

# 立法會

## *Legislative Council*

LC Paper No. CB(4)380/13-14

(These minutes have been  
seen by the Administration)

Ref : CB4/PL/PS

### **Panel on Public Service**

**Minutes of meeting held on  
Thursday, 20 January 2014, 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 Claudia MO  
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 absent** : Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

**Members attending** : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP

**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

Mr Eddie MAK, JP  
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1

Ms May CHAN  
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2

Ms Vivian SUM, JP  
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 3

Mr Peter CHAN, JP  
Director of General Grades  
Civil Service Bureau

**Agenda item V**

Mr Paul TANG, JP  
Secretary for the Civil Service

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

Mr Eddie MAK, JP  
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1

Mr TANG Ping-ming  
Assistant Commissioner (Human Resource)  
Correctional Services Department

Mrs NG TSUI Fung-ying, Pauline  
Assistant Commissioner of Police (Personnel)  
Hong Kong Police Force

**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 Linda MA  
Legislative Assistant (4)1

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Action

**I. Confirmation of minutes**

LC Paper No. CB(4)316/13-14      -- Minutes of meeting on  
16 December 2013

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2013 were confirmed.

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

LC Paper No. CB(4)283/13-14(01)      -- Letter from Hon  
Christopher CHUNG  
Shu-kun on personnel  
management and  
promotion system of  
the Housing  
Department

2. Members noted the above letter from Hon Christopher CHUNG Shu-kun and the response from the Civil Service Bureau ("CSB") to the concerns raised in the letter. CSB's response was tabled at the meeting.

*(Post-meeting note: The CSB's response was issued to members on 21 January 2014 after the meeting via LC Paper No. CB(4)327/13-14.)*

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

LC Paper No. CB(4)307/13-14(01) -- List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(4)307/13-14(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 17 February 2014 –

- (a) An overview of training and development for civil servants; and
- (b) An overview of medical and dental benefits for civil servants, pensioners and eligible dependants.

4. Members agreed to start the next regular meeting at 9:30 am so as to receive views from relevant civil service associations/unions and other interested parties on item (b) above.

### **IV. Briefing by the Secretary for Civil Service on the policy initiatives of Civil Service Bureau featuring in the 2014 Policy Address**

LC Paper No. CB(4)307/13-14(03) -- Paper provided by the Administration

5. Secretary for the Civil Service ("SCS") briefed members on policy initiatives of CSB featured in the 2014 Policy Address. At the request of the Chairman, SCS provided a copy of his speaking note for tabling at the meeting for members' reference.

*(Post-meeting note: The speaking note was issued to members on 21 January 2014 after the meeting via LC Paper No. CB(4)327/13-14.)*

### Civil service establishment

6. Notwithstanding that the Administration had strengthened the civil service establishment by about 1% annually since 2007-08, the Chairman relayed the concerns of some civil servants over the increasing

workload and pressure due to the increase in visitors from the Mainland and the delivery of various policy initiatives such as increasing land and housing supply. She urged the Administration to strengthen the establishment of the civil service to cope with the increasing workload.

7. SCS agreed that with the increasing demand for public services and the implementation of new policies, there was a need to strengthen the civil service establishment to cope with the additional workload. He however remarked that apart from strengthening the establishment, there were other means to cope with the increase in workload, such as internal redeployment, streamlining, re-engineering, etc. The Administration would closely monitor the situation to address the manpower requirements.

8. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan said that the annual increase of 1% in the civil service establishment over the past years was grossly inadequate to cope with the increase in workload. SCS explained that there was a need to strike a balance between the proper use of public funds and efficient delivery of public services. CSB would support creation of new civil service posts where fully justified by operational need and when the work involved could not be undertaken by re-deployment of existing staff or through alternative modes of service delivery. There would likely be a notable increase in the civil service establishment in 2014-15 to provide the required manpower to deliver various policy initiatives and implement improvements to existing services. The relevant details would be announced in the 2014-15 Budget.

9. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung said that despite a growing population, the number of civil servants had dropped from about 180 000 in 1997 to about 160 000 at present. Ms CHAN Yuen-han expressed the same concern. The Chairman said that the work of the civil service had increased tremendously over the years not only due to the substantial increase in resident population, but also the increase in transient population which included visitors and temporary workers in Hong Kong. The Members enquired how the Administration determined the extent of increase in the civil service establishment.

