

**Legislative Council Panel on Public Service
Meeting on 21 May 2001**

**Joint Secretariat for the Standing Commission,
the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services
and the Standing Committees on Directorate and
Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service**

PURPOSE

This paper briefs Members on the Administration's proposal to set up a joint Secretariat to service the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service (SC), Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service (SCDS), the Standing Committees on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service (Directorate and Judicial Committees).

BACKGROUND

2. There are currently four advisory bodies which advise the Government on matters relating to civil service pay and conditions of service, namely, the SC, the SCDS and the Directorate and Judicial Committees. The Secretariats of SC and SCDS operate as two separate departments, with Secretary General (SG)/SC and SG/SCDS being the respective Controlling Officers. A Principal Assistant Secretary in the Civil Service Bureau serves as part-time Secretary to the Directorate and Judicial Committees.

The role and composition of the SC

3. The SC was set up in 1979 to advise on salary and conditions of service matters for the non-Directorate civil service other than the Judiciary. It advised on issues affecting the disciplined services until 1989 when the SCDS was established. The SG of the Secretariat is pitched at Administrative Officer Staff Grade B1 (AOSGB1) (D4) level. He is assisted by an Assistant SG at the rank of Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2) and other

general grades staff. In addition to servicing the SC, the Secretariat also oversees the Pay Survey & Research Unit (PSRU) which is responsible for conducting annual pay trend surveys and other surveys relating to salary and benefits and provides support services to the Pay Trend Survey Committee. The current establishment of the SC is 23.

The role and composition of the SCDS

4. The SCDS advises on matters relating to the pay and conditions of service of the disciplined services. It was established in 1989 because of the perceived need for an independent advisory body to deal with issues relating to the disciplined services, given their special nature and status which made them different from the rest of the civil service whose pay and conditions of service matters were handled by the SC.

5. The Secretariat for the SCDS was set up on 1 July 1989 to provide secretariat support for the SCDS to undertake a root-and-branch review of all the disciplined services. The establishment of the Secretariat was reduced after completion of that review. The SG of the SCDS is pitched at Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (AOSGB) (D3) level. He is currently underpinned by a Principal Executive Officer (PEO) (D1) and two Senior Executive Officers in addition to a general support team comprising clerical and secretarial staff. The current establishment of the SCDS is 12.

The role of the Directorate and Judicial Committees

6. The Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service is responsible for advising on the structure of Directorate posts and the pay and conditions of service of Directorate officers. The Standing Committee on Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service has a similar advisory role in respect of judicial officers. A Principal Assistant Secretary in the Civil Service Bureau serves as part-time Secretary to the Committees.

PROPOSAL

7. We propose to amalgamate the Secretariats of the SC and SCDS and set up a new organisation to provide support to the SC, SCDS and the Directorate and Judicial Committees. The PSRU (which is now a unit under

the SC Secretariat) would become a separate unit under the joint Secretariat and continue to provide support services to the Pay Trend Survey Committee.

Staffing of the joint Secretariat

8. With the amalgamation of the SC and SCDS Secretariats, we propose an AOSGB1 (D4) to head the joint Secretariat. He/she would be the SG of the joint Secretariat and would attend meetings of all advisory bodies on salaries and conditions of service. Under the new set-up, the Head would have a wider role to play, particularly when we have service-wide issues on which we need advice from the various advisory bodies. We are reviewing the number and ranking of staff to underpin the Head to provide dedicated support to the four advisory Committees.

BENEFITS OF THE PROPOSAL

9. The objective of the amalgamation is to enhance productivity, streamline work procedures and ensure better coordination between the advisory bodies in the handling of service-wide issues relating to pay and conditions of service. A significant benefit arising from it will be the enhanced flexibility to redeploy resources within the future organisation to cope with large-scale ad hoc assignments specific to individual advisory bodies. Such flexibility is difficult to achieve under the current set-up. The proposal for the joint Secretariat to also serve the Directorate and Judicial Committees will also enhance the secretariat service to these two advisory bodies as there will be dedicated and wider scope of support services available to them.

10. The proposal will entail creation and deletion of posts. Our preliminary estimate is that this will result in a net savings of staff cost. With the centralisation of registry and other support services, we expect that further savings may be achieved.

CONSULTATION

11. We have consulted the SC, SCDS and the Directorate and Judicial Committees. All of them support the proposal. We have also informed the four Staff Side Councils and the ICAC Staff Consultative Committee of the proposed arrangements. We have explained to them the rationale and benefits of the joint Secretariat and have reassured them that the proposal will not in any

way affect the independent status or designated responsibilities of the advisory bodies.

PROPOSED WAY FORWARD

12. We will work with the SGs of the SC and SCDS on the implementation plan. Since setting up of the joint Secretariat entails the creation and deletion of directorate posts and the merging of Heads of Expenditure, when we have worked out all the logistics, we will seek the approval of the Establishment Sub-Committee and the Finance Committee on the proposal in the normal manner.

Civil Service Bureau
May 2001