

## CHAPTER 1

### AN OVERVIEW

#### Section 1 : Introduction

1.1 The Village Representative Election Ordinance, Cap. 576 (“VREO”), enacted on 14 February 2003, provided a statutory framework for the conduct of Village Representative (“VR”) elections. Since then, three ordinary elections have been conducted by the Home Affairs Department (“HAD”) under the supervision of the Electoral Affairs Commission (“EAC”). To expand the statutory control over the elections in the rural community, the Government reviewed the VR elections and introduced the Rural Representative Election Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2013 to extend the scope of the VREO to cover the Kaifong Representative (“KFR”) elections for the Market Towns (“MTs”) of Cheung Chau and Peng Chau.

1.2 With the passage of the Bill on 26 March 2014, the VREO was renamed as Rural Representative Election Ordinance (“RREO”). A new term Rural Representative (“RR”) was introduced to cover both VR and KFR. To bring the two KFR elections under the purview of the EAC, the Electoral Affairs Commission Ordinance, Cap. 541 (“EACO”) and its subsidiary legislation were also amended to empower the EAC to supervise the conduct of both the VR and KFR elections and to perform its functions through the Director of Home Affairs (“DHA”).

1.3 Pursuant to the RREO, there are altogether four types of Rural Areas, including Existing Village (“EV”), Indigenous Village (“IV”), Composite Indigenous Village (“CIV”) and MT. Indigenous Inhabitant Representatives (“IIRs”) are elected for IVs and CIVs and the number of IIRs for each village ranges from one to five. Resident Representatives (“ReRs”) are elected for EVs and there is only one ReR for each village. KFRs are elected for Cheung Chau and Peng Chau MTs and there are respectively 39 and 17 KFR seats for the two MTs.

1.4 The IIR’s primary functions are to look after the lawful traditional rights, interests and needs of the indigenous inhabitants of the village concerned and to reflect their views to the relevant authorities. As for the ReR and KFR, their role is to take care of the general interests and needs of the residents of his/her village/MT only.

1.5 The term of office of the ReRs and IIRs elected in 2011 would expire on 31 March 2015. The fourth ordinary election was held to return 695 ReRs, 789 IIRs and 56 KFRs for a term of four years from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2019.

## **Section 2 : Legislation Governing the Election**

1.6 In line with any other public elections, the 2015 Rural Ordinary Election (“ROE”) was conducted within the bounds of the law. The election is governed by the following ordinances:

- (a) the EACO which empowers the EAC to perform its various functions in supervising the conduct of the Rural Representative election (“RRE”) and to submit to the Chief Executive (“CE”) a report on the election;
- (b) the RREO which provides the legal basis for the conduct of the election; and
- (c) the Elections (Corrupt and Illegal Conduct) Ordinance, Cap. 554 (“ECICO”), which prohibits election-related corrupt and illegal activities and is administered by the Independent Commission Against Corruption (“ICAC”).

1.7 These ordinances are supplemented by two pieces of subsidiary legislation which provide for the detailed procedures for the conduct of the election. They are:

- (a) Electoral Affairs Commission (Registration of Electors) (Rural Representative Election) Regulation, Cap. 541K (“EAC (ROE) (RRE) Reg.”), which sets out the procedures for registering eligible persons as electors for elections held under the RREO; and
- (b) Electoral Procedure (Rural Representative Election) Regulation, Cap. 541L (“EP (RRE) Reg.”), which provides detailed procedures governing the conduct of the RRE.

### **Section 3 : Amendments to Electoral Legislation**

#### *Electoral Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2011*

1.8 The Government introduced the Electoral Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2011 to the Legislative Council (“LegCo”) on 4 May 2011. The Bill, which proposed changes to the electoral and related arrangements for the LegCo, District Council (“DC”), Election Committee Subsector, CE and VR elections, was passed by the LegCo on 6 July 2011.

1.9 With the passage of the Bill, a simplified relief mechanism was introduced to facilitate the handling of election returns with minor errors and/or false statements under the ECICO. Under the mechanism, for any errors and/or false statements found in an election return submitted by a candidate of which the aggregate amount does not exceed a specified amount for an election (\$200 as in the case of the VR election), the candidate might, subject to certain conditions, seek to have the errors and/or false statements rectified under a simplified relief procedure without recourse to court order.

#### *Amendment Regulations Made by the EAC*

1.10 The EAC also amended the regulations under the EACO in 2011 to improve various electoral procedures and arrangements and, in particular, to refine the voting arrangements for electors in custody. The

amendment regulations were published in the Gazette on 13 May 2011 and tabled at the LegCo on 18 May 2011. The refined voting arrangements for electors in custody were applicable to the VR election.

*Electoral Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2012*

1.11 The Government introduced the Electoral Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2012 to the LegCo on 8 February 2012. The Bill proposed to amend various pieces of legislation to improve the regulatory regime of election advertisements (“EAs”) and other electoral procedures; and to make technical amendments to the ECICO. The Bill was passed on 9 May 2012 and major changes applicable to the VR election are set out below:

- (a) making amendments to various EAC Regulations to specify the relaxed public inspection requirement of EAs including the lifting of the previous requirement of ex ante declaration by candidates, and allowing candidates to upload their EAs onto an open platform operated through the Internet within one working day after the publication for public inspection;
- (b) providing that a candidate is not required to obtain the prior written consent of a person or an organisation which gives support in his/her EAs if the candidate has neither requested or directed, nor authorised any other

person to request or direct, the inclusion of the support in the EAs; and

- (c) empowering the Electoral Registration Officer (“ERO”) to make available an additional copy of the voter register in a format which he/she considers appropriate for public inspection.

*Rural Representative Election Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2013*

1.12 In 2013, the Government introduced to the LegCo the Rural Representative Election Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2013 to bring the KFR elections for MTs of Cheung Chau and Peng Chau under statutory purview. The major provisions of the Bill are set out below:

- (a) providing for the compilation of a provisional register (“PR”) and a final register (“FR”) for MTs;
- (b) introducing computer counting to facilitate the vote counting process and an alternative manual counting method by recording the choice(s) marked on each valid ballot paper on counting form(s) as a fallback arrangement; and
- (c) amending the Maximum Amount of Election Expenses (Rural Representative Election) Regulation, Cap. 554B,

to prescribe the maximum amount of election expenses (i.e. \$38,000) that could be incurred at an election of Rural Area with over 5,000 electors.

1.13 The Rural Representative Election Legislation (Amendment) Bill 2013 was passed by the LegCo on 26 March 2014.

*Electoral Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2014*

1.14 The Government introduced the Electoral Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2014 to the LegCo on 16 April 2014. The Bill included proposals to introduce the extension of electoral deadlines in case of inclement weather and to include electors who have voluntarily requested voter de-registration in the omissions list.

1.15 In addition, Committee Stage Amendments were made to include the following amendments:

- (a) stating clearly the procedures for voter de-registration and changing the Chinese title of omissions list from “遭剔除者名單” to “取消登記名單” to better reflect its nature;

- (b) adding electronic mail as a means of delivery of the notice of appointment/revocation of an election agent, an election expense agent, a polling agent or a counting agent; and
- (c) stating that a candidate may appoint a maximum of two polling agents for one polling station, but only one polling agent may be appointed for a dedicated polling station situated in a prison (other than a maximum security prison).

1.16 The Electoral Legislation (Miscellaneous Amendments) Bill 2014 was passed by the LegCo on 10 July 2014.

#### **Section 4 : Guidelines on Election-related Activities**

1.17 The Guidelines on Election-related Activities in respect of the RRE (“the Guidelines”) were amended four times between 2011 and 2014 to reflect the legislative amendments mentioned in paragraphs 1.8 to 1.16 above and to set out the related electoral arrangements. The copies of the revised Guidelines were sent to all parties concerned in mid-October 2014.

1.18 The EAC has at all times made its best endeavours in refining the electoral arrangements for elections. Before each general or ordinary election, the EAC will revise the electoral guidelines. The



revision is done on the basis of the guidelines used for previous elections, taking into account the operational experience of each election, as well as suggestions and complaints received from the public and other parties concerned. Before the publication of the guidelines, a 30-day period of consultation will be conducted during which representations are invited from the public and all parties concerned on the proposed guidelines. By taking into account the views received during the public consultation period, the guidelines will then be revised before they are finalised for issue to the public.

1.19 The EAC started in November 2013 the review of the Guidelines for the 2015 ROE. In undertaking the review, the EAC had made reference to the Guidelines on Election-related Activities in respect of the LegCo Election and DC Election published in June 2012 and September 2012 respectively and the operational experience gained as well as suggestions and complaints received from the public and other parties concerned in the past elections including the 2011 DC Election and the 2012 LegCo Election.

1.20 Having carefully considered all the representations received during the public consultation period and noted the latest legislative amendments, the EAC finalised and published the Guidelines in October 2014 for adoption in the 2015 ROE and all subsequent rural by-elections. Having examined the practicability of the public's suggestions to extend the polling hours for the KFR elections for Cheung Chau and Peng Chau MTs, HAD recommended to extend the original proposed polling hours

by two hours, i.e. from 9:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. was extended to 9:00 a.m. – 8:00 p.m. after public consultation. The EAC considered that as many residents in the Islands District had to commute to the urban area daily, the proposed extension of polling hours was reasonable to enable them to vote after returning from work. The revised polling hours was accordingly incorporated into the final Guidelines.

1.21 The final Guidelines were made available for public viewing at the EAC's website and for distribution at a number of places including the Public Enquiry Service Centres of the District Offices. Each candidate of the election was provided with a copy of the Guidelines in CD-ROM format when he/she submitted the nomination form.

