

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(1)1499/07-08
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB1/PL/PS/1

Panel on Public Service

**Minutes of meeting held on
Monday, 21 April 2008, at 10:45 am
in Conference Room A of the Legislative Council Building**

Members present : Hon Howard YOUNG, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon LI Fung-ying, BBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan
Hon Margaret NG
Hon James TO Kun-sun
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon KWONG Chi-kin

Member absent : Hon Mrs Sophie LEUNG LAU Yau-fun, GBS, JP

**Public officers
attending** : **Agenda item IV**

Miss Denise YUE, GBS, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Andrew H Y WONG, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Mrs Sarah KWOK, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1

Agenda item V

Miss Denise YUE, GBS, JP
Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr Andrew H Y WONG, JP
Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service

Mr K S SO, JP
Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 2

Deputations

Environmental Hygiene, Leisure and Cultural Services Staff Association

Mr WONG Wah-hing
Representative

Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council (Staff Side)

Mr CHAN Hin-cheong
Chairman

Mr LEUNG Tat-wah
Vice Chairman

Hong Kong Federation of Civil Service Unions

Mr LEUNG Chau-ting
Chairman

Government Mod 1 Staff General Union

Mr IP Yum-tak
Chairman

Hong Kong Civil Servants General Union Negotiation Committee

Mr CHUNG Tak-cheung
Chairman

Government Employees Association

Mr WONG Chit-man
General Secretary

Miss CHAN Sin-ming
Assistant General Secretary

Clerk in attendance : Mr Andy LAU

Chief Council Secretary (1)2

Staff in attendance : Mr Noel SUNG
Senior Council Secretary (1)4

Miss Winnie CHENG
Legislative Assistant (1)5

Action

I Confirmation of minutes of meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1239/07-08 — Minutes of meeting on
11 March 2008)

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 March 2008 were confirmed.

II Information papers issued since last meeting

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1086/07-08(01) — Letter from staff sides of Police
Force Council dated 20 February
2008 to Secretary for the Civil
Service (SCS) regarding provision
of medical and dental care to police
officers

LC Paper No. CB(1)1086/07-08(02) — Reply from SCS dated 13 March
2008 to staff sides of Police Force
Council regarding provision of
medical and dental care to police
officers

LC Paper No. CB(1)1088/07-08(01) — Submission from the staff sides of
Police Force Council dated 3 March
2008 regarding the grade structure
review

LC Paper No. CB(1)1152/07-08(01) — Submission from the staff sides of
the Police Force Council dated 18
March 2008 regarding the grade
structure review for the Hong Kong
Police Force

LC Paper No. CB(1)1152/07-08(02) — Reply dated 26 March 2008 from
the Secretary General of the Joint
Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies
on Civil Service and Judicial
Salaries and Conditions of Service)

2. Members noted the information papers issued since last meeting.

III Items for discussion at the next meeting scheduled for 19 May 2008

Action

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1129/07-08(01) — List of outstanding items for discussion

LC Paper No. CB(1)1129/07-08(02) — List of follow-up actions)

3. Members agreed that the following items should be discussed at the Panel meeting scheduled for 19 May 2008 –

(a) Application of the no double benefits rule to civil service housing allowances; and

(b) Medical benefits for existing and retired civil servants.

4. Members suggested that, subject to the Administration's view, the item "Updated overview of civil service conduct and discipline", which was originally scheduled for discussion at this meeting, might also be included in the agenda for the meeting in May 2008.

(Post-meeting note: The Administration advised that it would provide a paper on "Updated overview of civil service conduct and discipline" to the Panel in June 2008.)

IV Incorporation of Basic Law assessment into civil service recruitment

(LC Paper No. CB(1)1129/07-08(03) — Administration's paper on incorporation of Basic Law assessment into civil service recruitment

LC Paper No. CB(1)1243/07-08 — Paper on incorporation of Basic Law assessment into civil service recruitment prepared by the Legislative Council Secretariat (Background brief))

Briefing by the Administration

5. The Secretary for the Civil Service (SCS) apprised the meeting on the incorporation of Basic Law (BL) assessment into civil service recruitment, by highlighting the salient points in the paper.

