

Section 2 – Preparation

Appointment of RO and AROs

2.1 The District Officer (“DO”) (Eastern) was appointed as the RO for the Hong Kong Island GC, with DO(Central & Western), DO(Southern), DO(Wanchai), Assistant District Officer (“ADO”) (Eastern), ADO(Central & Western), ADO(Southern) and ADO(Wanchai) appointed as Assistant Returning Officers (“AROs”). Their appointments were published in the Gazette on 5 October 2000.

Appointment of NAC

2.2 Mr Lawrence LOK Ying-kam, SC, was appointed as Nominations Advisory Committee (“NAC”) to provide legal advice to the RO on the eligibility of the nominated candidates. His appointment for the by-election was gazetted on 5 October 2000 and covered the period from 20 October to 4 November 2000. No request for Mr Lok’s service was made by the RO.

Appointment and training of polling staff

2.3 Because of the tight time frame within which the by-election had to be completed, it was not possible to launch a civil service-wide recruitment exercise to recruit the 2,477 polling staff required, as was the case for the general election. The majority of those who had served as polling staff for the general election were therefore, as far as practicable, recruited again and posted to the same polling station where they had worked before. This arrangement proved to be extremely effective in facilitating the smooth operation of the stations.

2.4 Though the polling staff were experienced and familiar with the operation of a polling station, briefing sessions, as a refresher, were organised for them on 15 and 16 November 2000 at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium.

Appointment and training of counting staff

2.5 For the same reason, most of the 405 counting staff recruited

for the by-election were civil servants who had worked as counting staff for the Hong Kong Island GC at the general election and were very much familiar with the procedures and logistics of counting work. A small number of them were those who had worked in the counting stations on the Kowloon side for the general election but lived on Hong Kong Island.

2.6 A briefing session was also organised for these counting staff on 17 November 2000 at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium.

Contingency plan

2.7 The Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”), the executive arm of the Commission, had drawn up a contingency plan to cope with unexpected situations. A mobile polling station – a fully equipped container – was ready to serve as a substitute in case any one of the polling stations suddenly became inoperable owing to unforeseen circumstances on the polling day. Emergency teams of polling staff were standing by in the REO and the District Offices to take over, whenever necessary, polling duties from those polling staff who could not perform such duties for one

reason or another.

Designated display spots

2.8 There were 8,430 designated spots for the candidates to display their election advertisements. Immediately after the briefing of the candidates by the Chairman of the Commission on 4 November 2000 at the Queen Elizabeth Stadium, the designated spots were allocated to the candidates by the drawing of lots, witnessed by all parties concerned.

Polling stations

2.9 To start off, the REO approached the management of the 93 premises, all located within the Hong Kong Island GC, which were used as polling stations for the general election in September 2000 for permission to use these premises again as polling stations for the by-election. Unfortunately, for various reasons, eight of these premises could not be made available this time and the REO had to look for other suitable venues as replacements. However, only six alternative venues

could be identified. Electors who had been allocated for the general election to the other two stations that were no longer available had to be re-allocated to nearby polling stations. At the same time, in order to provide better service to the electors, the REO designated three other new polling stations. This made up a total of 94 polling stations, one more than the 93 for the general election. About 67,000 of the electors had to cast their votes at a polling station different from the one in the general election. As for the special polling stations for the handicapped, there were 31 of them, as compared with the 39 in the general election. The decrease was due to the fact that the Rehabilitation Alliance of Hong Kong (“RAHK”) considered some of the 39 special polling stations in the general election not suitable to serve the handicapped. The REO tried to look for more suitable replacements but there were not many venues that could fully meet the RAHK’s requirements. As a result, only 31 venues could be used as special polling stations.

Counting station

2.10 A central counting station was set up in Hall 7B on Level 7 of the Hong Kong Convention and Exhibition Centre (“HKCEC”) in Wanchai.

Publicity

2.11 Publicity was launched in mid-October 2000 by the Constitutional Affairs Bureau (“CAB”), Radio Television Hong Kong (“RTHK”) and Information Services Department (“ISD”), and Home Affairs Department (“HAD”) to promote voter turnout. These included posters, radio and television APIs, election forums, and a carnival.

2.12 The Chairman of the Commission showed up in a number of media interviews to appeal to the electors on Hong Kong Island to cast their votes on the polling day. The EAC and REO websites on the Internet and the REO’s Electoral Information Centre also helped disseminate information relating to the by-election.