

**立法會**  
***Legislative Council***

LC Paper No. CB(4)546/12-13  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/PS

**Panel on Public Service**

**Minutes of meeting held on  
Monday, 18 February 2013, at 10:45 am  
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

**Members present** : Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP  
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP  
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung  
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP  
Hon IP Kin-yuen  
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, JP  
Hon TANG Ka-piu  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen

**Member attending** : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH

**Member absent** : Hon Claudia MO

**Public Officers attending : Agenda item IV**

Mr Paul TANG, JP  
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Raymond H C WONG, JP  
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Ms Shirley LAM, JP  
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 3

**Agenda item V**

Mr Paul TANG, JP  
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Raymond H C WONG, JP  
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Ms May CHAN, JP  
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2

**Clerk in attendance :** Ms Anita SIT  
Chief Council Secretary (4)1

**Staff in attendance :** Ms Shirley CHAN  
Senior Council Secretary (4)1

Ms Angela CHU  
Council Secretary (4)1

Ms LAM Yuen-kwan  
Legislative Assistant (4)1

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**I. Confirmation of minutes**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)399/12-13 -- Minutes of meeting on 17 December 2012)

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2012 were confirmed.

**II. Information papers issued since the last meeting**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)348/12-13(01) -- Submission from a member of the public on leave arrangement of the civil service

LC Paper No. CB(4)407/12-13(01) -- Administration's response to the submission on leave arrangement of the civil service)

2. Members noted that the above papers had been issued since the last meeting.

**III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)395/12-13(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(4)395/12-13(02) -- List of follow-up actions)

3. Members agreed to discuss the following items proposed by the Administration at the next regular Panel meeting to be held on 18 March 2013 at 10:45 am –

- (a) Civil service-related issues featuring in the 2013-2014 Budget; and
- (b) An overview of medical and dental benefits for civil servants, pensioners and eligible dependants.

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4. The Chairman suggested that the discussion on item (b) above should include the provision of Chinese medicine services to civil servants, pensioners and eligible dependants. The Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") agreed to provide relevant information in the discussion paper.

5. Regarding the request made by Ms Emily LAU at the meeting on 21 January 2013 for discussion of issues relating to the employment of ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities in the civil service, SCS suggested reporting the latest situation to the Panel at its regular meeting on 15 April 2013.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration will report the latest situation regarding the employment of ethnic minorities in the civil service at the Panel's regular meeting on 15 April 2013 and at a later meeting regarding the employment of persons with disabilities in the civil service.)*

## **IV. An overview of training and development for civil servants**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)395/12-13(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)395/12-13(04) -- Background brief on training and development for civil servants prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

6. SCS briefed members on the salient points of the Administration's paper on the provision of training and development for civil servants by the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB"). He said that the Administration provided civil servants with learning opportunities that would equip them with the necessary skills, knowledge and mindset for providing quality service to the public. While bureaux and departments ("B/Ds") provided work related training courses for their staff to meet job-specific needs, CSB, through the Civil Service Training and Development Institute ("CSTDI"), focused mainly on training programmes which were best provided by a central training agency, such as leadership and management, language and communication, national studies and the Basic Law. For the 2012-13 financial year, CSB had budgeted \$58 million for the provision of these training programmes and services. In 2012, CSTDI had organised

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programmes, seminars and workshops for about 54 000 civil servants, conducted 250 consultancy projects on training and human resource management for B/Ds, and recorded 530 000 visits to the e-learning portal. Following the Chief Executive's 2013 Policy Address which had called for the enhancement of civil service training, the Administration planned to strengthen civil service training in the areas of managing adversity and pressure, handling public consultations, enhancing innovative thinking and deepening the understanding of the latest developments in the Mainland.

### Statistics on training provided to civil servants

7. Noting that about 54 000 civil servants, which represented about one third of the civil service establishment, had received training in 2012, Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired about the training plan for the other civil servants. The Deputy Chairman opined that it was important to ensure that civil servants were given equal opportunity for receiving training. He requested the Administration to provide the number of civil servants who would receive training in 2013.

