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SCMA speaks on Green Paper on Constitutional Development

Following is the transcript (English portion) of the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Stephen Lam, speaking to the media today (July 15):

Reporter: Mr Lam, can you just respond to the concern expressed by Mr Yeung (Sum) earlier over ... concerning the nomination procedure?

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs: I think at this stage the most important point is that we should agree on the number of candidates which the nominating committee should put forth, i.e. whether it is more than 10, eight, or two to four? Once we have reached a consensus on that point, we can discuss further and in more detail what sort of democratic procedures we should set for these candidates to be put forth. There is no need for us to be overly concerned at this stage. Any proposals put forth by the Government will require a two-thirds majority in the Legislative Council (LegCo) to become a constitutional proposal to be put to Beijing. So, there will be ample opportunities for us to discuss and agree on suitable arrangements to make the system for returning the Chief Executive (CE) democratically.

Reporter: From what you are saying during the forum, you basically haven't ruled out any pre-screening of possible candidates in the CE election?

Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs: I think it is unhelpful for us to label at this stage any particular sets of procedures as "pre-screening" or otherwise. What we do need to do is to settle on a number of candidates which we believe will be suitable for the nominating committee to put forth as CE candidates for the 3.2 million registered voters of Hong Kong to choose. Thereafter, all of us together - the Government, the LegCo - can agree on suitable constitutional and democratic procedures for choosing these candidates. I think that is a much more helpful, constructive and constitutional approach to take.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

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