



***D-Dong's Response to the Consultation Paper
on the District Council Appointment System***

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1. Introduction to D-Dong

D-Dong is one of the few non-district-based youth organizations in Hong Kong. It was established by a group of high-calibre young people in 2010.

Our major focuses are issues related to youth culture and policies, and we release research reports regularly. All researches are conducted in the most serious and professional manner. We are eager to increase the public awareness of youth problems and youth issues, and to recommend policies that are beneficial to the young people in Hong Kong.

Moreover, we encourage the young people to contribute to society and participate in various community activities. D-Dong is the ideal place for them to experience the joy of contributing to Hong Kong and China.

D-Dong is an elitist organization. All the members are carefully chosen in order to satisfy the demanding requirement of the organization.

2. Response to the Consultation Paper

2.1 Advantages of Abolishing the District Council Appointment System

D-Dong supports the abolition of the District Council appointment system all in one stroke starting from the fifth term of the DCs which will commence operation on 1 January 2016. The reasons are as follows:

- I. After the 1997 handover, the public became increasingly demanding for democracy. If the next term of the DCs still retains appointed seats, it will exert negative effects on the credibility of the DCs. If it is to be abolished over one term, that will enhance their credibility and lay down the foundation for further improvement in terms of authority;
- II. Most people regard “democracy” as a system that they can exercise their right to choose, whether directly or indirectly. Since it is the Chief
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Executive who may appoint as members of a DC, and the next CE is not yet elected by universal suffrage, the appointed members, if to be retained, in terms of either direct democracy or indirect democracy, will contain no democratic component, and so it is not a good idea to abolish the appointment system over two terms; and

- III. It will be seen as a monument on the road to democracy and reveal the determination to constitutional reform.

2.2 Encourage the Appointed Members to Run in Election

We agree with paragraph 2.11 that the appointed DC members have made significant contributions to society. Once it is abolished, we expect that some of them, with the advantage of being DC members, will choose to run in election. We welcome this kind of transition. Most of them have professional backgrounds and many of them are the elites in Hong Kong, but the 2010 constitutional reform had weakened their political influence. So if they can renew their terms of office with a mandate from the voters, it will increase the quality and political influence of the DCs as a whole. As, we sometimes hear people complain about the quality of elected DC members, we think that it will be better for the appointed DC members to run in election rather than retaining the appointment system.

2.3 Jointly Review the Authorities of the DCs and Home Affairs Department

However, we do not agree to abolish the appointment system just for the sake of abolition. It is not only a response to the public's demand, but it is also important to increase the authority and efficiency of the DCs. Most people expect institutions that are the most relevant to their daily lives such as the DCs to be democratically composed. For now, the DCs are merely advisory institutions and, to a certain extent, tend to overlap the functions of the 18 district offices of the Home Affairs Department. The DC members help to maintain the community networks and gather public opinions in the districts, which are supposed to be jobs of the HAD, too. And what is more, the HAD is not responsible to the DCs. In other words, there are two public institutions that perform very similar functions in Hong Kong. We think that the HAD should

review its authority in light of the abolition of the DC appointment system. In the long run, the HAD should gradually pass its authority to the DCs and eventually become a mere executive brand of the DCs or completely replaced by them. It is meaningless to talk about rendering the DCs more democratic without giving them more authorities.

3. Summary

We support the abolition of the DC appointment system in order to render the DCs more democratic, and encourage high-calibre appointed DC members to run in election and to enhance the quality and political influence of the DCs as a whole. We look forward to a joint reform of the DCs and HAD to increase the efficiency of district administration.