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30 September 2013

Ms Anita SIT  
Clerk to Panel on Public Service  
Legislative Council  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central  
Hong Kong

Dear Ms SIT,

**Panel on Public Service**  
**Motion passed at the meeting on 15 July 2013**

I refer to your letter of 17 July 2013. In relation to the motion on conditioned hours of work of the civil service, which was passed at the captioned panel meeting, we would like to provide our written response in the ensuing paragraphs.

**Alignment of conditioned hours of work**

To recapitulate, there are two systems of conditioned hours of work in the civil service, namely gross (i.e. including meal breaks) or net (i.e. excluding meal breaks). A civil servant subject to the net system is regarded as performing overtime work if he/she is required to perform duties during his/her meal breaks and, subject to meeting the prescribed requirements, is eligible for overtime compensation. This does not apply to a civil servant subject to the gross system.

There is no uniform conditioned hours of work in the civil service. In general, conditioned hours of work vary to suit the operational requirements of different grades in the civil service (including civilian and disciplined services staff). The conditioned hours of work for respective grades have evolved over the years, and have been taken into account when the

Administration determines the pay of different grades. It is not practicable to align the conditioned hours of work for all civil servants. But the conditioned hours of work for all members of a particular grade should be the same.

As the conditioned hours of work have been taken into account in determining the remuneration packages offered to civil servants, a reduction in the conditioned hours of a particular grade without any corresponding change to its pay is in effect an improvement to the pay and conditions of service of that grade. Also, such a reduction will have an impact on cost, manpower and service level. Therefore, any proposal to reduce the conditioned hours of work of any grade has to be carefully evaluated and fully justified.

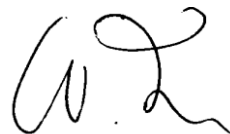
**Civil servants working in the Hospital Authority (HA)**

Notwithstanding the above, as set out in our submission to the captioned panel meeting, we have recently launched an exercise to review and explore proposals to reduce the conditioned hours of work of all Model Scale (MOD) 1 grades under the three prerequisites (i.e. cost-neutrality, no additional manpower, and maintaining the same level of service to the public). More specifically, we have invited Bureaux and Departments (B/Ds) with MOD 1 grades to assess the viability to launch trial scheme to reduce the conditioned hours of these grades from 45 hours net to 45 hours gross per week under the three prerequisites. We do not think it is practical nor necessary to consider 44 hours gross per week.

As part of the review, the Department of Health is critically assessing the possibility of reducing the conditioned hours of work of MOD 1 grades civil servants working in HA from 45 hours net to 45 hours gross per week.

The review is currently underway and the returns from B/Ds are expected to reach us by the third quarter of 2013. Upon receiving the returns, we will further discuss the matter with the MOD 1 staff side. After we have concluded the review for MOD 1 grades, we will consider whether a similar review for other grades working 45 hours net per week should be launched.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss Winnie Tse)

for Secretary for the Civil Service

c.c. Director of Health  
(Attn : Mr David Yuen)