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CMAB responds to comments on Green Paper

Regarding media enquiries today (July 24) about the Government's response to "model answers" for the Green Paper on Constitutional Development (Green Paper) prepared by 22 Legislative Council (LegCo) Members, a spokesman of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau made the following response:

The Green Paper has presented to the public all the proposals on the implementation of universal suffrage in a systemic and structured manner. We hope that, after adequate discussion within the community, a consensus and mainstream view can emerge.

It is a responsible way for us to present systematically in the Green Paper the main elements contained in some 300 proposals which we have received. This can enable the public to discuss and make choices on the different options, roadmap and timetable for implementing universal suffrage.

Regarding the allegation made by the 22 LegCo Members that there are "traps" hidden in the Green Paper, this is totally untrue and ungrounded:

(1) It is entirely proper to invite the public to give their views on the number of candidates to be put forth to stand for universal suffrage election as the Chief Executive (CE). It is important that the people of Hong Kong know how many candidates will be standing in the general election, so that they will have an idea of the scope and scale of the election in which they will play a part.

Regarding different proposals on the nomination threshold, the Green Paper has presented the options involved clearly, including Mrs Anson Chan and her Core Group's proposal of setting the nomination threshold at 10 per cent, and the 22 LegCo Members' proposal that a candidate can be nominated by 50 members from the 1200-strong nominating committee.

(2) Regarding the requirement of "nomination by the nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures", the Green Paper has already set out all the relevant views received (see paragraphs 3.23-3.37 of the Green Paper). The Government's position is that, after we have reached consensus on the number of candidates available for election, detailed procedures can be discussed further and agreed upon.

(3) Aside from the size and composition, paragraphs 3.19-3.22 of the Green Paper also cover the electorate base and the method for forming the nominating committee.

(4) In the Green Paper, we have only reflected to the public the submissions received in respect of the proposal that "universal suffrage for the CE should precede that for LegCo". The HKSAR Government has not taken any view on this issue. At this stage, we are inviting views from the public on

the electoral methods for implementing universal suffrage both for the CE and the LegCo.

(5) Regarding the roadmap and timetable for implementing universal suffrage, we have been very open in covering all the options in the Green Paper, including 2012, 2017 or beyond 2017 for the CE; and 2012, 2016 or beyond 2016 for the LegCo.

The fact that the HKSAR Government has issued the Green Paper 11 days after inauguration on July 1 underlines the commitment of the Government to resolve the issue of universal suffrage within the five-year term.

In accordance with the established practice, the purpose of publishing the Green Paper is for the HKSAR Government to listen to public views on all relevant issues relating to universal suffrage; and that at this stage, the Government refrains from taking a stance on the matter.

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