

Transcript of remarks by CS at media session (with photos/video)

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr John Lee, at a media session today (November 19) on the determination results of the Candidate Eligibility Review Committee on the 2021 Legislative Council General Election:

Reporter: Good morning, several English questions. First of all, a number of newspapers or analysts had actually pointed out that a number of Election Committee members had made mistakes in the nomination and have nominated more than one candidate within one sector. So how was that issue handled, and why didn't it affect the eligibility of any candidates this time? And what does this say about the reformed electoral system and the nomination procedures? And my second question is regarding the expected turnout rate. What's your expectation for the turnout rate for this election? Because some analysts have also pointed out that the public doesn't seem to be really enthusiastic about the election this time. Thank you.

Chief Secretary for Administration: This is the first election consequent to the improved election system. The rules and regulations, although very clearly set out in the law and the different guidelines that we sent out, it is of course reasonable that sometimes they (people) have to get familiar with the procedures. But the law is very clear. When a particular person makes a nomination, the Returning Officer will look at the case itself to ascertain whether a particular nomination satisfies the requirement of the law. When this happens, then of course, there are methods to deal with that. But amongst the 154 candidates that the Candidate Eligibility Review Committee has done the scrutiny, all the nominations are validly confirmed by the Returning Officers. So there is no question of any candidates that the Review Committee has examined do not satisfy the nomination requirement.

Regarding voting turnout, I have noticed that there are people in Hong Kong who, because of their political stance, have indicated opinions against the election system. And a few of them have even taken unlawful action to advocate people not to vote, cast invalid votes and to, in some way, incite people to do that. We are very firm on that – this is illegal and we will deal with it without a doubt. The relevant law enforcement agencies will take action, and have taken action against three people.

What is important, I think, when we look at any election system, is what eventually the election system will produce. The election system after improvement will be producing candidates who will be broadly representative of society, and there will be balanced participation. And the improved election system will prevent previous chaos, unlawfulness that happened in the Legislative Council, and these include, as all have remembered, illegal acts, damages to the Council's order, sabotaging by prolonging all processes, ensuring that the successful implementation of "one country, two systems"

will not materialise. Some even have been suspected of colluding with foreign forces, and are now standing trials for such alleged criminal activities against national security. So this election after improvement will ensure all these unlawful activities, all these matters that may contravene and be harmful to national interests, will not happen. This improved election system will ensure that those who are elected eventually will be for the benefit of society as a whole, will be for the benefit of "one country, two systems", will be able to solve problems and make Hong Kong a better place while all working together to find out solutions, but not to create problems and be obstructive, and this will work in the best interests of all Hong Kong people.

Reporter: Good morning. First question, I was talking to some voters recently and they kind of show lacklustre interest in finding out what's going on with the new system and some don't even know which constituency they'll be voting in – I'm talking about layman voters. So has the Government done any study or assessment to try to ascertain the understanding of the society, whether they understand what's going on with the new system? And with this kind of lack of interest in understanding a system, how can a system be said to have been improved? Second question, any updates on the polling stations at the border that the Government said would set up to accommodate Hong Kong voters living on the Mainland? Thank you.

Chief Secretary for Administration: I will answer your second question first. This is still being worked out. When there is a final decision, then of course we'll make public the detailed arrangements. As regards understanding the new improved election system, of course we appreciate that election is always a subject that people will have to take time to be familiar with when there are changes. This is something the Hong Kong Government has been doing very much and those who are interested in the electoral system also have been actively doing a lot of introduction and presentations in regard to the new system. But I agree, for anything that takes place on the first occasion, it may take time to familiarise. We'll continue to work on that, but I think there will be even better understanding of the system when the actual electioneering work starts, because we have just announced the result of the Candidate Eligibility Review Committee and 153 candidates can go on board with their electioneering activities very soon. And through all these electioneering activities, I'm sure society will be more focused and be able to learn more what the whole election procedures and the various matters relating to the election will be. So all these activities will be happening very soon, because from now to the actual election day we have roughly four weeks, and I'm sure there will be a lot of activities to let us understand more about the new election system.

I have said, in answering other reporters' questions, that my focus is on ensuring a fair, safe and orderly election on December 19, so that everybody can come out to vote at their own time according to their own schedule. What is important is that the election will then be able to produce the candidates in a fair and just manner so that eventually those who represent the people of Hong Kong in the Legislative Council will be contributing to the overall good and interests of Hong Kong, will be finding

solutions for issues that may have been bothering us, and working with all parties together for a brighter future of Hong Kong through successful implementation of "one country, two systems" and integration with the Mainland, at the same time maintaining our international city position so that we can be able to benefit from both being a Special Administrative Region and an international city.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)