### **Section 5 : The Scope of this Report**

1.22 This report describes the preparation work for the conduct of the 2015 ROE, depicts how the election was conducted, sets out the complaints-handling arrangement and, after reviewing the effectiveness of the electoral arrangements, makes recommendations for improvement for future elections.

## CHAPTER 2

### DEFINING STATUS OF RURAL AREAS

#### Section 1 : Types and Numbers of Rural Areas and RRs

2.1 The RREO classifies 4 types of Rural Areas, including 3 types of villages (709) and MTs (2) according to their different nature as follows:

(a) **Existing Villages**

An EV is a village with physical boundaries shown on a map, rather similar to the DC constituencies in the DC election or geographical constituencies in the LegCo election. In the 2015 ROE, there were 695 EVs listed in Schedule 1 to the RREO.

(b) **Indigenous Villages**

An IV is a village shown in the “Index for electing IIRs” kept by DHA. There were 588 IVs in the 2015 ROE, listed in Schedule 2 to the RREO. These IVs were not identified by their boundaries.

(c) **Composite Indigenous Villages**

A CIV is a group of IVs, comparatively with small population. There were 15 CIVs in the 2015 ROE, listed in Schedule 3 to the RREO. These 15 CIVs were composed of 32 IVs and they were also EVs.

(d) **Market Towns**

A MT is a township with physical boundaries shown on a map, rather similar to the EVs. In the 2015 ROE, there were two MTs, namely Cheung Chau and Peng Chau, listed in Schedule 3A to the RREO.

A chart illustrating these types of Rural Areas is at **Appendix I**.

2.2 The number of RRs to be returned for each EV, IV, CIV and MT is specified in Schedules 1-3A to the RREO. Of the total number of 1,540 seats, there are 695 ReR seats representing the residents of EVs, 789 IIR seats representing the indigenous inhabitants of IVs or CIVs, and 56 KFR seats representing the residents of MTs. A detailed breakdown of the numbers of Rural Areas and RRs by district is at **Appendix II**.

## **Section 2 : Boundaries of EVs**

2.3 Based on the boundaries of the EVs delineated for the 2011 Village Ordinary Election, the proposed boundary maps for the 2015 ROE were drawn up by the respective District Officers (“DOs”) of HAD

and issued for public inspection from 26 September to 16 October 2013. The proposed boundary maps of the EVs were displayed at HAD headquarters, in the respective District Offices and on the notice boards in the villages, and disseminated to the Heung Yee Kuk (“HYK”) and the relevant Rural Committees (“RCs”). The proposed boundary maps were also uploaded to the RRE dedicated website for public inspection. At the end of the public inspection period, a total of 42 objections, involving 41 villages, were received. The DOs concerned carefully examined these objections and accepted 27 of them. The revised maps of 27 villages in question were displayed from 27 December 2013 to 16 January 2014 for further consultation. During this consultation period, one objection, involving one village, was received. This objection was not accepted.

### **Section 3 : Boundaries of MTs**

2.4 The boundaries of the MTs were delineated by the Islands DO in accordance with a set of general Guidelines drawn up by HAD. In drawing up the boundaries, the DO concerned had considered the physical features and the affiliation of the residents with the MT concerned. The proposed boundary maps for the 2015 ROE were drawn up by the Islands DO and issued for public inspection from 27 March to 16 April 2014. The proposed boundary maps of the MTs were displayed at HAD headquarters, in the Islands District Office and on the notice boards near the piers in the MTs, and disseminated to HYK and the relevant RCs. The proposed boundary maps were also uploaded to the

RRE dedicated website for public inspection. At the end of the public inspection period, a total of two objections, concerning the division of Cheung Chau MT into several constituencies, were received. The DO concerned carefully examined these objections and determined to reject them on the grounds that Cheung Chau MT should be considered as one Rural Area under the RREO.

2.5 A full set of the finalised boundary maps was kept in the custody of DHA and uploaded to the RRE dedicated website. Each relevant District Office also kept a copy of those boundary maps relating to its district for public viewing.

#### **Section 4 : Index of IVs and CIVs**

2.6 According to sections 2 and 4 of the RREO, the information relating to all IVs and CIVs is contained in an Index kept by DHA. Villages, the names of which appear in this Index, are IVs/CIVs.

## CHAPTER 3

### REGISTRATION OF ELECTORS

#### Section 1 : Eligibility for Registration as an Elector

3.1 The criteria of eligibility for registration as an elector are stated in section 15 of the RREO. In sum, a person is eligible for registration as an elector for an EV if he/she:

- (a) is a Hong Kong permanent resident;
- (b) is aged 18 years or above as at 20 October in the year of publication of the FR; and
- (c) is a resident of the EV for the 3 years immediately before applying to be registered. In the case of a prisoner, for the purpose of this residence requirement, a term of imprisonment does not normally break the period of residence provided the person has resided in that EV immediately before serving the sentence and has been maintaining his/her principal residential address in that EV throughout the period of imprisonment.

3.2 A person is eligible for registration as an elector for an IV or a CIV if he/she:

- (a) is an indigenous inhabitant<sup>1</sup> of that village or the spouse or surviving spouse of an indigenous inhabitant of that village;
- (b) is aged 18 years or above as at 20 October in the year of publication of the FR;
- (c) at the time of applying to be registered, satisfies the ERO that he/she:
  - (i) holds an identity document; or
  - (ii) has:
    - (A) applied for a new identity card; or
    - (B) requested the alteration of the identity card or the issue of a new identity card, in replacement of the identity card previously issued to

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<sup>1</sup> According to s 2 of Rural Representative Election Ordinance, Cap. 576, "indigenous inhabitant" means-

- (a) in relation to an Indigenous Village that existed in 1898 (whether or not the name the Village now has is the same name it had in 1898), means-
  - (i) a person who was in 1898 a resident of the Village; or
  - (ii) a person who is descended through the male line from a person mentioned in subparagraph (i);
- (b) in relation to an Indigenous Village that branched off from an Indigenous Village that existed in 1898 (whether or not the name the Village now has is the same name it had in 1898), means-
  - (i) a person-
    - (A) who was at the time of the branching off a resident of the first-mentioned Indigenous Village; and
    - (B) who was an indigenous inhabitant of the second-mentioned Indigenous Village; or
  - (ii) a person who is descended through the male line from a person mentioned in subparagraph (i);
- (c) in relation to a Composite Indigenous Village, means-
  - (i) a person who was in 1898 a resident of any of the villages of which the Village is composed; or
  - (ii) a person who is descended through the male line from a person mentioned in subparagraph (i).



him/her; and

- (d) at the time of applying to be registered:
  - (i) if the identity document held by, or previously issued to, him/her is an identity card, informs the ERO of the identifying number of the identity card;  
or
  - (ii) if the identity document held by him/her is not an identity card, provides the ERO a copy of the identity document.

He/She is not required to reside in Hong Kong or that village.

3.3 A person is eligible for registration as an elector for a MT if he/she:

- (a) is a Hong Kong permanent resident;
- (b) is aged 18 years or above as at 20 October in the year of publication of the FR; and
- (c) is a resident of the MT for the 3 years immediately before applying to be registered. In the case of a prisoner, for the purpose of this residence requirement, a term of imprisonment does not normally break the period of residence provided the person has resided in that MT immediately before serving the sentence and has been maintaining his/her principal residential

address in that MT throughout the period of imprisonment.

## **Section 2 : The Registration Period**

3.4 HAD received a total of 27,352 applications for registration (9,474 for the ReR elections, 8,666 for the IIR elections and 9,212 for the KFR elections) as at the statutory cut-off date stipulated in section 9(1) of the EAC (ROE) (RRE) Reg. on 16 July 2014.

## **Section 3 : Publication of PR and Objections and Claims**

3.5 After the end of the registration period, a PR for the EVs, IVs/CIVs and MTs, recording the personal particulars of 86,507 electors of EVs, 103,283 electors of IVs/CIVs and 9,147 electors of MTs, was published on 27 August 2014 for public inspection until 9 September 2014. For this purpose, a full copy of the PR was kept in the office of the DHA (who is the ERO for RRE) and the relevant District Offices would keep those parts of the PR which were related to their districts. Details were announced in the Gazette published by the ERO on 27 August 2014.

3.6 In accordance with sections 23 to 25 of the EAC (ROE) (RRE) Reg., any person who considers that a registered person is not eligible to be registered as an elector may serve a notice of objection in the specified form in person at the office of the ERO or the office of the relevant

Assistant ERO (i.e. the relevant DO). If any person, whose principal residential address is in Hong Kong, has applied for registration as an elector but whose name is not recorded in the PR, or has a claim against his/her particulars in the PR, he/she may serve a notice of claim in the specified form in person at the office of the ERO or the office of the relevant Assistant ERO. For a person whose principal address is not in Hong Kong and wishes to lodge a claim relating to IV or CIV, he/she may serve the notice of claim in the specified form in person, by post, facsimile transmission, electronic means (within the meaning of section 2(1) of the Electronic Transactions Ordinance, Cap. 553 and authenticated by a digital signature within the meaning of that section) or authorising another person in writing to serve the notice on his/her behalf. Copies of the specified forms can be obtained from the office of the ERO or relevant Assistant EROs, or downloaded from the RRE dedicated website. For the 2015 ROE, the arrangements of lodging notices of objection and claim were announced by the ERO in the Gazette published on 27 August 2014. Such objections and claims should be lodged during the public inspection period, i.e. from 27 August to 9 September 2014<sup>2</sup>.

