

張有興

19 March 2007

By Fax & by Mail, Fax: 22503242, 28111048

The Editor
South China Morning Post,
GPO Box 47,
Hong Kong

Dear Sir:

The Road to Universal Suffrage proposal prepared by Anson Chan and her core group appears to be aimed mainly at Hong Kong's political mainstream.

It was fortuitously released to the public at the time of the first ever two television debates of the two candidates for the HKSAR chief executive post.

This was a landmark in Hong Kong's development towards democracy under the Basic Law of China and the One Country - Two Systems principle and the rule of law.

Anson Chan's core group report carries a positive tone in that it has joined the emerging mainstream view to convert the Election Committee of 800 into a Nominating Committee for the chief executive. This paves the way towards an expanding consensus which could give the people of Hong Kong the right to elect their chief executive under universal suffrage by 2012.

The core report pragmatically recognizes that Legco may have to follow a longer time frame towards universal suffrage compared to that of the chief executive election.

Most of the core group's report is focussed on the group's preferred steps forward, with alternative options, in regard to Legco's development in the process towards universal suffrage.

In principle, I support the core group's proposal urging government to redefine corporate voting for the 2008 Legco election to encompass all members of the Boards of Directors, Executive and/or Management Committees of those companies, associations and organizations which currently exercise a single corporate vote. I would urge the government to do its level best to come up with a compromise solution acceptable to the corporate constituency in time for the 2008 Legco election.

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As regards 2012, I think it would be very difficult to take away in that year half of the 30 functional constitutions to be converted to directly elected geographic seats, as recommended by the core group. A more balanced approach with the chance of wider acceptability, would be to change in 2012 all the functional constituencies into 10 groups in order to strengthen the mandate and representativeness of those elected, (core group's report, para 5.6.5, Table 2).

It is patently an open question whether full universal suffrage for Legco will be attained by 2012, as recognized in the core group's report.

In the ongoing preparation of its roadmap on political reform and universal suffrage, I would urge the government to examine in depth the following:

- a) the pros and cons of a bicameral legislature as proposed by the Business and Professionals Federation of Hong Kong,
- b) vis-a-vis the existing unicameral legislature where it is proposed in the core group's report that all functional seats would be phased out by 2016, to be replaced by geographic directly elected constituency seats, and presumably the removal of the split voting system of the functional seats from the legislative deliberative process. I think this would be a crucial factor overall as to whether Legco could attain universal suffrage by the year 2016.

Sincerely,

(Signed)

Hilton Cheong-Leen

20 March 2007

The Hon Donald Y K Tsang
Chief Executive
Government House,
Hong Kong

Dear Chief Executive:

I attach a copy of a letter on universal suffrage which I sent to the editor of the South China Morning post on 19 March.

My purpose in writing to you is simply to express my conviction that a bicameral legislature for Hong Kong could be a most suitable institution for the attainment of universal suffrage and development of the democratic process in Hong Kong, as a Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

The Business and Professionals Federation of Hong Kong, as you know, has done some studies in this regard.

For the forthcoming green paper on this subject which you expect to have ready by the middle of the year for public consultation, may I urge government to include in the green paper the bicameral system as one of the viable options.

Your sincerely,

(Signed)

Hilton Cheong-Leen

Enclosure