

LCQ18: Arrangements for filling vacancies in Legislative Council

Following is a question by Dr the Hon Tik Chi-yuen and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (July 10):

Question:

There are views pointing out that a seat of the current-term Legislative Council (LegCo) has been left vacant for over 18 months, which has inevitably affected this Council's work in monitoring the Government's policy implementation and expressing social aspirations. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of seats left vacant in the course of the term of LegCo since the first LegCo and the period for which each of the seats was left vacant;

(2) of the number of LegCo by-elections held by the Government since the first LegCo, and the number of seats involved and the expenditures incurred in each by-election; the considerations or criteria based on which the Government decided to hold such by-elections; and

(3) given that in the reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council on the Estimates of Expenditure 2024-2025, the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs has indicated that the Government will maintain close communication with the Electoral Affairs Commission and will consider matters related to the by-election of the current-term LegCo based on the actual situation, of the latest progress of the relevant work and the considerations or criteria for deciding whether or not to hold the by-election?

Reply:

President,

Our reply to Dr the Hon Tik's question is as follows:

(1) Since the establishment of the first term of the Legislative Council (LegCo) of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the first term of LegCo), a total of 51 seats have been left vacant during the term of office. In view that by-elections must be arranged in accordance with the law and the actual situation, by-elections for filling previous vacancies were not necessarily conducted within a short period of time. Statistics show that 58 per cent (30 seats) of the aforesaid 51 vacancies were left vacant for over 1 year.

(2) and (3) The Government has held a total of 10 LegCo by-elections involving 20 seats since the first term of LegCo. The expenditure of by-

election is affected by multiple factors, including the number of seats involved, the constituency concerned, the number of electors, the number of polling stations, the booking situation of venues, and the required manpower, etc. Therefore, the total expenditure of different by-elections varies. We will continue the principle of enhancing the efficiency and managing our finances prudently, so as to enable future public elections to be conducted successfully while achieving cost effectiveness.

Regarding the current vacancy of the LegCo, the Government will continue to maintain close communication with the Electoral Affairs Commission, and will consider the relevant arrangements as appropriate and as practicable based on the actual situation.