

Press Release



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CS' transcript

Following is the transcript (English portion) of the Question and Answer session of a press conference given by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Donald Tsang, on the second report of the Constitutional Development Task Force today (April 15):

Reporter: Chief Secretary, my question is on procedure, will we in future expect that when we get to the question of different options that may exist, that we would see reports sent to the NPC for approval and then coming back. Or would different options be discussed and decided within Hong Kong?

CS: The way I looked at interpretation of the NPC Standing Committee dated April 6, the important thing is the recognition that there is a need to change the two electoral systems. Once that recognition is given and indicated by the NPC Standing Committee, it would be up to us to proceed with the procedure laid down in Annex I and Annex II of the Basic Law. In other words, we would be discussing options in Hong Kong. We would be debating those options in the Legislative Council. We hopefully would come to a consensus. Once we reached a consensus, we would then ask for the consent and agreement of the Chief Executive and then put the matter before the NPC Standing Committee for approval or for endorsement.

Reporter: No more prior steps such as that would require for ?

CS: In matters such as this, (there would be) consultations of all kinds. And I am sure we're going to maintain a dialogue on all proposals for change with the Legislative Council here, with the public here, with the Chief Executive as well as with the Central Authorities.

Reporter: You have said that at this stage, we are dealing with principles, not with options. But of course the principles have a bearing on the options which will follow. Do you believe that the principles you have set out today are compatible with universal suffrage in 2007 and 2008?

CS: We are not discussing in this Report No. 2 the question of universal suffrage in 2007 as such. But we are rather, as we have set out to do in the very beginning, to discuss various thoughts governing or concerning constitutional development in Hong Kong, particularly in relation to the way in which we elect the Chief Executive and the Legislature. There is no specific discussion of a time frame as such. What we are doing, of course, is everything running towards universal suffrage as the aim. Exactly the speed at which we're going to arrive at is a matter for discussion, as a matter for decision by the Legislature in Hong Kong, the Chief Executive and the NPC Standing Committee, as stipulated in the Annexes to the Basic Law.

Reporter: You expressed a concern that there is a lack of political

talent and a lack of maturity among political groups in Hong Kong. In many places, it's true that through the democratic process that political parties and individuals are able to gain this maturity. So my question is, don't you think implementing an earlier process of democracy would expand the pool of political talent and also would help the political parties win the public trust? If this is not to happen quickly, then through what method do you envision the political skills of individuals and also the development of the political parties to take place? Thank you.

CS: In Chapter 3 of the Report, the Task Force was merely stating the fact, as recognized by the community. We're not passing any judgment on the consequences of that fact. The important thing is, we recognized there is such thing happening here. And I agree entirely with you, democratization would bring about maturity in the long run. It just simply takes time. That's all.

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

Ends/Thursday, April 15, 2004

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