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\$5.2 million for registration

By DAPHNE CHENG

THE Government today launches a \$5.2 million publicity drive to get people to register for the three-tier elections next year.

The publicity drive will last six weeks and will see an average \$2.50 spent on each of the 2.1 million eligible voters who have yet to register.

This represents a three-fold increase on the amount spent on a similar campaign for the 1988 elections.

The Acting Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Mr Darwin Chen, yesterday said the Government's aim was to encourage the maximum number of potential voters to come forward.

There are 3.7 million eligible voters, but only 1.6 million, or 43.9 per cent, are listed as electors.

Mr Chen said the main objective of the campaign was to encourage young people to sign up as voters.

Of the 442,300 potential voters in the 20 to 25 age group, only 12 per cent or 53,077 people have registered.

"We hope that percentage of registration for younger people will be as much as the average percentage which is 40 to 50 per cent," he said.

He welcomed efforts by

Registration Statistics by Districts			
District	*Estimated Population	Estimated Potential Electorate	Registration Rate
REGIONAL			
Islands	56,800	36,300	60.0%
North	165,000	105,400	41.5%
Sai Kung	99,800	63,700	34.6%
Sha Tin	508,900	325,000	34.8%
Tai Po	196,850	125,700	37.7%
Tsuen Wan	248,300	158,600	39.9%
Tuen Mun	339,900	217,000	43.5%
Yuen Long	245,800	157,000	37.8%
Kwai Tsing	420,200	268,300	44.2%
Sub-total	2,281,500	1,457,000	40.1%
URBAN			
Central & Western	270,900	173,000	40.3%
Wan Chai	200,000	127,700	45.3%
Eastern	540,300	345,100	47.9%
Southern	262,900	167,900	46.6%
Kowloon City	397,300	253,700	43.6%
Kwun Tong	620,800	396,500	49.2%
Mong Kok	190,800	121,900	45.0%
Shamshuipo	394,800	252,100	44.8%
Wong Tai Sin	380,400	243,000	55.2%
Yau Tsim	158,350	101,100	34.9%
Sub-total	3,416,550	2,182,000	46.5%
Total	5,698,100	3,639,000	43.9%

* Including 31,400 marine population

political groups to boost registration.

The publicity drive will cover the six-week General Electoral Roll voter registration period from today to October 1, but applications for registration will be accepted if submitted by November 20.

Mr Chen said people

who registered over this period would be entitled to vote in the district board elections in March, the municipal councils elections in May and the direct elections to the Legislative Council in September next year.

Another registration exercise would be held next April, but people who regis-

ter then would be allowed to vote in the Legco elections only, he said.

The current campaign will cover fun fairs, bus parades, newspaper advertisements, television and radio announcements, cinema slides, and household visits to attract potential voters.

The climax of the campaign will be a gala show to be held at the Hongkong Cultural Centre on August 25.

Meanwhile, the Principal Assistant Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Benjamin Tang Kwok-bun, said the City and New Territories Administration had not yet been formally informed of any industrial action to be taken by liaison officers in the New Territories.

The 160-strong Government Liaison Officers' Association earlier threatened not to register voters in protest against their conditions of service.

Mr Tang said: "The Regional Secretary for New Territories wrote a personal letter to each liaison officer, reiterating the importance we placed in this exercise as the vanguard of the development of a representative government in Hongkong."

He said the Government had contingency measures in case the officers went on strike.