

香港特別行政區立法會公共事務委員會
有關公務員改革之陳述
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引言：改革之需要

公眾對香港公務員改革之渴求是十分清晰的。在海外，公務員管理之實行遠較本地的優勝。全球化及國際間競爭的壓力是公共範籌所難於幸免的。香港的競爭力部分是建基於其公營部門的能力，而公營部門以公務員為核心；然政府亦了解這項挑戰。

公務員當中的問題已是由來已久，並非由1997年7月1日才出現，只是在經濟旺盛時我們把大部分的問題遺忘了。但在亞洲經濟危機下這些問題被放大了；負增長，通縮，高失業率等既對社會造成衝擊外，更把問題嚴峻地凸顯出來。

這些問題可分為幾類。第一，政界領袖表現懦弱及缺乏策略性視野：一貫以來他們都是反應極快，但缺乏前瞻性。某程度上這是由於香港的政界領袖由業餘政客擔任，而他們則沒有廣泛地被賴以政治訴求。

第二，政府制訂政策的能力並非真的那麼大。在預見問題及協調跨部門的政策均乏力的情況下，問題更是表露無遺。這些由來已久的問題在八十年代中葉已曾被提出過：例如最近的居港權爭論已於約十年前在一些非政府界介別中提及過；而環保問題亦如是。

第三，政策之落實往往缺乏協調；而那些負責落實之官員間中亦看不見藍圖。縱是看見藍圖的官員也不能或不願將其所看見的藍圖授予下屬；禽流感事件中官員缺乏協調，和最近市政及區域市政署之紀律問題便是二例。

第四，雖然在前線公務員文化轉變上已有一定成果，但其他公務員有時仍當自家是老闆。除了在營運基金部門外，改革似乎鮮有觸及部分部門黑箱作業的問題。

公務員事務局的諮詢文件中只提及公務員改革之部分問題，可見其所指之改革實在相當有限。

改革目標

改革之目標應在於改善公營部門之效率及成效。然而，要達此目的，我們需要比諮詢文件中所提較多的改革。

第一，我們需要一更清晰的策略性視野以使香港配合中國，東南亞以及世界的環境。我們亦需要一群有決心，有認受性的政治領袖來結合社群力量去實現這目標。此等需要我們在政治制度上作改革，而直選行政長官則尤為重要。

第二，我們需要徹底檢討政府在社會之角色—政府應該做甚麼？一般來說，政府所提供的服務應為私營部門所不能提供的（如不少市場監管功能，推行法律，防火等），或是一些必要但私營部門不願提供的服務。縱使我們可審慎地以小政府自豪，但何以還僱用那些網球教練及博物館館長？從現在房屋管理私營化可見政府仍有減肥空間，而且既可行，又可取。此舉可將更多原屬政府所辦的活動引入市場競爭。然而，政府必須確保：市民可得到高質素的服務，私營化及外判之服務受到嚴格監管，以及公務員自家要明白及接受這些政策。

第三，政界對香港市民的問責與公務員的行政監管仍見不足。原因之一是在這不民主的政制下，有大部分立法會的議席是留予一些特定的利益集團；另一原因則是為恐不穩而導致不願破斧沉舟地進行改革的傾向十分普遍。一支政治問責的公務員隊伍是較有成效的；而政治問責程度可通過普選立法會及實行部長制來提高。至於監管方面則可對政府部門作定期而頻密之審計來加強。

第四，我們可以通過改革政務級官員來改善政府制訂及施行政策的能力。政府尤可考慮在級內成立專才編制及延長轉職間之時間的可能性。有改革建議直接從私營部門招聘更多高級職員，這實屬百分百洽當。

公務員改革某程度上是由私營部門運作引發過來的：這是非常自然的，尤其是當公務員是在市場經濟原則下運作。政府管理層亦應以開放眼光去明白人力資源最佳的運用方法。

可是，我們要留心私營部門也可是人力資源運用最差勁的地方：這包括重親主義及憑藉個人關係而登上仕途，皆因其運作包括機密，專制及單向的人事決策。故此，我完全認同財政司司長所指的在公務員改革中我們必須顧及到公共服務的特質。正因為公務賴以公帑，所以它必須要問責，開放及具足夠透明度；而這種特殊性是我們不可忘記的。又因為它提供了大量必要性而對我們生活有看重大影響性的服務，故此它必須由盡忠及有公共使命的人組成，而他們亦必須受到嚴格監管。

