

Press Release

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Transcript of SCA's briefing

The following is a transcript of a stand-up briefing by the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs (SCA), Mr Stephen Lam, after a meeting with District Council representatives at Central Government Offices today (September 3):

SCA: With regard to the 2003 District Council elections, in the last few months, the colleagues of the Constitutional Affairs Bureau have undertaken wide public consultations. Basically, the majority of District Councils are in agreement with our position that the current composition of the District Councils should be maintained. And the preparatory work on delineation of constituencies and other follow-up work are entering the final stage. Timing is very tight and the scope for change is very limited.

Nonetheless, since assuming this position in July, I have taken note of the fact that the population growth in three new towns, namely Tung Chung, Tseung Kwan O and Tin Shui Wai has been substantial. As a result of this, the District Councils of Sai Kung, Islands, and Yuen Long have reservations about maintaining the current number of elected seats. Earlier on, the Honourable Ip Kwok-him and representatives of these three districts have had an exchange of views with myself and with my colleagues.

The SAR Government places a lot of importance on district work and communication with district representatives. Today, I gave them a three-point response. Firstly, I affirmed that we have already taken note of the fact that these three new towns are experiencing substantial population growth.

Secondly, I have undertaken to conduct further research and a further review of the relationship between population growth and the number of elected seats in these new towns in coming weeks.

Thirdly, I have expressed the hope that, prior to resumption of Legislative Council meetings in October, we will have a final decision.

I should also add that as a result of the further review which we need to do in the next few weeks, the work of the Electoral Affairs Commission on delineation of constituencies and the associated public consultation exercise has to be deferred somewhat.

Reporter: Mr Ip said that if you insist upon not increasing seats, it might affect their services. Do you agree with that?

SCA: The District Council representatives who came today made it very clear to us that with the substantial growth in population already experienced and to be enhanced further in the coming months, they

foresee that the demands of residents, their need for services in respect of housing, education, transportation, all these demands will increase. And, with the population expanding in these new towns, youths who are unemployed, who are in need of counselling and other services, all these will add to the demands on District Councillors.

I have listened very carefully to these views and these needs. In the next few weeks, in undertaking our review, I will take all these very carefully into account.

Reporter: Will the Government have any ...

SCA : All I can say is that I will deal with this issue progressively and positively.

Reporter: ... necessary legislative amendment?

SCA: First, let me deal with the policy considerations, and then other associated questions about timetable and the legislative provisions. We will take all these carefully into account.

(Please also refer to the [Chinese](#) portion of the transcript.)

End/Tuesday, September 3, 2002

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