8. SCS clarified that "54 000" was the number of civil servants who attended training courses/programmes organised by CSTDI in 2012. The figure did not cover those civil servants who attended work related training courses organised by B/Ds in 2012. As training was provided to civil servants on an on-going basis, civil servants would have ample chance to receive training. SCS further said that while the Administration encouraged all civil servants to attend the training courses/programmes organised by CSTDI and had put in place a mechanism for B/Ds to release staff to attend training, it would not be appropriate to make these courses/programmes compulsory. He understood that as a general policy, staff were required to attend work related training courses provided by B/Ds to meet their job-specific needs.

9. The Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service ("PSCS") advised that the estimated number of civil servants who would receive training organised by CSTDI in 2013 would likely be similar to that of 2012, and it would be reflected in the Controlling Officer's Report of CSB in the forthcoming Budget.

10. Mr KWOK Wai-keung enquired about the reason for the discrepancy between the approved financial provision for CSB for its work on civil service training and development in the Estimates of Expenditure 2012-2013 (\$118.5 million) and the amount as stated in the

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Administration's paper (\$58 million). PSCS explained that "\$118.5 million" was the original estimate for civil service training and development which included staff salaries in 2012-13, whereas "\$58 million" had discounted staff salaries.

11. Noting that only about 4 900 civil servants had attended continuous learning courses since 2005, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan considered that this was barely adequate. He pointed out that the Administration should promote continuous learning in the civil service. In reply, SCS clarified that "4 900" was the number of civil servants remunerated on or below MPS 16 or equivalent (including MOD I staff) who had been granted financial sponsorship to pursue self-arranged studies since 2005. This number was relatively small in comparison with the number of civil servants who attended courses organised by CSTDI. Apart from attending training courses, the Administration also encouraged civil servants to pursue continuous learning through on-the-job training and the Cyber Learning Centre Plus ("CLC Plus") website. The e-learning resources of CLC Plus had been enhanced to facilitate the pursuit of continuous learning among civil servants. In 2012, CSTDI recorded 530 000 visits to the e-learning portal developed on CLC Plus.

### National studies programmes

#### *Contents of programmes*

12. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed concern that the contents of the national studies courses conducted in the Mainland might be one-sided and included some brainwashing elements. Pointing out that Hong Kong also had a lot of scholars/experts in this field of studies and in order to ensure that viewpoints from different perspectives were covered, Mr LEE suggested that some of those courses be conducted in Hong Kong. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung queried whether the course materials used by the Mainland institutions in conducting national studies might contain publications from the Propaganda Department of the Mainland Government. He considered that such publications might have a brainwashing effect on the participants since the main duty of the Propaganda Department of the Mainland Government was to control the mind-set of people.

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13. On behalf of Ms Claudia MO who was absent from the meeting, the Chairman conveyed Ms MO's request for the Administration's provision of information on the national studies e-learning portal of the CLC Plus website so that members could review whether there was any brainwashing elements in the courses. Mr SIN Chung-kai said that the Administration should provide members with access to the e-learning portal to facilitate members' understanding of the contents of the courses.

14. Quoting his experience in participating in a national studies programme in the Mainland, SCS said that most of the speakers were scholars in the Mainland who offered a lot of insights and critical viewpoints on the problems and challenges faced by the Mainland. There was also much room for stimulating discussion and sharing. He did not find the contents of the programme one-sided and reflected any brainwashing involved. He also trusted that the participating civil servants were mature enough to have their own independent thinking and judgment. SCS further explained that apart from visits and exchange programmes which were conducted in the Mainland, CSTDI also organised national studies workshops, seminars and e-learning portal on CLC Plus which were all conducted in Hong Kong. Local scholars/experts with different political perspectives had been invited to conduct seminars on national issues and their presentations were also uploaded onto the dedicated e-learning portal. As requested by members, SCS agreed to provide a set of login ID and password for members' access to the national studies e-learning portal on CLC Plus website.

*(Post-meeting note: The Administration has provided a set of login ID and password for members' access to the national studies e-learning portal on CLC Plus website vide LC Paper No. CB(4)497/12-13(01).)*

15. Being an ex-civil servant, the Chairman shared her experience in participating in a national studies programme in the Mainland. The Chairman remarked that although civil servants could learn about Mainland affairs in Hong Kong, visiting the Mainland could enable the participants to gain first-hand experience and deepen their knowledge in this aspect. She recalled that the lectures given by the Mainland scholars were highly critical, and viewpoints from different perspectives were covered in the lectures and discussions. She suggested that civil servants who had participated in the national studies in the Mainland might consider writing reviews of their visits to be posted on the web for sharing.

