

LCQ13: Operation of the Hong Kong Girl Guides Association

Following is a question by the Hon Leung Kwok-hung and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (October 20):

Question:

After the Secretary for Home Affairs answered my question concerning the operation of the Hong Kong Girl Guides Association (the Association) on July 14 this year, I have received complaints from parents, members of women groups and kindergarten teachers that the appointment of the Chief Commissioner (CC) of the Association had all along been made in a black box, with the candidates being pre-determined internally. The Association would not take the initiative to provide nomination forms for CC to the eligible persons and those other than the pre-determined candidate for the next CC, rendering the election system cosmetic and unfair. Moreover, some complaints have also pointed out that the appointment of the incumbent CC gave rise to a conflict of interest as well as a breach of the constitution submitted to the Inland Revenue Department (IRD) by the Association and the provisions governing its internal organisation. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council whether it knows:

- (a) if the Association had taken the initiative to issue relevant nomination forms to members of its Council, including CC, Deputy Chief Commissioners (DCC), Assistant Chief Commissioners, International Commissioner (IC), Division Commissioners, Assistant Division Commissioners and various District Commissioners before each of the last three appointments of CCs; if so, of the respective dates of issuance; if not, the reasons for that, and whether eligible electors for CC have to make a request in order to obtain the nomination forms;
- (b) if the incumbent six DCCs and the IC of the Association had participated in the patrol assemblies each week in the past five years to train the girl guides; if so, of the number of assemblies in which each of them had participated each month and the number of the patrols involved; if not, of the reasons for that, and whether such posts are only honorary in nature;
- (c) of the respective numbers of candidates who were nominated in the 2007 and

2010 elections of CC; the number of nominators for the incumbent CC in the 2007 election and the respective numbers of votes for and against her appointment as well as the number of abstentions; and

(d) if there are provisions in the constitution submitted by the Association to IRD which restrict CC from holding the post of Vice President concurrently so as to avoid conflict of interests; if so, of the details and the reasons why the incumbent CC is allowed to hold the post of Vice President concurrently; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Hong Kong Girl Guides Association (the Association) was established in 1916. As an independent statutory body, the Association is subject to legislation, its constitution and internal rules as far as its operation is concerned. The Government respects its independent status. My reply to the question of Hon Leung Kwok-hung is as follows:

(a) Under Section 15.02 of its constitution, the Association's Chief Commissioner (CC) shall be a person nominated by the ex-officio members of the Council of the Association and elected by the Council. Calls for nomination by the ex-officio members shall be at least six weeks before the election date. According to the information provided by the Association, after receiving the notification letter about the election, the ex-officio members of the Council may ask the Honorary Secretary for the nomination forms.

(b) According to the Association, the Deputy Chief Commissioners and International Commissioner serve as members of the management team on a voluntary basis. They make use of their professional knowledge and resources to help raise funds and are tasked with planning and guidance work. From time to time, they meet with other Commissioners and/or Unit Guiders to discuss and arrange activities for the girl guides. Patrol assemblies and direct training to girl guides are the responsibilities of frontline Unit Guiders.

(c) According to the information provided by the Association, only one candidate was nominated in the 2007 election of CC with the following result: For: 39 votes; Against: 2 votes; Abstention: 3 votes.

Regarding the 2010 CC election, the number of candidates is not known yet since the nomination period will only start in the near future.

(d) At present, there are no provisions in the constitution of the Hong Kong Girl Guides Association restricting CC from holding the post of Vice President concurrently. Nor are there any restrictions in the constitution on any person other than CC to take up the duties of the Council in addition to his own.

Ends/Wednesday, October 20, 2010

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