

HKSARG responds to public meeting

In response to media enquiries on the public meeting in Central today (January 19), a Government spokesman made the following response:

"Universal suffrage of 'one person, one vote' for selecting the Chief Executive (the CE) and electing all Legislative Council (LegCo) members is enshrined as an ultimate aim in the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China (the Basic Law). The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government has all along been taking forward constitutional development in accordance with the Basic Law and the relevant Interpretation and Decisions of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (the NPCSC)."

"Article 45 of 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."

"On the sequence of implementing universal suffrage for the selection of the CE and the election of all members of the LegCo, according to the relevant Decisions of the NPCSC, after the CE is selected by universal suffrage, the election of the LegCo of the HKSAR may be implemented by the method of electing all the members by universal suffrage. In other words, we shall first implement the selection of the CE by universal suffrage before the CE selected by universal suffrage and the HKSAR Government under his/her leadership can take forward the method for electing all LegCo members by universal suffrage."

"According to the Basic Law and the relevant Interpretation and Decisions of the NPCSC, the successful implementation of universal suffrage for selecting the CE requires the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the LegCo, the consent of the CE, and the approval of the NPCSC."

"Since the return to the Motherland, the HKSAR has made three attempts to take forward constitutional reform. The HKSAR Government introduced in 2012 the relevant bills to amend the methods for selecting the CE and for forming the LegCo. The bills were successfully passed by a two-thirds majority of all members of the LegCo. As a result, the membership of the Election Committee was increased from 800 to 1 200, while that of the LegCo was increased from 60 to 70. Among the 10 newly-added LegCo seats, five of them are returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections, while the remaining five seats (District Council (Second) Functional

Constituency) are returned through 'one-person-one-vote' by the registered electors who have not registered as an elector in any traditional functional constituencies. This is a milestone in the development of democracy in Hong Kong. For the 2020 Legislative Council General Election, the five seats in the District Council (Second) Functional Constituency are expected to be returned by around four million registered voters."

"The other two constitutional reform proposals put forward in 2005 and 2015 respectively were vetoed as they failed to obtain support from a two-thirds majority of all members of the LegCo. For the last time in 2015, the HKSAR Government spent a total of 20 months to tackle the issue. Having conducted two rounds of extensive public consultations spanning seven months in total, the Government put forward a universal suffrage package for selecting the CE which is constitutionally in order, lawful, reasonable and rational. Nonetheless, it was regrettably vetoed as it failed to obtain support from a two-thirds majority of all members of the LegCo."

"The HKSAR Government understands the aspiration of the community for universal suffrage. To achieve this aim, the community needs to have a clear understanding that apart from being accountable to the HKSAR, the CE selected by universal suffrage is appointed by the Central People's Government (CPG) and shall also be accountable to the CPG. This is the constitutional order under the 'one country, two systems' principle which should not be ignored. The community needs to attain a consensus on these principles, and premised on the legal basis, to narrow differences through dialogues under a peaceful atmosphere with mutual trust. Any constructive discussion on the issue of constitutional development would be difficult to commence if the aforesaid cannot be achieved."

"The HKSAR Government will act prudently, assess the situation carefully and do its best in creating a favourable social atmosphere to take forward political reform and carry out constitutional development in accordance with the Basic Law and the relevant Interpretation and Decisions of the NPCSC."

"The HKSAR Government deeply regrets that some participants of the public meeting had called on foreign governments to intervene in the affairs of Hong Kong and to impose sanctions. Foreign governments, legislatures or organisations have absolutely no role in matters relating to the constitutional development of Hong Kong and should not express any opinion or take any action in an attempt to influence or interfere in the discussions of related matters in Hong Kong."

"The HKSAR Government reiterates that foreign countries should not interfere in any form in the internal affairs of the HKSAR."