

**Response to concerns raised by
Members of the Legislative Council Panel on Public Service
at the meeting on 16 January 2006 on
the proposal to create one directorate post to provide support to
the expanded Commission on Strategic Development (CSD)**

We have reviewed our proposal in the light of members' observations.

In respect of (a) (i) -

- (a) we are already planning to increase non-directorate posts to support the expanded CSD, as explained in para. 11 of paper LC Paper No. CB(1)675/05-06(05);
- (b) we consider that the additional non-directorate posts alone will not be sufficient to cope with the new workload;
- (c) in view of the additional workload after CSD's expansion and the setting up of its four committees, the new D2 post proposed is needed to maintain the quality of support rendered to the CSD. For instance, the incumbent of the post will have to oversee additional research or studies commissioned by the CSD and to monitor their progress. Moreover, in view of the breadth of strategic issues deliberated by the expanded CSD, we need an additional directorate officer at D2 level to co-ordinate and liaise with relevant parties in preparing discussion papers and reports for the CSD. These tasks require a high level of analytical and intellectual capability;
- (d) the CSD involves a wide spectrum of community participation. Its work is important and deserves a level of support commensurate with its mission. The incumbent of the D2 post should be able to coordinate the input of various organisations both within and outside the Government in a systematic and timely manner;
- (e) we consider that a total of three directorate posts to service four separate committees of over 40 members each, meeting bimonthly in full session plus other working groups to be a modest provision. This assessment has regard for the respective terms of reference and in the light of experience with the first and second rounds of meetings.

In respect of (a) (ii) -

The expanded CSD is a Government initiative to address strategic issues, the need for which is widely recognised. It is a standing policy for appointments to Government advisory bodies to be made on a time-limited basis. Given the strategic and long-range nature of the issues addressed by the expanded CSD, it is necessary to provide proper secretariat support to the CSD by creating the proposed additional D2 post to handle the additional workload. Under normal circumstances, we will provide permanent posts for consultative bodies. This is crucial in providing continuity in the work of the CSD, notwithstanding possible changes in its membership in future. We accept, of course, that staff resource must be monitored carefully to match the task at hand and we undertake to review staffing needs if the nature of the work of the CSD changes in any significant manner in the future.

In respect of (b) -

For the reasons given, we propose no change to the staffing proposal.

Central Policy Unit
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