

**Presentation by Secretary for Civil Service
at the Special Meeting of the Finance Committee
on Friday, 23 March 2001**

Mr Chairman,

I would like to start by saying a few words about the progress that we have made in containing the size of the Civil Service while upholding the quality of public service. The Financial Secretary announced in his Budget Speech last year an initiative to reduce the total civil service establishment by 10,000, or about 5%, from 198 000 to 188 000 over the period from 2000-01 to 2002-03. I am grateful to all my colleagues for their concerted efforts. Together we have managed to reduce the Civil Service establishment by 8 000 to 190 000 by the end of this financial year. We see scope for further deletion of some 9 000 Civil Service posts in the coming two years as a result of the Voluntary Departure Scheme of the Housing Department and the Voluntary Retirement Scheme. This will surpass the target set by the Financial Secretary and bring the Civil Service establishment down to 181 000 by the end of 2002-03. It is worthy to note that the reduction is made under the deletion of vacant posts or voluntary departure of officers. In other words, there is no forced redundancy among the serving civil servants.

At the same time, the Civil Service remains committed to continued improvement in service quality. Earlier this month, we presented prizes to 20 teams of civil servants who won the "Quality Service Enhancement Award" under the Customer Service Award Scheme organized by the Civil Service Bureau. The winning teams were selected from 75 participating teams. They set very good examples of joint efforts made by both management and staff to increase productivity with reduced resources through redeployment of resources, redistribution of work, streamlining of procedures and re-organisation. I have put some examples of these departments' innovative efforts in the Annex to my speaking note to share with Members their accomplishments.

In the light of remarkable results achieved so far, the Financial Secretary announced in his Budget Speech this year that the freeze on recruitment to the Civil Service would be lifted. I would like to assure Members that the Administration will continue to be vigilant of the growth of the Civil Service. We shall put in place measures to ensure that departments will continue to carefully control the growth of departmental establishment, streamline their existing operations, and deliver services through cost-effective means.

To keep step with the enhanced service culture in the Civil Service Reform, it is important that civil servants have the necessary skills and knowledge to meet the latest service requirements. I wish to thank Members for your approval of \$50 million to launch a 3-year Training and Development Programme for civil servants. The Programme will provide an additional 90 000 training opportunities to civil servants and particular attention will be given to the training needs of junior staff. We have

invited departments to draw up detailed training and staff-development plans and we shall ensure optimization of the training resources.

To formally mark the launch of our 3-year Training and Development Programme, we are holding a Symposium and Exhibition on Continuous Learning and Development at the City Hall on 2 April 2001. I would like to invite Members to the occasion and share with us your valuable ideas and experience.

Mr Chairman, that concludes my presentation. My colleagues and I will be happy to answer any questions.

Examples of providing new services or enhancing existing service standards without additional resources

1. *General Post Office, Hong Kong Post*

Service enhancement includes:

- (a) The opening hours of the Office were extended from 9 am - 5pm to 8 am - 6 pm on Mondays to Saturdays and 8 am - 2 pm on Sundays.
- (b) Formerly separate counters were set up for the acceptance of parcels and speedpost. These counters were merged in mid 1999 to provide services for both parcels and speedpost. Following a re-organisation exercise as a result of the merging of the counter services, an overall saving of 91 man-hours per day was achieved and 13 staff were deployed to other sections which required additional staff due to increasing demand of services.
- (c) A "Postal Gallery" was set up in the accommodation released by the merging of parcel and speedpost acceptance counters. Customers can enjoy touring around the various displays showing the history of the post office and philatelic products.

2. *Energy and Environment Management Team, EMSD*

With the restructuring of organisation and merging of existing teams of officers on site in hospitals , existing staff were deployed to undertake "energy audit surveys" in 13 hospitals and 3 clinics which would otherwise cost \$2.1M of consultancy fee. Energy saving measures were introduced as a result of the findings of the surveys and \$5.9M energy cost were saved in 1999/00 with another \$9.9M to be saved in 2000/01.

3. *Licensing Section, TELA*

In March 2000, 1 Assistant Clerical Officer post in the Licensing Section was deleted as a result of the redistribution of duties in support of the EPP. Through streamlining of procedures and the development of a customer service culture among staff, the Licensing Section has not only been able to maintain existing licensing service, but also managed to improve the Performance Pledges as follows :

	<u>Original Pledge</u>	<u>New Pledge</u>
● Processing of Trade Promotion Competition Licences	3 weeks	7 working days

- Processing of Lottery Licences 2 weeks 10 working days
- Processing of Amusement 16 weeks 15 weeks
Game Centre Licences

4. *Ma On Shan General Out-Patient Clinic*

Through training provided to staff, implementation of information technology skills, and setting up of Works Improvement Teams to identify causes to problems and to propose improvement measures, the following results were achieved :

- (a) The number of health talks conducted and the number of participants attending the talks were increased by **3.4** times and **5** times from 1998 to 1999 respectively.
- (b) The number of counselling service rendered to individuals has increased by **4.8** time (from 1998 to 1999).
- (c) The number of patients seen by doctors has increased from **90** to **92** per day (from 1998 to 2000).
- (d) The coverage of annual assessment of diabetes patients has increased from **60 %** to **80%** (from 1999 to 2000).
- (e) With minimal cost of conversion works, the waiting area was improved to provide a more pleasant environment to the public.
- (f) The data entry previously undertaken by doctors and nurses manually is now performed by clerical staff with the aid of a barcode system. This initiative has saved considerable nursing time which is now devoted to patients.

5. *Social Welfare Department - NT East Region*

A designated team on customer service was set up in the NT East Region to work out strategies, propose and implement quality service enhancement initiatives. With streamlining of operation procedures and re-engineering of office practices to cut red tapes, the following results were achieved without additional manpower resources :

- (a) The customer waiting time at the service counters was reduced from **10** to **5** minutes.
- (b) A web-site was introduced to provide the public fast, updated and comprehensive information on the activities launched in the region.

- (c) With the feedback from the Customer Liaison Groups, the regional office has provided group activities in addition to counselling services.

6. *Lands Department - Survey and Mapping Office*

The Office conducted regular staff meetings to discuss problems and difficulties staff encountered and to derive solutions to problems. This coupled with training courses to enhance the technical knowledge and customer service skills, the following improvement of service was achieved :

- (a) The process of the number of orders of digital maps has increased from **545** in 1998 to **1050** in 2000. The process time for each order has been shortened from **14 days** to **5 days**.
- (b) On-line access to digital maps were provided to government departments. This service has provided much convenience to the client departments and has reduced their process time.
- (c) Telephone enquiry hotline was set up to provide pre-sale and after-sale service to users.