

EAC Chairman chairs first meeting of Crisis Management Committee

The following is issued on behalf of the Electoral Affairs Commission:

The Chairman of the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC), Mr Justice Barnabas Fung Wah, chaired the first meeting of the Crisis Management Committee (CMC) this afternoon (September 15) to prepare for the 2021 Election Committee Subsector (ECSS) Ordinary Elections to be held on September 19 (Sunday).

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"The ECSS Ordinary Elections are the first public elections after the Improving Electoral System (Consolidated Amendments) Ordinance 2021 was enacted. When it comes to public elections, openness, fairness and honesty are the most basic principles. The EAC will strive to follow these principles and make practical arrangements in accordance with the law," Mr Justice Fung said at today's meeting.

"Following the enactment of the Ordinance, new arrangements were also introduced in the ECSS Ordinary Elections, which include using an Electronic Poll Register system to issue ballot papers, and the special queuing arrangements for persons who are aged 70 or above, persons who have difficulties in standing for a long time to queue due to their physical condition and pregnant women to collect ballot papers," he said.

"On the other hand, the Registration and Electoral Office (REO) will implement various measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the polling and counting stations, which include requiring all polling and counting staff to wear masks; not allowing staff with fever symptoms to perform election duties; and requiring candidates, their agents and voters/authorised representatives (ARs) to wear their own masks, use hand sanitiser and have their body temperature checked before entering polling and counting stations. Voters/ARs should maintain social distancing. The above arrangements have posed additional challenges to the preparatory work for the elections."

"To ensure the orderly implementation of various measures, as well as the smooth voting and counting processes on the polling day, the EAC is working with different bureaux and departments to closely monitor the situation, and has drawn up various security and crisis management plans to deal with different circumstances which may arise during the elections."

During the meeting, the EAC was briefed by representatives from the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau and relevant government departments including the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Hong Kong Police Force on the assessment of the different situations and deployment planned for the polling day. The REO, the Home Affairs Department, the Information Services Department and the Department of Justice also gave briefings on preparatory and co-ordination work regarding the

elections.

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Mr Justice Fung pointed out that the CMC will assist the EAC in closely monitoring the situation on the polling day and handle situations in which the elections are affected by different incidents.

The EAC thanked all the bureaux and departments for their efforts in the preparation and arrangement for the elections, and said that the meeting today helped to get better prepared and formulate contingency plans for the ECSS Ordinary Elections to be held on September 19.

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The CMC is part of the contingency mechanism for public elections. The CMC advises the EAC on matters which may affect the proceedings of the elections, such as inclement weather and issues on public health and safety. The Committee is chaired by the EAC Chairman, and comprises all EAC Members, the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (or his representative) and representatives of relevant bureaux/departments.