10. SCS said that each year, individual bureaux and departments ("B/Ds") would review their own staffing situation and put up requests for additional resources to meet the demand for new or improved services to the public, taking into account the increase in workload over the years. He remarked that it would not be appropriate to use the increase in the size of population as the basis to determine the civil service establishment. Instead, additional manpower would be provided when

new initiatives or facilities to cope with the increase in the demand, such as clinics, police stations and boundary control points, were provided.

Non-civil service contract staff scheme

11. Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired about the replacement of non-civil service contract ("NCSC") positions by civil service posts in the forthcoming financial year. SCS replied that under the existing policy, B/Ds should seek to replace NCSC positions with established long-term service needs by civil service posts subject to the availability of resources. Over the past years, about 6 000 NCSC positions had been phased out. The replacement plan for NCSC positions by civil service posts in the next financial year would be covered in the 2014-15 Budget.

12. Mr KWOK Wai-keung welcomed the Administration's plan to enhance the provision of medical and dental benefits to civil service eligible persons. He however expressed concern that unlike their counterparts in the civil service, NCSC staff were excluded from the related medical and dental benefits. He urged the Administration to rectify the situation.

13. SCS explained that the NCSC staff scheme aimed at providing B/Ds with a flexible means of employment so that it could respond more promptly to changing operational and service needs which might be time-limited, seasonal, subject to market fluctuations, etc. The remuneration packages offered to NCSC staff were determined by the employing B/Ds having regard to the remuneration packages of comparable jobs in the labour market. As the civil service and NCSC appointments were two distinct types of employments, it was not appropriate to compare the terms and conditions of employment between them.

14. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was concerned about the arrangement of offsetting severance and long service payments with the employee's accrued Mandatory Provident Fund ("MPF") benefits under the current NCSC contracts. With reference to the provision of paternity leave to civil servants, he opined that before the enactment of legislation to abolish the offsetting arrangement, the Government should take the lead in abolishing such offsetting arrangement so as to set a good example for the private sector.

15. SCS said that unlike the provision of paternity leave for eligible male employees in the civil service, the abolition of the offsetting arrangement of severance and long service payments with the accrued

benefits of MPF schemes involved complex policy considerations and there were very divergent views on the matter among different stakeholders. The subject was under the purview of the Labour and Welfare Bureau and the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau. It would not therefore be appropriate for CSB to deviate from the existing MPF offsetting arrangement until the matter had been fully reviewed and deliberated. CSB would nonetheless convey Mr Wong's views to the two policy bureaux.

#### Civil service medical and dental benefits

16. Noting that the Administration would kick start the preparatory work on setting up a new Families Clinic in the New Territories in 2014-15, the Chairman called on the Administration to keep in view the demand for the facility in other districts, and set up new Families Clinics to address the need of civil servants.

17. Mr TAM Yiu-chung said that as Families Clinics were for exclusive use of civil service eligible persons, the Administration should avoid setting up new Families Clinics in prominent locations of residential areas. Otherwise, local residents might mistake the Families Clinics for public clinics.

18. SCS said that while the locations of Families Clinics should be easily accessible to its users, the Administration would take into account members' views in the provision of such facility in future.

19. Noting that the Administration planned to provide a Chinese medicine hospital in Tseung Kwan O, the Deputy Chairman enquired whether the Administration would review the existing arrangement of non-inclusion of Chinese medicine in the scope of civil service medical benefits.

20. SCS said that in general, civil service eligible persons were entitled to medical and dental treatment and services that were provided by the Hospital Authority ("HA") or the Department of Health ("DH") free of charge. The crux of the issue was whether the services provided by the new Chinese medicine hospital would be part of the standard services of DH or HA. The Panel would discuss the related issue at a future meeting.

#### Training and development for civil servants

21. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed concern that the training

programmes for civil servants placed too much emphasis on national studies, and as a result, civil servants could not gain sufficient international exposure. Mr IP Kin-yuen expressed similar concern and said that the Administration should not merely focus on strengthening the provision of national studies programmes, but should also devote more efforts on enhancing overseas training programmes so as to provide civil servants with balanced exposure and practical experience.

22. Mr TAM Yiu-chung considered that the national studies programmes were beneficial to civil servants. It was important for civil servants to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the developments in the Mainland, which were also issues of international concern.

