

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

**Permanent Secretary Posts
under the Accountability System for Principal Officials**

Introduction

This paper provides supplementary information on the arrangements for the Permanent Secretary posts under the Accountability System for Principal Officials.

Present Position

2. At present, there are 16 civil service posts ranked at D8 of the Directorate Pay Scale (DPS) heading 16 bureaux in the Government Secretariat.

Proposed Position

3. Under the Accountability System for Principal Officials to be implemented on 1 July 2002, the arrangements for these sixteen existing D8 civil service posts will be as follows –

(a) **Re-titling of posts:** Eleven of the existing D8 civil service posts will continue to take on substantially the same functions and duties after the implementation of the accountability system though under the direction of the respective Principal officials. No redeployment of post will be involved, although the post titles will be changed to reflect their new positions in the setup under the accountability system. These eleven posts are those in the following bureaux –

- (i) Civil Service Bureau
- (ii) Commerce and Industry Bureau

- (iii) Constitutional Affairs Bureau
- (iv) Economic Services Bureau
- (v) Finance Bureau
- (vi) Financial Services Bureau
- (vii) Home Affairs Bureau
- (viii) Housing Bureau
- (ix) Information Technology and Broadcasting Bureau
- (x) Planning and Lands Bureau
- (xi) Security Bureau

(b) **Re-titling of posts and substantive adjustment in their duties:**

There will be substantive adjustments in the functions and duties under the accountability system for the remaining five existing D8 civil service posts. Under the direction of the respective Principal Officials –

- (i) One existing D8 post will take up matters relating to education and manpower but will be relieved of the responsibility for labour issues.
- (ii) One existing D8 post will take up matters relating to health and welfare as well as food safety.
- (iii) One existing D8 post will take up matters relating to transport and works.
- (iv) One existing D8 post will take up matters relating to environmental protection and conservation.
- (v) One existing D8 post will take up matters relating to labour issues.

Job description

4. The existing 16 D8 civil servants in bureaux will assist the Principal Officials in formulating policies and, subject to the direction of the Principal Officials, to assist in explaining and defending policies in LegCo panels and committees and in public. Their job description, set out at **Annex**,

remains largely the same.

5. These Permanent Secretaries will be the most senior civil servants in the bureaux underpinning the respective Principal Officials. In addition to providing reliable and professional input to the Principal Officials under the accountability system on policy formulation, they will continue to play a pivotal role in promoting support for agreed policy, in steering and co-ordinating the implementation of agreed policies and programmes by executive departments, in resource and staff management and upholding the reliability and professional standards of public services. These duties are broadly similar to the existing duties of these D8 civil service posts and justify retention of the ranking, pending the outcome of the organizational review by the future Principal Officials.

The Number of Permanent Secretaries

6. We note questions were raised as to whether the number of Permanent Secretaries should be reduced to eleven to tally with the number of the bureaux under the accountability system. To ensure the Principal Officials are given the maximum support in the bureaux when they assume office, we consider it appropriate to retain all the sixteen D8 civil service posts in accordance with the arrangement as in paragraph 3 above.

Authority

7.. Under delegated authority from the Finance Committee, Financial Secretary can create supernumerary directorate posts provided that, among other things, the post is created for period not exceeding 12 months on each occasion and is held against a vacant permanent post in a rank with the same or a higher notional annual mid-point salary value.

8. Eleven out of the existing sixteen D8 posts in question will only involve re-titling after the implementation of the accountability system. No separate approval is required for this. As regards the other five D8 posts, we will effect the temporary redeployment for twelve months using the delegated authority as in paragraph 7 above for twelve months.

Long-term Arrangements

9. As set out in the paper presented to the Legislative Council on the accountability system for Principal Officials on 17 April 2002, we expect the Principal Officials will review the working relationship between their bureaux and departments as well as the staffing and structure of their policy bureaux, including the number of D8 civil service posts, upon their assumption of duties. In the process, consultation with the concerned parties, including the staff, will be undertaken.

10. The outcome of the review will be reported to the relevant committees of Legislative Council as appropriate. Proposals for changes to these D8 posts will be submitted where appropriate to ESC/FC for approval.

Civil Service Bureau

3 June 2002

Job Description of the Permanent Secretaries

- (a) to assist the principal officials in formulating, explaining and defending policies; to assist the principal officials in securing support of the public and LegCo; and to assist the principal officials in answering LegCo questions, moving bills and taking part in motion debates;
- (b) subject to the direction of the relevant principal officials, to assist in explaining and defending policies in public including at meetings of LegCo panels and committees;
- (c) to steer and coordinate with the executive departments falling within the respective portfolios of the principal officials and liaise with other concerned bureaux to achieve smooth, timely and effective implementation of the agreed policies and programmes;
- (d) to assist the principal officials in acquiring and deploying resources to support the implementation of policies and delivery of services;
- (e) to monitor the needs and aspirations of the community and having regard to the findings, to undertake timely review and to generate proposals to the principal officials for necessary changes to the established policies and services;
- (f) to uphold the reliability and professional standards in the delivery of services by the executive departments and agencies;
- (g) to be the controlling officer for the relevant heads and subheads of expenditure and to ensure proper use of financial resources within the bureau; and
- (h) to manage civil servants and other staff in the bureaux.