

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

2004 Policy Agenda

Introduction

This paper briefs Members on the initiatives of the Constitutional Affairs Bureau (CAB) set out in the 2004 Policy Agenda.

CAB's Initiatives in Policy Agenda

2. In the 2004 Policy Agenda, we have proposed to promote effective governance through the following four initiatives:

- (a) Address the issue of constitutional development after 2007.
- (b) Conduct a review on the roles, functions and composition of the District Councils (DCs) and consult the public in the process (jointly proposed by CAB and the Home Affairs Bureau (HAB)).
- (c) Make practical arrangements to ensure that the 2004 Legislative Council (LegCo) elections are conducted in a fair, open and honest manner, and adopt measures to support political parties, political groups and independent candidates in these elections.
- (d) Continue to implement "One Country, Two Systems" and demonstrate its success.

Details of the initiatives in (b), (c) and (d) above are set out in the following paragraphs. As for the initiative in (a) above, we will cover this issue in another paper.

Review of Roles, Functions and Composition of DCs

3. The Chief Executive has stated in his 2004 Policy Address that the Government will review the function and composition of the DCs at a suitable time. CAB will work closely with the HAB and other relevant bureaux and departments in the process. The public will also be consulted.

2004 LegCo Elections

4. The 2004 LegCo elections will be held in September 2004. The elections will return 30 members each from the geographical constituencies and the functional constituencies. On 3 July 2003, the Legislative Council (Amendment) Bill 2003 was passed to provide the legislative framework for the elections.

5. Preparatory work for detailed electoral arrangements is underway. For example, we will introduce the following measures to support political parties, political groups and independent candidates in the elections -

- (a) candidates will be allowed to print on the ballot papers their photos and emblems or, if they are members of organisations, the names and emblems of the organisations; and
- (b) eligible candidates will receive financial assistance at a rate of \$10 per valid vote received. Details are set out in paper no. CB(2)331/03-04(09) for the Constitutional Affairs Panel.

The two pieces of subsidiary legislation providing for the above measures were tabled at LegCo for negative vetting in December 2003 and January 2004 respectively.

6. Separately, the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC) is preparing the draft guidelines for the elections. There will be a one-month consultation period for the public to express their views before the EAC finalizes the document.

7. The 2004 voter registration campaign will be launched in around April 2004. The Registration and Electoral Office will publish the final register of electors on or before 25 July 2004, as stipulated under the law.

Implementation of One Country, Two Systems

8. To facilitate the conduct of HKSAR's external affairs, CAB will continue to act as a focal point of contact between the HKSAR Government and the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. We will also continue to advise bureaux and departments on the conduct of the HKSAR's external affairs in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Basic Law and the "One Country, Two Systems" principle.

9. We will continue to assist bureaux and departments to establish channels of communication and develop an effective working relationship with the relevant Mainland authorities, as well as with the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region, under the "One Country, Two Systems" principle. We will further promote better understanding between the HKSAR Government and the Mainland as well as Macao authorities through official visits and other official contacts.

10. CAB also provides support for the Hong Kong/Guangdong Cooperation Joint Conference and the Hong Kong/Shanghai Economic and Trade Cooperation Conference. We will continue to liaise with the Guangdong Provincial People's Government and the Shanghai Municipal People's Government respectively to strengthen cooperation.

11. In accordance with "Qian's Seven Principles", we will continue to enhance economic and cultural exchanges between Hong Kong and Taiwan. We will demonstrate to Taiwan visitors from the business and other professional fields the successful implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle through briefings on the latest development in Hong Kong and visits to Government bureaux/departments. We will also continue to liaise with the Chung Hwa Travel Service on matters relating to Hong Kong/Taiwan relations.

Conclusion

12. Members are requested to note the content of this paper.

Constitutional Affairs Bureau
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