

**Subcommittee to Study the Proposed
Accountability System for Principal Officials and Related Issues**

Portfolios of Directors of Bureau under the Accountability System

Introduction

This paper sets out the distribution of portfolios of the Directors of Bureau under the accountability system and the supporting arrangements.

Overview

2. In reorganizing the relevant policy portfolios that accompanies the introduction of the accountability system, we have to balance the need to contain the number of Directors of Bureau under the new set up and the need to ensure that the scope of responsibility of each Director of Bureau is reasonable and manageable.

3. Ten existing policy bureaux will be merged into five bureaux headed by five Directors of Bureau. The portfolios relating to two other bureaux will be reorganized and rationalized and will be led by two Directors of Bureau. The other four existing bureaux have dedicated roles and will remain unchanged for the time being. After the re-organization, the number of policy bureaux will decrease from 16 to 11.

Bureaux with portfolios merged

4. Because the relevant portfolios are closely related or for better coordination, ten of the existing policy bureaux will be merged into five, headed by five Directors of Bureau under the accountability system :

- (a) Economic Services and Information Technology have been placed under the portfolio of the same Director of Bureau, because both areas cover important economic infrastructure underpinning the growth of the Hong Kong economy;
- (b) The Treasury functions and Financial Services respectively cover different aspects of financial services and management – the former relates to HKSARG’s public finances and the latter to ensuring Hong Kong’s continued growth as an international financial centre. The two fields are closely related and are therefore placed under the same Director of Bureau;
- (c) We propose that the same Director of Bureau should be responsible for the two portfolios of Health & Welfare and the Environment & Food, because environmental protection, food hygiene, and medical and health services are closely related. Placing these portfolios under one Director of Bureau will facilitate closer policy coordination and ensure food hygiene and effective pollution control. This arrangement is conducive to the health of the public;
- (d) The supply of land and the planning of future developments have an important bearing on housing developments, and vice versa. The two policy areas are closely related and have been placed under the same Director of Bureau;
- (e) Transport and Works both concern the development of physical infrastructure. Placing the two portfolios together will facilitate closer coordination in planning and more efficient implementation of the infrastructure projects.

Bureaux with portfolios rationalized

5. We have rearranged and rationalized the portfolios relating to the Education and Manpower Bureau and the Commerce and Industry Bureau. Two Directors of Bureau will be in charge of the two reorganized bureaux :

- (a) Education shapes the next generation of Hong Kong. The Chief Executive places a lot of importance on it. Removing the human resource matters, especially labour issues, from the portfolio of the Education and Manpower Bureau will allow the future Secretary for Education to concentrate on the education portfolio;
- (b) Unemployment is a problem that the Government has to deal with urgently. The development of the economy and its various sectors has an important bearing on employment opportunities. Putting the Manpower portfolio together with the Commerce & Industry portfolio would enable the new Director of Bureau to better focus on the impact on jobs, while promoting the development of various services and industries, attracting overseas investments or assisting the small and medium enterprises. The Commerce & Industry portfolio and Manpower portfolio are also related in the sense that the deployment and training of manpower in different spheres have to be designed to match the expected growth, development and transformation in different sectors of the economy. Putting the two portfolios together is also conducive to better understanding and cooperation of employees and employers and consensus building between the two. This arrangement facilitates shifting the relationship between the two parties from one of the traditional antagonism to one of cooperative partnership. It is also in line with the world trend that unemployment problems are tackled by way of tripartite cooperation among employees, employers and the government.

Bureaux that remain unchanged

6. The remaining four policy bureaux have dedicated duties or important policy objectives. They should not be merged with others. They will remain intact for the time being and each will be led by one Director of Bureau:

- (a) the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs will continue to dedicate himself to constitutional affairs and will not take up other portfolios because of the importance of constitutional developments;
- (b) the Secretary for Home Affairs is in charge of policies relating to district administration. He will play a vital role in ensuring that the Government keeps tabs on the pulse of the community and in enhancing the Government's understanding of the needs of the public;
- (c) the Security Bureau is responsible for law enforcement policies. Its Director of Bureau should not take up other portfolios;
- (d) the Civil Service Bureau is responsible for civil service policies and management of the civil service. Its Director of Bureau should not take up other portfolios.

Support to Directors of Bureau under accountability system

7. Directors of Bureau under the accountability system will enjoy full support and cooperation from their policy bureaux and executive departments. The D8 civil service posts in policy bureaux will be retained. These posts will be re-titled as permanent secretaries and filled by experienced civil servants. They will assist the Directors of Bureau in formulating and implementing policies so that the Directors

of Bureau can focus better on communicating with the Legislative Council and the public. With better understanding of the community needs, the Directors of Bureau will be able to formulate better policies and overall governance will be improved.

8. Some Directors of Bureau will have wider ranging portfolios than others. They will be entitled to more support. For example, the two D8 civil service posts in the Health and Welfare Bureau and the Environment and Food Bureau will be retained and filled by senior civil servants. They will assist the Secretary for the Environment, Health and Welfare in different areas of his portfolio.

Constitutional Affairs Bureau
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