

Press Release



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Transcript of CS, SJ and SCA

Following is the transcript of the press conference given by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Donald Tsang, the Secretary for Justice, Miss Elsie Leung, and the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Mr Stephen Lam, at the Central Government Offices New Annexe Conference Hall after the Chief Executive, Mr Tung Chee Hwa, delivered the Policy Address this (January 7) afternoon:

Reporter: Could you describe for us please what the ambit is of this three-member group, whether it could be expanded? Also, in terms of the number of people. And secondly, whether there is anything that is outside the ambit, for example, the 2007 selection of the Chief Executive?

Chief Secretary: The Chief Executive formed this task force to look at the constitutional development in relation to what is enshrined in the Basic Law. The Basic Law calls for a review somewhere before 2007 and we are embarking on this exercise. And this is a three-person task force. But in the process, of course we are going to canvass views in the wide community. We will be talking to Legislative Council, District Council, opinion formers, academics and different organisations. And we are hoping we will be able to have their views on those principles we are discussing with the Central People's Government. And at the same time, we have already established an email address and later on a website whereby members of the public can express their views to us. And we will certainly be accounting for the views we receive to the public periodically during the course of our deliberation.

Reporter: Is there anything outside the ambit?

Chief Secretary: Well, our ambit is quite clear. We are going to discuss and deal with the question of constitutional development. Nothing more, nothing less.

Reporter: Can you give us an idea as to how long your task force will take to complete its work, and do you see it as possible to complete your work and the constitutional review in time to conduct an election of the next chief executive by universal suffrage?

Chief Secretary: We are going to consult with the various departments in the Central People's Government immediately and we will proceed with that as soon as possible. And at the same time, as you know, we are not sitting on our hands in Hong Kong. We will be canvassing Hong Kong people's views, political parties' views, Legislative Council's views, academics' views and the general public's views on the same topics. I'm pretty confident, given the will and given the common purpose, because it is also the Central People's Government to uphold what is written in the Basic Law and Hong Kong's interest is their interest as well, I'm sure that we will be able to complete this exercise within the next three years.

Reporter: Mr Tsang, can you give us a deadline for the Task Force to report to, or to submit a report to the Chief Executive on this particular issue, a constitutional issue. And secondly, are we still going for a public consultation. And when are we going to start ? And when will public consultation start? And when will the related legislative work start? Or be completed?

Chief Secretary: At this stage, I know we have to complete the exercise by 2007. And I also know that I need to start the first stage as quickly as possible. And this is the intention of myself, Mrs Leung, and Mr Lam. And I am sure that we will be able to come back to tell Hong Kong people what we have achieved and what we proposed to do. So at this stage I cannot outline in detail which individual steps. But I hope I would be able to do this having heard Central Government's views, and having assessed the total exercise, how complicated it is, and how we would be able to tackle it within the time frame available.

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

Ends/Wednesday, January 7, 2004

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