

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1683/02-03
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/ITB/1

Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting
Panel on Commerce and Industry

Minutes of joint meeting
held on Monday, 14 April 2003, at 4:00 pm
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Members of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

- * Hon SIN Chung-kai (Chairman)
- Dr Hon David CHU Yu-lin, JP
- Hon Eric LI Ka-cheung, JP
- Hon CHAN Kwok-keung
- Hon Albert CHAN Wai-yip
- * Hon MA Fung-kwok, JP

Members of the Panel on Commerce and industry

Hon Kenneth TING Woo-shou, JP (Chairman)
Hon HUI Cheung-ching, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon NG Leung-sing, JP
Hon Mrs Selina CHOW LIANG Shuk-ye, GBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, SBS, JP

Action

Members absent : Members of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting

Hon Howard YOUNG, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Dr Hon Philip WONG Yu-hong
Hon YEUNG Yiu-chung, BBS
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP
Dr Hon LAW Chi-kwong, JP
Hon Timothy FOK Tsun-ting, SBS, JP

Members of the Panel on Commerce and industry

Dr Hon LUI Ming-wah, JP
Hon CHAN Kam-lam, JP
Hon Henry WU King-cheong, BBS, JP

(* Also members of the Panel on Commerce and Industry)

Public officers attending : Agenda Item II

Mr Henry TANG, GBS, JP
Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology

Miss Denise YUE, GBS, JP
Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Commerce and Industry)

Mr Francis HO, JP
Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Information Technology and Broadcasting)

Mrs Sarah KWOK
Acting Commissioner for Innovation and Technology

Mr Raymond YOUNG
Deputy Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Commerce and Industry)1

Action

Miss Viola CHAN
Principal Executive Officer (Administration),
Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau
(Commerce and Industry)

Clerk in attendance : Miss Polly YEUNG
Chief Assistant Secretary (1)3

Staff in attendance : Ms Debbie YAU
Senior Assistant Secretary (1)1

I Election of Chairman

Mr SIN Chung-kai, Chairman of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting, presided at the election of Chairman for the joint Panel meeting. He invited nominations for the Chairmanship. Mr SIN Chung-kai was nominated by Mr Eric LI and seconded by Mrs Selina CHOW. Mr SIN accepted the nomination. There being no other nomination, Mr SIN Chung-kai was elected Chairman of the joint meeting.

II Reorganization of Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau

LC Paper No. CB(1)1414/02-03(01) -- Information paper provided by the Administration

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (SCIT) referred members to the Administration's paper and highlighted that the proposal to reorganize the Commerce, Industry and Technology Bureau (CITB) would enable the Bureau to become more efficient and more responsive to changing needs.

Deletion of posts

3. Mr Albert CHAN was concerned that in the process of re-organization, it was quite common for the Administration to delete posts at lower ranks, notably non-directorate posts at Master Point Scale (MPS) Point 33 and below, by way of outsourcing or converting civil service posts into non-civil service contract posts. He sought information on the deletion of posts other than the proposed deletion of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (AOSGC) (D2) post in the Innovation

Action

and Technology Commission (ITC).

4. In response, the Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Commerce and Industry) (PSCI) advised that if the present proposal was approved, seven permanent non-directorate posts comprising Administrative Officers, Executive Officers, clerical and secretarial staff in the Commerce and Industry Branch (CIB) of the Bureau would be deleted through the Departmental Establishment Committee. An AOSGC(D2) post had also been deleted in CIB with effect from 1 January 2003 to offset the creation of a post of AOSGC(D2)/non-civil service position at D2-equivalent to serve as the Administrative Assistant to SCIT. She recalled that the Administration had undertaken to effect sufficient savings to make the exercise of setting up the accountability system cost-neutral. In this regard, the posts of SCIT and of his staff working in his private office were funded by internal redeployment of resources within CITB.

