

Ho Iat Seng elected Chief Executive, aiming to reform and innovate



While 2019 marked the 70th anniversary of the founding of the People’s Republic of China and the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Macao SAR, the fourth-term SAR Government actively prepared for the Fifth Chief Executive Election. On 25 August, the former president of the Legislative Assembly, Ho Iat Seng, was elected the Chief Executive of the fifth MSAR Government, winning 98 percent of total votes.

The Chief Executive Election concluded smoothly, realising the full implementation of the principles of “One country, two systems”, “Macao people governing Macao” and a high degree of autonomy, and laying a solid foundation for the prosperity and stability of the SAR. Under the leadership of the Central People’s Government, Macao will open a new chapter for its development.

Election commenced in accordance with the law

On 4 February 2019, Chief Executive Chui Sai On issued the Executive Order No. 54/2019 in accordance with the Basic Law of the MSAR and the Chief Executive Election Law, to set 16 June 2019 as the date for the election of the members of the Chief Executive Election Committee, officially initiating the Fifth Chief Executive Election.

The president and members of the Electoral Affairs Commission of the Chief Executive Election were sworn in on 13 February, to proceed with the work for the Fifth Chief Executive Election in a fair, impartial and effective manner according to the law. The five members of the Electoral Affairs Commission were the judge of the Court of Final Appeal, Song Man Lei (President); the deputy public prosecutor, Chan Tsz King; the judge of the Court of Second Instance, Tong Hio Fong; the director of the Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau, Kou Peng Kuan; and the director of the Government Information Bureau, Victor Chan.

The election of the members of the Fifth Chief Executive Election Committee was held on 16 June. In all, 350 candidates ran for the election. Out of 5,735 eligible voters, 5,001 cast their votes, representing a voter turnout rate of 87.20 percent, which reflects the active participation and support of voters from all sectors in this election, as well as the recognition of the current electoral system.

As the election results were verified and announced by the Court of Final Appeal and the qualifications of members of the Election Committee in other sectors were confirmed, the list of all members was published in the *Macao SAR Gazette* on June 24.

In accordance with the Basic Law of Macao, the Chief Executive of MSAR is elected by the Election Committee, a body representative of the broad community, in a fair, impartial and open manner, and appointed by the Central Government for a five-year term. The number of members of the Election Committee increased from 300 to 400, while the number of Election Committee members required for nominating Chief Executive candidates increased from 50 to 66 at the 27th Session of the Standing Committee of the Eleventh National People's Congress on 30 June 2012. During the past 20 years, the Chief Executive Election Law has been twice amended, to enhance the representativeness of the Chief Executive Election Committee.

In accordance with the Chief Executive Election Law, the Chief Executive Election Committee comprises 400 members from four sectors: Sector 1 (Industrial, Commercial and Financial) takes 120 seats; Sector 2 takes 115 seats, 26 of which are for the Cultural sub-sector, 29 for the Educational sub-sector, 43 for the Professional sub-sector and 17 for the Sport sub-sector; Sector 3 takes 115 seats, 59 of which are for the Labour sub-sector, 50 for the Social Services sub-sector, two for representatives of Catholicism, two for Buddhism, one for Protestantism and one for Taoism in the Religious sub-sector; and Sector 4 takes 50 seats, 22 of which are for representatives of Legislative Assembly members, 12 for Deputies of the Macao SAR to the National People's Congress, 14 for representatives of members of the National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference in Macao, and two for representatives of municipal organisations.

Apart from the six representatives from the Religious sub-sector in Sector 3 and the 50 representatives from Sector 4 selected in accordance with their respective rules or by consultation, the remaining 344 members from the seven sectors or sub-sectors are elected.

Ho Iat Seng announces he will run for election

After the Election Committee was formed, the Chief Executive Election proceeded in an orderly manner. According to Executive Order No. 94/2019, the Fifth Chief Executive Election Day was set on 25 August, 2019. The nomination period for election candidates ran from 8 to 23 July. According to the Chief Executive Election Law, any candidate shall obtain not less than 66 nominations from members of the Election Committee.

