

The Honourable Tam Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Chairman, Legislative Council Panel
on Public Service
c/o Legislative Council Secretariat,
8 Jackson Road, Central
Hong Kong.

18 March 2000

Dear Mr. Tam,

**Update on Civil Service Reform
Panel Paper compiled by
Civil Service Bureau**

We refer to the paper prepared by the Secretary for the Civil Service entitled “Update on Civil Service Reform” for consideration by your Panel at the meeting scheduled on Monday, 20 March 2000. We wish to bring to your attention that the contents and presentation made in this paper do not sufficiently reflect the latest position and developments of the various issues arising under the Administration’s promulgated Civil Service Reform initiatives. As a consequence, we feel obliged to invite you and your Panel Members to take note of our elaborations, as given below, which we believe will be useful for your better understanding of the current situation on the issues in question :-

(a) Appointment of new recruits (paragraphs 6-8)

The proposed employment of recruits on three years probationary terms

to be followed by agreement terms for another three years is strongly objected to by the Senior Civil Service Council (SCSC) Staff Side and all the other Staff Side representatives sitting on the Working Group on the Entry System. So far, there has not been any agreement on the Administration's unilateral decision to take forward this contentious mode of recruitment. Indeed, the Staff Side is strongly of the view that a three year probationary period should be more than adequate for assessing a recruit's competence in a post and determining his/her suitability for permanent appointment in the Civil Service. The proposed three year " further assessment period " is unnecessary and counterproductive to the recruits' morale and commitment to the Civil Service.

(b) Civil Service Provident Fund Scheme (CSPFS) (paragraphs 14-16)

The Staff Side has proposed to the Secretary for the Civil Service that consideration should be given to exploring other types of retirement protection schemes for new recruits, such as a modified pension scheme. However, we regret to report that nothing about our proposal is mentioned in this paper. It seems to us that the Administration has chosen to listen no other views.

C) Disciplinary Mechanism (paragraphs 17-18)

Notwithstanding the Staff Side's general support to the proposed measures for enhancing efficiency to the existing disciplinary mechanism, we are very much annoyed by the Administration's deliberate tactic of bypassing the Staff Sides and the cross-service Associations in the finalization of details concerning the revised mechanism. Since the last Working Group meeting held on 30 November 1999, there has been no further meeting to round off progress and finalize the detailed arrangements. All of a sudden, on 10 March 2000, the Secretary for the Civil Service notified the Staff Side that the revised mechanism had already been endorsed by the Executive Council and the package was gazetted the same day and the implementation date was set on 17 April 2000. This approach has obviously deviated from the normal *modus operandi* of the Central Staff Consultative Machinery and has adversely affected the good spirit of genuine staff consultation.

(d) Management-initiated retirement (paragraphs 22-24)

At the 1st Working Group meeting on Exit Arrangements held on 23 November 1999, all Staff Side representatives strongly objected to the need to introduce management-initiated retirement (MIR). We

believe it would be subject to instances of unreasonable and unfair dismissal of civil servants who are innocent of any misdeeds which would normally require termination of their service. However, in paragraph 23 of the paper, it is mentioned that the Administration is convinced of the necessity for introducing MIR. This pre-determined position has again bypassed the usual step of conducting prior staff consultation.

(e) Staff Side's other views neglected

The update paper also neglects the Staff Side's reservation/rejection on other issues, such as review of starting salaries, review of job-related allowances, parity between the civilian and disciplined civil servants, the proposed fringe benefits package for recruits and the performance management and performance-based reward system.

Yours sincerely,

(Ms. Cecilia SO Chui-kuen)
Staff Side Chairman
Senior Civil Service Council