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**By fax**

7 June 2013

Clerk to Subcommittee on Poverty  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central  
Hong Kong  
(Attn: Mr Colin CHUI)

Dear Mr CHUI,

**Subcommittee on Poverty  
Follow-up to meeting on 8 May 2013**

Thank you for your letter of 16 May 2013 to the Secretary for Labour and Welfare. With respect to the information requested by the Subcommittee at its meeting on 8 May 2013 concerning the employment of ethnic minorities in the Civil Service, the Labour and Welfare Bureau has referred the request to this Bureau and our responses are set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Appointments to the Civil Service are based on the principle of open and fair competition. All candidates in an open recruitment exercise are assessed on the basis of their merits and having regard to the stipulated entry requirements (including language proficiency) set according to the job requirements of the grade concerned. The race of a candidate is not a relevant consideration in the selection and appointment of civil servants.

It is the Administration's policy to maintain a fully biliterate (Chinese and English) and tri-lingual (Cantonese, Putonghua and English) Civil Service. In order to maintain a fully biliterate and tri-lingual Civil Service that can function effectively and efficiently in the two official languages, the Administration needs to specify appropriate Chinese and English language proficiency requirements (LPRs) as part of the entry requirements for appointments to individual grades (including disciplined services grades) having regard to the job requirements of the concerned grades.

Heads of department/grade (HoDs/HoGs) are responsible for stipulating the LPRs for each of the grades under their charge, as they are best placed to know the work and operational needs of such grades. To ensure compliance with the guidance of the Equal Opportunities Commission as set out in its Code of Practice on Employment under the Race Discrimination Ordinance, the Civil Service Bureau has issued guidelines to HoDs/HoGs reminding them to review the LPRs from time to time, taking into account the changing operational needs of the grades concerned, and to make suitable adjustments whenever and wherever appropriate.

In revising the existing LPRs, the overriding principle must be to meet actual operational needs of individual grades and to ensure that the LPRs specified or selection methods adopted are relevant to and commensurate with the satisfactory performance of the job concerned. Where appropriate, departments have made suitable adjustments to their LPRs and recruitment selection process. For instance, the Police Force has revised the selection process for Police Constable, under which candidates' proficiency in language(s) other than Chinese and English would also be considered. The Correctional Services Department has replaced the Chinese written test with a group interview or an oral question session in the selection process for relevant grades.

To obtain up-to-date information on the implementation of the LPRs and ensure that these requirements remain relevant to and commensurate with the satisfactory performance of the relevant duties,

we have launched another comprehensive review of the LPRs of all civil service grades. Through the review, we will examine whether there is further room to adjust the LPRs of the relevant grades. We would update the Legislative Council Panel on Public Service and the Subcommittee on Poverty on the results of the LPR review upon completion of the review.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss Natalie LI)  
*for* Secretary for the Civil Service

c.c. Secretary for Labour and Welfare (Attn: Ms Jane LEE)