

**Replies to supplementary questions raised by Finance Committee Members in  
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2007-08**

**Director of Bureau : Secretary for Constitutional Affairs**

**Session No. : 9**

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| <b>Reply Serial<br/>No.</b>    | <b>Question<br/>Serial No.</b> | <b>Name of Member</b> | <b>Head</b> | <b>Programme</b>       |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------|------------------------|
| <a href="#"><u>S-CAB01</u></a> | SV024                          | LAU Wai-hing, Emily   | 144         | Constitutional Affairs |

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO  
SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

**S-CAB01**

Question Serial No.

SV024

Head : 144 GS: Constitutional Affairs Bureau      Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Constitutional Affairs

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Constitutional Affairs

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Constitutional Affairs

Question : At the request of Hon Emily LAU, Chairman of the Finance Committee, the Administration agrees to provide information on the detailed breakdown of the \$1.5 million reserved for conducting the public consultation on the roadmap for implementing universal suffrage.

Asked by : Hon. LAU Wai-hing, Emily

Reply :

When preparing the draft Estimates, our cardinal consideration is to seek a provision not greater than is necessary for delivering the concrete tasks envisaged. Otherwise, we would be depriving the community of much needed funds for pursuing other equally deserving public policies and services.

Discussions at the Commission on Strategic Development (CSD) clearly indicate that the process in search of a consensus on the implementation of universal suffrage is interactive. The contents of the report to summarize the discussions of the CSD and the detailed plans for public consultation on the report are, therefore, evolving. Our current plan is to publish the report in around mid-2007. For budget planning purpose, at this stage, we have set aside \$1.5 million. The estimated provision covers the following items:

| <u>Items</u>  | <u>Estimated<br/>cost</u> |
|---|---------------------------|
| (a) Publication of public consultation document                             | \$0.4 million             |
| (b) Public consultation and publicity activities                            | \$1 million               |
| (c) Maintenance of a dedicated website for the public consultation exercise | \$0.05 million            |

| <u>Items</u>  | <u>Estimated<br/>cost</u> |
|---|---------------------------|
| (d) Other expenses (e.g. postage, stationery and other miscellaneous items) | \$0.05 million            |
| Total   | \$1.5 million             |

The above estimate covers expenditure directly related to the public consultation exercise. The provision does not cover staff costs, as these would be absorbed from within the existing resources of the Constitutional Affairs Bureau.

We would like to emphasize that the \$1.5 million earmarked represents a prudent approach to budgeting. Subject to established rules, policy bureaux have flexibility to redeploy funds within their allocation. The HKSAR Government attaches great importance to narrowing the differences in views on the models of universal suffrage, and if discussions at CSD suggest that the public consultation exercise needs to involve expenditure items beyond those envisaged, the Constitutional Affairs Bureau will redeploy resources within its own allocation to ensure that the exercise will be conducted in a proper and wholesome manner.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name in block letters \_\_\_\_\_ Mrs. Cherry Tse

Post Title \_\_\_\_\_ Permanent Secretary for  
Constitutional Affairs

Date \_\_\_\_\_ 23 March 2007