

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

Publicity for the 2004 Legislative Council Election

Purpose

This paper sets out the main features of the proposed publicity programme to promote the third term Legislative Council (LegCo) election.

Background

2. The third term LegCo election will be held on 12 September 2004. An inter-departmental working group comprising representatives from Constitutional Affairs Bureau (CAB), Home Affairs Department (HAD), Information Services Department (ISD), Registration and Electoral Office (REO), Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) and Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has been formed, to work out the details of a publicity programme to call on all registered electors to cast their votes in the election.

3. At the last meeting held on 17 May 2004, Members expressed concern about recent media reports on the alleged use of duress against electors with a view to influencing their voting behaviour. It was suggested that publicity measures should be stepped up to promote public awareness of arrangements and legislative provisions which protect the secrecy of votes. We undertook to follow up when we worked out the publicity programme for the LegCo election.

Main Features of the Publicity Programme for 2004 Legislative Council Election Turnout

4. The main features of the publicity programme are outlined below.

(a) Objectives

5. Our main objectives are to encourage voter participation in the LegCo election by-

- (a) providing voters with information on the candidates and the voting procedures; and
- (b) encouraging registered electors to vote on 12 September.

6. We will also publicize the importance of honest and clean elections.

(b) Timing

7. An eight-week publicity programme will start from 17 July 2004, marked by a kick-off ceremony, up until polling day on 12 September 2004. The publicity for call for nominations will also start on 17 July 2004 to tie in with the nomination period from 22 July to 4 August 2004. The ICAC will start disseminating clean election messages in late June, well before the nomination period.

(c) Strategy

8. The promotional efforts in July and August will mainly be awareness-raising. We will adopt a multi-pronged approach under which we will organize a variety of activities, including regular announcements on TV and radio, posters, leaflets, bus parades and carnivals. In the week leading up to polling day, on top of the above initiatives, there will be daily count-downs to heighten the awareness of electors. Special TV programmes will be screened. Throughout the whole period, the importance of clean elections will be actively promoted by the ICAC through multi-media channels.

(d) Activities

Information on candidates and the voting procedures

9. Electors need access to information on candidates to make informed decisions in elections. RTHK will produce a series of programmes to be broadcast on TV and radio during prime time, to provide an opportunity for candidates to introduce their election platforms and to make appeals to electors. Election forums will also be broadcast on TV and radio, which will provide candidates with another opportunity to explain their election platforms and to respond to questions put to them. All these programmes will be uploaded onto the

Internet. Further, leaflets on introduction to candidates will be sent to electors together with the poll card.

10. On voting procedures, we will make use of different publicity vehicles to publicize the procedures. A sample polling station will be set up, and mock voting exercises organized, in regional carnivals. Leaflets and exhibitions will provide information on the voting procedures.

Sustaining awareness about the election

11. Publicity efforts at the central level will be complemented by district events in sustaining awareness about the election throughout the election period. In addition to a centrally coordinated kick off ceremony to be held on 17 July 2004, exhibitions, carnivals and bus parades will be held in districts.

12. Advertisement banners and promotional display will be put up at prominent sites throughout the territory. Publicity materials including leaflets and souvenirs will be imprinted with the logo of the 2004 LegCo election and distributed to the public at exhibitions and carnivals to remind registered electors to cast their votes on polling day. Special programmes on TV and radio will be produced.

Clean Elections

13. We will introduce a range of enhanced educational and publicity measures to promote honest and clean elections. The ICAC will launch new TV and radio APIs and put up a new poster in prominent sites throughout the territory. These will carry the message of clean elections and will also encourage the public to report all suspected cases of corrupt and illegal conduct that they are aware of to the ICAC. The ICAC will keep all information in strict confidence. A 24-hour election enquiry hotline (tel no. 2920 6530) has been set up.

14. Relevant provisions of the Election (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance (ECICO), the ICAC clean elections programme and reference materials will be publicized through a dedicated website and a new webcasting channel placed in the website of the ICAC (www.icac.org.hk). An information booklet on the gist of ECICO will be given to candidates and their election agents at the time of their

nomination. ICAC representatives will speak at briefings to be organized by REO to remind candidates and their agents of common pitfalls and points to note. In addition, a reminder leaflet will be sent to all electors together with the poll card to remind them to abide by law in elections. The message of clean elections and the major provisions of the ECICO will also be conveyed to the public through pamphlets and roving exhibitions.

15. We will also make use of special TV programmes to promote public awareness of various arrangements and legislative provisions which protect the secrecy of votes.

16. A summary table of the activities is at **Annex**.

Financial Implications

17. We estimate that the publicity programme will cost about \$30 million. Sufficient provision for this purpose has been included under REO's Head of Expenditure for 2004 – 05.

Consultation with the Electoral Affairs Commission

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

Conclusion

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

Constitutional Affairs Bureau
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Publicity for the 2004 Legislative Council Election Turnout

<u>Responsible Bureaux/ Departments</u>	<u>Activities</u>
Constitutional Affairs Bureau (CAB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Overall coordination of the election turnout publicity
Home Affairs Department (HAD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Roving exhibitions in areas with high pedestrian flow● Bus parades in districts● Buntings and banners in districts
Registration and Electoral Office (REO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● General Briefings for candidates● Sample Polling Station● Electoral Information Centre● Hotline service to handle public enquiries related to elections● Dedicated election website
Information Services Department (ISD)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Announcements of public interest (APIs) on television and radio● Coordinate special radio programmes● Display of posters and giant wall banners, advertisements in MTR and on tram, bus and taxi bodies, and hyperlinks to the dedicated election website.● Advertisements on newspapers
Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Kick-off ceremony● Special TV and radio programmes on Election Platforms and Forums

**Responsible Bureaux/
Departments**

Activities

- Carnivals
 - Radio phone in games
- Independent Commission
Against Corruption
(ICAC)
- Information booklet for candidates and election agents
 - Reminder leaflet for electors
 - Briefing sessions for candidates to be organized by REO
 - Report and Enquiry Hotlines
 - TV and Radio APIs
 - Posters and Advertisements
 - Web publicity, including a clean LegCo Election website and a webcasting programme