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16. Mr KWOK Wai-keung concurred that national affairs should be studied from different perspectives. He considered that describing various kinds of studies on national affairs conducted in the Mainland as "brainwashing" was unfounded.

17. Mr IP Kin-yuen said that he did not object to the conduct of national studies in the Mainland and concurred that the views of Mainland scholars were much open than before. He however considered it important that the course participants should be exposed to analyses and viewpoints from different perspectives. He therefore suggested more Hong Kong scholars be invited to give lectures on national studies. Mr SIN Chung-kai shared the view of Mr IP. He pointed out that national studies courses should aim at providing civil servants with the opportunity to understand and examine Mainland issues from different angles. The viewpoints of the scholars in Hong Kong could complement those of the Mainland scholars.

18. SCS advised that the Administration held an open mind regarding the choice of speakers to be invited to conduct seminars for civil servants. In fact, the Administration had in the past invited speakers who were critical of Hong Kong/Mainland Government policies to conduct seminars for civil servants, so that civil servants could listen to different viewpoints and learn from different perspectives.

19. In addition to the learning of national policies, Mr IP Kin-yuen enquired whether the national studies programmes for civil servants included the element of strengthening the "homeland relationship" with the Mainland. SCS agreed that it was important to strengthen relationship with the Mainland. With the establishment of more Mainland Offices, civil servants working in Mainland Offices needed to be equipped with appropriate knowledge and skills to maintain close contact and work with the Mainland authorities.

*Exchange programmes with the Mainland*

20. Referring to the civil service exchange programme with the Mainland, Ms Emily LAU enquired what Hong Kong civil servants could learn from the practices of the Mainland authorities. SCS responded that the exchange programme aimed at fostering mutual understanding and networking between Hong Kong and Mainland officials. Based on his observation, participating Mainland officials found the experience of Hong Kong in selected policy areas, such as anti-corruption practices, very useful.



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Owing to the differences in political and administrative systems, it might not be appropriate to directly apply the Mainland's experience to Hong Kong and vice versa. However, it would be useful to discuss some common problems faced by the two places, such as aging population and disparity between the rich and the poor.

21. On Mr IP Kin-yuen's concern about possible leakage of confidential or sensitive information during the exchange programme with the Mainland, SCS replied that under the exchange programme, civil servants of one side were attached to the government departments of the other side to observe the host organisations' work practices. Since the participants would not take up any specific duties in the host organisations, it was very unlikely that they would have access to the confidential or sensitive information of the host organisations.

### *Evaluation of programmes*

22. The Deputy Chairman and Mr KWOK Wai-keung enquired about the mechanism for evaluating the effectiveness of various training programmes. SCS advised that feedback from both course providers and participants would be collected systematically for the evaluation of the courses with a view to further improving the training programmes. Course participants were invited to provide feedback and comments through questionnaires. The Administration would seriously consider the views collected and fine tune the programme contents to meet the training needs of civil servants at different levels.

23. Mr SIN Chung-kai requested the Administration to provide a summary of the assessment of the national studies courses. SCS explained that the Administration did not simply adopt a quantitative approach for the assessment of the courses. Responses collected were mainly general views and comments from course providers and participants.

### Basic Law training

24. Noting that only about 28 000 civil servants had attended courses and seminars on the Basic Law in 2012, Mr KWOK Wai-keung urged the Administration to put in extra effort to ensure every civil servant could have the chance to receive training on the Basic Law.

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25. SCS replied that training on the Basic Law formed an integral part of the training for civil servants, and the Administration had introduced three core programmes on the Basic Law, viz introductory, intermediate and advanced courses for newly appointed, middle level and senior level civil servants respectively. To enable civil servants to keep abreast of the developments relating to the Basic Law, thematic seminars on specific topics relating to the Basic Law were organised regularly. Furthermore, updated information on the Basic Law was also available at the CLC Plus website for self-learning by civil servants.

### Enhancement of overseas training programmes

26. Pointing out that the Mainland Government had increased the number of visits to overseas countries for its civil servants to broaden their views in recent years, Mr IP Kin-yuen suggested that the Administration should not concentrate merely on organising visits to the Mainland but should also devote efforts on enhancing the visits and exchange programmes with overseas countries.

