

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

Publicity Programme for the 2000 Legislative Council Elections

Purpose

This paper sets out the main features of the publicity programme for the elections of the second term Legislative Council (LegCo) of the HKSAR.

Background

2. With the conclusion of the voter registration drive on 16 March 2000, we now move on to the next stage of our publicity efforts to call on all registered voters to cast their votes in the Election Committee (EC) subsector elections on 9 July and the general election on 10 September. We have formulated a large scale publicity programme to be launched between May and September. An inter-departmental steering group comprising representatives from Constitutional Affairs Bureau (CAB), Home Affairs Bureau (HAB), Home Affairs Department (HAD), Information Services Department (ISD), Registration and Electoral Office (REO), Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) and Independent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) has been formed to work out details of the publicity programme and monitor its implementation.

Objectives

3. Our main objective is to encourage voter participation in the LegCo elections by –

- (a) helping voters to understand the elections and their impact on daily life;
- (b) providing voters with information about candidates of the elections and the nuts-and-bolts of the voting process itself; and
- (c) creating and sustaining an election atmosphere.

4. Besides, we also aim to familiarize candidates, election agents/helpers and voters with the spirit and basics of the newly enacted Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance (ECICO) and to promote clean elections among the community.

5. Promotional efforts in the month of May will be predominantly awareness-raising and educational in nature, with a view to setting the scene for the upcoming electoral events. Between June and early July, publicity

activities will centre around the EC subsector elections. Following a centrally coordinated election carnival in mid-July, the publicity campaign will reach its full-blown stage, culminating in an all-out effort in the week leading up to polling day. We will be deploying all promotional tactics that have proven to be effective in the last elections, including special programmes and regular announcements on TV and radio, the internet, posters, leaflets, parades and carnivals, and appeal messages from celebrities. Throughout the whole period, the importance of clean elections will be actively promoted by the ICAC through multi-media channels.

6. Highlights of our publicity programme are set out in the following paragraphs.

Publicity Programme

Understanding how LegCo and the elections work

7. Helping voters to understand how LegCo works and how to make their voices heard will increase their motivation to get involved in the electoral process. We will be organising a territory-wide roving exhibition with display panels showing the functions and formation of LegCo in major shopping arcades from July onward. RTHK will produce a series of special programmes to be broadcast on TV and radio during prime time, to explain the composition of the second term LegCo and highlight the importance of voting in a lively manner.

Accessibility to information about candidates and the voting process

8. Voters need access to candidates' information to make informed decisions in elections. We will be providing essential information about candidates through an election publication available to members of the public free of charge. RTHK will set aside free TV and radio airtime for candidates to introduce their platforms and to make appeals to voters. Voters can also meet with their candidates face to face in election fora to be broadcast on TV and radio. All these programmes will be uploaded to the internet to reach the computer-orientated population. In addition, voters can gain on-line access to candidates' platforms through the Election Homepage specially set up for the 2000 LegCo elections by REO.

9. On the voting process itself, we will make use of different publicity vehicles to widely publicise the polling procedures, including the use of chops in marking ballot papers. Through the respective District Offices, HAD will organise mock voting exercises in district exhibitions or during visits to

community groups and schools.

Creating and sustaining an election atmosphere

10. Publicity efforts at the central level will be complemented by district events in sustaining an election atmosphere throughout the election period. In addition to a centrally coordinated election carnival to be held in mid-July, District Offices will be organising exhibitions, carnivals and parades in their respective districts. We will also collaborate with local organisations such as Mutual Aid Committees and Owners' Corporations to bring the election message practically to the doorstep of the electorate.

11. High visibility is the key to our publicity programme. Giant advertisement posters and promotional displays will be put up at prominent sites throughout the territory. Publicity materials will be imprinted with a logo of the 2000 LegCo elections to remind registered voters to cast their votes on polling day. A set of two souvenir cards with very attractive design will be issued to all geographical constituency voters, along with their poll cards, to commemorate the LegCo elections. In the run-up to polling day, we will enlist the assistance of celebrities to make appeals to voters through various media channels, whilst senior officials will make use of their public speaking engagements to drive home the election message.

Young People

12. Special efforts will be devoted to get young voters to vote. We will be launching a cyber campaign on REO's Election Homepage to provide election-related information to young people through the internet. Appeal advertisements will be placed on popular websites. Senior form students will be invited to visit REO's Electoral Information Centre which has a wide range of electoral information in textual and interactive formats. HAD will organise educational games and competitions targetted at secondary school students to help them better understand the roles and functions of LegCo. ICAC will promote to the young people the importance of clean elections through activities conducted for schools, e.g. ICAC Weeks, and ICAC's Home Page for Youth on the internet.

Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance (ECICO)

13. The ECICO, passed by LegCo in February 2000, will be applicable to the elections of the second term LegCo. Leaflets are now available at ICAC's Regional Offices to provide a handy reference on the main provisions of the ECICO and the major changes in the ECICO in comparison with the

repealed Corrupt and Illegal Practices Ordinance. An election hotline has been set up to answer enquiries concerning ECICO. Briefings will jointly be organised by ICAC and REO to remind candidates and their agents/helpers of common election pitfalls and points to note in view of the enactment of the new law. In conjunction with District Offices, ICAC Regional Offices will promote clean elections through district activities and roving exhibitions.

14. Details of the publicity programme are at Annex.

Budget

15. We estimate that the publicity programme will cost about \$50 million. Sufficient resources have been set aside to meet the financial requirements.

Conclusion

16. Members are requested to note the content of this paper.

Constitutional Affairs Bureau
April 2000

Publicity Programme for the 2000 Legislative Council Elections

(A) Territory-wide programmes

- TV and radio APIs, special radio programmes in commercial stations, games and countdown programmes on TV, posters and leaflets, vantage point and cinema advertising, advertisements in newspaper and magazines, election playroom and GIC banners in internet and 'election special'.

(B) District activities

- educational games and competitions for secondary and post-secondary students, buntings and banners, briefings for mutual aid committees and owners' corporations, district roving exhibitions and mock votings, bus and van parades, advertisements in district newspapers, special carnivals and souvenirs.

(C) RTHK programmes

- election carnival, special TV and radio programmes, election fora and electoral information on internet.

(D) REO programmes

- commemorative cards, central briefings for candidates by EAC chairman, briefing for candidates and agents with ICAC and Police, training of polling and counting staff, sample polling stations, election enquiry hotline, visits to Electoral Information Centre and election homepage on the Internet.

(E) ICAC programmes

- press conference, pamphlets, information packages and VCD on ECICO, election enquiry hotline, handbook and mail inserts on 'Support Clean Elections', briefings for Returning Officers and candidates, TV spot series, TV and radio APIs, press, journal and internet advertisements, school promotions on ECICO and clean elections, posters and special features in ICAC newsletter/publications.