

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

2004 VOTER REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the main features of the 2004 Voter Registration Campaign.

Background

2. The Legislative Council (LegCo) election will be held in September 2004. In line with past practice during LegCo election years, we will organize a voter registration campaign and a publicity campaign for voter turnout. An inter-departmental working group comprising representatives from Constitutional Affairs Bureau (CAB), Home Affairs Department (HAD), Registration and Electoral Office (REO), Information Services Department (ISD) and Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) has been formed to work out the details of the voter registration campaign. The working group will prepare proposals for the voter turnout campaign at a later stage.

Main Features of the 2004 Voter Registration Campaign

3. The main features of the campaign are outlined below.

(a) Objectives

4. The latest final voter register published in September 2003 records a total of 2.97 million registered electors for the LegCo geographical constituencies, representing 65.67% of the estimated total number of eligible electors. As for functional constituencies, the final voter register published in September 2003 records a total of 0.16 million registered electors, representing 60.5% of the estimated total number of eligible electors.

5. Our overall objectives are to encourage eligible persons to

register as electors, and to remind registered electors who have changed addresses to update their records with the REO. The overall emphasis is to promote general awareness and to call upon eligible electors of all age groups to register. As part of the overall campaign, we will also cover eligible electors turning 18. We will also encourage potential electors in the 28 functional constituencies to register.

(b) Timing

6. To tie in with this year's timetable for registration of electors and publication of the voter register^{Note 1}, a six-week voter registration campaign will be conducted from 3 April to 16 May 2004.

(c) Strategy

7. We will adopt a multi-pronged approach under which we will organize a variety of activities which aim at bringing in as many valid applications for voter registration and updating of particulars as possible. These activities will be supported by awareness raising measures.

(d) Activities

8. A kick-off ceremony will be held on 3 April 2004 to formally launch the campaign. During the ensuing six weeks of the campaign, we will set up roving registration counters at popular locations (for example, major MTR stations and shopping malls) to help people make applications for voter registration or changes of personal particulars.

9. We will also set up registration counters at major Registration of Persons Offices to facilitate eligible persons, who turn up at these offices to apply for or to collect their identity cards, to register as electors.

10. To target those who have changed addresses, we will conduct household visits to newly developed residential areas. The opportunity will also be taken to appeal to those who have not yet registered as electors to submit applications.

^{Note 1} Under Section 32 of the Legislative Council Ordinance (Cap.542), the provisional register of electors should be published on or before 15 June 2004. The deadline for accepting applications for registration in the voter register is 16 May 2004.

11. To encourage eligible electors in the functional constituencies to register, individual appeal letters will be sent to all eligible persons who have not registered. Appeal letters will also be sent to umbrella organizations to request their assistance in encouraging their members who are eligible electors in the functional constituencies to register.

12. The above activities will be supported by a range of awareness raising measures. These include television and radio announcements of public interest (APIs), advertisements in major MTR stations, bus and taxi bodies and video walls, plus banners and bunting in selected locations. A dedicated website with hyperlinks to Government websites will also be set up. Celebrities will be appointed Ambassadors to provide publicity focus and attraction for the campaign. A number of mini-concerts and DJ shows will be held in various shopping malls.

Financial Implications

13. We estimate that the 2004 Voter Registration Campaign set out in paragraphs 8 to 12 will cost about \$12 million. Sufficient provision for this purpose has been included under REO's Head of Expenditure for 2004-05.

Consultation with the Electoral Affairs Commission

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

Advice Sought

15. Members are invited to note the content of this paper for information.

Constitutional Affairs Bureau
11 March 2004