27. Mr TANG Ka-piu welcomed the enhancement of the national studies programmes. In order to bring in more good experience from overseas countries, he requested the Administration to provide information on the visits and training programmes conducted in overseas countries.

28. SCS advised that apart from the national studies programmes organised by Mainland institutions, the Administration also provided overseas training opportunities for civil servants. For example, a training programme of three to four months at overseas tertiary institutions would be provided to Administrative Officers who had passed the probation. Regular overseas duty visits would also be arranged for senior civil servants. There was also an exchange programme with the Singapore Government involving a small number of civil servants from both sides. Arrangements had also been made for Hong Kong government officials to be attached to international organisations to gain exposure in the international arena. As far as he knew, individual B/Ds also arranged overseas duty visits or training programmes for staff to meet job-specific needs. While the Administration was open to providing overseas visits and training programmes to civil servants, the Administration would also need to consider the cost and effectiveness of such programmes.

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29. Highlighting the importance of nurturing talents and the fact that the Singapore Government had provided many in-depth training programmes to its civil servants, the Chairman opined that the Administration should consider allocating more resources to providing civil servants with the opportunity to attend overseas training of at least one year duration with recognized degree qualification. She enquired about the situation and number of such courses provided at the moment. The Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 3 replied that the Administrative Services Grade operated a programme offering sponsorship to one to two civil servants to acquire a master degree in overseas institutions each year. In addition, if civil servants wished to apply for studying local degree or overseas distance learning programmes which were related to their job duties, they could apply for financial sponsorship from the Government. SCS remarked that in promoting such kind of training to civil servants, factors such as financial implications and the work commitment of staff should also be considered.

### Other suggestions on training

30. Given the changes in social environment, Mr LEUNG Chi-cheung was of the view that some civil servants were inadequate in grasping public sentiments and opinions, and this would hinder the launching of government policies. He asked if the Administration had any plan to equip civil servants, especially the civil servants of middle and senior levels, with proper training to facilitate smooth launching of new government policies. SCS responded that it was the duty of the Principal Officials under the accountability system to formulate policies while civil servants would be responsible for executing them. In order to gauge public views in formulating policies, public consultations might need to be conducted. In this regard, the Administration planned to strengthen civil servants' skills of communication with the public and the media. In view of the rapid changes in the community and the increasing public demand for service quality, training courses on facilitating changes and building resilience would also be provided to civil servants.

31. Mr Martin LIAO was of the view that the training courses/programmes provided by the Administration for civil servants mainly focused on skills and knowledge. He considered that training on the areas of team-building and self-fulfillment was equally important for the development of civil servants. SCS replied that the Administration aimed to provide a wide range of training opportunities to civil servants taking into account their operational and career development needs. He pointed out that some of the courses organised by CSTDI, such as leadership and

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management training, workshops on innovation, problem solving, leading changes, positive psychology and managing adversity etc., also contained the elements of self-development and team-building.

32. Mr Tony TSE said that while it was difficult to compel civil servants to attend non-job-specific training courses, the Administration should put in extra effort to encourage civil servants to pursue continuous learning to enhance their knowledge and capabilities. As those civil servants who had joined the Government for a long time might fail to keep pace with the development of the commercial market, he asked whether the Administration had put in measures to ensure that civil servants kept abreast of the developments of the commercial market. SCS replied that it was important for B/Ds to keep abreast of the latest developments of the related market sectors in formulating/promoting policies and devise suitable job-related training programmes/courses for their staff to help them perform their jobs effectively. B/Ds had much flexibility to devise job-related courses for their staff.

33. Pointing out that many significant changes had resulted from the introduction of education reform initiatives in recent years, Mr IP Kin-yuen enquired whether the Administration had put in place a mechanism to strategically upgrade teachers' qualifications and nurture teaching professionals to lead the reform. SCS replied that the Education Bureau ("EDB") would consider the training needs of teachers and the expertise required for implementation of the reform.