5. The Permanent Secretary for Commerce, Industry and Technology (Information Technology and Broadcasting) (PSITB) further informed members that in addition to the deletion of an AOSGC(D2) directorate post in ITC, the supernumerary AOSGC post (designated as Assistant Commissioner (Projects)) in ITC would also lapse on 1 April 2003. Besides, the supernumerary posts of the Cyberport Co-ordinator and the Chief Engineer (Cyberport) would expire in January 2004 while the supernumerary E-government Co-ordinator (EGC) post in the Information Technology and Broadcasting Branch (ITBB) would expire in August 2004. The secondment of the two Cyberport-related posts would cease in January 2004. As regards the EGC post, the Administration would review the future of the E-government Co-ordination Office upon the expiry of the EGC post. PSITB said that ITBB had reviewed the other directorate posts in the Branch and confirmed that they continued to be necessary and were appropriately ranked.

6. Mr Albert CHAN did not subscribe fully to the Administration's explanation and considered that the lapse of supernumerary posts should not be regarded as deletion of posts. He was of the view that re-organization seeking to streamline the responsibilities of a policy bureaux and its executive departments should bring about deletion of directorate posts in the Bureau and departments under its purview. He enquired whether the present proposal was a finalized one and whether there would be further cuts in middle- and lower- ranking posts.

7. On the deletion of non-directorate supporting posts, PSCI recalled that the aforementioned seven non-directorate posts earmarked for deletion had been proposed following the deletion of the AOSGC(D2) post. She also referred members to paragraph 31 of the Administration's paper which outlined the establishment changes of the CIB, ITBB and ITC. PSCI assured members that

Action

there was no question of maintaining the directorate establishment at the expense of non-directorate establishment at middle- or lower-ranks.

8. On streamlining responsibilities within the Bureau and its departments, PSCI pointed out that except the Trade and Industry Department (TID), the other three executive departments under the purview of CIB, namely, Invest Hong Kong, Intellectual Property Department and Customs and Excise Department, were responsible for enforcing/executing policies formulated by the Bureau. Given the operational nature of their responsibilities, it was unlikely that the functions of any of these departments could be subsumed under CIB of the Bureau. However, as explained in the present proposal, there was some overlap in the work of CIB and TID in the area of multilateral, regional and bilateral commercial relations which could be streamlined. As such, the Administration now proposed to transfer these areas of responsibility from Division 1 in CIB to TID.

9. In this connection, PSITB advised that similarly, the departments under the purview of ITBB (namely, Radio Television Hong Kong, Television and Entertainment Licensing Authority, Information Technology Services Department and Office of Telecommunications Authority) were executive in nature and each had its specific scope of enforcement or operational responsibilities. Merging the functions of any of these departments with ITBB would not be consistent with the latter's policy-making role.

Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices

10. Referring to Hong Kong's withdrawal from the World Watch, Clock and Jewellery Fair 2003 held in Zurich and Basel, Switzerland as a result of the Swiss Government's last-minute ban on participants from areas affected by Atypical Pneumonia, Mr HUI Cheung-ching highlighted the important role of the Hong Kong Economic and Trade Offices (HKETOs) in assisting Hong Kong traders in such matters. He also sought information on the review of HKETOs currently underway.

11. In response, SCIT informed members that the Administration would conduct a series of review on the deployment of resources and the outfit of HKETOs having regard to operational requirements and external changes, such as the increase in member states of the European Union from the current 15 to 25 next year. The Administration expected that the review would be completed in the current financial year. Recalling the assistance of the ETO at Washington in bringing about smooth arrangements following the implementation of the container security initiative by the United States, SCIT was fully aware of the important role played by HKETOs in promoting Hong Kong's economic and trade interests abroad. SCIT informed members that the Administration would review

Action

the participation of Hong Kong traders in the World Watch, Clock and Jewellery Fair 2003 in Zurich/Basel with Members at the special meeting of the Panel on Commerce and Industry to be held on 15 April 2003.

12. Summing up, the Chairman concluded that in general, Panel members supported the Administration's proposal to reorganize the CITB.

13. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 4:25 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
15 May 2003