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**Panel on Public Service  
Meeting on 21 November 2011**

**Updated background brief on  
national studies and Basic Law training for civil servants**

**Purpose**

This paper provides background information on national studies and Basic Law training for civil servants, and summarizes the major views and concerns expressed by the Panel on Public Service (the Panel) on the subject in past discussions.

**Background**

2. In keeping with the development of closer ties between Hong Kong and the Mainland, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) provides training courses and theme-based visits to the Mainland, local seminars, civil service exchange programmes and a dedicated website on Mainland-related information and developments to enhance civil servants' understanding of the systems and developments on the Mainland. In addition, the Administration provides training on the Basic Law for civil servants and organizes a variety of promotional activities to enhance the awareness of the Basic Law amongst civil servants.

National studies training

3. Since May 2003, CSB has regularly updated the Panel on enhancements to national studies training. Following the Chief Executive's pledge in the 2010-11 Policy Address to further enhance national studies training for civil servants, the Civil Service Training and Development Institute (CSTDI) under CSB has launched an enhanced training plan since April 2011 to ensure that national studies training forms an integral part of training undertaken by civil servants at

various ranks. A brief description of the training programmes and activities related to national studies is given in **Appendix I**.

### Basic Law

4. Since the promulgation of the Basic Law in the early 1990's, CSTDI has been providing training on the Basic Law for civil servants. Since 1997, over 39 000 participants have attended dedicated training programmes on the Basic Law and over 7 000 have participated in CSB's promotional activities. Many civil servants have also learned the Basic Law through the e-learning portal on national studies.

5. Since 2008, the Administration has further enhanced Basic Law training for civil servants to ensure that it forms an integral part of training for civil servants, and is provided in a systematic and well planned manner which takes into account the needs of civil servants of different levels and work nature. The Administration has adopted a multi-pronged approach which includes classroom training, e-learning, publications and diversified promotional activities to achieve this objective. A brief description of the enhanced training on the Basic Law is set out in **Appendix II**.

### Major concerns expressed by the Panel during past discussions

6. The Administration has regularly updated the Panel on the progress of its provision of national studies programmes and Basic Law training for civil servants. Members in general were supportive of the implementation of these training programmes. Members have expressed the following concerns—

- (a) whether there was an open and fair system in selecting civil servants to attend the programmes, so that the training programmes would not cater for the same group(s) of officers only;
- (b) whether the officers had to take leave to attend the training programmes organized by the Administration;
- (c) whether civil servants had to take leave to attend courses or activities co-organized by civil service staff unions and institutions on the Mainland;
- (d) the impact of relevant exchange programmes conducted with Mainland officials on Hong Kong civil servants;

- (e) how the Administration evaluated the effectiveness of different programmes to facilitate better planning of such programmes;
- (f) whether directorate officers of the professional grades and non-directorate officers of the middle ranks were offered the same opportunities to receive training on national studies, in particular, whether training opportunities were offered to frontline civil servants of the lower and middle ranks; and
- (g) how the qualification requirements for course instructors were ensured, and how CSTDI monitored the performance of these instructors.

7. Apart from providing supplementary information on the course content and outline as well as the trainers/speakers of training programmes, the Administration has responded to members' concerns as follows –

- (a) a monitoring system would be put in place to ensure that all civil servants in the targeted grades/ranks had the opportunity to attend the training programmes;
- (b) apart from web courses, civil servants were released from their duties during office hours to attend the training programmes organized by CSTDI and individual bureaux/departments, most of which only lasted for a couple of hours or half a day;
- (c) office bearers or representatives of a civil service staff union invited by their counterparts on the Mainland could apply for authorized absence not counting as leave to attend the visit activities if they were of labour education nature or related to the work of the departments in which the staff representatives worked. For training courses organized on the Mainland by a staff union, authorized absence for members of the union to attend the course would be considered, subject to exigencies of service, on basis of whether the course programme was of a labour education nature or related to the work of their respective departments.
- (d) participants in the training programmes were required to provide feedback in the form of questionnaires to CSB with a view to further improving the arrangements of the

programmes. The feedback contained in the evaluation summaries would form part of the reference materials which the Administration would take into account when deciding on how similar programmes should be structured and conducted in future;

- (e) directorate or higher rank officers would normally have stronger operational needs to keep abreast of the latest developments and current issues in the Mainland in the discharge of their duties. Nevertheless, the training needs of officers of middle and lower ranks were also catered for through a variety of national studies programmes open to officers of different ranks. These included seminars on national studies and a national studies portal; and
- (f) regarding course instructors' qualifications, instead of setting general requirements, suitable instructors were identified through two major sources. For the courses commissioned by CSTDI in collaboration with local universities, the course instructors were normally recommended by the universities concerned. On the other hand, CSTDI also identified suitable instructors among reputable academics with expert knowledge about developments and systems in the Mainland to conduct seminars or talks on specific topics. CSTDI would evaluate the instructors' performance based on the observations made by its staff in attendance of the courses and the course attendees' feedback.

