

Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs

Constitutional Development Task Force Progress of Work

Introduction

On 21 June 2004, the Constitutional Development Task Force (“the Task Force”) informed the Legislative Council (LegCo) Panel on Constitutional Affairs of the progress of work of the Task Force since the publication of its Third Report on 11 May 2004, and briefed Members on the next stage of work (Paper no. CB(2)2857/03-04(02)). This paper informs Members of the work of the Task Force since then.

Consultation period

2. Originally, three and a half months were set aside for public consultation for the Third Report. The consultation deadline was 31 August 2004. In August, in response to feedback from the community that more time should be allowed for public discussion, the Task Force extended the consultation period by one month to 30 September 2004. Subsequently, in the light of requests from some Members of the Legislative Council, the Task Force further extended the consultation deadline to 15 October 2004. In total, therefore, the consultation period lasted five months.

Public submissions

3. As at 15 October 2004 afternoon, the Task Force had received over 430 written submissions from the community, of which more than 90 submissions were from organisations. The submissions

are being processed. All submissions, except those which have requested confidentiality, will be made public when the Task Force publishes its Fourth Report. Several organisations and individuals that put in written submissions also requested meetings with the Task Force. The Task Force met them accordingly to hear their views and proposals.

Seminars & Forums

4. In order to encourage different sectors of the community to discuss the issues set out in the Third Report in a more in-depth manner, the Task Force commissioned the Central Policy Unit (CPU) and the Home Affairs Department (HAD) to organise, respectively, a total of 12 discussion sessions. The discussion sessions, held between May and August 2004, comprised two seminars, four regional forums, and six focus groups. These were attended by a total of over 870 participants from different sectors, including young people and the expatriate community.

5. In each discussion session, the participants were divided into groups of about 20 each. The discussions were led by facilitators who were community personalities and academics invited by the Task Force to help out on a voluntary basis. During the discussions, note-takers would record the views expressed, without attribution, on flipcharts so that participants could refer to them in the first instance. Towards the end of the discussions, the facilitators would confirm the recorded views with their respective group members. For the two constitutional development seminars, the regional forums and the focus group for young people, the group facilitators reported the discussion summaries at the plenary sessions which were attended by all participants.

6. To enhance the transparency of the process, the discussion summaries of all the above sessions have been uploaded onto the Constitutional Development Website (www.cab-review.gov.hk) for public information. Three sets of the summaries have been deposited with the LegCo Secretariat for Members' reference.

Next Stage of Work

7. The Task Force will be issuing a Fourth Report within this year. The Task Force will continue to consult the community on changes to be made to the methods for the selection of the Chief Executive in 2007 and for forming the Legislative Council in 2008. The aim is to arrive at a set of electoral arrangements that is feasible and acceptable to the Hong Kong community at large.

Constitutional Affairs Bureau
15 October 2004