

Legislative Council Panel on Home Affairs

Rural Elections

This information note reports the progress of the rural elections in 2007, namely the Village Representative (VR) election, the Rural Committee (RC) election and the Heung Yee Kuk (the Kuk) election.

(a) Background

2. To ensure that the VR elections are open, fair and consistent with the Hong Kong Bill of Rights Ordinance (Cap 383) and the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (Cap 480), the Government enacted the Village Representative Election Ordinance (Cap 576) (“the Ordinance”) in 2003 to provide a statutory basis for VR elections. Under the Ordinance, there are 1 480 VR seats, including 693 Resident Representatives (RRs) and 787 Indigenous Inhabitant Representatives (IIRs). The first ordinary VR elections were held in 2003 and the term ended on 31 March 2007. The second ordinary VR elections were held in January and February 2007 to return VRs for the new 4-year term from 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2011.

(b) Latest Progress

2007 Village Representative Election

3. Prior to the 2007 VR election, a voter registration exercise was conducted in June/July 2006. This has added about 14 000 new electors to the voter register which now has some 170 000 voters.

4. The 2007 VR elections were conducted over five consecutive weekends from 6 January to 4 February 2007 (i.e. a total of 10 polling days). A total of 632 candidates from 191 villages contested 324 seats, comprising seats for 200 IIRs and 124 RRs. 43 220 electors from these 191 villages turned out to cast their votes. The overall turnout rate was 67.08%. Overall speaking, these VR elections were conducted in a smooth manner under the oversight of the Electoral Affairs Commission.

Rural Committee Election

5. The elections of chairmen/ vice-chairman/ executive committee members of the 27 RCs were held between 15 January and 22 March 2007. These elections were held under the provisions of the constitutions of the respective RCs with the District Officers serving as Returning Officers. The elected chairmen of the RCs take up the ex-officio District Council seats in their respective districts from 1 April 2007.

Heung Yee Kuk Election

6. The election of Special Councillors of the Kuk will be held on 10 May 2007. The elections of Executive Committee Members, Vice-chairmen and Chairman will take place on 1 June 2007.

(c) Way Forward

7. After completion of all the rural elections in 2007, the Administration and the Kuk will jointly conduct a review of the rural elections. The review will include matters such as the electoral arrangements for the VR elections, the question of enacting legislation for the RC elections, etc.

Home Affairs Bureau
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