

立法會
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From : Clerk to Panel
To : Hon Andrew WONG Wang-fat, JP (Chairman)
Hon Emily LAU Wai-hing, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Wing-tat
Hon Martin LEE Chu-ming, SC, JP
Hon Margaret NG
Hon Ronald ARCULLI, JP
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon Ambrose CHEUNG Wing-sum, JP
Hon Christine LOH
Hon Gary CHENG Kai-nam
Hon Jasper TSANG Yok-sing, JP
Hon Howard YOUNG, JP
Dr Hon YEUNG Sum
Hon Ambrose LAU Hon-chuen, JP
Hon SZETO Wah

LegCo Panel on Constitutional Affairs

Follow up to meeting on 19 October 1998

In the course of discussing the Administration's paper entitled "Relationship between the HKSAR Government and the Central People's Government" at the meeting on 19 October 1998, member requested for information on the functions of the Beijing Office and the responsibilities of the Director of Beijing Office.

2. I attach Paper No. FCR(97-98)115 on the subject which was discussed by the Finance Committee on 27 March 1998 and an extract of the minutes of meeting for members' reference.

(Mrs Percy MA)
Clerk to Panel

Encl.

c.c. All Other Non-Panel Members of Legislative Council
LA

**Extract of minutes of meeting of Finance Committee
of the Provisional Legislative Council on 27 March 1998**

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Action

Item No. 8 - FCR(97-98)115

NEW HEAD “GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT:BEIJING OFFICE”

43. At the Chairman’s invitation, the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs (SCA) made the following points in response to concerns raised by members at the joint meeting of the Constitutional Affairs and the Public Service Panels on 25 March 1998:

- (a) The ranking of the post of Director of the Beijing Office was pitched at D8 level of the directorate pay scale in recognition of the importance of the post as the principal representative of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region in the Mainland. The Director would provide an important bridge for liaison and communication, and enhance working relations between the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region and Mainland authorities. As such, the incumbent would have to be an experienced officer who would be capable of leading the office in accomplishing its objectives, and the pitching of the post at D8 level was appropriate.
- (b) The functions of the Beijing Office would encompass a range of aspects including trade, immigration, contact with offices of non-Government-organisations in the Mainland such as those of the Hong Kong Tourist Association and the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, etc. As such functions were outside the remit of the Constitutional Affairs Bureau and traversed those of many bureaux and departments, it would be logical for the Director to report to the Chief Secretary for Administration; and
- (c) The reference, as set out in Enclosure 1 of the discussion paper, to the Beijing Office acting in consultation with the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council on certain specific issues, might be misleading. The Administration therefore decided to delete the phrase “in consultation with the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council,” under item (c) of Enclosure 1 of the paper.

44. Mr IP Kwok-him expressed strong reservations at the pitching of the Director's post at D8 level. While appreciating the multifarious functions of the Beijing Office, he pointed out that duties such as that of liaison with Mainland authorities overlapped with those of the Constitutional Affairs Bureau. Having regard also to the small staffing complement of 35 in the office, he considered it appropriate for the post to be ranked at D7 level. In reply, SCA stressed that the level of responsibility of the post justified its ranking at D8 level. He further clarified that the scope of liaison responsibilities of the Beijing Office and the Constitutional Affairs Bureau was different, and that the latter's scope in this respect was relatively confined. Mr IP however maintained his objection to the proposed ranking.

45. In response to a member on whether a review would be undertaken on the functions of the Beijing Office, SCA advised that such a review would be conducted in one or two years time after its operation. At the Chairman's suggestion, SCA confirmed that the review would be conducted 18 months after the opening of the office.

46. Referring to the proposed rates of rent allowance for Hong Kong-based staff in the Beijing Office, a member commented that the rates seemed high and enquired about the rental for residential units in Beijing and the sizes concerned. SCA said in reply that detailed information was not in hand. He estimated that rental should be in the region of US\$20 to \$40 per square metre for offices, and HK\$250 to \$300 for residential units. SCA advised that to enable the Beijing Office to be set up as soon as possible, the Administration would initially rent suitable office premises in a commercial building. In the long term, the Administration would consider to construct a permanent office building for the Beijing Office. As regards remuneration for local personnel of the Beijing Office, SCA said that reference was made to information obtained from the Foreign Enterprise Service Corporation. As the Beijing Office was not a foreign enterprise, the Beijing Office was not bound to secure the service of local personnel through the Corporation. That said, the Administration would consider the desirability of securing the service of local personnel through the Corporation having regard to operational requirements.

47. The Chairman put the paper to vote. Mr IP Kwok-him stated his objection to the paper. The Committee approved the proposal.

48. The Committee was adjourned at 5:40 pm.