

Press Release

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Transcript of SCA's standup briefing (English only)

Following is the transcript of the standup briefing given by the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Mr Stephen Lam, after attending the motion debate on "Electing the Chief Executive by universal suffrage" of the Legislative Council meeting this (November 22) afternoon (English only):

Reporter: Mr Lam, some people are saying that actually Beijing do not think Hong Kong will be ready for universal suffrage of our Chief Executive in 2012, or in any time, until a DAB candidate will win the election. Do you agree?

Secretary for Constitutional Affairs: I think we should go back to the Basic Law. The system of universal suffrage for returning the Chief Executive will be designed, not in the specific interest of any particular political party, but to suit the overall interest of Hong Kong.

We need to do three things. Firstly, we need to design a nominating committee which is broadly representative of Hong Kong community. Secondly, we need to devise some systems and procedures for allowing candidates to secure a sufficient degree of support among the nominating committee. Thirdly, we need to set a system for nominated candidates to be elected through "one man, one vote" by the registered voters of Hong Kong. So these three steps are relatively clear and the focal point in the discussions among the Commission on Strategic Development now is how we can compose and how we can form the nominating committee.

Reporter: The problem is actually many legislators, as we heard in the debate, are saying that these are technical details and we should actually come up with a time table for universal suffrage first, because these are only technical things. And so they think the Government and also those who are against universal suffrage in 2012 are using some excuses.

Secretary for Constitutional Affairs: Our position is that first, we should devise a road map and have consensus on the systems for implementing universal suffrage. These are not just technical details. These are constitutional aspects of Hong Kong's future electoral system, and these aspects are terribly important. Before we have a consensus on the system for returning the Chief Executive by universal suffrage, before we have devised a road map for getting from where we are to the ultimate aim of universal suffrage, we cannot fix a time table. If we fix a time table for attaining universal suffrage in a vacuum, that will be irresponsible. It would be like a bus-driver who wishes to get to the bus terminus through taking a short cut, bypassing essential stops en route, and that would be irresponsible.

Ends/Wednesday, November 22, 2006
Issued at HKT 21:16

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