### **Latest developments**

8. The Administration has proposed to update the Panel on the provision of national studies programme and Basic Law training for civil servants at the Panel meeting on 21 November 2011.

### **Relevant papers**

9. A list of relevant papers is in **Appendix III**.

### **Training programmes and activities related to national studies**

#### *(i) One-week National Studies Programme at the CAG for Senior Directorate Officers*

1. This is a new intensive study-cum-visit programme introduced in 2011 for senior directorate officers (i.e. those at Directorate Pay Scale Point 3 (D3) and above). The programme aims to provide participants with the latest update on the Central People's Government's policies, enhance their understanding of the latest political, economic and social developments in the Mainland, and provide opportunities for sharing and exchanges with senior Mainland officials. Topics covered in the programme include "China's Constitution, legal system, and the Basic Law", "The 12th Five-Year Plan", "China's foreign policy", etc. The programme also includes visits to community facilities in Beijing or in a neighbouring city. It is expected that about 50 directorate officers at D3 or above will have attended this programme by the end of 2011.

#### *(ii) Advanced National Studies Course at the CAG*

2. This is a two-week programme introduced since 1999 for civil servants at D1-D2 level. Through lectures and talks delivered by distinguished Mainland scholars and senior Central People's Government officials, the programme aims to deepen participants' understanding of the current policies and topical issues in the Mainland, and enhance networking between participants and Mainland officials. By the end of 2011, about 510 directorate civil servants are expected to have attended this programme. Participants' feedback on the programme has been highly positive.

#### *(iii) Tsinghua/Peking University Programmes*

3. CSB has been organising the Tsinghua University Programme and the Peking University Programme since 1993 and 2004 respectively for senior civil servants (i.e. those at point 45 of the Master Pay Scale (MPS) or above). Both programmes last for 17 days and include classroom lectures and visits to state agencies in Beijing, as well as a 3-day visit to selected Mainland cities. The programmes provide participants with a comprehensive introduction of the political, social, economic, cultural and legal developments in the Mainland. They also aim to enhance communication between participants and Mainland officials. By the end of 2011, about 2 500 civil servants are expected to have attended the two programmes. Participants generally considered the programmes

highly effective in improving their understanding of the Mainland and its latest development.

*(iv) Foreign Affairs Studies Programme*

4. Since 2004, CSB has commissioned the China Foreign Affairs University to organise a one-week Foreign Affairs Studies Programme for directorate and other civil servants involved in external affairs. The programme covers China's foreign affairs, protocol and other related topics. By the end of 2011, about 150 civil servants are expected have attended this programme, including heads of our Economic & Trade Offices overseas.

*(v) Thematic Study Programmes*

5. Since 1991, thematic study programmes have been organized for middle level to senior level civil servants (MPS 34-49) through the coordination of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office (HKMAO). These programmes mainly take the form of familiarization visits to selected Mainland provinces and cities. They aim to enhance participants' general understanding of the systems and developments in the Mainland in selected policy areas or themes. By the end of 2011, more than 1 200 civil servants are expected to have attended these programmes. The themes of the more recent programmes included "Urban Planning and Development of Wuhan" and "Social and Economic Development of Harbin".

*(vi) National Studies Programme for Middle Managers*

6. To enable middle-ranking civil servants (i.e. those at MPS 34 to 44) to acquire a better understanding of the Mainland's systems and deepen their knowledge on the developments in the Pearl River Delta region, CSB has commissioned the Sun Yat-sen University and the Shenzhen Graduate School of Peking University to organize a one-week national studies programme since 2006 and 2007 respectively. The programme covers the latest socio-economic and political developments in the Mainland, with special focus on the Pearl River Delta region. By the end of 2011, around 1 300 civil servants are expected to have attended the programme. The feedback received has been very positive.

