭賀會員李國寶獲得香港特別行政區政府頒發金紫荊星章，同時也祝賀會員劉慕基獲頒榮譽勳章。

本人很榮幸成為本世紀的首任會長。本人謹向所有理事會成員，尤其是黃德偉和孫德基兩位副會長、委員會委員及秘書處職員的支持和合作，致以衷心謝意。在我們的合作取得了豐碩的成果之餘，本人預期公會在明年實施今年所作出的多項重要決定時，定必更添姿采。

最後，本人對前會長周福基不幸辭世，深表哀悼。周先生對會計專業和公會貢獻良多，他的辭世實在是會計專業的重大損失。

李兆銓

二零零一年十月三十日