

Ms Ana Marie Pamintuan
Editor-in-Chief
The Philippine Star
editor@philstar.com

Ms Pamintuan,

Further to my previous letter dated 19 March, 2021, I am writing again to update on the latest development on the improvements of the electoral system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).

Improving electoral system of Hong Kong

The Standing Committee of the National People's Congress introduced improvements to the Hong Kong electoral system by amending the Annexes of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) on 30 March. The amendments established a political structure that upholds the "One Country, Two Systems" principle, reflects the actual situation of Hong Kong and ensures "patriots administering Hong Kong".

The main content of improving the electoral system includes the reconstitution of the Election Committee which is broadly representative, suited to Hong Kong's actual situation, and representative of the overall interests of society. The committee will now be composed of 1 500 Members from five sectors, including (i) industrial, commercial and financial sectors, (ii) the professions, (iii) grassroots, labour, religious and other sectors, (iv) Legislative Council members, representatives of district organisations and other organisations, and (v) HKSAR deputies to the National Peoples' Congress, HKSAR members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference and representatives of Hong Kong members of relevant national organisations.

The Legislative Council (LegCo) will be expanded from 70 members to 90 members, among them 40 members will be returned by the Election Committee, 30 will be returned by functional constituencies, and the remaining 20 will be returned by geographical constituencies through direct elections.

A Candidate Eligibility Review Committee will also be established, which will be responsible for assessing and validating the eligibility of candidates in the Election Committee, Chief Executive and LegCo elections. Pursuant to the assessment made by the National Security Department of the Police of the HKSAR Government, the Committee for Safeguarding National Security of HKSAR will decide whether a candidate complies with the legal requirements and conditions for upholding the Basic Law and bearing allegiance to the HKSAR of the People's Republic of China, and issue an opinion to the Candidate Eligibility Review Committee for those who do not comply with the legal requirements and conditions.

The HKSAR Government is pressing ahead with the necessary amendments to the relevant local electoral legislation, including the delineation of organisations and eligible corporate electors involved in the Election Committee Subsectors and the functional constituencies of the LegCo, the delineation of geographical constituencies through direct elections, nomination procedures for candidates, the voting method, the composition of the Candidate Eligibility Review Committee. It is expected that the Election Committee Subsector elections will be held in this September, the 7th term LegCo election in this December, and the 6th term Chief Executive election in March next year.

The HKSAR Government will continue to dutifully administer Hong Kong according to the rule of law, safeguard national sovereignty, security and development interests, and maintain the overall stability of Hong Kong. We firmly believe that by improving the electoral system and implementing "patriots administering Hong Kong", the governance capability of the HKSAR will be enhanced. Our city will then be able to further leverage our unique advantages and the staunch support of the Central Authorities to develop the economy and improve the livelihood of our citizens. The steadfast and successful implementation of "One Country, Two Systems", as well as the long-term prosperity and stability of Hong Kong, will be assured. On such promising premises, Hong Kong will also continue to enhance our position as a prime platform and key link for the ASEAN.

You are most welcomed to visit our dedicated website on the improvements of the electoral system (<https://www.cmab.gov.hk/improvement/en/home/index.html>) to learn more.

Best regards,

Law Kin-wai

Director-General
(Representative for the ASEAN)
Hong Kong Economic and Trade Office
The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region