*(vii) Civil Service Exchange Programme with the Mainland*

7. The civil service exchange programme with the Mainland commenced in 2002. Under the programme, CSB has partnered with the municipal governments of Beijing and Shanghai, the city government of Hangzhou and the provincial government of Guangdong. For each exchange under the programme, civil servants of one side are attached to government departments of the other

side for about four to eight weeks with a view to broadening exposure, sharing experience and expertise, and fostering networking and communication. While on attachment, the participants will study the relevant legislation, rules and regulations, and codes of conduct of the host organizations. They will also observe the host organizations' work practices through attendance at briefings, participation in training, meetings, discussion forums, experience sharing sessions and site visits, etc.

8. Civil servants taking part in the exchange programme will not take up any specific posts or duties in the host organizations, and they will only have access to information which is not of a confidential and sensitive nature. Participants have to observe the law, rules and regulations, as well as the general working rules and codes of conduct of the host organizations.

9. So far, over 50 Hong Kong government departments/ public organizations and about 130 Mainland departments/agencies have participated in the exchange programme. HKSARG has sent about 100 civil servants at senior professional level to the Mainland, while about 190 Mainland officials, mostly at division director (處長級) or deputy division director (副處長級) level, have been sent to Hong Kong. The scope of exchange covers a wide range of disciplines, including infrastructure development, city planning, traffic management, environmental protection, public housing, health and food safety, trade and commerce, information technology, social security, education, civil service management, culture and arts, etc.

10. Prior to the commencement of each exchange, CSB will provide Mainland participants with a briefing on the structure and system of the HKSAR Government, and an overview of the political and social environment of Hong Kong. At the end of the exchange, an evaluation will be conducted to collect feedback. Participants from both sides have found the programme very useful and effective, especially in enabling them to understand the structure and operation of the host organizations. They also valued the opportunity to experience the work culture of their counterparts, and strengthen their network and relationship with the respective authorities.

*(viii) Local Programmes on National Studies*

11. To further strengthen national studies training for civil servants, a new module on national studies has been incorporated in the induction programmes for new recruits of degree or professional grades. It aims to enhance participants' understanding of the Mainland, including its political system, economic challenges and latest developments. In 2011, 2 000 civil servants are expected to have attended the programmes.

12. CSB works closely with local and Mainland institutions in conducting seminars for civil servants on latest developments in the Mainland. These seminars cover a wide variety of topics such as the Mainland's political and government reforms, legal system, economic and social changes, administrative and civil service systems, foreign affairs, etc. Seminars on topical issues, e.g. "The Role of China in the New Financial and Political Order of the World" and "The 12th Five-Year Plan", etc, have also been organized. Apart from local scholars and academics from renowned universities in the Mainland, CSB has also invited officials from relevant Mainland institutions, such as the National Development and Reform Commission, to speak on their expert areas. Since 2000, 33 600 civil servants have attended these national studies seminars.

(ix) *National Studies E-Learning Portal*

13. Established since 2002 and further enhanced in 2005, the learning portal on national studies in the "Cyber Learning Centre Plus" website provides comprehensive information about the Mainland, covering such areas as the political and civil service systems, the economy, the legal framework and geographical data. In-depth analyses of current issues, such as "Challenges of the Foreign Affairs of China" and "The 12th Five-year Plan" are also available. To help keep civil servants abreast of the latest developments, the portal also houses up-to-date policy documents of the Central People's Government, relevant speeches on key policies and developments, and useful linkages. The e-learning portal provides a convenient platform for civil servants to pursue national studies at their own pace and in their own time. Continued enhancement has been made to increase the user-friendliness and enrich the content of the portal. The portal has been well received, recording a hit rate of over 570 000 since July 2005.

### Enhanced training on the Basic Law

#### (i) *Core Programmes on the Basic Law*

1. Three core programmes on the Basic Law were introduced in 2008-09 to enable civil servants, at various stages of their careers, to have the opportunity to learn and refresh themselves on knowledge about the Basic Law. By the end of 2011, over 22 000 civil servants are expected to have attended the Introductory Course for New Civil Service Appointees; the Intermediate Course for Middle Level Civil Servants (MPS 34 - 44); and the Advanced Course for Senior Level Civil Servants (MPS 45 and above). These programmes aim to enhance civil servants' understanding of the key concepts and provisions of the Basic Law. In the Intermediate and Advanced Courses, more in-depth analysis is provided and court cases related to the Basic Law are discussed. Academics, legal practitioners and officials from both Hong Kong and the Mainland are invited to conduct the programmes. Feedback from the participants has been very positive. They found the training useful in enhancing their understanding of the Basic Law, and the speakers professional and knowledgeable in the subject.