3.7 By the close of the aforesaid public inspection period, 409 objections and 103 claims had been received by the ERO. 13 objections were later withdrawn in front of the ROs. These cases were heard by a team of 11 Revising Officers in the Fanling and the Shatin Magistrates' Courts from 2 to 22 September 2014, and afterwards there were requests

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<sup>2</sup> As 9 September 2014 is a public holiday, the objector must deliver the notice of objection in person to the ERO not later than 6 p.m. on 8 September 2014. If a notice of claim is to be delivered in person, it must be delivered to the ERO not later than 6 p.m. on 8 September 2014.

for review of the Revising Officers' ruling. The Revising Officers then reviewed these cases and reheard them during the period from 24 to 30 September 2014. The final outcome was that 220 objections were allowed and 189 objections were dismissed, while 5 claims were allowed and 98 claims were dismissed. A detailed breakdown is shown in **Appendix III**.

3.8 Under sections 27 and 28 of the EAC (ROE) (RRE) Reg., the ERO may make corrections to entries in the PR before compiling the FR. Those made under section 27 of the regulation concerned requests from electors to amend their personal particulars or the part of the register in which the particulars should be recorded. These corrections need not be approved by the Revising Officer. Those made under section 28 of the regulation concerning the removal, addition or correction of entries require the Revising Officer's approval. A detailed breakdown of the corrections made by the ERO in the 2014 PR under section 28 of the regulation is at **Appendix IV**.

#### **Section 4 : Publication of the FR**

3.9 After the Revising Officers' rulings and the relevant corrections to the entries in the PR had been made, the ERO published the 2014 FR on 17 October 2014. The number of electors for EVs, IVs/CIVs and MTs as shown in the 2014 FR is 86,389, 103,149 and 9,137 respectively. As in the case of the PR, a full copy of the FR is kept in the ERO's office and the relevant part of the FR are kept in the respective District Offices.

## CHAPTER 4

### PUBLICITY

#### Section 1 : General

4.1 In order to raise public awareness and encourage the public participation in the 2015 ROE, HAD launched a large scale publicity campaign to:

- (a) draw the attention of the general public to the election;
- (b) draw the attention of the residents of Cheung Chau and Peng Chau that the 2015 KFR elections would be held for the first time in accordance with statutory requirements;
- (c) furnish the indigenous villagers and village residents, including those who are living outside Hong Kong, with detailed information about the election, such as the qualification for registration as electors and standing as candidates in the election, the polling dates of the IIR and ReR elections for various villages, and polling and counting arrangements; and
- (d) appeal to eligible persons to actively participate in the election, i.e. to be registered as an elector, to vote at the election, and to stand as a candidate.

4.2 As not only local indigenous villagers but also those who are living abroad were involved, the publicity events and measures were carried out both locally and abroad.

## **Section 2 : Local Publicity**

4.3 HAD launched an extensive voter registration drive from 19 May to 16 July 2014.

4.4 Publicity letters, pamphlets and posters on the election were distributed through the District Offices, HYK, RCs, village offices, youth groups and women's organisations. Banners were put up at spots where the voter registration work was carried out. Mobile broadcasting vans were arranged for villagers in all New Territories districts. Advertisements were published in several local newspapers including Ming Pao and the Standard during the voter registration period.

4.5 During the period from May 2014 to January 2015, Announcements in the Public Interest ("APIs") in both Chinese and English were broadcast on the television and the radio to publicise the voter registration exercise, change of registered particulars, nomination of candidates and polling arrangements, etc.

### **Section 3 : Overseas Publicity**

4.6 The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government's overseas Economic and Trade Offices helped to keep overseas Hong Kong communities in the picture by displaying and disseminating the publicity materials, and issuing press releases on the RRE. HYK and RCs also rendered their assistance in distributing the publicity materials and other related information to the indigenous villagers living abroad through their own networks. The overseas Hong Kong communities could also receive the information about the 2015 ROE from the overseas edition of a Hong Kong newspaper, i.e. the Sing Tao Daily (European edition).

### **Section 4 : Publicity on the Internet**

4.7 In order to have a wider reach to the community, in particular the youth, to register as electors in the 2015 ROE, online advertisements on the homepage of Yahoo were published for two intermittent weeks from 19 May to 16 July 2014. Advertisements on nomination of candidates and polling days were also published on Yahoo from 14 to 26 November 2014 and from 21 December 2014 to 24 January 2015 respectively.

4.8 To obtain information and registration/nomination forms for the 2015 ROE, the public could visit the dedicated website for the RRE ([www.had.gov.hk/rre](http://www.had.gov.hk/rre)). The website of the EAC ([www.eac.gov.hk](http://www.eac.gov.hk)) also

displayed information about the relevant legislation and Guidelines on the ROE. For information relating to the provisions of the ECICO, the public could visit the website of ICAC ([www.icac.org.hk](http://www.icac.org.hk)).

### **Section 5 : Publicity Campaign for the KFR elections**

4.9 As all previous electors had to register afresh for the 2015 KFR elections, extra efforts were made to strengthen the voter registration work for two MTs of Cheung Chau and Peng Chau. Mobile registration counters were set up in Cheung Chau and Peng Chau from 19 May to 16 July 2014. Household visits were also conducted in major housing estates. Besides, video broadcasting of APIs on voter registration, nomination of candidates and polling day were arranged at Peng Chau Pier and on the ferries plying between Central and Cheung Chau.

### **Section 6 : Mock Polling Stations for the KFR elections**

4.10 To enable the residents of Cheung Chau and Peng Chau familiarise themselves with the voting procedures in the 2015 KFR elections, a mock voting was held on 30 December 2014 in Peng Chau and from 15 to 17 January 2015 in Cheung Chau.



## **Section 7 : Publicity by ICAC**

4.11 To remind candidates, election agents and helpers abide by the law, ICAC conducted a total of 18 briefings for them to explain the major provisions of the ECICO through the co-ordination of the District Offices/HAD and rural organisations. In addition, 22 briefings were arranged for members of the elderly centres in the rural community to increase the awareness of aged electors on the clean elections messages.

4.12 ICAC also produced an Information Booklet, in both printed and CD-ROM versions, highlighting the legal requirements and common pitfalls in conducting election activities as reference for all candidates and their election agents. In addition, an Election Enquiry Hotline was set up to handle public enquiries on the ECICO.

4.13 ICAC leaflets containing warnings anti-vote rigging and important points-to-note for voters were produced and distributed to electors through activities of ICAC with the assistance of HAD. A poster with the theme of 'Don't Sell Your Votes, Support Clean Elections' was also produced and displayed at the District Offices, village offices, public facilities as well as government offices both locally and abroad. ICAC also arranged roving exhibitions by vehicle in the villages/MTs to disseminate clean election messages.

4.14 Other publicity media such as radio APIs and short video was also broadcast on infotainment channels of public transports and

government buildings. Messages were also published on newspapers and newsletters of district organisations to publicise the clean election messages extensively. Moreover, ICAC also set up a dedicated website with all the education and publicity materials uploaded for public reference.

## CHAPTER 5

### NOMINATION OF CANDIDATES

#### Section 1 : Eligibility of Candidates

5.1 The criteria for eligibility of candidates are stipulated under sections 15 and 22 of the RREO. A person is eligible to be nominated as a candidate in the ReR or KFR elections, if he/she:

- (a) is a Hong Kong permanent resident;
- (b) is aged 21 years or above at the time when he/she is nominated as a candidate;
- (c) is registered, and eligible to be registered, as an elector for the EV or MT concerned;
- (d) has been a resident of that EV or MT for at least six years immediately preceding his/her nomination;
- (e) is nominated by at least five registered electors in that EV or MT;
- (f) is not disqualified from voting at the election by virtue of section 14 of the RREO; and
- (g) is not disqualified from being nominated as a candidate at the election, or from being elected as a ReR for the Village or a KFR for the MT by virtue of section 23 of the RREO or any other law.

5.2 A person is eligible to be nominated as a candidate in the IIR election, if he/she:

- (a) is a Hong Kong permanent resident;
- (b) is an indigenous inhabitant of the IV/CIV concerned;
- (c) is aged 21 years or above at the time when he/she is nominated as a candidate;
- (d) is registered, and eligible to be registered, as an elector for the IV/CIV concerned;
- (e) has been ordinarily residing in Hong Kong;
- (f) is nominated by at least five registered electors in the IV/CIV concerned;
- (g) is not disqualified from voting at the election by virtue of section 14 of the RREO; and
- (h) is not disqualified from being nominated as a candidate at the election, or from being elected as an IIR for the Village by virtue of section 23 of the RREO or any other law.

## **Section 2 : The Nomination Period**

5.3 The nomination period started on 14 November 2014 and ended on 27 November 2014. Candidates must hand in their nomination forms to the relevant Returning Officer (“RO”) in person. At the close

of nomination, the ROs received a total of 1,891 nominations, including 755 for the ReR elections, 1,046 for the IIR elections and 90 for the KFR elections.

### **Section 3 : Validly Nominated Candidates**

5.4 Of the 1,891 nominations received, 17 were withdrawn before close of nomination and another 5 were determined as invalid by the ROs. Out of the remaining 1,869 nominations which had been declared valid by the ROs, 742 were for the ReR elections, 1,038 were for the IIR elections and 89 were for the KFR elections. There were no validly nominated candidates for 110 EVs and 9 IVs/CIVs involving 120 VR seats in total.

#### *Uncontested elections*

5.5 Among the 1,869 valid nominations, 945 candidates were elected uncontested (438 for the ReR elections and 507 for the IIR elections). Mr Lee Yiu-fai, a candidate who should have been elected uncontested for the ReR election for Lin Au, Lei Uk in Tai Po, passed away before publication of the relevant notice to declare the election result. The RO concerned therefore endorsed on the nomination form of that particular candidate that the candidate had passed away and declared at the same time that the election for that village had failed. In respect of the remaining 944 validly nominated candidates who had been elected uncontested, the election results were published in the Gazette on 11

December 2014 and are shown at **Appendices V(A) and (B)** respectively.

