

Interpretation of Paragraph 2, Article 53 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress

Adopted at the 15th Session of the Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress on 27 April 2005

The Standing Committee of the Tenth National People's Congress at its 15th session deliberated the State Council's Proposal on Requesting Interpretation of Paragraph 2, Article 53 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China. In accordance with Item 4, Article 67 of the Constitution of the People's Republic of China and Paragraph 1, Article 158 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, and after consulting the Committee for the Basic Law of the HKSAR under the NPC Standing Committee, the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress hereby makes the following interpretation on Paragraph 2, Article 53 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China.

Paragraph 2, Article 53 of the Basic Law stipulates, "In the event that the office of Chief Executive becomes vacant, a new Chief Executive shall be selected within six months in accordance with the provisions of Article 45 of this Law." The phrase "a new Chief Executive shall be selected ... in accordance with the provisions of Article 45 of this Law" implies that both the method of selecting and the term of office of the new Chief Executive shall be as prescribed and determined by the said article.

Paragraph 3, Article 45 of the Basic Law stipulates, "The specific method for selecting the Chief Executive is prescribed in Annex I 'Method for the Selection of the Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.'" Clause 1 of Annex I stipulates, "The Chief Executive shall be elected by a broadly representative Election Committee in accordance with this law and appointed by the Central People's Government." Clause 2 of Annex I stipulates, "The term of office of the Election Committee shall be five years." Clause 7 of Annex I stipulates, "If there is a need to amend the method for selecting the Chief Executives for the terms subsequent to the year 2007, such amendments must be made with the endorsement of a two-thirds majority of all the members of the Legislative Council and the consent of the Chief Executive, and they shall be reported to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress for approval." These provisions make it clear that prior to the year 2007, when the Chief Executive is selected by the Election Committee with a five-year term of office, in the event that the office of Chief Executive becomes vacant as he (she) fails to serve the full term of office of five years as prescribed by Article 46 of the Basic Law, the term of office of the new Chief Executive shall be the remainder of the previous Chief

Executive; and that after 2007, the above mentioned method for selecting the Chief Executives could be amended, and should the office of the Chief Executive then become vacant, the term of office of the new chief executive shall be determined in accordance with the amended method for the selection of the Chief Executive.

This Interpretation is hereby announced.