

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

Written Response to the Motion on Enhancement of the Communication with Non-Civil Service Contract Staff

Introduction

At the meeting of the Panel on Public Service held on 17 December 2007, Members passed the following motion -

“(This Panel) urges the Government to consider setting up an inter-departmental platform to enhance the communication with non-civil service contract (NCSC) staff, so as to improve employee-employer and staff-management relations and boost the morale of NCSC staff.”

2. This paper sets out the response of the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) to the above motion.

General Policy

3. The Government attaches a lot of importance to good staff relations. There is an established consultative machinery within the civil service which is built on three levels: central, departmental and individual. Through this machinery, the management communicates with individual staff members including NCSC staff, as well as staff unions/associations and staff consultative bodies in which NCSC staff are represented, on a wide range of subjects.

4. It is our stated policy that Heads of Departments (HoDs)/Heads of Grades (HoGs) should communicate direct with the NCSC staff they employ on matters affecting their employment and to provide formal or informal communication channels, drawing reference to existing channels for civil servants.

Communications with NCSC Staff

5. There are two Central Consultative Councils representing the interests of civilian staff, namely the Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council (MOD 1 Council) and the Senior Civil Service Council (SCSC). Members of the Staff Sides are all nominated by recognized staff associations/unions in accordance with the constitution of the respective Council. All the eight constituent staff associations/unions of the MOD 1 Council open their membership to NCSC staff. The largest of the three constituent staff associations of the SCSC, namely the Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants' Association, (the other two being the Hong Kong Senior Government Officers Association and the Association of Expatriate Civil Servants of Hong Kong), also opens its membership to NCSC staff.

6. The Councils hold meetings regularly and the Staff Sides are welcome to suggest items for discussion. As a matter of fact, in the past year, issues relating to the engagement of NCSC staff were raised by the Staff Sides for discussion in both Councils.

7. At the departmental level, departments with more than 100 staff are encouraged to set up Departmental Consultative Committees (DCCs). DCCs aim to achieve better understanding and cooperation between management and staff through regular discussions on matters affecting the well-being of the staff in the departments. DCCs comprise the departmental management and the staff representatives, and it is our stated policy that all staff, including NCSC staff, should be represented on the DCC. The staff representatives are either elected by the staff themselves or nominated by their staff associations. A CSB representative attends the DCC meetings to explain overall government policies and practices and acts as a bridge between CSB and departments.

8. As a general principle, NCSC staff may convey their views and concerns at DCC meetings through the staff representatives. Moreover, NCSC staff in many bureaux/departments (B/Ds) participate in the election of these staff representatives. Indeed, at the moment, some NCSC staff have been elected as staff representatives on the DCCs of some departments, including Leisure and Cultural Services Department,

Hongkong Post and Food and Environmental Hygiene Department which are major employers of NCSC staff.

9. At the individual level, similar to members of the civil service, there are available for NCSC staff various other channels to reflect their views to their supervisors and the management. We also encourage B/Ds to develop appropriate and effective communication channels with their NCSC staff befitting their operational and human resources management considerations. A wide array of formal and informal communication channels including Staff Relations Units, Complaints Divisions, seminars/briefings/fora, visits of senior management, etc. are set up/arranged in B/Ds providing avenues for effective communication with individual staff.

10. In view of the foregoing, we consider the current consultative mechanism for NCSC staff works well and do not see a need to set up an inter-departmental platform to enhance the communication with NCSC staff.