### *Contested elections*

5.6 The names and relevant particulars (i.e. principal residential address and relevant village/MT) of the remaining 924 validly nominated candidates for contested elections (304 for the ReR elections, 531 for the IIR elections and 89 for the KFR elections) were also published in the Gazette on 11 December 2014.

5.7 One of the validly nominated candidates contesting the ReR election for Kau Sai San Tsuen in Sai Kung was later disqualified by the RO in accordance with section 23(1) of the RREO. The RO concerned then published his disqualification in the Gazette on 16 January 2015. Since the number of validly nominated candidates for the ReR election concerned (i.e. reduced from three to two) still exceeded the number of ReR to be returned, the poll was conducted on 18 January 2015 as scheduled.

### *Elections that failed*

5.8 For the 110 EVs and 9 IVs/CIVs (110 ReRs and 10 IIRs) for which there was no validly nominated candidate or insufficient registered electors to serve as subscribers, the ROs concerned declared that the relevant elections had failed. The lists of EVs and IVs/CIVs where the

elections had failed were published in the Gazette on 11 December 2014 and are also shown at **Appendices VI (A) and (B)** respectively.

#### **Section 4 : Briefing for Candidates**

5.9 As in other public elections, the EAC Chairman hosted a briefing for the candidates of the 2015 ROE on 3 December 2014 at the Heung Yee Kuk Building. The briefing was attended by the Deputy Director and the Assistant Director of HAD, the representatives of ICAC, the Department of Justice (“DoJ”) and the Registration and Electoral Office (“REO”).

5.10 In the briefing session, the EAC Chairman briefed the candidates and their agents on the major provisions in the relevant electoral legislation and guidelines and drew their attention to various electoral arrangements and important matters related to the election. The EAC Chairman appealed to the candidates for their compliance with the relevant legislation and Guidelines so as to ensure that the election would be held in an open, fair and honest manner.

5.11 After the briefing session, the ROs drew lots to allocate to each candidate a candidate number to be printed on the ballot paper and designated spots for displaying EAs.

**Section 5 : Introduction to Candidates**

5.12 “Introduction to Candidates” leaflets containing relevant information about the candidates, their photographs and election platforms were issued by HAD to each elector of the relevant villages/MTs 10 days before the poll.



## CHAPTER 6

### POLLING AND COUNTING ARRANGEMENTS

#### Section 1 : Polling Days and Hours

6.1 With the experience gained in the 2011 VR election, the number of polling days for VR elections in the 2015 ROE was reduced from 4 to 3 and the polls were arranged on 3 consecutive Sundays from 4 to 18 January 2015. KFR elections which were for the first time conducted under the electoral law were held on a separate polling day of 25 January 2015 because of their different voting and counting arrangements.

6.2 The polling hours for VR elections were from 12:00 noon to 7:00 p.m. (7 hours) which were the same as those in the past elections. As for KFR elections, having regard to the representations received during the public consultation on the Guidelines and the electorate size of the two MTs, the polling hours were from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (11 hours) which were longer so as to allow ample time for the electors in the MTs to cast their votes. For security reason, the dedicated polling stations (“DPSs”) situated in penal institutions had shorter polling hours as detailed in paragraph 6.7. The polling dates and polling hours for relevant VR and KFR elections were published in the Gazette by the Secretary for Home Affairs (“SHA”) and DHA on 17 October 2014 and 11 December 2014 respectively.

6.3 After ROs had verified the nominations received, it was confirmed that about 63.61% of VR seats were returned uncontested. The polls scheduled for the relevant elections in respect of the villages concerned were thus cancelled.

## **Section 2 : Voting System**

6.4 The voting system adopted for RRE is the simple majority or relative majority, commonly known as the “first-past-the-post” system. A registered elector for:

- (a) an EV may vote for 1 candidate as ReR for that EV;
- (b) a CIV may vote for 1 candidate as IIR for that CIV;
- (c) an IV may vote for 1 to 5 candidates as the case may be depending on the number of IIR seats of IV; and
- (d) Cheung Chau MT may vote for 39 candidates while Peng Chau MT may vote for 17 candidates as KFR.

The candidate who obtains the largest number of votes will be elected. In the case of an IV or a MT, the next vacancy will be filled by the candidate who gets the next largest number of votes, and so on, until all vacancies are filled. In the event that there is/are still one or more vacancy/vacancies to be filled and the remaining candidates obtain the same number of votes, RO will draw lots to determine which candidate/candidates should be elected to fill the remaining vacancy/vacancies.

### Section 3 : Polling and Counting Stations

6.5 HAD and ROs had identified suitable venues for setting up 131 polling stations and 22 counting stations in nine districts. To ensure better supervision and effective use of manpower resources, 46 polling stations, out of 131, were clustered polling stations, a number of polling stations were set up at the same venue to serve a number of villages in the same locality. Venues used as polling and counting stations were mainly schools, community halls, village offices and indoor recreation halls. The number of polling stations in each district is shown below:

<b>District</b>	<b>Number</b>
Islands	12
Kwai Tsing	1
North	18
Sai Kung	3
Sha Tin	8
Tai Po	27
Tsuen Wan	7
Tuen Mun	8
Yuen Long	47
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>

6.6 As a contingency measure, 131 reserve polling stations were designated for the contested elections to cater for the situations that the original designated polling stations could not be used on the polling day.

## *Dedicated polling arrangements for imprisoned, remanded and detained electors*

### *Dedicated Polling Stations*

6.7 To enable registered electors who were imprisoned or remanded by the Correctional Services Department (“CSD”) on the polling days to vote, DPSs were set up in 16 penal institutions. Owing to security reasons, the polling hours of the DPSs remained the same as in the past elections from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (3 hours). A DPS was set up at Mei Tin Community Hall in Sha Tin on each polling day for registered electors who were remanded or detained by the law enforcement agencies (“LEAs”) (other than CSD). Since persons who happened to be registered electors for the villages/MTs concerned might be arrested any time on the polling days, the opening hours of this DPS was the same as that for the ordinary polling stations, i.e. from 12:00 noon to 7:00 p.m. for the VR elections on 4, 11 and 18 January 2015, and from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. for the KFR elections on 25 January 2015.

6.8 The venue set-up at all the DPSs was basically the same as that of an ordinary polling station except that the materials used were specially designed for security reasons.

6.9 The polling hours and the designation of polling and counting stations including DPSs were published in the Gazette on 11 December 2014 by DHA.

### *Ballot Paper Sorting Station*

6.10 For VR elections, a Ballot Paper Sorting Station (“BPSS”) was set up at the Hin Keng Neighbourhood Community Centre on the first 3 polling days for sorting the ballot papers received from the DPSs and the sorted ballot papers were delivered to the relevant counting stations for counting of votes. For KFR elections, a BPSS was set up at the Conference Room of the Islands District Council on the last polling day for sorting the ballot papers received from the DPSs before sending to the concerned counting stations for vote counting.

6.11 To enhance the efficiency of counting, special arrangements were made in respect of the delivery of ballot papers for the DPS at Mei Tin Community Hall as follows:

- (a) if no electors were to cast vote in the DPS at Mei Tin Community Hall, the ballot box would be delivered to the BPSS. The Assistant RO (“ARO”) (BPSS) would open the empty ballot box from the DPS and inform the ROs concerned of the result and that no ballot paper would be delivered to their counting stations; or

- (b) if elector(s) did cast vote(s) in the DPS at Mei Tin Community Hall,
  - (i) for VR elections, the ballot box would be delivered to the BPSS for sorting of ballot paper(s) before delivery to the relevant counting station(s).
  - (ii) as to KFR elections, ballot box(es) (designated for Cheung Chau or Peng Chau MTs) would be delivered direct to the relevant counting station(s) for counting of votes.

#### *Central Command Centre*

6.12 A Central Command Centre (“CCC”) was set up at HAD’s office at Yau Ma Tei Carpark Building to monitor the overall polling and counting process on each polling day. It acted to ensure the smooth operation of the polling and counting stations as well as the BPSS. The District Office of each of the 9 districts in which a poll was conducted served as the District Command Centre on the relevant polling days.

#### **Section 4 : Polling and Counting Staff**

6.13 Staff of the Home Affairs Bureau, HAD, Leisure and Cultural Services Department and Legal Aid Department were recruited and deployed as polling and counting staff on the 4 polling days. Polling and counting stations had a mix of electoral staff from the aforesaid Bureau/departments while the CCC and the District Command Centres were mainly operated by the staff of HAD.

## **Section 5 : Polling Notices to Electors**

6.14 10 days before the relevant polling days, a polling notice was sent to each elector concerned, notifying him/her of the date, time and location of the polling station in connection with the election for the relevant village/MT. Notices were also sent to the electors concerned in cases where the candidates were uncontested or where the elections had been declared as having failed so that the electors concerned knew that they needed not go to the polling station to cast their votes.

## **Section 6 : Appointment of ROs, AROs, AROs (BPSS) and AROs**

### **(Legal)**

6.15 In accordance with section 54 of the RREO, the EAC appointed 9 DOs and 3 Assistant DOs (“ADOs”) of the 9 New Territories Districts as ROs, and 11 ADOs and 17 members of their staff as AROs. Besides, 3 more staff from HAD were appointed as AROs (BPSS) and 3 Government Counsels of DoJ, Ms Cheng Tai-ngar, Dorothy, Mr Ip Wai-kee, Cliff and Mr Leung Man-fung, Ivan, were appointed as AROs (Legal). The appointment of ROs as required under the electoral law was published in the Gazette on 17 October 2014. A list of the ROs and AROs is shown at **Appendix VII**.

