

**Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs**

**Publicity for the 2016 Legislative Council General Election**

**Purpose**

This paper outlines the main features of the proposed publicity programme for the 2016 Legislative Council (“LegCo”) general election.

**Background**

2. The 2016 LegCo general election will be held on 4 September 2016. As in previous elections, we will launch a series of publicity activities for the 2016 LegCo general election. An inter-departmental working group led by the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau has been set up to organise the publicity campaign. The working group comprises representatives from the Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”), Home Affairs Department, Information Services Department, Independent Commission Against Corruption and Radio Television Hong Kong.

3. On voter registration (“VR”), the 2016 VR campaign commenced on 5 March. This year, the statutory deadlines for VR and changing registration particulars are both set as 2 May 2016. Eligible persons who have yet to register as electors must submit their applications before the aforementioned deadline so that they can be included in the final registers to be published in July 2016 and vote in the 2016 LegCo general election and/or other public elections. As at 1 April, the REO has received about 70 000 VR applications and about 100 000 applications for change of particulars in the 2016 VR cycle. Besides, the REO continues to implement checking measures and carry out inquiry process in this cycle so as to enhance the accuracy and completeness of registration particulars. The Government is publicising the VR messages through various channels, including calling upon eligible persons to register as electors, reminding registered electors to update their registration particulars, encouraging electors to use the Online Voter Information Enquiry System to verify their registration status and particulars, as well as reminding electors against whom the inquiry process has been initiated to reply before the deadline, etc. The 2016 provisional registers and omissions lists will be published on 1 June for public inspection.

4. As for voter turnout publicity, we will launch the publicity campaign as detailed below from early July to 4 September 2016 to call upon electors to cast their votes at the election.

## **Main Features of the Publicity Campaign**

5. The main features of the publicity campaign are summarised in paragraphs 6 to 8 below.

### **(a) Objectives of the Publicity Campaign**

6. The objectives of the publicity campaign are to promote public awareness of the polling day of the 2016 LegCo general election and to call upon all registered electors to exercise their right to vote at the election on 4 September. Besides, we will publicise the nomination period to encourage eligible persons to stand for election. Efforts will also be made to publicise the electoral procedures and promote clean and fair elections.

### **(b) Timing of the Publicity Programme**

7. The publicity campaign will run for about two months from early July to 4 September 2016 (polling day). We will adopt a phased approach in building up the intensity of the publicity. From early July to before the end of nomination period on 29 July, the emphasis will be put on publicising the nomination period of the election. The emphasis during the canvassing period that follows will be put on encouraging electors to cast their votes, publicising the electoral procedures and promoting clean and fair elections. In the last week before the polling day, we will further step up publicity to call upon electors to cast their votes.

### **(c) Publicity Activities**

8. A series of publicity activities will be launched through various channels in phases starting from early July, including:

- (a) Announcements of Public Interest with sign language interpretation will be broadcast on TV, outdoor large-scale screens, public transport, government venues and online as well as on radio;
- (b) advertisements will be placed at vantage points (e.g., major vehicular tunnels, ferry piers, bus shelters, MTR stations and trains, bus and tram bodies, etc.);
- (c) giant wall banners and billboards will be mounted on the exterior walls of commercial and government buildings in districts;
- (d) banners and lamppost buntings will be installed at specific locations;

- (e) posters will be put up in districts;
- (f) advertisements will be placed on newspapers;
- (g) advertisements will be placed on popular Internet websites;
- (h) dedicated websites will be set up for easy access to information on the election itself and promoting clean elections;
- (i) special radio programmes will be produced to publicise voting procedures and encourage voting;
- (j) election forums will be held and broadcast on TV and radio to enhance electors' understanding of the candidates' platforms;
- (k) briefing sessions will be held for candidates, their electioneering teams, political parties, the elderly, students, etc. on the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance and the proper conduct of electioneering and canvassing activities;
- (l) the message of clean elections will be publicised through roving exhibitions;
- (m) mock polling stations will be set up for electors to familiarise themselves with polling procedures;
- (n) publicity activities will be rolled out on the newspapers and radio programmes for ethnic minorities; and
- (o) enquiry and reporting hotlines will be set up.

### **Financial Implications**

9. The expenditure on the publicity programme mentioned in paragraphs 6-8 above is estimated to be about \$33 million. Sufficient provision has been included in REO's estimated expenditure for 2016-17 for this purpose.

### **Advice Sought**

10. Members are invited to comment on the proposed publicity programme.