

CE's Statement on passage of Decision on improving HKSAR's electoral system by the National People's Congress

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, issued the following statement today (March 11) in response to the passage of the Decision on improving the electoral system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) at the fourth session of the 13th National People's Congress (NPC):

I, together with the governing team of the HKSAR Government, would like to pledge our staunch support for and sincere gratitude to the passage of the Decision on improving the electoral system of the HKSAR by the NPC this afternoon.

The political structure of HKSAR, of which the electoral system is an essential component, is the prerogative of the Central Authorities. The Decision, made in accordance with Article 31 and Article 62(2), 62(14) and 62(16) of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China, and relevant requirements in the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and the Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, is fully constitutional and legal.

Having considered the actual situation in Hong Kong, the Central Authorities take the initiative from the national level to improve the electoral system of Hong Kong, aiming to ensure that Hong Kong can stay true to the original aspiration in implementing the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" and get Hong Kong back on the right track; it is only by putting in place institutional safeguards to ensure "patriots administering Hong Kong" that the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" can be fully and faithfully applied in the HKSAR which is conducive to the long term prosperity and stability of the city.

The HKSAR Government fully supports the fundamental principles adopted in the Decision for guiding amendments to Annex I of the Basic Law on Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Annex II on Method for the Formation of the Legislative Council of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and its Voting Procedures, i.e. (i) upholding and implementing the principles of "One Country, Two Systems", "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong" and a high degree of autonomy; (ii) firmly safeguarding the constitutional order of the HKSAR as enshrined under the Constitution and the Basic Law; (iii) ensuring "patriots administering Hong Kong"; (iv) effectively enhancing the governance capability of the HKSAR; and (v) upholding HKSAR permanent residents' right to vote and the right to stand for election in accordance with law.

The Decision has authorised the Standing Committee of the NPC (NPCSC) to

amend Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law according to the aforementioned principles. I, together with the HKSAR Government, will render our full cooperation in facilitating the amendments, and press ahead with the necessary amendments to the relevant local electoral legislation thereafter. We will conduct and regulate election-related activities in accordance with the law efficiently, so as to implement the new electoral system that accords with the actual situation in Hong Kong.

I note that the expanded and broadly representative Election Committee (EC) which should reflect the overall interest of Hong Kong is the core element of the improvement to the electoral system. The reconstituted EC will not only nominate and elect the Chief Executive, but also be endowed with the new function of nominating candidates for the Legislative Council (LegCo) election and electing some of the legislators. The HKSAR Government will provide the NPCSC with our views on the composition of the five sectors of the EC, with a view to ensuring the EC fulfills the requirements of being broadly representative and reflecting the overall interests of our society.

The Decision also stipulates the establishment of an eligibility vetting mechanism for the different elections of the HKSAR to provide a robust systemic safeguard for implementing the principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong" in our political system. It is only when the offices of the Chief Executive, Election Committee members and LegCo members are filled by determined patriots can the full and resolute implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" be ensured; national security, sovereignty and development interests of the Country be safeguarded; and Hong Kong's long-term stability and prosperity be maintained.

As Chief Executive of the HKSAR, I will lead my governing team to dutifully ensure the full and resolute implementation of the principle of "One Country, Two Systems", administer Hong Kong according to the rule of law, safeguard the constitutional order of the HKSAR as defined under the Constitution and the Basic Law, safeguard the Country's sovereignty, security and development interests, and ensure the overall stability of Hong Kong. I firmly believe that, after the principle of "patriots administering Hong Kong" is fully implemented and loopholes of the existing electoral system are plugged, we will be able to resolve the problem of the LegCo making everything political in recent years and effectively deal with the reckless moves or internal rift that have torn Hong Kong apart. It will then allow us to leverage our unique advantages to develop the economy and improve livelihood of our citizens with the staunch support of the Central Authorities.

The HKSAR Government will spare no effort in continuing to explain to the public about the necessity and urgency of improving the electoral system as well as the solid constitutional basis of the Decision. Upon the passage of the amendments to Annex I and Annex II to the Basic Law by the NPCSC, the HKSAR Government will enact the needed local legislation as soon as practicable, and conduct the relevant elections efficiently in light of the actual circumstances in Hong Kong, including the pandemic situation.