## **Section 7 : Training of Polling and Counting Staff**

6.16 To ensure that the staff who had been appointed as polling and counting staff were competent in discharging their duties, HAD had conducted 8 main training sessions from 16 to 19 December 2014. To facilitate the staff to familiarise themselves with the rules and operational procedures as well as their respective roles and duties, operational manuals, training DVDs and powerpoint notes on polling and counting arrangements were issued to them for easy reference. Hands-on practices were arranged in each training session to facilitate the polling and counting staff to gain more operational experience. Veteran Presiding Officers (“PROs”) and Counting Supervisors were also invited to share their experience with the polling and counting staff in the training. In addition, “tips at your fingertips” of the essential points on polling and counting arrangements were also issued to the PROs, Counting Supervisors and Assistant Counting Supervisors as quick reference for performing their duties. Besides, some ROs organised separate briefings for their electoral staff on each polling day to ensure that they understand the operational details of the poll and count. In view that computer counting was adopted for KFR elections for the first time, 5 training sessions with hands-on practice were conducted on 13 November 2014, 9 and 11 December 2014 and 22 and 23 January 2015 to familiarise all the counting staff concerned with the arrangements and workflow of computer counting.



6.17 The EAC Chairman attended the training session for polling and counting staff conducted on 16 December 2014 to observe training process. He took the opportunity to remind the polling staff to follow closely the enhanced ballot paper issuing procedures and measures on checking a person's eligibility to vote.

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **THE POLLS**

#### **Section 1 : Polling Dates and Polling Hours**

7.1 The polls for VR elections, involving 251 villages and 420 seats, were held on the first 3 consecutive Sundays in January 2015, viz. 4, 11 and 18 January. The polling hours started at 12:00 noon and ended at 7:00 p.m. on each polling day. As for the KFR elections for the MTs of Cheung Chau and Peng Chau, the polls were held on 25 January 2015 and the polling hours ran from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. For security reasons, the polls at the DPSs set up in penal institutions were conducted from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. on all the 4 polling days.

#### **Section 2 : Logistical Support and Polling Arrangements**

7.2 On each of the 4 polling days, all the designated polling stations were opened for electors to cast vote as scheduled. Alternative polling stations were designated for use by persons with mobility difficulty who in case the polling stations originally allocated to them were inaccessible. The CCC at HAD's office and the District Command Centres set up at the concerned districts were operated in parallel to provide the necessary support.

7.3 A Complaints Centre, operated by the staff of the EAC Secretariat, was set up at the REO office in Harbour Centre to receive and process complaint calls from members of the public throughout the polling hours on each polling day.

7.4 HAD, ICAC and Police had teamed up for the purposes of combating triad influence and forestalling triad intrusion into electoral activities. A task force, composed of senior officers from the above departments, met on a regular basis to co-ordinate information and mapped out strategies to fight crime and corruption. To facilitate communication among these departments on the polling days, representatives of ICAC were stationed at HAD's CCC. At the same time, Police also set up its own command centre at the New Territories North Regional Headquarters for the purpose.

7.5 The set-up of each polling station was basically the same except that the number of ballot paper issuing desks and voting compartments varied depending on the number of electors to be served. Where a venue was used to accommodate more than one polling station (i.e. clustered polling station), the respective polling stations therein were partitioned or situated in separate rooms.

7.6 For VR elections, there were 2 types of ballot papers with different colour codings, red for the IIR elections and white for the ReR elections. Similarly, ballot boxes in 2 different colours, red for the IIR and white for the ReR were used. Electors with different voting

entitlements were given cardboards in different colours, red for those entitled to vote in the IIR elections, white for those entitled to vote in the ReR elections, as well as red and white striped for those entitled to vote in both the IIR and ReR elections. For a polling station serving a village where both the IIR and ReR elections were held, there were two separate sets of poll registers for marking electors who had been issued with ballot papers, one for the IIR elections in red colour and the other for the ReR elections in white colour. Cross references were made in these registers to ensure that those entitled to have two ballot papers would be issued the correct number of ballot papers.

7.7 As for a polling station serving a MT, the ballot papers were printed in orange colour. Electors were also provided with an envelope for concealing their choices marked on the ballot papers. Ballot boxes of different sizes respectively in blue and in white were designated for use in the KFR elections for Cheung Chau and Peng Chau MTs. There was a set of poll register for marking electors who had been issued with ballot papers.

7.8 An elector had to mark the ballot paper inside the voting compartment by using the “✓” chop provided. In the case of a VR election, the elector was required to fold the ballot paper after marking the ballot paper so that the marked side was concealed, and then to put the folded ballot paper into the ballot box. In the case of a KFR election, the elector would be required to put the unfolded ballot paper into an envelope after marking the ballot paper for concealing their choices

marked on the ballot paper, and then to put the envelope into the ballot box.

7.9 A no canvassing zone (“NCZ”) and a no staying zone (“NSZ”) were specified by the RO concerned outside each polling station or each clustered polling station. Ample police officers were deployed to maintain law and order at the polling stations.

### **Section 3 : Exit Polls**

7.10 One application for conducting exit polls on the four polling days had been received. Having considered the aforesaid application in accordance with the established principles set out in Chapter 11 of the Guidelines, the application was approved by HAD. The organisation was required to sign an undertaking not to release the results of the exit polls before the close of poll to:

- (a) any candidate contesting in any village/MT covered by the exit polls;
- (b) any person or organisation which had publicly expressed support for any candidate contesting in any village/MT covered by the exit polls; and
- (c) any organisation with member(s) contesting in any village/MT covered by the exit polls.

The name of the organisation approved for conducting exit polls was uploaded to the RRE dedicated website on 31 December 2014 and was also displayed in a prominent place outside the relevant polling stations for public inspection.

#### **Section 4 : Voters' Turnout Rates**

7.11 For VR elections, the total number of registered electors for all the contested elections was 85,597, which was 7.05% higher than that for the VR elections in 2011 (79,959). Of these, 50,429 were electors of IIR elections and 35,168 were electors of ReR elections. Both KFR elections were contested and the total number of registered electors was 9,137.

7.12 On voters' turnout, a total of 22,404 electors for ReR elections (i.e. 63.71%) and 31,825 electors for IIR elections (i.e. 63.11%) were recorded to have turned up to cast their votes on the 3 polling days for the VR elections. As for the KFR elections, 5,134 electors (i.e. 56.19%) cast their votes on the fourth polling day. Altogether, 48 imprisoned or remanded electors cast votes at the DPSs. The overall turnout rate of the VR election was 63.35%, comparable to that of the VR elections in 2011 (63.56%). The overall turnout rate of the KFR elections was 56.19%. A detailed breakdown of the overall daily turnout rates of ReR, IIR and KFR elections are shown in **Appendices VIII (A) and (B)**.

## **Section 5 : Elections which had Failed and By-elections**

7.13 As mentioned in paragraph 5.4, the ROs concerned declared that the elections for 110 EVs and 9 IVs/CIVs had failed. As a result, HAD would need to conduct by-elections for these villages at a later stage.

## **CHAPTER 8**

### **THE COUNTS**

#### **Section 1 : Counting Stations**

8.1 For VR elections, there was one counting station for all the villages covered by the same RC in the same district. For KFR elections, one counting station was set up for each of the two MTs. Each counting station was supervised by the RO concerned. A reserve counting station had been designated for each RC in the same district to serve as a replacement or additional counting station in the event that the original station, for any reason, could no longer function properly.

#### **Section 2 : Counting Methods**

##### *VR Elections*

8.2 In the case of a single-seat election (e.g. ReR elections), the method of manual counting was adopted for the counting of votes. Ballot papers were sorted into different plastic boxes corresponding to the votes marked thereon and, thereafter, counted to give the number of valid votes cast for each candidate.

8.3 In the case of a multiple-seat election (e.g. IIR elections), where the number of candidates contesting was small and the number of



voting combinations was of a manageable size, the method of manual counting was also adopted. An example of the table for recording the count showing the various permutations for an election where 5 candidates contested for 3 seats is at **Appendix IX**. If the number of voting combinations was too large for manual counting to be handled efficiently, the method of vocal counting was used. The votes given to a candidate were recorded on a white board displayed behind the counting table by a series of five-stroke Chinese character of “正”, with each stroke representing one vote.

### *KFR Elections*

8.4 Considering the large number of electors and candidates involved, HAD has developed and deployed a computerised system to facilitate the vote counting process for KFR elections. The system made use of the Optical Mark Recognition (“OMR”) technology to read the votes marked on the ballot papers. In case the votes marked on the ballot papers could not be recognised by the computer system, they would be input manually into the system with the “Manual Key Entry” method. To ensure accuracy, counting staff worked in pairs and each one of them would input into the system the votes marked on each ballot paper separately and independently. The computer system would then compare the votes entered by each of the pair to ensure a complete match before accepting the counting result.

8.5 In the event of failure of the computer system, an alternative “roundtable counting” method would be adopted to manually count and record on a counting form the votes obtained by each candidates. Counting staff would sit around a counting table and the number of staff to be deployed to record the votes would correspond exactly to the number of candidates. Each of them would be responsible for recording the votes given to the candidate specifically assigned to him/her.

### **Section 3 : Counting Arrangements**

8.6 The counting of votes for VR elections was held at the counting stations set up for the relevant villages in each district. After the close of poll, the sealed ballot boxes were delivered to the relevant counting stations under the escort of Police. The time for transporting the ballot boxes from the polling stations to the respective counting stations varied from village to village. For some villages it took a relatively short time, while some took as long as a couple of hours, depending on the distance between the polling and counting stations. In the case of KFR elections, the respective polling stations were also designated as the counting stations and would be converted into counting stations immediately after the close of the poll.