公務員改革

一般來講，我大力支持政府所建議的公務員改革。諮詢文件內載述了不少很正面的元素，包括以下各項：

（甲）合約一易入易出。政府建議使公務員體制的進出更簡易化。建議提及成立一較細小而永久的編制，當中只包含真正表現優良者。政府將可從各階層聘請有能者入行，而並不只限於現時所定的「入職層」－這只會使公務員改善表現。另外，他們在去留時可攜同所得之利益，繼而促進人力流動。

（乙）薪酬。政府沒有建議改變薪酬之基本原則，即是以足夠金額來吸引和留任員工，及提供足夠誘因使有關員工完成其工作。我非常欣賞這項決定，因為這正是決定公務員薪酬的最基本原則。但或許公務員薪酬過高意味著當中沒有職位空缺，故我們應該審慎地把其薪酬與市價看齊。

政府所建議的薪酬與表現掛鉤引來試驗其彈性的需要，但這完全是洽當的。在以個人為本的薪酬與表現掛鉤有問題的情況下，政府必須對

此非常謹慎。我會建議政府考慮一些以項目及部門為本的薪酬掛鉤類別，營運基金便是一典型的例子，因其表現較易量度。各員工某部分的薪酬可跟整體項目或部門的表現掛鉤，當中所掛鉤部分的工作表現須要是可被清楚量度的。再者，政府步向「全支薪」的概念，即盡可能把獎勵兌現，實是非常洽當。

（丙）紀律。很明顯，我們有需要改善部分公務員的紀律及建立歸屬感。在瞬息萬變的時代裏，這任務將會是艱巨的；尤其是不單止要改變前線官員，而更要改變整個公務員的文化，這是萬分重要的。當然，明確的目標是非常重要的，但更重要的是對公務員活動加強審計，並給予公務員諮詢及抱怨的渠道。

（丁）管理表現。我非常欣賞政府對表現評估程序所作的改善，可是，政府必須分開決定個人評估之過程（如「傑出」，「超卓」，「滿意」等）及決定個人等級之過程（最高 10%，其次 20%等）。以強迫選擇及小組檢閱之實驗是完全可取的，而當中機制所提供的「360 度反饋」（反饋來自同事，下屬，客人及上司）不應與薪酬掛鉤，但可考慮與表現掛鉤；而隊制，團體及項目表現之評估則應予以重視。

結論：改革的陷阱

在政府考慮改革之際，還應留意以下事項。

第一，政府在改革中應採納一策略性視野，避免「短視主義」。諮詢文件當中的部分建議，如側重倚靠定期合約員工等在經濟衰退情況下或許會適合。當經濟復甦時，政府能否奪得優秀人才？當然，這點不應對改革有所影響。我們必須要注意到對整個公務員體系所作的微調是個連續的過程；政府應有足夠的彈性去預期當中的轉變，並在有需要時予以實行。但迄今為止，這種彈性仍未曾在公務員管理層出現過。

第二，政府應考慮公共服務終身制到底有多重要。聘請終身制公務員有明顯的好處：例如員工有更多經驗，須知經驗是很重要的。過多永久及長俸制公務員或已使討論變得越軌，但我們應在官員之豐富經驗及私營部門的創新元素兩者對社會之需要中取一平衡。

第三，政府應考慮其投入公共服務之價值。在瞬息萬變時代下建立承諾絕非易事，因此政府有需要諮詢及與公眾一同建立共識。當然我亦明白到政府已在這點上幹著。

最後，當政府考慮公務員改革時它應以宏觀藍圖為本。如我們果真想改善政府之成效，那麼憲制及政制便有改變的必要，但這已是我們討論範圍以外的事了。

There are glitches in performance-based wage schemes, says John Burns

The paying game

IN the wake of the Asian financial crisis and Hong Kong's poor economic performance, it is not surprising the public holds the Government and, in particular, the civil service, responsible.