6. The Deputy Chairman was concerned that the BL test results would be taken into account if two candidates were considered equal in all other aspects, which meant that the BL test results still had a bearing on the outcome of a recruitment exercise. The Deputy Chairman opined that for civil service jobs requiring academic qualifications below Form 5 level, candidates should not be compelled to study BL in detail in order to be successful in a recruitment exercise.

Action

7. SCS responded that only when two candidates were considered equal in all other aspects, including their academic qualifications and performance during recruitment interview, would the result of the BL test be taken into consideration in a recruitment exercise for civil service jobs requiring academic qualifications below Form 5 level. For instance, if candidate A outperformed candidate B in all other assessments, except in the BL test, candidate A instead of candidate B would be selected for appointment.

8. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan opined that in order to enhance civil servants' understanding of BL, the best way was to provide more training on BL to the civil servants rather than set a test on BL during the recruitment process. Referring to paragraph 2 of the paper which stated that "(BL) test result will not affect a candidate's eligibility for applying for a civil service job", Mr LEE asked whether the results of the BL test had a bearing on the selection of candidates for appointment, and the exact weighting of the BL test result on the overall assessment. He opined that a fixed weighting could be set for different posts, such as Engineers.

9. SCS responded that the entry requirements for a civil service post included, inter alia, academic qualification, e.g. degree or Primary 6 level, and relevant working experience. A candidate who did not meet the entry requirements would not be eligible for applying for the relevant civil service post. For civil service jobs requiring academic qualifications below Form 5 level, candidates would be tested on their BL knowledge through one or two oral questions during recruitment interviews. If a candidate was considered suitable for appointment in all aspects even though he scored no mark in the BL oral questions, the candidate would still be selected for appointment. For civil service jobs with BL assessment conducted through written tests, i.e. jobs requiring academic qualifications at Form 5 level or above, the BL test result of a candidate would be assigned an appropriate weighting not exceeding 10% of the overall assessment of the candidate. A review of the weighting would be conducted after the assessment had been implemented for, say, one year. For other civil service jobs, the result of BL assessment would be taken into account only if two candidates were considered equal in all other aspects.

10. While supporting the incorporation of a BL test in civil service recruitment, especially for senior officers, Mr KWONG Chi-kin expressed concern about the form of the BL test, i.e. through multiple choice questions, as it could not effectively test the BL knowledge of a particular candidate. Mr KWONG was of the view that the test could take the form of true or false questions or short questions. He pointed out that in a recent surprise mock test of BL knowledge conducted by the mass media, he and another Senior Counsel could only give correct answers on three out of five questions as they were asked a specific numeric figure in the relevant provision of BL.

11. SCS concurred with Mr KWONG's view that the aim of the BL test was to enhance civil servants' understanding of BL rather than serve as a barrier for candidates applying for civil service jobs. Multiple choice questions would be set

Action

bearing in mind that candidates would not be expected to know the minute details of BL.

12. Mr TAM Yiu-chung supported the inclusion of a BL test in the civil service recruitment process to promote understanding of BL. He opined that questions on basic principles rather than detailed figures would be more appropriate for the test. Mock questions could also be made available to facilitate candidates in preparing for the BL test.

13. SCS replied that some mock questions and answers had been put on the Government website for general information and more would be uploaded later.

14. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong opined that the incorporation of a BL test for recruitment of the middle and low rank civil servants was only a political gesture. If too much weighting was put on the result of the BL test, the best candidates might not be selected for appointment. Based on the mock questions and answers provided by the Government, the test seemed to be put in place purely for the sake of examination, and would only encourage candidates to recite BL. For senior civil servants whose duties mainly involved political considerations, candidates should be tested on the spirit and application of BL. Mr CHEUNG was of the view that for the middle and junior rank posts, e.g. gardeners and life guards, there was no need to test the BL knowledge of applicants. He asked whether the Government would waive the BL test for candidates of such posts.

15. SCS responded that no weighting would be given to the outcome of BL assessment for recruitment in respect of civil service jobs requiring academic qualifications below Form 5 level. The incorporation of BL assessment into civil service recruitment was one of the measures to promote Hong Kong people's understanding of BL. The main consideration for assessing suitability for appointment to civil service posts remained a candidate's qualifications, experience and caliber. For civil service jobs with BL assessment conducted through written tests, the BL test result of a candidate would be assigned an appropriate weighting not exceeding 10% of the overall assessment of the candidate. Under the existing arrangements, candidates for posts such as Administrative Officer were already required to answer questions relating to the spirit and application of BL.

16. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was of the view that the BL assessment for candidates applying for the junior rank posts was unnecessary, as the test would put undue pressure on candidates. He pointed out that two candidates might be equal in all aspects, including the BL test results.

17. SCS reiterated that the aim of the BL assessment was to promote an understanding of BL among the people of Hong Kong, and any assessment would inevitably bring about pressure on the candidates. The qualification, experience and technical skills would still be the main consideration for selection of candidates for civil service posts.

Action

V Status of Model Scale 1 staff

- (LC Paper No. CB(1)1129/07-08(04) — Administration's paper on status of Model Scale 1 staff
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1241/07-08(01) — Submission from Environmental Hygiene, Leisure and Cultural Services Staff Association
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1296/07-08(01) — Submission from Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council (Staff Side)
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1305/07-08(01) — Submission from Hong Kong Civil Servants General Union Negotiation Committee
- LC Paper No. CB(1)1305/07-08(02) — Submission from Government Employees Association)

18. A submission from the Federation of Hong Kong & Kowloon Labour Unions was tabled at the meeting and circulated to members after the meeting vide LC Paper No. CB(1)1336/07-08(01) on 22 April 2008.

Briefing by the Administration

19. SCS briefed members of the Administration's proposal to allow serving Model Scale 1 (MOD 1) staff to opt to become Category A officers, with improvement in leave accumulation limit; and to grant the same status to new recruits to the MOD 1 grades.

Presentation of views by civil service staff associations

20. The Chairman welcomed representatives of the civil service staff associations to the meeting. He reminded the representatives that when addressing the Panel, they would not be covered by the protection and immunity provided under the Legislative Council (Power and Privileges) Ordinance (Cap. 382), and their papers or written submissions would also not be covered by the Ordinance.

Environmental Hygiene, Leisure and Cultural Services Staff Association

21. Mr WONG Wah-hing, representative of Environmental Hygiene, Leisure and Cultural Services Staff Association, stated that the Association would not accept the conversion proposal if the Government did not offer MOD 1 staff the benefits enjoyed by Category A officers, including annual leave of 31 days, Overseas Education Allowance (OEA), etc. He said that the Government had not fully consulted the staff concerned and many MOD 1 staff were not aware of the conversion proposal until they were informed by the Administration. He also pointed out that the staff were worried about the proposed inter-departmental posting condition. He requested that the

Action

Administration should conduct a comprehensive staff consultation exercise again before deciding on whether to take forward the conversion proposal.

Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council (Staff Side)

22. Mr CHAN Hin-cheong, Chairman of the Model Scale 1 Staff Consultative Council (Staff Side) (MOD 1 SCC), said that the Staff Side of MOD 1 SCC had requested for conversion to Category A status for many years. Whilst the conversion proposal might not satisfy the requests of all serving MOD 1 staff, it enabled them to have a choice to switch to Category A status so that they could have greater security in employment, better safeguard in terms of disciplinary and related procedures, more favourable arrangements upon in-service appointment to another grade, an increase in the leave accumulation limit, etc. The management had also undertaken that the arrangement for inter-departmental posting would only be made with due regard to the work experience and skills of the staff concerned. To provide a clearer picture to the 160 odd MOD 1 staff who were appointed on the Old Pension Scheme, they would be given details of their respective pension entitlement under Category A or Category B status to facilitate their decision. Mr CHAN requested the Panel to support the conversion proposal to facilitate its early implementation.