8.7 For VR elections, the ballot papers cast at all DPSs were sent to the BPSS at Hin Keng Neighbourhood Community Centre for sorting according to each village before they were delivered to the relevant counting stations for counting. As for KFR elections, the BPSS was set

up at the Conference Room of the Islands District Council for the sorting of the ballot papers cast at all the DPSs.

8.8 No vote was cast in the DPS at Mei Tin Community Hall for both VR and KFR elections on all polling days. In accordance with the operational procedure, the AROs (BPSS), after opening the empty ballot boxes from the DPS, informed the ROs concerned of the result and that no ballot paper would be delivered to their counting stations. This enabled the ROs to immediately commence the counting process.

8.9 After the ballot boxes arrived at their respective counting stations, the RO concerned opened and emptied the ballot boxes for the count to commence. For the ballot papers delivered from the BPSS, they were mixed with the ballot papers of the relevant villages/MTs at the counting stations before counting in order to preserve the secrecy of votes. Members of the public were allowed to attend the counting stations to observe the counting process.

8.10 Counting staff would identify and set aside questionable ballot papers and the ROs concerned would determine their validity in front of the candidates or their agents who were present at the counting station. The summary of rejected ballot papers with related reasons is at **Appendix X**.

8.11 The time for completing the count varied from district to district, mainly depending on the number of ballot papers involved. For

some districts, it took about an hour or two to complete the count and declare the election results, while in others such as the KFR elections in the Islands District, a much longer time was required to count the large number of votes involved.

#### **Section 4 : Declaration of Result**

8.12 The election results were declared by the ROs concerned at each counting station after completion of the counts. The results of the contested elections were published in the Gazette on 9, 16, 23 and 30 January 2015 respectively.

8.13 The full lists of successful and unsuccessful candidates including those returned in uncontested villages and the villages for which the elections were declared as having failed are shown in **Appendices XI (A), (B) and (C)**.

#### **Section 5 : EAC Visits**

8.14 The EAC Chairman and Members visited either separately or together a number of polling and counting stations on each of the four polling days. Altogether, they visited a total of 12 polling stations, two DPSs, one BPSS, and five counting stations. On the first polling day, they met to observe the operation of the BPSS at Hin Keng Neighbourhood Community Centre and, thereafter, briefed the media on the latest progress of the poll before proceeding to observe the count at

the counting station at Fung Kam Street Sports Centre that evening. On the second and third polling days, the EAC Chairman and Members paid separate visits to the polling and counting stations of different villages. On the last polling day for the KFR elections, the EAC Chairman attended the polling-cum-counting stations situated at Cheung Chau Sports Centre and a Member attended Peng Chau Sports Centre to observe the poll and count.

8.15 The EAC closely monitored the events on the polling days and found the polling and counting arrangements satisfactory generally.

#### **Section 6 : Visits by Government Officials**

8.16 Mr Tsang Tak-sing, SHA, and Mr Patrick Li, Deputy DHA, visited the polling station at Tai Wo Neighbourhood Community Centre on the first polling day on 4 January 2015. Mrs Fung Ching Suk-ye, Betty, Permanent SHA, and Mr Patrick Li, Deputy DHA, joined the EAC Chairman and Members to visit the polling station at Fanling Public School and the counting station in Tai Po Hui Sports Centre on 18 January 2015. On the last polling day for the KFR elections (i.e. 25 January 2015), Mr Tsang Tak-sing, SHA, and Mrs Pamela Tan, DHA, visited the polling station at Cheung Chau Sports Centre for Cheung Chau MT.

## **CHAPTER 9**

### **COMPLAINTS**

#### **Section 1 : Complaints-handling Period**

9.1 The complaints-handling period started on 14 November 2014 (i.e. the commencement of the nomination period) and ended on 11 March 2015 (i.e. 45 days after the last polling day on 25 January 2015).

#### **Section 2 : Complaints-handling Parties**

9.2 Five different parties were involved in handling complaints relating to the 2015 ROE including the EAC, the ROs, Police, ICAC and, on the polling days, the PROs as well. The division of work was as follows:

- (a) the ROs were responsible for handling complaint cases of a minor nature under the authority delegated to them by the EAC, e.g. those relating to EAs, electioneering activities conducted in private premises, use of sound amplifying devices, etc.;
- (b) Police handled cases that involved possible criminal liability, breaches of the EP (RRE) Reg. and criminal

damage of EAs;

(c) ICAC attended to cases that involved possible breaches of the ECICO, the Prevention of Bribery Ordinance, Cap. 201, and the Independent Commission Against Corruption Ordinance, Cap. 204; and

(d) the PROs handled complaints received at the polling stations on the polling days and took action on the spot on those cases which required immediate attention e.g. use of sound amplifying devices in the vicinity of the station, unlawful activities carried out in the NCZ or NSZ, etc.

9.3 The EAC Secretariat assumed the role of the co-ordinator for collating the complaint-related statistical information from the other parties and compiling a consolidated return for submission to the EAC on a weekly basis during the complaints-handling period.

### **Section 3 : Number and Nature of Complaints**

9.4 The total number of complaints received during the complaints-handling period (including those received on the polling days) was 214. ICAC received the largest number of complaint cases, a total of 111.

9.5 The major heads of the complaints concerned corruption/bribery/treating/undue influence/impersonation, entitlement to vote and EAs. The lists showing the total number of complaint cases received by different complaints-handling parties with detailed breakdowns by nature are shown in **Appendices XII (A) – (F)**.

#### **Section 4 : Complaints Received on Polling Days**

9.6 On the 4 polling days, a total of 40 complaint cases were received, of which 27 were received by the PROs and were mostly related to the electors' entitlement to vote (i.e. names not included in the FR). **Appendix XIII** shows the subjects of complaints took action on the spot regarding cases which required immediate attention, e.g. unauthorised display of EAs and illegal canvassing in the no canvassing zone. Other less straight forward cases were referred to the authorities concerned for investigation, where necessary.

#### **Section 5 : Outcome of Investigations**

9.7 Of the 281 cases handled during the complaints-handling period, 8 were found substantiated or partially substantiated and 33 not substantiated while 117 were still under investigation. **Appendices XIV (A) - (D)** detailed the breakdown.

9.8 A total of nine warning letters had been issued by relevant ROs to the infringing parties.



## **Section 6 : Judicial Review and Election Petition**

9.9 For RRE, the statutory period for lodging an election petition questioning an election is within 2 months following the date on which the RO has published the result of the election in the Gazette. After the deadline, it was noted that no application has been received in respect of the 2015 ROE.

9.10 At the time of compiling this report, there was no application for leave to apply for judicial review in relation to the 2015 ROE.

## **CHAPTER 10**

### **REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **Section 1 : A General Note**

10.1 The EAC is generally satisfied with the electoral arrangements made for the 2015 ROE and considers that the election has been organised in an open, fair and honest manner. Following the established practice, the EAC has conducted a comprehensive review of the electoral procedures and arrangements with a view to improving the conduct of future elections. The EAC's findings and the related recommendations are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

#### **Section 2 : Matters Relating to the Preparation Work**

##### *(A) Publicity for Voter Registration*

10.2 The EAC appreciates that HAD has made continuous efforts to promote voter registration for RRE through various means. Publicity programmes were rolled out by phases at different stages of the voter registration campaign starting from 19 May 2014. A variety of publicity channels including TV and Radio APIs, RRE dedicated website, pamphlets, posters, banners, online and newspaper advertisements were employed to disseminate the message and encourage eligible persons to register as electors for RRE. In addition, HAD has sent letters to HYK,

RCs, village offices and youth groups and women's organisations of the New Territories to publicise the 2015 ROE and appeal for support in the promotion of voter registration.

10.3 As a result, for VR elections, the number of new voter registration applications received increased from 15,793 in 2011 to 18,140 in 2015, showing an increase of 14.9%. In this regard, the EAC notes that the number of villages for which elections had failed because of no validly nominated candidate or insufficient registered electors to serve as subscribers decreased from 125 in 2011 to 119 in 2015.

10.4 KFR elections were conducted under the electoral legislation and the supervision of the EAC for the first time. Voter registration for KFR elections had to be conducted afresh under the electoral law and all eligible persons were required to make an application to register as electors. In this regard, HAD had carried out a comprehensive publicity campaign to encourage eligible persons to register as electors, including placing voter registration advertisements on ferries, setting up registration counters at the ferry piers for Cheung Chau and Peng Chau routes, issuing appeal letters to existing electors (registered for the previous KFR elections conducted administratively), sending promotional letters to the households of Cheung Chau and Peng Chau MTs and carrying out household visits to the major estates in the two MTs to promote voter registration. As recorded in the 2014 FR, a total of 6,658 and 2,479 persons were duly registered as electors for the two MTs of Cheung Chau and Peng Chau respectively.

10.5 **Recommendation:** The EAC appreciates the considerable efforts made by HAD to promote voter registration for both VR and KFR elections. In particular, the EAC notes that the conduct of the first voter registration exercise for KFR elections under the electoral law was smooth and successful. In view of the ever rising public aspirations in elections, HAD should continue its efforts in promoting the registration of RR electors for RRE through various publicity measures such as setting up temporary registration counters at village offices, public transport terminals, MTR stations, and conducting household visits to those villages without the requisite number of registered electors to serve as subscribers to nominate candidates in election, and to consider exploring alternative publicity measures to reach out to potential electors.

*(B) Registration of Electors for EVs*

10.6 Eligibility for voter registration for EV's is governed by the RREO. If ERO is satisfied on reasonable grounds that an existing elector has not been a resident of the village for the three years immediately before the compilation of the voter register or no longer resides in the village, ERO may in accordance with the statutory procedure omit the person's name from the next FR for the village concerned.