Perhaps the most serious of the criticisms levelled against the civil service is that neither Hong Kong's economic condition nor the performance of the civil service warrant the high levels of pay it currently enjoys.

Among solutions being proposed by the Government for re-aligning the salaries of Hong Kong's 189,000 civil servants is the adoption of performance-based pay.

It is an intuitively appealing concept. We all believe employees should be rewarded according to their contribution. Studies overseas indicate civil servants also subscribe to these values. And performance-based pay is the norm in the private sector.

Australia and the United States have adopted performance-based pay schemes in the form of bonuses: in Australia, senior executives receive bonuses of between five and 20 per cent of base pay, and some US state governments offer up to seven per cent of base pay.

Yet these experiments have not been successful. According to an evaluation of the Australian experience by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), "it cannot be stated with any confidence that performance pay has had any impact on the effectiveness of public sector agencies in Victoria [where the scheme has been implemented since 1982]".

In the US, an independent assessment concluded: "There is very little in the record ... to suggest it has

been a success." OECD studies of the attitudes of civil servants towards the schemes paint a similarly gloomy picture.

According to a 1994-95 survey of 965 middle level and senior civil service managers in 11 agencies in Australia, Denmark, Ireland, Britain and the US, "a majority ... believed performance-related pay schemes in their agency were generally ineffective in that they were not easy to understand, were not generally accepted by managers, and there was not a clear link between performance pay awards and the performance achievements of managers". Most managers reported they were not motivated by the prospect of receiving a performance award and they felt these were distributed unfairly and inequitably in their agency.

Why have the results been so poor? First, there are serious problems with public-sector performance assessments that no country has been able to overcome. Standards and evaluation criteria for many civil service jobs are vague and unquantifiable, especially for managerial work. Subjective assessments are common.

Second, for performance-based pay to motivate, managers must perceive that performance and pay are linked. That they do not, even where such schemes have been implemented for relatively long periods of time, is in part the result of budget constraints.

In Australia and the US, due to budget deficits and legislative budget-cutting, allocations for bonuses were often too small to motivate. Where merit pay budgets were fixed and one employee's gain was another's loss,

pay for performance schemes were found to be demotivating. Moreover, in these cases in practice very few managers had their pay decreased as a result of poor performance.

Third, because performance-based pay schemes usually isolate individual contribution they may demotivate if employees believe they have been unfairly denied a bonus.

Quite rightly, government officials have been cautious about the adoption of performance-based pay. Financial Secretary Donald Tsang Yam-kuen has made it clear that only if the current performance-appraisal system can be appropriately reformed will performance-based pay be considered in the longer term, while "we must not lose sight of the unique job nature of much of the civil service". A further implication of his statement is that such schemes may be appropriate for some grades and departments of the service, but not for others.

THE Hong Kong Government's performance-assessment system currently suffers from a variety of weaknesses. Overgrading is so serious in some departments, Public Services Commission head Haider Barma revealed recently that 60 to 70 per cent of staff receive the highest ratings. The system, then, is not able to discriminate effectively between satisfactory and outstanding performances.

The civil service reform consultative document released on March 8 proposes to strengthen the performance-appraisal system by relying on assessment panels rather than individual supervisors to grade staff. Removing the one-on-one nature of

current assessments should improve the grading.

The consultative document also recommends a forced choice method that would require the assessment panel to grade a certain percentage as "outstanding", a certain percentage as "very good" and so forth. But morale could suffer if the assessments were perceived to be unfair, or if the same people year after year repeatedly received "outstanding" bonuses. A probable result of such a system would be an informal agreement to rotate the "outstanding" grades (and thus the bonuses) among members of a larger group, as is common in some agencies of the US federal government. Such a practice, however, defeats the purpose of performance-based pay.

The Government's intention to move towards a "total remuneration concept" that encashes all benefits is entirely appropriate. Flexibility and experimentation are called for to determine the appropriate levels of benefit sufficient to attract and retain suitable staff.

In the longer term, the Government must consider additional policies that limit the size of the permanent civil service, such as contracting out or the privatisation of some tasks. But the Government must improve its ability to manage contracts and strengthen accountability over quasi-public bodies to ensure the public's interests are protected.

Still, a core civil service must be maintained that performs efficiently and that is managed effectively.

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