Hong Kong Federation of Civil Service Unions

23. Mr LEUNG Chau-ting, Chairman of the Hong Kong Federation of Civil Service Unions stated that the Federation had not been consulted on the conversion proposal and was not aware of the proposal until members in the MOD 1 grades were informed by the management. Mr LEUNG pointed out that since most MOD 1 staff had already worked in the civil service for more than 20 years, they should not have to worry about their status as long term civil servants. The conversion proposal did not bring about much additional benefits to MOD 1 staff. Mr LEUNG opined that the inter-departmental posting arrangements would only facilitate the Government to outsource its services and MOD 1 staff might be compelled to take up any posts/duties in different departments. Further, he pointed out that back in 1989 when the Artisan Grade amongst the then MOD 1 grades was converted from Category B to Category A status and was put under the Master Pay Scale, the Government had undertaken to re-grade all MOD 1 staff in the same manner. Mr LEUNG said that MOD 1 staff in the civil service had been labelled as the most junior civil servants. As such, it had all along been the desire of MOD 1 staff to have their status changed so as to uphold their dignity. The Government should offer a good package for MOD 1 staff to switch to Category A status, and put all MOD 1 staff under the Master Pay Scale.

Government MOD 1 Staff General Union

24. Mr IP Yum-tak, Chairman of the Government MOD 1 Staff General Union, said that MOD 1 staff had previously requested that a leave entitlement of 31 days per

Action

annum should be granted to them or they would not agree to the change of status. Mr IP pointed out that MOD 1 staff expressed grave concern about the inter-departmental posting arrangement as they had worked in their respective departments for many years, and might not be able to undertake the new duties and adapt to the new working environment in another department. Mr IP said that the Union would not accept the present conversion proposal and the Government should consult the MOD 1 staff again on the proposed change of status.

Hong Kong Civil Servants General Union Negotiation Committee

25. Mr CHUNG Tak-cheung, Chairman of the Hong Kong Civil Servants General Union Negotiation Committee, said that although the current conversion proposal had not fully met their demands, with due respect to the decision of the Staff Side of MOD 1 SCC, the Union would not object to the proposal. The Union noted that MOD 1 staff would be given a free choice to opt for the change of status. The Union was most concerned that MOD 1 staff who opted to retain their Category B status should not be affected in one way or another and that their existing terms and conditions of service should remain unchanged.

Government Employees Association

26. Mr WONG Chit-man, General Secretary of Government Employees Association, said that MOD 1 staff were being discriminated in respect of their job security and job prospects. Measures should be taken to remove such discrimination.

Discussion

27. SCS gave a consolidated response to views expressed by the staff associations. She said that there was a well-established consultative machinery within the civil service, comprising the four Central Staff Consultative Councils, namely the MOD 1 SCC, the Senior Civil Service Council, the Police Force Council and the Disciplined Services Consultative Council. Service-wide issues concerning the terms and conditions of employment of civil servants were discussed at the Central Consultative Councils. In the present case, apart from consulting the Staff Side of the MOD 1 SCC, the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) took the initiative to issue a letter to individual MOD 1 staff which explained the details and implications of the conversion proposal. Departments which employed a large number of MOD 1 staff were also requested to organize seminars for the affected staff.

28. On the composition and representativeness of MOD 1 SCC, SCS said that MOD 1 SCC was established in 1982 to provide a channel of communication with MOD 1 staff. A civil service staff association, registered under the Trade Unions Ordinance, with a paid up membership of 1 000 or more serving MOD 1 staff would be provided with two seats in the MOD 1 SCC. For a staff association with a paid up membership of less than 1 000 serving MOD 1 staff, it could group with other staff associations. A group with a combined paid up membership of 1 000 or more serving

Action

MOD 1 staff could apply to join the MOD 1 SCC and would be given two seats. At present, there were eight constituent staff unions/associations on the Staff Side of the MOD 1 Council.

29. With regard to leave earning rates, SCS said that since 2000 civil servants appointed to the junior ranks, including those employed under the Master Pay Scale, were entitled to 14 days (for officers with less than 10 years' service) and 18 days' annual leave (for officers with 10 or more years' service), whereas the leave entitlements for MOD 1 staff appointed before 1999 were 14 days and 22 days respectively. Based on the findings of the Pay Level Survey in 2006, the leave entitlement of MOD 1 staff was still higher than that of their counterparts in the private sector performing similar jobs, hence there were no justifications to increase the leave entitlement of MOD 1 staff.

