

For information on
8 April 2011

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON HOME AFFAIRS

Matters Relating to the Village Representative Elections

PURPOSE

This paper provides Members with information on the key features of the arrangements and outcome of the 2011 Village Representative (VR) Elections.

BACKGROUND

2. VR Elections have been brought under statutory control since the enactment of the Village Representative Election Ordinance (VREO) (Cap 576) in 2003. There are two types of VRs under the VREO, namely the Indigenous Inhabitant Representatives (IIRs) and Resident Representatives (RRs). The functions of IIRs are to reflect views on the affairs of the village on behalf of the indigenous inhabitants of the village, and to deal with all affairs relating to the lawful traditional rights and interests, and the traditional way of life, of those indigenous inhabitants. The function of RRs is to reflect views on the affairs of the village on behalf of the residents of the village.

3. Under the VREO, there are now 1 484 VR seats, including 789 IIRs and 695 RRs.

4. With the provisions of the Voting by Imprisoned Persons Ordinance and the amendment regulations made by the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC) coming into operation in October 2009, the 2011 VR Elections were the first VR Elections in which Dedicated Polling Stations were set up for registered electors imprisoned, remanded or detained by law enforcement agencies to vote.

2011 VR ELECTIONS

5. The 2011 VR Elections were held in four consecutive Sundays from 2 to 23 January 2011. Polling days were reduced from 10 in the 2007 VR Elections to 4 for these VR Elections. The number of registered voters for the 2011 VR Elections increased by over 7%, from around 170,000 in 2007 to over 182,000 in 2011. The percentage of female registered voters for the 2011 VR Elections was 47.3%, comparable to the last, 2007 VR Elections.

6. A total of 808 candidates from 246 villages contested 414 seats. Of these, 273 were IIR seats and 141, RR seats. Amongst the 808 candidates, 17 are females and 8 won the elections. Of the 79,900 registered electors in all contested elections, around 50,800 turned out to vote, representing a turnout rate of 63.6% which was comparable to the 2007 VR Elections.

7. HAD mounted various publicity campaigns to promote voter registration and encourage registered voters to vote. We set up a dedicated VR Election website; advertised on newspapers, television and radio; displayed banners, posters and notices at villages in the New Territories; distributed voter registration forms and leaflets; arranged mobile broadcast on vehicles; and issued numerous press releases. Female voters were also targeted in our promotion efforts.

8. Overall, the VR Elections were conducted smoothly and in a fair, open and honest manner under the oversight of the EAC.

OTHER RELATED MATTERS

9. VRs are members of Rural Committees (RCs). The elections of Chairmen, Vice-chairmen and Executive Committee members of the 27 RCs took place between 16 February and 25 March 2011. The new term of RCs starts on 1 April 2011 for four years. With the posts of RC Chairmen and Vice-chairmen filled, Heung Yee Kuk (HYK) will hold elections for its Chairman and Vice-chairmen on 1 June 2011. The

Chairmen and Vice-chairmen of the RCs are ex-officio councilors of the HYK.

WAY FORWARD

10. To identify room for improvement for the conduct of future VR Elections, the Administration will conduct a review on the 2011 VR Elections in the light of the operational experience gained.

Home Affairs Department
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