10.7 To ensure the accuracy of electoral records and prevent vote-rigging, DHA as ERO had in the course of the voter registration exercise stepped up its efforts to verify the eligibility of electors by

various measures, including the issue of enquiry letters to all electors requesting them to confirm their registration details, conduct of random sample checks on registered electors and applicants by requiring them to provide documentary proof of their addresses, and cross-checking of the personal data of electors with various public authorities such as the Immigration Department (for identification of electors who had passed away) and Housing Department (for checking against the department's tenancy records). As a result of the extensive enhanced checks conducted in the past three years (i.e. from 2012 to 2014), a total of 12,027 electors were deleted from the FR because they had failed to provide sufficient information to show their eligibility for registration, or had requested for deregistration, or had passed away.

10.8 In the run-up to the 2015 ROE, there were media reports raising concerns on some incomplete residential addresses appearing in the register of electors for ReR elections. However, an elector whose registered address appears to be incomplete does not necessarily mean that his/her registration eligibility is doubtful. Such situation is quite common in some remote rural areas. As long as the elector actually resides in the EV concerned, he/she remains an eligible elector and is, therefore, eligible to vote. To address the concerns on the eligibility for electors in ReR election, the EAC issued a press release on 25 January 2015 to explain the eligibility requirements vis-à-vis the issue of incomplete address and the follow-up actions which HAD had taken or were to take to address the matter. An extract of the aforementioned press release at **Appendix XV**.

10.9        **Recommendations:** The EAC notes and appreciates that HAD has made special efforts to enhance the accuracy of the register of electors. Although the electoral legislation does not impose a criminal sanction on an elector for failing to report and update his/her residential address as recorded in the register, it is undeniably an elector's civic responsibility to report any change of his/her residential address or other registration particulars to HAD timely. This would enable ERO to update the elector's registration records accordingly and will help to ensure the accuracy of and maintaining public trust in the voter register. The enhanced checking measures of HAD would unavoidably cause some inconvenience to the electors. But overall, the EAC is satisfied that HAD has endeavored to strike a balance between upholding the integrity of the voter registration system on one hand and safeguarding a person's voting right on the other.

10.10        The EAC notes that the above concerns or doubts about the voter registration may be occasioned by misunderstanding of the eligibility for registration as electors under the RREO.

10.11        In case of IIR elections, voter eligibility is based on the lineage of the electors and their residential address is not a criterion of the eligibility. The change of the residential address or the use of a correspondence address would not affect an elector's eligibility to vote in IIR elections.

10.12 For ReR elections, as long as the elector actually resides in the EVs concerned, he/she remains eligible to vote under the law despite the registered address may appear to be incomplete in some aspects. However, once an elector moves out of the EV concerned, he/she will lose the eligibility to be registered and to vote.

10.13 Nonetheless, the issue of incomplete address for ReR election should be addressed as far as possible to dispel public concern. HAD should continue to review the situation and follow up on cases with incomplete addresses. In particular, special attention should be paid to the completeness of the registered residential addresses in compiling the next registers of electors for ReR election.

### **Section 3 : Matters Relating to Polling and Counting Arrangements**

#### *(C) Polling Days and Polling Hours*

10.14 VR elections were conducted on 3 consecutive Sundays from 4 to 18 January 2015, and polling for villages under the same RC was conducted on the same Sunday. When compared to the last election in 2011, the number of polling days for VR elections was reduced by one. Owing to its different voting arrangements, KFR elections were held on a separate polling day (i.e. 25 January 2015). To ensure the smooth conduct of the elections, HAD had made meticulous plans for the manpower deployment and logistical arrangements. In particular, HAD had extended recruitment of polling staff to cover all civil servants in

government departments under the policy purview of the Home Affairs Bureau so as to ensure a sufficiently large pool for recruiting an adequate number of electoral staff to carry out the polling and counting duties on the four polling days.

10.15 As regards the polling hours, the arrangements for VR elections were the same as those in the past elections (i.e. from 12:00 noon to 7:00 p.m. (7 hours)). For KFR elections, having considered the representations received during the public consultation on the Guidelines and the electorate size of the two MTs, the EAC accepted HAD's recommendation to adopt longer polling hours (i.e. from 9:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. (11 hours)). The extended polling hours would allow the electors in KFR elections to have ample time to cast their votes. For security reason, the polling hours of the dedicated polling stations set up in CSD penal institutions remained unchanged, i.e. from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. (3 hours) for both VR and KFR elections.

10.16 **Recommendation:** The EAC notes that HAD has made careful planning and preparation to cope with the work on the four polling days and, in particular, resolve the operational issues arising from the reduction of polling days from 4 to 3 for VR elections. The EAC finds the arrangements satisfactory and that the elections were conducted smoothly and orderly on all the four polling days. For KFR elections, the EAC notes that the new polling hours was generally well received by the electors of the two MTs and should continue to be adopted in future elections.



*(D) Setting up of Clustered Polling Stations*

10.17 As in past elections, HAD has arranged clustered polling stations as far as circumstances permitted. From the operational point of view, this arrangement would help to optimise the deployment of resources and make available more space for on-site logistical support at polling stations to maintain order and assist electors. To avoid possible confusion to electors, HAD had put up sufficient directional signs at the clustered polling stations and deployed additional polling staff to usher the electors to their designated polling stations.

10.18 **Recommendation:** The EAC appreciates the arrangements made by HAD in ensuring the smooth conduct of polls at the clustered polling stations. Such arrangements should continue to be adopted in future elections as long as the locations of the clustered polling stations are convenient and acceptable to electors.

*(E) Enhancement Measures for Issuing Ballot Papers*

10.19 To follow up on a recommendation made by the EAC in its Report on the 2011 Village Ordinary Election, HAD had reviewed its operational procedures and adopted effective measures to improve the procedure for the issue of ballot papers, especially for the polling stations where the polls for both IIR and ReR elections were held concurrently at the same venue.

10.20 To ensure that the ballot papers were issued correctly, HAD had adopted the following measures:

- (a) the design of poll register was modified in such a way that electors' individual entries as shown in the poll registers were printed in alternate white and grey colours to enable easy identification by the polling staff;
- (b) the standard dialogue drawn up for the polling staff operating the ballot paper issuing desks to ascertain the identity and eligibility of electors was refined to improve clarity;
- (c) the polling staff operating the ballot paper issuing desks were reminded to cross check if the correct entry on the poll register had been crossed out and the correct type and number of ballot papers had been issued to each elector;
- (d) the procedure of checking a person's eligibility to vote with the CCC by the PRO was standardised to minimise the chance of miscommunication between the PRO and the CCC;
- (e) the number of enquiry desks at the Voters' Enquiry Team at the CCC was increased for enhanced supervision;

- (f) the PROs were reminded of the key points on the operation of polling station, including the handling of “Tendered”, “Spoilt” and “Unused” ballot papers; and
- (g) training for polling staff was strengthened. More hands-on practices were provided for polling staff to familiarise themselves with the duties assigned (e.g. issuing of ballot papers and verification of electors’ eligibility to vote).

10.21 **Recommendation:** In general, the EAC considers the above enhancement measures effective, which have substantially reduced the chance of human errors in the issue of ballot papers. Such measures should be maintained in future elections.

*(F) Counting of Votes in VR Elections*

10.22 The EAC notes that there were two incidents concerning the counting of votes at the ReR election for Cheung Po Tsuen on 4 January 2015 and the IIR election for Ng Uk Tsuen on 11 January 2015. For the first incident, the RO for the ReR election for Cheung Po Tsuen found out after counting of votes that the number of ballot papers actually counted at the counting station did not tally with the number of ballot papers estimated by the PRO to be in the ballot box as recorded on the ballot paper account. The actual number of ballot papers counted

fell short of the estimated number on the ballot paper account by one. Furthermore, according to the initial counting results, the winning candidate in the election won by only one vote. As soon as becoming aware of the discrepancy, the RO promptly informed the candidates concerned of the initial counting results and the discrepancy detected. Given the very narrow winning margin, the RO immediately conducted a recount. The result of the recount was exactly the same as the first count. In accordance with the relevant electoral legislation, the RO proceeded to conclude the counting process and announced the election result on the basis of the actual number of ballot papers counted at the counting station.

10.23 The second incident arose out of a clerical error made during the count of the IIR election for Ng Uk Tsuen held on 11 January 2015. At the election, there were 4 candidates contesting 2 IIR seats and electors could vote for up to 2 candidates of different combinations. Manual counting was adopted for the counting of votes. In accordance with the counting procedure, ballot papers were sorted into different plastic boxes corresponding to the voting combinations marked thereon and, thereafter, counted and recorded on a counting form. During the count, the counting staff had inadvertently forgotten to record on the counting form the number of valid votes cast for the voting combination of Candidate Nos. 3 and 4. As a result, the votes in question which should otherwise have been counted towards the total numbers of valid votes pertaining to the 2 candidates concerned had been left out. This error was only discovered after the RO had declared the election result at

the counting station. As soon as becoming aware of this error, HAD took immediate steps to double check the counting records, rectified the total number of votes obtained by each of the two candidates, and revised the counting results. Fortunately, this mishap did not affect the overall election result although the number of votes received by the 2 candidates in question had to be adjusted afterwards.