30. On education benefit, SCS said that from the very beginning, MOD 1 staff were entitled only to Local Education Allowance (LEA) but not OEA. MOD 1 staff would still be eligible for LEA no matter whether they chose to convert to Category A status or not. Since 1996, OEA had been withdrawn from the civil service, and it was unjustifiable to grant OEA to MOD 1 staff even if they chose to convert to Category A status.

31. SCS explained that MOD 1 staff who did not opt to change their status would not be subject to inter-departmental postings, but might still be re-deployed to other posts within their existing department. Officers who converted to Category A status and belonging to the MOD 1 common grades would be subject to inter-departmental postings, which, however, would only be arranged through CSB when there was a mismatch of manpower resources relating to MOD 1 common grades staff in different departments.

32. SCS said that implementation of the conversion proposal would be subject to the approval of the Legislative Council. MOD 1 staff would be given adequate time to opt for the change. If MOD 1 staff chose to retain the Category B status, their terms and conditions of service would remain unchanged.

33. SCS clarified that when Artisans were converted from Category B to Category A status in 1989, the Government had not undertaken to allow all other MOD 1 staff to change their status, and convert all MOD 1 posts to those under the Master Pay Scale. In fact, over the years the Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service (the Standing Commission) had discussed the relevant issues four times and concluded that the status quo should be maintained. When the Standing Commission was consulted on the current conversion proposal in February 2008, the Commission supported the proposal and maintained that the MOD 1 Staff Pay Scale should be retained. SCS pointed out that at present the civil service had eight to 10 different pay scales for various categories of staff, and the existence of such pay scales did not represent any discrimination or disrespect of any group(s) of civil servants.

Action

34. Mr WONG Kwok-hing commented that the Staff Side of MOD 1 SCC had demanded for the conversion of MOD 1 staff from Category B to Category A status for more than 20 years. Whilst the Staff Side had indicated acceptance of the conversion proposal, they continued to seek improvement to the leave benefits of MOD 1 staff who chose to convert to Category A status and remained concerned about the inter-departmental posting condition. Mr WONG enquired as to whether the Administration would accept the staff associations' views and modify the conversion proposal to meet the MOD 1 staff's demands. As some staff associations claimed that they were not aware of the conversion proposal, Mr WONG queried whether the Administration had done enough consultation to gauge the views of the affected staff.

35. SCS responded that the Government had consulted the Staff Side of MOD 1 SCC through the established consultative machinery. While fully understanding the demands from some MOD 1 staff, the Administration considered that there were no justifications to change the terms and conditions of services of MOD 1 staff since there was no major change to the duties and skills required of MOD 1 staff as a result of the conversion proposal. The Standing Commission also supported the Administration's views.

36. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan opined that the conversion proposal might become a fruitless exercise as MOD 1 staff would not benefit from the change of status, e.g. the enhanced leave accumulation limit would not mean that it would be easier for MOD 1 staff to take leave. Instead, MOD 1 staff who converted to Category A status would be subject to inter-departmental postings. In the end, most MOD 1 staff might choose not to opt for the change. Mr LEE pointed out that some MOD 1 staff suspected that the conversion proposal was to enable the Administration to control the posting of MOD 1 staff so as to facilitate outsourcing of services. Mr LEE opined that the extra effort taken by the Administration to inform the MOD 1 staff of the conversion proposal was not intended to seek the views of the MOD 1 staff on the conversion arrangements. In a genuine consultation exercise, the Administration should be ready to hear and accept the views of the staff.

37. SCS responded that the benefits brought about by the conversion proposal had been spelt out in paragraph 4 of the paper which were the outcome of many years of discussion with the Staff Side of MOD1 SCC. In the end, MOD 1 staff would be free to opt for the change if the conversion proposal was approved. SCS stressed that based on the existing staff consultation mechanism, the Government could submit the conversion proposal directly to the Legislative Council for consideration after an agreement had been reached with the Staff Side of MOD 1 SCC. However, CSB had taken the extra step of issuing a letter to each MOD 1 staff explaining the conversion proposal, and requiring relevant Heads of Departments to organize seminars to explain to the affected staff of the implications of the conversion proposal.

