

Government's response on constitutional development

In response to media enquiries on constitutional development, a Government spokesman today (August 31) said, "Universal suffrage of 'one person, one vote' for selecting the Chief Executive (CE) and electing all Legislative Council (LegCo) members is enshrined as an ultimate aim in the Basic Law. Article 45 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (the Basic Law) stipulates that the method for selecting the CE shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the HKSAR and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the selection of the CE by universal suffrage upon nomination by a broadly representative nominating committee in accordance with democratic procedures. Article 68 of the Basic Law also stipulates that the method for forming the LegCo shall be specified in the light of the actual situation in the HKSAR and in accordance with the principle of gradual and orderly progress. The ultimate aim is the election of all the members of the LegCo by universal suffrage."

"Constitutional development must be taken forward in accordance with the Basic Law as well as the relevant Interpretation and Decisions of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC). The successful implementation of universal suffrage for selecting the CE requires endorsement from the LegCo by a two-thirds majority, consent of the CE, and approval by the NPCSC. The HKSAR Government of the previous term spent a total of 20 months to deal with the issue. Unfortunately, the relevant motion was voted down as it did not obtain support from a two-thirds majority of all members of the LegCo. The process has also created serious conflicts in the community."

"Issues relating to constitutional development are extremely controversial and the Government must act prudently. Rashly embarking on political reform again will further polarise society, which is an irresponsible act. Any discussions on constitutional development have to be premised on the legal basis, and be conducted under a peaceful atmosphere with mutual trust in a pragmatic manner. The HKSAR Government will assess the situation carefully and take forward constitutional development in accordance with the Basic Law and the relevant Interpretation and Decisions of the NPCSC."