

Bills Committee on Race Discrimination Bill

Administrative guidelines on promotion of racial equality

Purpose

At the meeting of the Bills Committee held on 3 June 2008, we advised Members that, to enhance the provision of support services to ethnic minorities and promote racial harmony, the Administration would explore the compilation of guidelines within the Government for the key Bureaux and Departments to follow in their implementation of their relevant policies and measures.

2. This paper sets out our objectives and our current thinking in regard to the contents of the administrative guidelines, their implementation and the mechanism for monitoring.

Planned administrative guidelines

3. The Government is committed to eliminating racial discrimination and promoting equal opportunities for ethnic minorities. Over the years, we have also endeavoured to foster understanding and racial harmony through public education and other promotional activities.

4. The Race Discrimination Bill represented a major initiative in the Administration's continuing efforts in pursuing the above policy

objective. In parallel with the introduction of the Bill, relevant Bureaux and Departments have continued to strengthen support measures for ethnic minorities, in order to promote equal opportunity and to facilitate their integration into the community.

5. As a further step in our progressive approach and to demonstrate the Government's commitment, in consultation with the Bureaux and Departments concerned, we will draw up administrative guidelines for them to follow in their formulation and implementation of relevant policies and measures.

6. The planned guidelines are not intended to be restricted to the specific areas of activity prescribed in the Race Discrimination Bill. They are expected to cover the key aspects of government policies and operation which are relevant to meeting the special needs of ethnic minorities and facilitating their integration into the community. The guidelines will focus on the key services including medical, education, vocational training, employment and major community services.

7. We envisage that the guidelines will clearly state the Bureau/Department's commitments to pursue the Government's policy to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination and to promote racial equality. They will invite the Bureaux/Departments concerned to -

- (a) enumerate the policies and measures which are relevant to the policy objective stated above;
- (b) assess the impact, if any, of these policies and measures on racial equality;
- (c) consult relevant parties and stakeholders, as appropriate, in assessing the impact;
- (d) in the light of the assessment, consider the measures to be implemented to eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, to promote racial equality and to enhance support services to ethnic minorities, in line with our policy objective.
- (e) monitor the implementation of the measures at (d) above;
- (f) publicise the measures taken and the relevant assessments or considerations;
- (g) review the measures from time to time to ensure that they are in line with the policy objectives; and
- (h) provide training or briefing to staff on the implementation of the guidelines.

8. We plan to include more detailed information in the guidelines to facilitate relevant Bureaux/Departments to focus on race related issues and to implement the guidelines. They will also contain information on the arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the guidelines within the Bureaux/Departments concerned.

Implementation and monitoring

9. The Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau will coordinate the preparation of the guidelines. We will also offer advice and assistance when required.

10. We will start drafting the guidelines after the enactment of the Race Discrimination Bill. When completed, these guidelines will be published for the information of the Legislative Council, the general public, relevant organisations of the ethnic minorities, other interested organisations and the media.

11. Individual Bureaux/Departments will be responsible for implementing the guidelines within their policy/programme areas. The Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau will take an overview on the implementation in the Administration as a whole. We will also brief the relevant Panel of the Legislative Council on progress of the implementation so that Members and the public will be aware of the progress.

Staff training

12. Apart from the formulation of the guidelines, we also recognise the importance of training to enhance staff sensitivity and understanding of race-related issues, including particularly their appreciation of cultural differences and their awareness of the special needs of members of the ethnic minorities. In this connection, relevant training modules are incorporated in the training programmes of relevant Departments. We also disseminate, on the Civil Service Training and Development Institute web-site, a special self-learning kit to promote awareness in recognising and valuing racial diversity. We will continue our efforts in this regard.

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau

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