

LCQ13: Registration as electors for Information Technology Functional Constituency

Following is a question by the Hon Charles Mok, and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (May 27):

Question:

The 2020 Legislative Council General Election is tentatively scheduled for September 6. Some people who have submitted applications for registration as electors for the Information Technology Functional Constituency (ITFC) have relayed to me that owing to the implementation of special work arrangements and curtailment of certain public services by a number of government departments in recent months due to the epidemic, the progress of processing the relevant applications have been slow. They are worried that the processing of their applications cannot be completed before the publication date of the Final Registers of Electors (which must not be later than July 25 under the law), which will render them unable to vote in this election. Regarding the processing of applications for registration as electors for ITFC, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers of applications for change of the functional constituency to which the applicants belonged to ITFC, which were received, approved and rejected by the Electoral Registration Officer in each month within the cycle for electors to change their registration particulars (i.e. from June 3, 2019 to April 2, 2020), as well as the current number of such applications awaiting to be processed;

(2) of the respective numbers of applications for new registration as electors for ITFC, which were received, approved and rejected by the Electoral Registration Officer in each month within the cycle for registrations of new electors (i.e. from July 3, 2019 to May 2, 2020), as well as the current number of such applications awaiting to be processed;

(3) whether, as envisaged by the Registration and Electoral Office (REO), it can complete the processing of all applications for registration as electors for ITFC before the publication date of the Provisional Registers of Electors (which must not be later than June 1 under the law); if not, of the expected number of applications the processing of which cannot be completed in time, and whether it will continue to process such applications after the publication of the Provisional Registers of Electors;

(4) given that upon receiving applications for registration as electors for ITFC, REO will issue letters to the applicants requesting them to submit proofs of academic qualifications, professional qualifications and employment, of the length of time given by REO to the applicants for

submitting the relevant documents; whether REO has, in the light of the special work arrangements implemented earlier, given sufficient time to the applicants for submitting the documents, and informed them in a timely manner the progress of processing their applications; whether REO has put in place measures to ensure that the processing of all applications for registration as electors for ITFC will be completed before the publication of the Final Registers of Electors; and

(5) of the current number of REO staff members responsible for processing applications for registration as electors for ITFC; whether REO has plans to recruit additional manpower to enhance its capacity in processing applications for registration as electors, so as to ensure that no eligible electors will be disqualified from voting in the ITFC election because their applications for registration as electors have not been processed in time; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Our consolidated reply to Hon Charles Mok's question is as follows:

(1), (2) and (3) Insofar as the 2020 voter registration (VR) cycle is concerned, in accordance with section 10A(12) of the Electoral Affairs Commission (Registration of Electors) (Legislative Council Geographical Constituencies) (District Council Constituencies) Regulation (Cap. 541A) and section 26A(12) of the Electoral Affairs Commission (Registration) (Electors for Legislative Council Functional Constituencies) (Voters for Election Committee Subsectors) (Members of Election Committee) Regulation (Cap. 541B), the deadline for registered electors to change the registration particulars is April 2, 2020 and the deadline for new registration is May 2, 2020. The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) must handle applications for change of particulars and new registration received according to the relevant statutory deadlines, with a view to reflecting the relevant registration particulars in the 2020 provisional registers (PRs) to be published on or before June 1, 2020 and the 2020 final registers (FRs) to be published on or before July 25, 2020 respectively pursuant to section 32(1) of the Legislative Council Ordinance (Cap. 542) in a timely manner. The REO is working at full steam to handle applications received before the deadlines for change of particulars and new registration in the 2020 VR cycle. Given that the 2020 PRs and FRs have not been published yet, the REO at the moment is unable to provide any relevant data in respect of the 2020 VR cycle regarding the change from the respective functional constituencies (FCs) to the Information Technology FC (ITFC) and new registration.

(4) In view of the concern of the community about the eligibility of electors of the ITFC, starting from the 2017 VR cycle, the REO issues letters to the relevant specified body of the applicant and the applicant himself/herself requesting their provision of proof to substantiate the applicant's eligibility under the ITFC, for example, the documentary proof of the applicant's relevant academic and/or work experience, etc., for each new application intended to register as an elector of the ITFC. In general, the

REO requests that an applicant must provide the relevant documentary proof within 14 days from the date of issuance of the letter (the period will be changed to five days for applications received approaching the deadline of new registration) with a view to handling the relevant application expeditiously. Apart from issuing letters, the REO will also contact the applicant by telephone. In the event that an applicant fails to provide documentary proof before the specified deadline, the Electoral Registration Officer will decide not to process further the relevant application and will notify the applicant of the decision concerned by letter according to the relevant law.

(5) It is now the peak season for the work of 2020 VR cycle. The REO has arranged a team of 128 civil servants and about 570 contract staff who are working at full steam in handling the work of VR in this cycle.