

LCQ7: District youth forums

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Following is a question by the Hon Martin Lee and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Dr Patrick Ho, in the Legislative Council today (June 28):

Question:

To provide a platform for young people to participate in public affairs, the Commission on Youth has been promoting the setting up of a youth forum in each district since 2004. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the districts in which youth forums have been set up, and when such forums are planned to be set up in the remaining districts;

(b) of the number and background of the members of each district youth forum, including the respective numbers of those who are working people, young night drifters, non-engaged youths, ethnic minority people and people with disabilities, and the respective numbers of forum members who were nominated by schools and uniformed groups and those who volunteered to join the forum;

(c) of the activities participated or organised by each district youth forum since its establishment;

(d) whether it has reviewed the operation of district youth forums; if so, of the outcome of the review, including the areas in need of improvement; if not, whether there is a timetable for the review; and

(e) whether the authorities will explore the feasibility of returning members of district youth forums through elections by young persons aged between 18 and 25, schools or youth organisations in the districts concerned?

Reply:

Madam President,

Since 2001, the Commission on Youth (COY) has been organising the annual

Youth Summit and a series of district youth summits, as a prelude to the Youth Summit, for young people to have direct and interactive exchanges with Government officials and interested parties on selected topics. The theme for the 2004 Youth Summit was "Voice and Power of the New Generation" and the topics discussed included education, mass media and political system. During the district youth summits and Youth Summit, local young people expressed their interest in taking part in public affairs and called for additional channels of participation to be provided. They were of the view that the setting up of a youth forum would be a direct and effective way to facilitate their social participation and would provide a platform for them to participate in public affairs. The COY in principle endorses the value of a youth forum and has since undertaken extensive research, consultation and preparatory work. At its latest meeting, the COY reaffirmed the development direction of the youth forum but considered that its formation, operation and relationship with COY should be further examined with a view to working out a better mode before trying it out in certain districts. The replies to the various parts of the question raised are as follows --

(a) The district youth forums have not been set up. As mentioned above, the COY is examining the implementation details with a view to working out a better mode before trying it out in certain districts.

(b) It is planned that members of the district youth forums will include youth representatives from different backgrounds and sectors, including students, working youths, etc.

(c) The district youth forums have not been set up, and hence have not participated in or organised activities.

(d) The COY will conduct a review after the implementation of the district pilot project.

(e) It is planned that members of the district youth forums will be young people aged between 15 and 24. The COY is now examining ways of returning members of the district youth forums.

Ends/Wednesday, June 28, 2006