

(1.4m now) registered to vote in DB polls

More than 500,000 people have registered to vote in next year's district board elections since a major recruitment drive was launched five weeks ago.

With 900,000 already on the register role, a total of 1.4 million — 50 per cent of the 2.8 million people qualified for registration — are now eligible to vote.

And the City and New Territories Administration is hoping that by the end of this month the number will have increased to between 1.5 and two million.

The principal Assistant Secretary for District Administration, Mr C.M. Leung, said yesterday that given the short history of Hongkong's election system, the results are quite encouraging.

The Secretary for District Administration, Mr David Akers-Jones, appealed to those who have not yet put their names forward to do so quickly.

He said the district boards have played a vital role in communities over the past two years.

"They will play an even greater role in the future.

"If you haven't registered, do so now. Take part in the life of Hongkong," he said.

Meanwhile, three professional groups have pledged their support to the Green Paper's proposal of implementing indirect election to the Legislative Council by means of functional constituencies.

They are the Hongkong Institute of Architects, the Hongkong Institute of Planners and the Hongkong Institute of Surveyors.

In a joint statement, they said that as professionals engaged in building and land development, the members of the three institutes played important roles both in the development of Hongkong, and the welfare of its people.

The statement said the work of the professionals of the three institutes is directly related to a substantial proportion of gross domestic products and should be defined as a functional constituency.

The institutes also think the number of seats represented by functional constituencies next year should be increased from the proposed six to 12.

The institutes are consulting other allied professional bodies on the idea of forming a joint council to represent the professional institutes on the building industry.