

## **Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs**

### **Publicity for the 2003 District Council Election**

#### **Purpose**

This paper sets out the main features of the proposed publicity programme to promote the second District Council (DC) election to be held on 23 November 2003.

#### **Objectives of the Proposed Programme**

2. Our overall objective is to encourage voter participation in the DC election by putting across the message that the work of DC is closely related to the daily life and well being of the people of Hong Kong, and that each vote can make a difference. A secondary plank of the proposed programme is to publicise the importance of honest and clean elections. We will also remind the public of the new polling hours, subject to the final decision of the Electoral Affairs Commission on the matter.

#### **Proposed Programme**

3. The publicity programme will run from mid-August 2003 to polling day on 23 November 2003. We will adopt a phased approach in building up the intensity of the publicity. There will be some publicity items and activities from mid-August as a prelude. Most initiatives will be launched from early October onwards, reaching a climax in the last week before polling day.

#### ***Phase One***

4. We expect prospective candidates to make preparations for the election well before the nomination period commences in early October. ICAC's experience is that it is important that prospective candidates and their agents are made aware from early days of what constitute lawful or unlawful electioneering activities. Therefore, we intend to start the first phase of publicity in mid-August. We will focus on reminding prospective candidates, their agents and the public of the importance of clean elections. This message will be promulgated through posters and Announcements of Public Interest (APIs) on TV and radio. A spot series will also be screened on TV and other

networks to educate the public on some of the major provisions in the Election (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance.

5. To complement the clean elections message and as a prelude to Phase Two, we will also launch some promotional activities mainly through posters and APIs, to remind people of the importance of DCs and the election. An early start will allow more time for the message to slowly sink into people's minds.

6. Starting from the end of September, we will screen another API to call for nominations from prospective candidates. This API will be screened until the nomination period ends in mid-October.

### ***Phase Two***

7. The second phase of the programme will be launched in early October to tie in with the commencement of the nomination period of candidates. The launch will be marked by a public ceremony. The bulk of the promotional activities will be conducted within this phase. There will be new versions of posters and APIs to reinforce our message, and the use of a wide variety of channels to maximize publicity. The publicity channels to be used will include TV, radio, government websites, video-walls at major shopping centres, and major public transportation networks. Election forums in selected constituencies will be arranged. Quiz and promotional segments on radio will also be organised. At the district level, banners and buntings will be put up at prominent locations, and bus parades will be conducted.

### ***Phase Three***

8. The final phase of the publicity programme will commence one week before polling day. On top of the initiatives mentioned in paragraph 7 above, there will be daily count-downs to heighten the atmosphere for the election. Special TV programmes will be screened. On polling day, we will place an advertisement in local newspapers to serve as a last reminder for registered electors to cast their votes. VIP visits to polling stations will be arranged.

### **Financial Implications**

9. We estimate that the publicity programme described in paragraphs 3 to 8 above will cost about \$12 million. Sufficient provision for this purpose has been included under REO's Head of Expenditure for 2003-04.

*Consultation with the Electoral Affairs Commission*

10. The Electoral Affairs Commission has endorsed the proposals set out in this paper.

Constitutional Affairs Bureau  
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