

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **THE DEMARCATION EXERCISE**

#### **After the Public Consultation**

##### **Section 1 : Deliberations on the Representations**

4.1 As soon as the public consultation period ended, the EAC went through all the written and oral representations to consider whether they should be accepted.

4.2 Since some representations considered that the special physical characteristics of individual areas should be taken into account in the delineation exercise, the staff of the EAC Secretariat, where necessary, conducted site visits to assess the validity of the arguments raised and to explore the feasibility of the proposals given. To enable the EAC to thoroughly consider the representations and arrive at a fair and balanced deliberation, the information gathered from the site visits and the EAC Secretariat's analysis and observations were presented to the EAC again with the aid of maps and photographs showing the buildings and areas concerned.

*General Approaches adopted by the Commission*

4.3 For representations regarding DCCAs which were provisionally recommended to be the same as those of the DCCAs in 2007 (“unaltered DCCAs”), modifications to their boundaries would be considered only if:

- (a) they are supported by cogent reasons and would result in substantial and notable improvement on community, geographical and development considerations;
- (b) they would not in turn affect an unacceptable number of unaltered DCCAs; and
- (c) all the resulting populations will not depart from the population quota by more than 25%.

4.4 The Commission considered it inappropriate to accept representations on unaltered DCCAs which proposed solely improvement on population distribution. If the Commission were to accept them, many DCCAs would have to be re-delineated and included in the final recommendations without the benefit of further public consultation as to their acceptability.

4.5 For representations regarding new DCCAs, suggestions with sufficient cause on better population distribution or on community considerations would be accepted, except those adopting an approach entirely different from the Commission's and affecting an unacceptable number of unaltered DCCAs.

### *The Commission's General Views*

4.6 In considering the representations, the Commission also took the following factors into account:

(a) Preserving community identity and local ties

A large number of representations made to the Commission stressed the importance of maintaining local community identity and ties even though the population deviation in the DCCAs concerned would exceed the permissible limits. Some representations pointed out that the Commission's proposed delineation would disrupt the well established community identity and cohesiveness of the residents, and would affect the integrity of the community.

Some representations also emphasised that the residents of the affected areas would likely have a weaker sense of belonging to the DCCAs to which they had been newly assigned, and this in turn, would adversely affect the voters' turnout rate.

Some representations envisaged that the DC Member of a DCCA might have difficulty in serving two or more heterogeneous communities.

The Commission fully understood the sentiments and wishes of the representations and had considered all of them very carefully. Due weight had been given to community identities and local ties. Suggestions to alter the Commission's provisional recommendations with sufficient justifications on community and/or geographical consideration(s) would be accepted. The Commission viewed the conflict between the population quota requirement and local sentiments in an impartial manner so as to achieve a fair balance. Some DCCAs had been recommended to deviate from the population quota in excess of the permissible limits as the Commission considered that the community and/or geographical consideration(s) rendered the deviations necessary or desirable.

The EAC was pleased to note that through the concerted efforts of all parties concerned, the boundaries for a smaller number of DCCAs were changed in this exercise as compared with that in 2007 (i.e. 122 as compared with 139).

(b) The estimated population figures

There were representations objecting to the provisional recommendations on the grounds that they queried the accuracy of the estimated population figures which the Commission adopted for the demarcation exercise. They quoted other figures known to them, which were different from those used by the Commission. The Commission believed that the queries were merely based on personal estimation and/or information obtained from other sources which might not be appropriate for the exercise. The Commission's view in this aspect was that the estimated population figures used were supplied by the AHSG, which was set up solely for the purpose of the demarcation exercise. It had conducted comprehensive researches before compiling the relevant data by a systematic methodology. Moreover, for the reason of fairness and consistency, the EAC considered it necessary to use the same set of population distribution projections with the same basis and the same cut-off date for all DCCAs being considered under the demarcation exercise.

The Commission therefore held that the official data provided by the AHSG should remain as the sole and authoritative basis for the demarcation work.

(c) Anticipated changes in population

There were representations which considered that the future population of certain DCCAs would increase or decrease substantially, and the boundaries of such DCCAs should therefore be adjusted in anticipation of future developments, so that they would not have to be re-delineated again in future.

Although the development of an area was one of the factors which the EAC would have regard to, the Commission considered it essential to adhere to the population forecasts projected as at 30 June 2011 in delineating the boundaries of all DCCAs in this exercise, since the demarcation work was to facilitate the conduct of the 2011 DC Election. Future changes in population after the said cut-off date would be catered for in the next demarcation exercise, taking into account the latest development at that time.

(d) Supporting views

Where there were supporting representations received on the one hand and opposing ones relating to the same DCCA(s) on the other, the EAC would examine the acceptability of both sides in the light of the reasons given vis-à-vis the statutory criteria and working principles.

## **Section 2 : The Recommendations**

4.7 At its meeting on 7 February 2011, the Commission, having taken into consideration the representations received and comments from DOs, drew up its finalised recommendations. Its views on the representations are recorded in the last column of **Appendix III**.

4.8 The EAC adjusted its provisional recommendations in respect of the boundaries of 19 DCCAs and the names of 2 DCCAs. Details of the alterations and changes are set out in **Appendices IV and V** respectively.

4.9 In the finalised recommendations, the boundaries of 122 DCCAs were changed and the EAC allowed the population in 26 DCCAs to deviate from the permissible limits of the population quota for reasons specified in **Appendix VI**.

4.10 A summary of the Commission's final recommendations is shown in **Appendix VII** of this volume. The details of these final recommendations with reference to maps and boundary descriptions are in **Volume 2**.