34. Ms Emily LAU stressed the importance of safeguarding the core values of the civil service on honesty and integrity, objectivity and impartiality, political neutrality and professionalism. She urged the Administration to provide more seminars or workshops on this area. She also expressed concern on the recent incidents of suspected biased acts of some senior Government officials and cautioned that the politically appointed officials should not pressurize civil servants to undertake tasks that would compromise the core values of the civil service. SCS said that the Administration would continue to exercise vigilance in safeguarding the core values of the civil service. Regarding the allegations of individual B/Ds of being biased or not politically neutral, he said that the heads of the B/Ds had the responsibility to clarify publicly the facts and reaffirm the core values of the civil service.

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Succession problems

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35. Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed concern that succession problems might arise in the civil service, especially in the technical departments, due to the lack of suitable replacements and training after the retirement of experienced civil servants. He requested the Administration to provide further information on the retirement situation in the civil service and the measures to tackle the succession problems which might arise in the years ahead. Mr TANG Ka-piu echoed Mr WONG's concern. Quoting the example of the Marine Department ("MD") which had recently encountered difficulties in recruiting local senior maritime professionals, he asked whether the Administration would formulate any succession plans to train up the local young people to become maritime professionals in collaboration with the Vocational Training Council.

36. SCS advised that B/Ds had the responsibility to review their manpower situations with a view to identifying any succession problems so that timely remedial actions could be taken. In advance of the anticipated retirement of serving civil servants, some B/Ds had already recruited new civil servants in the past few years. In tandem with recruitment, appropriate in-service training had been put in place by B/Ds to ensure a smooth handover of responsibilities. In some special circumstances, such as the lack of experienced staff to take up the responsibilities or a sudden increase in workload, B/Ds might employ existing civil servants beyond their retirement age to help meet their short-term succession or operational problems. Regarding the problem on shortage of local maritime professionals, SCS believed that it was mainly caused by a lack of local young people willing to join the maritime industry. In the case of MD, if no suitable candidates could be found among local residents, it was acceptable to recruit non-locals to take up the jobs, and hopefully, suitable replacements could be trained up among locals in the long-run. In response to Mr TANG's question on whether other B/Ds had difficulty in recruiting civil servants from locals, SCS said that as far as he knew, cases of recruiting civil servants from overseas were exceptional as there was a mechanism to extend the employment of existing civil servants beyond their retirement age to cater for short-term succession needs.

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**V. An update on the provision of paternity leave to government employees**

(LC Paper No. CB(4)395/12-13(05) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)395/12-13(06) -- Background brief on the provision of paternity leave to government employees prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat)

37. SCS briefed members on the salient points in the Administration's paper on provision of paternity leave to government employees since its implementation on 1 April 2012.

Eligibility criteria for paternity leave

*Childbirth outside marriage*

38. Mr TANG Ka-piu expressed support for the provision of paternity leave to government employees as a family-friendly employment practice. He enquired about the arrangement for granting paternity leave for childbirth outside marriage. SCS explained that CSB would consider applications for paternity leave in respect of childbirth outside marriage on a case-by-case basis having regard to all relevant factors, including the relationship between the applicant and the infant, relationship between the applicant and the infant's mother, financial responsibility of the applicant over the caring of the infant, etc. While there was no legislation on paternity leave for the moment, the said arrangement should be consistent with the spirit of equal opportunities, and CSB would keep in view the relevant legislative proposal on paternity leave.

39. Whilst welcoming the implementation of paternity leave for all government employees including the employees of subsidized schools, Mr IP Kin-yuen was worried that there was inconsistency between the criteria applied to civil servants and those applied to employees of subsidized schools. As far as he knew, EDB had informed the employees of subsidized schools that the two major considerations for granting paternity leave on the occasion of childbirth outside marriage were whether the applicant was the biological father of the infant and the relationship

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between the applicant and the infant's mother. There was no mention of the financial responsibility of the applicant over the caring of the infant.

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40. SCS explained that financial support from the applicant could be regarded as evidence of a stable relationship between the applicant and the infant's mother. The major criteria for considering applications for paternity leave in relation to childbirth outside marriage applied to employees of subsidised schools were consistent with those applied to civil servants. In order to address Mr IP's concern, SCS agreed to convey the concern to EDB about the criteria for considering applications for paternity leave in respect of childbirth outside marriage.

*Single mothers*

41. The Chairman enquired whether single mothers who were government employees could benefit from paternity leave in addition to maternity leave so as to facilitate them in taking care of their newborns. SCS explained that as a family-friendly measure, paternity leave was provided to male government employees to enable them to take care of the newborns and their spouses. Female employees could apply for maternity leave which had a much longer duration and was primarily aimed at enabling the female employees to prepare for delivery and recuperate after confinement.

