

CHAPTER 4

WORK OF THE COMMISSION

4.1 The Commission has carried out its work with the dedicated support of the Registration and Electoral Office (“the REO”) headed by the Chief Electoral Officer (“the CEO”), Mr. LI Wing and other Government bureaux and departments.

4.2 On 29 December 1998, the Ad Hoc Subgroup under the Working Group on Population Distribution Projections (“the Ad Hoc Subgroup”) provided the Commission with the population forecasts of Hong Kong as at **31 March 1999**. This Ad Hoc Subgroup was chaired by the Assistant Director of Planning/Housing and Land Supply of the Planning Department and consisted of representatives from various Government departments and bureaux including experts from the Census and Statistics Department, Rating and Valuation Department, Housing Department, Lands Department, the Planning Department and Marine Department. The Commission was satisfied with the methodology used by the Ad Hoc Subgroup in arriving at the population forecasts and saw no reason to differ or depart from the forecast. The Commission therefore adopted the population forecast figures as its own estimate of the population of Hong Kong in 1999, which is the year in which the DC ordinary election is to be held.

4.3 To assist the Commission in its delineation work, population forecast figures at street block level were produced by the Ad Hoc Subgroup. A street block is a small unit in terms of population statistics and Hong Kong is divided into 4,649 street blocks. The population datum in each street block provided the Commission with information about the number of people in a small unit based on which the Commission could demarcate boundaries of a DCC on working maps by encircling with precision a population close to the population quota.

4.4 Members of the Commission held four meetings on 4, 8, 9 and 10 February 1999 to consider various options of demarcation and the names of District Council constituency areas (“DCCAs”). During this process, District Officers of various Districts provided helpful insight into the local circumstances.

4.5 The Commission has had to carry out its tasks under stringent time constraints as it has to submit its report containing recommendations on the proposed constituencies and demarcation of the boundaries of the same relating to the 1999 DC ordinary election to the Chief Executive by the statutory deadline of 31 May 1999. It could, however, finalise its provisional recommendations for public consultation only after the District Councils Bill was passed on 10 March 1999.

4.6 Immediately after the Commission has completed its provisional recommendations for public consultation, the Lands Department with its Land Information Centre Survey and Mapping Office

and the Government Printer were requested to prepare maps showing the proposed constituency boundaries. They accomplished that task speedily and efficiently. The maps with the provisionally determined DCCAs for the 1999 DC ordinary election with names, lists of population figures and boundary descriptions were exhibited and made available for public inspection for 27 days during the period from **22 March to 17 April 1999**, a duration almost doubling the statutory minimum period of 14 days.

4.7 On 22 March 1999, the Commission issued a press release and held a press briefing to announce that the Commission had provisionally determined its recommendations, inviting the public to make representations on the provisionally determined DCCAs. On the same day, a notice was also published in the Gazette inviting the public to make representations to the Commission on its provisional recommendations within a period of 27 days from 22 March to 17 April 1999 and to make oral representations at four public meetings to be held on 13, 14, 15 and 16 April 1999. Publicity to invite public representations was also arranged through the media and by posters to enhance public awareness of the issue. A copy of the Gazette Notice is at **Appendix II** and a copy each of the newspaper advertisements and posters in both English and Chinese can be found in **Appendix III**.

4.8 Public representations, both in writing either sent through the post or by facsimile transmission and made orally at the public meetings, were received by the Commission until the statutory deadline

of 17 April 1999. The representations have been collated, analysed and summarised by the REO for the Commission's use. The public representations are collected together in **Volume 3** of this report.

4.9 The Commission's recommendations, set out in Chapter 6 and in **Part I** and **Part II** of **Volume 2**, are made after it has fully taken into account and deliberated upon the public representations.