23. SCS said that as contacts between Hong Kong and the Mainland were frequent, there was a need to deepen civil servants' understanding of the developments in the Mainland to facilitate their work. National studies courses were only part of the training programmes for civil servants. Other programmes conducted by local and overseas speakers would also be arranged. Apart from the national studies programmes, the Administration also provided overseas training opportunities for civil servants. For example, Administrative Officers who had passed the probation would be arranged to attend a training programme at overseas tertiary institutions.

24. Miss Emily LAU expressed concern about corruption in the public sector. She remarked that some recent investigations and prosecutions involving former and incumbent high-ranking officials had caused grave public concern about the corruption situation in Hong Kong. She asked what measures CSB would take to restore public confidence in the integrity of civil service.

25. SCS said that CSB worked closely with the Independent Commission Against Corruption to remind civil servants that they should avoid any potential or perceived conflicts of interest situations, and provide seminars on corruption prevention and other good management practices. It remained the core value of the civil service to serve the public with integrity, honesty and impartiality. In addition, it was the obligation of an officer to report any incident of misconduct which was criminal in nature to the appropriate authority for investigation.

26. In response to Ms Emily LAU's enquiry, SCS said that according to the updated guidelines on the bestowal of gifts and official meals issued by the Administration recently, officers hosting official meals



should aim to spend no more than \$450 per person for lunch or \$600 per person for dinner, inclusive of all expenses incurred on food and beverages consumed on the occasion, service charges and tips. This adjustment was made in response to feedback from civil servants, taking into account various factors including inflation.

Meal break arrangement and manpower requirement of the Ambulance Stream of the Fire Services Department

27. Referring to the public procession staged by the Hong Kong Fire Services Department Ambulancemen's Union ("HKFSDAU") in the morning of 20 January 2014, Mr KWOK Wai-keung and Ms CHAN Yuen-han urged the Administration to review the meal break arrangement and manpower requirement of the Ambulance Stream of the Fire Services Department ("FSD"). In response, SCS said that due to emergency calls, there might be cases where the meal breaks of front-line staff were disrupted. FSD would continue to maintain dialogue with HKFSDAU and listen to their demands.

28. The Chairman said that due to the need to attend to emergency calls and the lack of manpower, front-line staff of FSD were very often unable to take a meal break during the designated meal break period. She urged the Administration to seriously look into the matter to resolve this long-standing problem.

29. Hon LEE Cheuk-yan criticized that CSB had not put in adequate efforts to address the concerns expressed by HKFSDAU over the meal break arrangement. He said that the entitlement to meal breaks was a fundamental right stipulated in the Civil Service Regulations and was also an important aspect of occupational health and safety. He urged CSB to take a proactive approach to strengthen the establishment of the related grade to resolve the manpower shortage problem.

30. The Deputy Chairman commented that the existing communication between the management and staff sides was not effective. He cautioned the Administration to address the concerns and views expressed by the staff sides, failing which the Government might face with governance problem in the end.

31. SCS advised that the number of emergency calls and the establishment of the Ambulanceman grade from 2008 to 2013 increased by 11.9 % and 16.3 % respectively. The increase in establishment had exceeded the growth of the civil service during the same period. Besides, it was the responsibility of individual B/Ds to put forward

Admin requests for additional manpower and CSB would support the creation of civil service posts that were fully justified by operational needs. Since each B/D had its own specific operational and service needs, it would be more appropriate for the management of B/Ds to initiate direct dialogue with their front-line staff. In the present case, he understood that FSD had maintained regular communication with the staff side and CSB would continue to follow up the matter with the Security Bureau and FSD. At the request of members, SCS agreed to report to the Panel on the outcome of the follow-up action in due course.

### Other issues

#### *Civil service pay adjustment*

32. Noting that the staff sides were greatly dissatisfied with the 2013-14 civil service pay adjustment, Mr KWOK Wai-keung called on the Administration to put in place concrete measures to improve the annual pay adjustment process.

33. SCS said that there was an established mechanism for dealing with the annual civil service pay adjustment and the mechanism had run well over the years. Under the established mechanism, the Pay Trend Survey Committee was reviewing the survey methodology of the annual pay trend survey and would come up with recommendations for improvement.