The former President of the Legislative Assembly, Ho Iat Seng, announced he would run for the election and presented his election platform during a press conference on 18 June. Supported by his own motto, "New role, new responsibilities, new achievements", he put forward his plan for "Better livelihoods and diversified development". Although according to the law, members of the Legislative Assembly are allowed to remain in their positions until elected as Chief Executive, Ho Iat Seng disclosed at a press conference that he did not want to do things sloppily, and had therefore

commenced the legal procedures to resign as member and president of the Legislative Assembly.

Ho Iat Seng and his campaign team submitted his nomination form to the Electoral Affairs Commission on 22 July, and was accepted as a candidate of the Chief Executive Election by the Electoral Affairs Commission three days later. He had obtained a total of 379 nominations from the Chief Executive Electoral Committee and became the sole candidate to the Fifth Chief Executive Election.

Unity and Efforts, Change and Innovation

The election campaign period ran from 10 to 23 August. On the first day of the campaign, the Electoral Affairs Commission held a session for the person accepted as a candidate for the Chief Executive Election, to give a presentation on the election platform and take part in a question-and-answer session. Ho Iat Seng introduced his election platform, titled “Unity and Efforts, Change and Innovation”, with the theme “Consolidate a Steady Momentum of Success and Maintain Overall Harmony”, which included five main sections: improving public governance, promoting diversified economic development, optimising the effectiveness of people’s livelihood projects, intensifying personnel training, and building a cultural cooperation base.

The Chief Executive Election was held at the Macao East Asian Games Dome on 25 August. Each of the 400 members of the Chief Executive Election Committee cast their votes. Of the total ballots cast, 392 were valid, seven were blank and one was ruled to be invalid. Ho Iat Seng won the election with 98 percent of the total votes available, and became the Chief Executive-elect of the fifth MSAR Government.

Ho Iat Seng thanked the Election Committee members for their trust and support, and appreciated the suggestions and advice shared by people from all walks of life during the election process. He promised he would make every effort to advance the principles of “One country, two systems”, “Macao people governing Macao”, and a high degree of autonomy. He would unswervingly carry out his duties and governance functions in strict accordance with the Constitution and the Basic Law, combine his efforts with those of people from a variety of social strata and all walks of life, and implement his election declaration and policy platform as set out in his campaign in a spirit of reform and innovation, in order to serve the people, Macao, and the country.

Smooth transition as Ho Iat Seng appointed by the Central Government

The day after the election, the Chief Executive of the fourth MSAR Government, Chui Sai On, met with Ho Iat Seng and congratulated him on being elected as Chief Executive of the fifth MSAR Government, and said he would instruct his administration to provide full support and cooperation with various resources including software and hardware, for Ho to organise a new government, while the current government would continue maintaining sustainable and stable development of society, so as to create a harmonious society for the 20th anniversary of the establishment of the Macao SAR and for the new government.

According to the law, the *Macao SAR Gazette* published the announcement of the Court of Final Appeal regarding the Chief Executive Election results, to confirm Ho Iat Seng as the elected candidate. Two days later, the State Council decided to appoint Ho Iat Seng as the Chief Executive

of the fifth MSAR Government. He was sworn in on 20 December 2019, for a five-year term.

On 10 September, Mr Ho Iat Seng and wife, Ms Cheng Soo Ching, went to Beijing to receive the Order of the State Council confirming the official appointment. On 11 September, they met with President Xi Jinping at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. President Xi said that during the past 20 years, under the leadership of the two chief executives Edmund Ho Hau Wah and Fernando Chui Sai On, the Macao SAR has united people from all walks of life and demonstrated to the world a successful practice of the “One Country, Two Systems” with Macao characteristics. He hoped that Ho would show awareness of the overall development and great foresight, and accurately grasp Macao’s situation and the country’s strategic development needs, to continue the successful implementation of “One country, two systems”.

On the same day, Premier Li Keqiang handed Ho Iat Seng a decree for the appointment at Zi Guang Ge of Zhongnanhai in Beijing. Li said that the appointment represented the central government’s trust and concern regarding Ho and Macao residents’ great hope and expectations for him.

Ho Iat Seng thanked the central government for his appointment, and said he was honoured at his appointment to the position entailing great responsibility, and was unwaveringly committed to the implementation of the “One country, two systems” principle under the leadership of President Xi Jinping and the Central People’s Government.

Consolidating the Foundation for Economic Development and Nurturing the Emergence of Various Industries