*Pregnancy complications*

42. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether paternity leave would be granted on the occasion of miscarriage. SCS replied that paternity leave would be granted if delivery had taken place as certified by a registered medical practitioner.

43. Noting that paternity leave could only be granted with the proof of delivery certificate, Mr KWOK Wai-keung opined that the Administration should exercise discretion in a sympathetic and flexible manner to grant paternity leave on the occasion of miscarriage or abortion. He said that some of the decisions for abortion were made on grounds of poor health condition of the mothers or the foetuses concerned, and it was crucial that the concerned male employees could take paternity leave to support the families through the difficult time.

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44. SCS responded that the Administration had made reference to relevant overseas practices in formulating the policy on paternity leave, and noted that the proof of delivery was often a determining factor in granting the leave. He pointed out that the provision of paternity leave on the occasion of abortion was a controversial issue. In fact, male government employees could consider taking vacation leave to deal with various childbirth related needs.

Implementing paternity leave in subvented organisations and public bodies

45. Pointing out the implementation of paternity leave might help boost the birth rate and promote family-friendly practices, Mr TANG Ka-piu enquired whether the Administration would consider implementing paternity leave in subvented organisations and public bodies. SCS explained that subvented organisations and public bodies had the autonomy to decide the terms and conditions of employment for their staff having regard to their own operation. He understood that some subvented organisations, public bodies and private enterprises had already provided paternity leave to their employees. As requested by Mr WONG Kwok-hing, SCS agreed to follow up on his request for a list of such organisations after the meeting.

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46. Mr TANG Ka-piu opined that as both government employees and staff of subvented organisations and public bodies had been providing services to Hong Kong people, the Administration should devise a plan for implementation of such a good policy in subvented organisations and public bodies. Mr WONG Kwok-hing expressed a similar view. He urged SCS to convey Members' concern for an early implementation of paternity leave in subvented organisations and public bodies to relevant B/Ds. He also took the opportunity to thank the Secretary General of the Legislative Council Secretariat for adoption of his suggestion of implementing paternity leave in the Legislative Council Secretariat.

47. SCS said that the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") was considering legislating for the provision of paternity leave to all employees in Hong Kong, including employees of subvented organisations and public bodies. In this connection, the LWB together with the Labour Department had been studying the feasibility of mandating the provision of paternity leave to all employees in Hong Kong. He trusted that LWB was aware of Members' concern for full implementation of paternity leave in Hong Kong.



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### Resource implications

48. Mr WONG Kwok-hing welcomed the Administration's response that there was no significant staffing and financial implications incurred for the provision of paternity leave to government employees. He opined that this would convey a positive message to the other employers in Hong Kong and encourage them to consider providing paternity leave to their employees.

49. Mr SIN Chung-kai was of the view that the Government was rather flexible in allowing employees to take paternity leave during the period from four weeks before the expected date of birth to eight weeks after the actual date of childbirth. The private enterprises might find it difficult to follow.

50. SCS said that being the biggest employer in Hong Kong, the Government had greater flexibility in staff deployment and was able to absorb the manpower implications arising from the provision of paternity leave without incurring additional resources despite the existing tight manpower situation. Therefore, the experience of the Government might not be fully applicable to the private sector as individual employers had to consider their own circumstances and manpower situation in providing paternity leave for their employees.

51. The Chairman enquired whether there would be any operational difficulties if both husband and wife employed under the same B/D took leave for childbirth at the same time. SCS replied that cases where both husband and wife worked in the same B/D was not very common. So far, the implementation of paternity leave in B/Ds had been smooth.

### Statistics on paternity leave

52. The Chairman asked why the disciplined services departments had the highest number of applications for paternity leave. SCS replied that this was mainly because there were relatively more male employees in these departments.

53. In response to Mr KWOK Wai-keung's enquiry on the employees' pattern of taking paternity leave, The Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2 replied that among the 2 101 government employees who had been granted five-day paid paternity leave from 1 April to 31 December

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2012, about 1 200 of them took the leave in one stretch and the rest took the leave in splits.

**VI. Any other business**

54. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:36 pm.

Council Business Division 4  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
10 April 2013