#### *Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme*

34. Mr Ip Kin-yuen enquired about the selection criteria under the Long and Meritorious Service Travel Award Scheme ("the Scheme"). SCS advised that the objective of the Scheme was to recognize and reward long and meritorious service of serving civil servants. Although all local non-directorate officers with a continuous service of 20 years or more, who had track records of consistently very good performance, were eligible for consideration for the grant of the award, due to the intense competition and limited quota, the majority of the award recipients had over 30 years of service.

35. Mr TAM Yiu-chung welcomed the provision of additional quota under the Scheme. He considered it reasonable to accord priority to eligible civil servants with longer durations of meritorious service in the selection process.

*Departmental quarters*

36. Notwithstanding the provision of 2 200 new departmental quarter ("DQ") units for disciplined services as announced in the Policy Address, the Deputy Chairman was concerned about the shortage of DQs for disciplined services staff and enquired about the criteria for allocation of DQs.

37. Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service ("PSCS") said that there were about 28 000 disciplined services staff who were eligible for DQs. However, the total number of DQ units available was 22 000. Whilst the additional provision would not fully meet the demand in one go, it would help to ease the current shortage. The new DQ units would be gradually delivered from 2017. The Security Bureau would allocate the quarter units in accordance with established criteria.

*District administration*

38. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung noted that in the Policy Address, the Administration had proposed to strengthen the role of District Officers ("DOs") to enable them to co-ordinate the work of different departments at the district level with District Councils and respond actively to public aspirations having regard to the district situation. He was concerned whether there was any change to the reporting line of public officers working in individual departments and whether their promotion would be affected by comments made by the concerned DO under the new arrangement.

39. SCS said that a pilot scheme would be implemented to provide the District Management Committees chaired by DOs with the decision-making power to tackle certain local management and environmental hygiene problems. The reporting line of public officers and their promotion would not be affected by the pilot scheme. Under the existing mechanism, should there be a difference between the work priorities of a District Council and the departments concerned, DOs could escalate to the Secretary for Home Affairs/Permanent Secretary for Home Affairs/Director of Home Affairs for them to resolve with their counterparts in B/Ds concerned. If necessary, the ruling of the Chief Secretary for Administration might be sought.

*Conditioned hours of work of civil servants*

40. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed concern on whether the conditioned hours of work of the civil servants in the lower salary band

Admin could meet the working hour requirement of the Low-income Working Family Allowance as announced in the Policy Address. SCS said that there was no uniform conditioned hours of work in the civil service. Specific conditioned hours of work were laid down for different civil service grades according to operational requirements. In the light of Mr LEE's concern, SCS agreed to provide further information on the monthly conditioned hours of work of civil servants.

## V. Employment of ethnic minorities in the civil service

LC Paper No. CB(4)307/13-14(04) -- Paper provided by the Administration

LC Paper No. CB(4)307/13-14(05) -- Updated background brief prepared by the Secretariat

### Briefing by the Administration

41. At the invitation of the Chairman, SCS briefed members on the measures adopted by the Government to facilitate the employment of ethnic minorities in the civil service, and the findings of the survey conducted by CSB in the second quarter of 2013 on the racial profile of the civil service, as set out in the Administration's paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)307/13-14(04). Assistant Commissioner of Police (Personnel) ("ACPP") then briefed members on the respective measures implemented by Hong Kong Police Force ("HKPF") to facilitate non-ethnic Chinese candidates in applying for certain posts in the department, including adjusting the language proficiency requirements ("LPRs") and the recruitment selection processes of the concerned posts. Assistant Commissioner (Human Resource) of Correctional Services Department ("AC/CSD") also briefed members on the modified recruitment process that had been implemented in Correctional Services Department ("CSD") for selecting the most suitable candidates for appointment, as well as the department's proactive strategies to promote recruitment exercises to ethnic minority groups.

## Discussion

### *Employment of ethnic minorities in the civil service*

42. Ms CHAN Yuen-han said that many of the ethnic minorities in Hong Kong possessed good academic qualifications, and yet were unable to join the civil service because they failed to meet the LPRs for civil service appointments. She urged the Administration to adopt a more proactive approach in promoting the employment of ethnic minorities by setting a target ratio of ethnic minority employees in the civil service.