#### (ii) *E-learning Resources on the Basic Law*

2. At present, a section of the national studies e-learning portal contains online resources on the Basic Law for self-learning by civil servants. These resources include reference materials as well as latest information updates related to the Basic Law. They also include presentation materials of Basic Law course speakers, judgments of major court cases relating to the Basic Law, and relevant articles and speeches by government officials. To tie in with the enhanced training on the Basic Law in the civil service, CSB has enriched the resources on the portal and developed a new modular web course on the Basic Law. CSB will continue to strengthen the e-learning resources and web programmes to supplement classroom training and to help civil servants refresh their knowledge on the Basic Law.

#### (iii) *Thematic Seminars, Publications and Promotional Activities*

3. CSB has organized seminars on specific topics relating to the Basic Law such as "An Analysis of the Continental Law, Common Law and Basic Law", "Implementation of the 'One Country Two Systems' Principle" and "The Basic Law and Developments of the Political System of the HKSARG" for different levels of civil servants. CSB has also assisted departments to organize seminars

to address their departmental training needs. CSB will continue to organize these seminars and provide services to departments.

4. To enhance the awareness of and sustain interest in the Basic Law amongst all civil servants, especially frontline staff, various promotional activities are organized on a regular basis. Such activities take the forms of quiz, competition and exhibition which help disseminate the fundamental concepts of the Basic Law as well as the relevance of the Basic Law to civil servants' work and daily life. In addition, CSB regularly publishes a "Basic Law Bulletin" jointly with the Department of Justice and the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau, and provide a "Basic Law Corner" in the Civil Service Newsletter which is circulated to all civil servants.

## Appendix III

### National studies and Basic Law training for civil servants

#### List of relevant papers

Date of meeting of Panel on Public Service	Minutes / Paper	LC Paper No.
19.5.2003	<p>Administration's paper on "National Studies Programmes for Civil Servants "</p> <p>Supplementary information provided by the Administration</p> <p>Minutes of meeting</p>	<p>CB(1)1650/02-03(04)  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0519cb1-1650-4e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0519cb1-1650-4e.pdf</a></p> <p>CB(1)1937/02-03(01)  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0519cb1-1937-1e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0519cb1-1937-1e.pdf</a></p> <p>CB(1)1910/02-03  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps030519.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr02-03/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps030519.pdf</a></p>
19.12.2005	<p>Administration's paper on "National studies programmes and related training activities for civil servants"</p> <p>Minutes of meeting</p>	<p>CB(1)507/05-06(04)  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ps/papers/ps1219cb1-507-4e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ps/papers/ps1219cb1-507-4e.pdf</a></p> <p>CB(1)965/05-06  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps051219.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr05-06/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps051219.pdf</a></p>

Date of meeting of Panel on Public Service	Minutes / Paper	LC Paper No.
15.1.2007	<p>Administration's paper on "Update on national studies programmes for civil servants "</p> <p>Supplementary information provided by the Administration</p> <p>Minutes of meeting</p>	<p>CB(1)623/06-07(04)  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0115cb1-623-4-e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0115cb1-623-4-e.pdf</a></p> <p>CB(1)879/06-07(01)  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0218cb1-989-2-e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0218cb1-989-2-e.pdf</a></p> <p>CB(1)876/06-07  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps070115.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr06-07/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps070115.pdf</a></p>
18.2.2008	<p>Administration's paper on "Update on national studies and Basic Law training for civil servants"</p> <p>Supplementary information provided by the Administration</p> <p>Minutes of meeting</p>	<p>CB(1)764/07-08(04)  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0218cb1-764-4-e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0218cb1-764-4-e.pdf</a></p> <p>CB(1)989/07-08(02)  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0218cb1-989-2-e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0218cb1-989-2-e.pdf</a></p> <p>CB(1)966/07-08  <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps080218.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr07-08/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps080218.pdf</a></p>

<b>Date of meeting of Panel on Public Service</b>	<b>Minutes / Paper</b>	<b>LC Paper No.</b>
18.1.2010	<p>Administration's paper on "Update on national studies and Basic Law training for civil servants"</p> <p>Background brief on the national studies and Basic Law training for civil servants</p> <p>Minutes of meeting</p>	<p>CB(1)860/09-10(04) <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0118cb1-860-4-e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0118cb1-860-4-e.pdf</a></p> <p>CB(1)866/09-10 <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0118cb1-866-e.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/ps/papers/ps0118cb1-866-e.pdf</a></p> <p>CB(1) 1383/09-10 <a href="http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps20100118.pdf">http://www.legco.gov.hk/yr09-10/english/panels/ps/minutes/ps20100118.pdf</a></p>

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