10.24 To follow up on the revised counting results for the above election, the RO concerned had taken the following course of actions:

- (a) conducted meetings with the candidates contesting in the election to explain the incident and announce the revised number of votes obtained by each candidate and the election result;
- (b) posted the revised Notice of Result of Election at the village and RC concerned, as well as the Yuen Long District Office for the reference of electors;
- (c) sent a copy of the revised Notice of Result of Election to the EAC, Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, SHA, DHA and the Chief Electoral Officer in accordance with section 67(1) of the EP (RRE) Reg.; and
- (d) issued a corrigendum to amend the counting result as stated in the press release issued on 12 January 2015.

After informing the EAC of the incident, DHA had directed all ROs, AROs, Counting Supervisors and Assistant Counting Supervisors to make every effort to verify the counting results and the number of recorded votes in the IIR/ReR elections to be held on the remaining polling day on 18 January 2015. Specifically, the counting procedures were strengthened to require that, on top of the check conducted by the Counting Supervisor, the ARO should also double-check the counting records and the election result to ensure the accuracy of the calculation thereon prior to the declaration of election result by the RO.

10.25      **Recommendation:** For the first incident, the EAC considers that it could have happened for different reasons including those not pertaining to the counting process. In the incident, the RO concerned took appropriate action in handling the discrepancy found between the counting result and ballot paper account. The steps taken to verify the counting result and ballot paper account were in line with the established counting procedures. Furthermore, a sufficient degree of transparency was observed during the process.

10.26      As to the second incident, the EAC considers that while it might be an isolated incident reflecting human error on the part of the counting staff concerned than the counting procedure, it has nonetheless revealed room for improvement in the training of counting staff and a need to strengthen their sense of care and alertness in recording the votes counted and completing the relevant counting forms. The EAC

appreciates that HAD has taken immediate remedial measures to verify and rectify the counting results and, also, to prevent the recurrence of similar incidents in the remaining polling days. The EAC is pleased to note that no similar incidents occurred on the polling days thereafter. In light of the experience gained, the EAC recommends that HAD should further review its operational workflow for the counting of ballot papers in multiple seats elections and provide more detailed guidelines and checking procedures for counting staff to follow. The training for counting staff should in particular be further strengthened to ensure sufficient hands-on practice on completion of counting forms and verification of counting results.

*(G) Polling Arrangements for KFR Election*

10.27 To cater for the large number of electors and candidates in KFR elections and facilitate the use of computer for vote counting, HAD had identified two sports centres in Cheung Chau and Peng Chau MTs as polling-cum-counting stations. Since the electors could elect up to 39 candidates in the Cheung Chau KFR election and 17 candidates in the Peng Chau KFR election, it was anticipated that longer time might be needed for electors to mark their ballot papers and, hence, the need for a sufficient number of voting compartments. In this regard, HAD had set up 39 and 22 voting compartments for use by electors in the Cheung Chau and Peng Chau MTs respectively. Of them, 18 and 11 respectively were enlarged voting compartments specially designed to cater for the need of the elderly electors who might need the assistance of

polling staff to mark their ballot papers. In addition, for better crowd control during the peak hours, a central queuing arrangement was put in place to regulate the flow of electors while waiting for their turn to enter the voting compartments to mark their ballot papers.

10.28 **Recommendation:** The EAC notes that the two polling-cum-counting stations were easily accessible and located in the vicinity of the residence of most electors. Also, they were very spacious to cope with a large number of candidates and their agents, electors and members of the public who visited the stations to cast their votes and observe the count. The EAC considers that both venues are suitable venues for use as polling-cum-counting stations in future KFR elections. Moreover, a sufficient number of electoral staff were arranged to operate the polling stations and the central queuing arrangement was effective in regulating the flow of electors and maintaining an orderly allocation of voting compartments. The setting up of sufficient issuing desks and voting compartments as well as the provision of enlarged compartments had greatly facilitated electors to cast their vote and allowed sufficient space for polling staff to assist the electors to mark their ballot papers inside the voting compartments if necessary. Overall, the EAC is satisfied with the polling arrangements made for the two KFR elections.

#### *(H) Counting of Votes for KFR Elections*

10.29 Considering the large size of the electorate and the large number of candidates in KFR elections, HAD has developed a



computerised system to enable efficient vote counting and consolidation of election results. The system makes use of OMR technology to read the votes marked on the ballot papers and allows manual input with an alternative “Manual Key Entry” method of the valid votes marked on those ballot papers which cannot be read by OMR. Before the election, HAD has conducted thorough tests to ensure data integrity, security and accuracy. Apart from carrying out quality assurance tests on the system by an independent software testing contractor, HAD has also employed an independent professional third party to perform pertinent procedures to assist HAD in evaluating the integrity of the system. To ensure the smooth conduct of the counting process, the counting staff have been provided with comprehensive training and sufficient hands-on practice. Contingency plans have also been drawn up to provide for a manual counting process to cater for system failure or suspension of power supply.

10.30 **Recommendation:** The EAC considers that the computerised arrangement made for the counting of votes in KFR elections is necessary and appropriate. Due to a slight technical problem, it took some time for the count to settle into a smooth and effective flow at the early stage but this had very little impact on the overall efficiency of the process. Given that this was a new system and was deployed for the first time in RRE, teething hitch of this kind were only to be expected. On the whole, the EAC considers the counting process satisfactory and that HAD should in the light of the experience gained this time examine room for enhancement in future elections. The EAC is also pleased to note that the new counting method was apparently well received by both

candidates and electors who were present at the counting stations to observe the process. The EAC opines that HAD should continue to consider the adoption of computerised counting in future KFR elections.

*(I) Wrong Photograph in the Poster for the KFR Election*

10.31 In view of the large number of candidates in KFR elections (39 seats for the Cheung Chau MT and 17 seats for the Peng Chau MT) and the limit of the size of the ballot paper for computerised counting, photographs of individual candidates could not be printed on the ballot paper. In this regard, HAD had prepared a large poster showing the names, candidate numbers and photographs of all candidates for display inside each voting compartment for electors' easy reference. Such arrangement aims to provide an additional mean to assist electors to identify the candidates of their choices when marking the ballot papers.

10.32 During the poll of KFR election for the Cheung Chau MT held on 25 January 2015, in which 70 candidates contested 39 seats, it was found that a candidate's photograph (Candidate No. 58) had mistakenly been printed with the photograph of another candidate (Candidate No. 16). Upon the discrepancy was reported to the PRO of the polling station at Cheung Chau Sports Centre, the PRO took immediate remedial action to replace the wrong photograph with the correct photograph of the candidate concerned and conducted a thorough check to verify the accuracy of other polling information contained in the poster. The candidate concerned was also informed of the incident on the same day.

A follow-up investigation of the incident revealed that the mistake had arisen out of an error made during the preparation of the poster.

10.33      **Recommendation:** The EAC notes that HAD has taken prompt actions to replace the wrong photograph identified in the poster. The EAC further notes that the information and photographs as contained in the “Introduction to Candidates” sent together with the poll cards to electors are accurate. Nonetheless, the incident was an unfortunate one and risked causing criticism of the polling arrangement. Given that the poster serves to provide electors with information on candidates, it would be necessary to verify all the information contained in the poster with extreme care beforehand. In the light of the incident, the proofreading process must be enhanced to ensure accuracy and forestall recurrence. In this regard, the EAC urges HAD to review the experience and draw up clear working procedures to strengthen the accuracy checks and, also, to remind the officers concerned to stay vigilant throughout the production process.

## CHAPTER 11

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

11.1 The smooth conclusion of the 2015 ROE was attributable to the dedicated and concerted efforts of all parties involved.

11.2 The EAC would like to thank the following government bureaux and departments for their unflagging support and valuable assistance rendered throughout the election:

Correctional Services Department  
Customs and Excise Department  
Department of Justice  
Food and Environmental Hygiene Department  
Government Logistics Department  
Home Affairs Bureau  
Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices of the Commerce  
and Economic Development Bureau  
Hong Kong Observatory  
Hong Kong Police Force  
Hongkong Post  
Housing Department  
Immigration Department  
Independent Commission Against Corruption  
Information Services Department  
Judiciary

Lands Department

Legal Aid Department

Leisure and Cultural Services Department

Official Languages Division of the Civil Service Bureau

Official Receiver's Office

11.3 The EAC appreciates all the staff of HAD, both civil servants and their non-civil-service counterparts, for their dedicated efforts and contribution at all stages of the 2015 ROE.

11.4 The EAC is grateful to the officers serving as ROs and AROs and those polling and the counting staff who conscientiously performed their duties and dutifully followed the relevant operational procedures as well as the staff of the REO who are responsible for drafting this report, preparing the EAC visit programme and co-ordinating the handling of complaints.

11.5 The EAC is thankful to CSD and other LEAs for their assistance provided to HAD in making arrangements for registered electors who were imprisoned, remanded and detained on the polling days to cast their votes.

11.6 The EAC would like to thank members of the media who had helped substantially to enhance the transparency of the election by giving the key events a wide and in-depth coverage.

11.7 The EAC shows appreciation towards candidates, their helpers and members of the general public for their dedicated efforts made for complying with the electoral legislation and the Guidelines.

11.8 The EAC also recognises the enthusiasm of the electors who exercised their civic duties and participated in the poll.

## **CHAPTER 12**

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

12.1 HAD is planning the rural by-election to be held on 14 June 2015 for the villages of which elections have been declared as failed in the ROE held in January 2015 and other villages in which vacancies have arisen subsequent to the ROE.

12.2 The EAC remains committed to fulfilling its mission of safeguarding the integrity of public elections in Hong Kong. It will continue with its utmost efforts in keeping a vigilant watch over every election to ensure that openness, fairness and honesty are upheld. The EAC welcomes positive and constructive comments to bring about improvements in future elections.

12.3 The EAC would like to recommend this report to be made public at a time the CE thinks appropriate, so that the public may be kept posted as to how the EAC conducted and supervised the 2015 ROE.