43. Dr CHIANG Lai-wan said that many overseas jurisdictions, such as Canada, took affirmative actions in promoting the employment of ethnic minorities. For example, during the recruitment selection process, the job applicants would be invited to disclose their race and a certain proportion of vacancies would be allocated for ethnic minority job applicants. She enquired whether the Administration would adopt similar measures, and set an example for the private sector to follow.

44. SCS responded that appointments to the civil service were based on the principle of open and fair competition. All candidates in an open recruitment exercise were assessed on the basis of merits having regard to the stipulated entry requirements, including LPRs specified for the grade concerned. Race was not a relevant consideration in the selection process and candidates were not required to declare their ethnic origins in their job applications.

45. In reply to Mr TANG Ka-piu and Dr CHIANG Lai-wan, SCS said that setting a target proportion of civil service posts for appointment of ethnic minorities to the civil service might not be the most appropriate and effective means for promoting the employment of ethnic minorities. Rather, the Administration would ensure that ethnic minorities would continue to have equal access to job opportunities in the civil service. In this regard, CSB had worked with B/Ds to review the LPRs of all civil service grades from time to time to see if the LPRs could be adjusted having regard to the prevailing operational needs of the grades concerned. Since 2010, the Chinese LPRs of a total of 20 grades had been relaxed upon review. PSCS added that under the prevailing arrangement, individual civil service grade management would ensure that the LPRs specified were relevant to and commensurate with the satisfactory performance of the duties of the relevant grades. This arrangement was in line with the guidance of the Equal Opportunities Commission ("EOC") as set out in the Code of Practice on Employment under the Race Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 602).

46. Ms Emily LAU said that the Panel should invite ethnic minority groups and EOC to give views on the effectiveness of the measures undertaken by the Administration in facilitating ethnic minorities to join the civil service. She was also keen to learn about the policies and measures adopted by government-funded public bodies with regard to the employment of ethnic minorities. The Chairman took note of Ms LAU's request and agreed to invite ethnic minority groups and EOC to give views on the issue at a future meeting, and to follow-up with the relevant bureau on the employment of ethnic minorities by government-funded public bodies.

*Employment of ethnic minorities in certain B/Ds*

47. Noting the efforts made by HKPF and CSD to encourage ethnic minorities to apply for government jobs, Ms Claudia MO asked whether other B/Ds which provided direct services to ethnic minority communities, such as HA, Social Welfare Department ("SWD") and Hong Kong Housing Authority etc., would follow suit. Mr SIN Chung-kai said that a lot of complaints had been received from ethnic minority patients about communication problems with staff in public hospitals. He opined that there should be ethnic minority staff stationed in hospital wards to facilitate effective communication with patients who were ethnic minorities. Mr TANG Ka-piu urged the Administration to consider setting up a dedicated team staffed by ethnic minorities in each of the B/Ds which delivered services to ethnic minority communities so as to ensure the effectiveness of the service delivery.

48. Regarding the suggestion of employing ethnic minorities to fill some civil service posts for providing service to ethnic minority communities exclusively, SCS advised that generally speaking, holders of civil service posts were expected to be able to perform the full range of duties of the ranks concerned. Appointing ethnic minorities who did not fully meet the entry requirements, in particular the specified Chinese LPRs of the grades concerned, would limit the appointees' posting and promotion prospects. That said, where appropriate and when there were no comparable civil service grades performing the required tasks, B/Ds might engage ethnic minorities on non-civil service contract terms to meet the specific operational needs. For example, in addition to the Police Community Liaison Assistants engaged by HKPF, SWD was planning to launch a trial programme to engage persons who were non-ethnic Chinese on non-civil service contract terms and part-time basis to meet specific service needs in the Integrated Family Service Centres in certain districts.

49. Mr SIN Chung-kai said that there was no point in discussing the promotion prospects of ethnic minorities in the civil service if the stipulated LPRs for civil service appointments were set at so high a level that in effect the employment opportunities of ethnic minorities to the civil service had been blocked. SCS said that for the purposes of meeting the operational needs of the grades concerned and B/Ds as a whole and facilitating the career development of the staff concerned, it was important for holders of civil service posts to be able to perform various types of duties of the relevant ranks. Also, there might be possible concern about favouritism if some civil servants were arranged to take up certain posts for performing a limited range of duties of the ranks concerned while their peers were subject to the usual posting arrangements.

Admin 50. SCS further said that apart from the ongoing efforts to review the LPRs of civil service grades to ensure that they would remain relevant to and commensurate with the satisfactory performance of the duties of the grades concerned, as a new initiative, CSB would organize Chinese language training tailored to meet the vocational needs of non-ethnic Chinese staff serving in the Government so as to facilitate their effective performance of duties and career advancement. At Mr SIN's request, SCS undertook to liaise with the relevant bureau to provide information after the meeting on the measures adopted by HA to address the communication problem encountered by ethnic minority patients in public hospitals.

51. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan suggested that for those civil service posts which involved direct service provision to the ethnic minority communities, the Administration should specify the LPRs in respect of the relevant ethnic minority language and such LPRs should substitute for the Chinese LPRs for the relevant grades. SCS said that for some grades, applicants who possessed foreign language skills would be awarded extra marks in the recruitment selection process. In setting the LPRs for appointments to different grades in the civil service, the job nature and operational requirements of the grades concerned were the primary considerations. The Administration would ensure that the LPRs specified would remain relevant to and commensurate with the satisfactory performance of the duties of the grades concerned.

52. Referring to the recruitment statistics for the posts of Police Constable and Assistant Officer II following the modifications to the recruitment selection processes, Ms Emily LAU considered that both the number of applications received from ethnic minority applicants and their success rates for appointments were low, and asked for the reasons.

Regarding the recruitment for the post of Police Constable during 2010-11 to 2012-13, ACPP advised that among the 61 applications received from non-ethnic Chinese, 21 applicants failed to meet the stipulated entry requirements of the post, 14 applicants did not attend the selection interview/tests and 15 applicants failed the tests. She added that HKPF had put in much effort in conducting career talks in secondary schools with ethnic minority students so as to instill their interest in joining the HKPF. She acknowledged that many ethnic minorities might be hesitant in showing commitment to apply for HKPF's posts. In fact HKPF recruited officers all year round and those who failed could re-apply in 12 months. AC/CSD said that with the department's efforts in promoting recruitment exercises to ethnic minority groups, there had been a notable increase in the number of applications for the post of Assistant Officer II received from ethnic minorities.

53. Noting that CSD had replaced the previous Chinese written test with a group interview in the selection process for the Assistant Officer II post, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan enquired whether HKPF would abolish the Chinese written test during the group interview stage for the post of Police Constable. ACPP replied that HKPF had replaced the previous requirement for candidates to answer questions in Chinese with the "Practical Incident Handling Test", in which job applicants were required to give a simple account of the incidents that were shown to them in written English and Chinese. The test was an important and indispensable assessment to evaluate the candidates' communication as well as fact-finding ability and judgment. It was not possible to do away the test given its relevance to the job requirements.

54. The Chairman enquired whether the ethnic minority civil servants had encountered any barriers in discharging some of the duties of the grades concerned, or had refused to undertake certain duties such as those involving cross-boundary liaison or investigation for reasons related to their race or culture. ACPP said that as job applicants for any posts in HKPF had to be permanent residents having resided for seven years in Hong Kong, she was not aware of any cases in which the ethnic minority civil servants in HKPF encountered difficulties in discharging the relevant duties. To the contrary, they welcomed jobs with variety because it would be beneficial to their career development. In response to the Chairman's further enquiry, ACPP said that it was necessary for Police Constables, regardless of their race, to be able to perform the full range of duties including writing Chinese statements, and they were subject to normal postings and transfer. There was no special stream for ethnic minorities serving in HKPF.



*Racial profile of the civil service*

55. Ms Claudia MO said that the findings of the survey conducted by CSB on the racial profile of the civil service, including information regarding the respondents' salary groups and education attainment, revealed the situation of non-ethnic Chinese rather than ethnic minority civil servants. She considered that such information was not useful in promoting the employment of ethnic minorities in the civil service. She further enquired whether the Administration could ask civil service job applicants to disclose their nationality instead of their race. SCS replied that the objective of conducting the survey on the racial profile of the civil service was to gain an appreciation of the composition of the workforce by racial groups. The racial groups used for collecting data in the survey were in line with those adopted in the Population Census of Hong Kong. Given that race was not a relevant consideration in the selection process for civil service appointments, it would not be appropriate to require applicants to declare their ethnic origins in their job applications.

**VI. Any other business**

56. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 1:00 pm.