38. Ms LI Fung-ying commented that the MOD 1 staff should be allowed to opt for the Category A status without any interference from the management. She queried why the MOD 1 staff were not granted better conditions of service in the conversion exercise,

Action

given that in 1989, the Artisans who were allowed to change their status were offered improved terms and conditions of service. Ms LI pointed out that under the current proposal, MOD 1 staff who were on the Old Pension Scheme and opted for the new status would suffer a reduction in pension benefits. She asked whether the affected staff would be duly informed of the implications of the proposed change of status. Ms LI further asked whether, in the light of the concerns raised by the staff associations, the Administration would further discuss with MOD 1 staff regarding the conversion proposal.

39. SCS responded that subject to the passage of the relevant subsidiary legislation by the Legislative Council, MOD 1 staff would be free to opt without any interference from the management. Detailed calculations of the pension benefits of the 160 odd MOD 1 staff who were appointed on the Old Pension Scheme would be worked out and forwarded to the staff concerned upon approval of the conversion proposal. SCS reiterated that in 1989, the Artisans were allowed to change their status to Category A Officer as the Standing Commission had reviewed the duties and skills required for the Artisan rank and considered that its duties were commensurate with other basic ranks on the Master Pay Scale. As such, Artisans were granted Category A status with improved terms and conditions of service. On the other hand, the Standing Commission did not consider it justifiable to change the terms and conditions of service of the remaining MOD 1 grades in the current exercise.

40. Mr TAM Yiu-chung remarked that since 1985, the MOD 1 staff had demanded for conversion to Category A status, and the current proposal provided certain improvements to the conditions of service of MOD 1 staff, including the opportunity to revert to the original grade if they failed to complete their probation on transfer to another grade in the civil service. Mr TAM asked whether a longer time could be given for MOD 1 staff to consider the option for change of their status. Mr TAM expressed concern that the enhanced leave accumulation limit might lead to insufficient manpower to cope with the workload. The reduction in the number of MOD 1 staff would also have an impact on individual staff associations which might encounter difficulties in recruiting sufficient members to register as a constituent staff association on the Staff Side of MOD 1 SCC.

41. SCS responded that staff associations with less than 1 000 paid members could group themselves together. So long as the associations within a group had a combined membership of 1 000 or more MOD 1 staff, the Administration would accept its status as a constituent staff association on the Staff Side of MOD 1 SCC. At present, three of the eight constituent staff associations were formed under such an arrangement. Regarding the impact of the increase in leave accumulation limit on staff deployment, she said that it would be difficult to predict the pattern of staff taking leave after an increase of their leave accumulation limit. However, based on past experience, the proposed increase in leave accumulation limit should not affect the leave plan of staff significantly. SCS added that the Administration would further consult the Staff Side of MOD 1 SCC as to whether the proposed period of three months for MOD 1 staff to opt for the change was appropriate.

Action

42. Mr KWONG Chi-kin commented that the conversion proposal was supported by the Staff Side of MOD 1 SCC as it had brought about certain benefits to MOD 1 staff. With regard to the leave earning rate, MOD 1 staff should not be compared with the new recruits under the Master Pay Scale joining the civil service since 2000 as most of the MOD 1 staff had worked in the civil service for more than 10 years. As such, they should be entitled to 31 days annual leave similar to other Category A officers with 10 years or more service. Mr KWONG pointed out that many MOD 1 staff were worried that if they opted for Category A status, they would be subject to inter-departmental postings and might not adapt to the requirements of the new departments, which might lead to involuntary departure from the civil service. The staff were also worried that the posting arrangement was to facilitate the Government outsourcing its services.

43. SCS responded that the details of the inter-departmental postings arrangements had yet to be worked out pending the approval of the relevant subsidiary legislation by the Legislative Council.

44. Mr KWONG Chi-kin also called on the staff associations to assess whether there was a genuine need for OEA, given the financial commitment involved for the staff concerned in sending children abroad for education.

45. Mr CHEUNG Man-kwong remarked that based on the views expressed by the six staff associations attending the meeting, there were divergent views among the staff side on the conversion proposal put forward by the Administration. Whilst some asked for its early implementation, some had expressed concern about the negative impact of the proposal, particularly the inter-departmental posting arrangement. Under the circumstances, he asked whether the staff associations would consider conducting a universal poll among all MOD 1 staff on whether they supported or objected to the proposal so as to facilitate Members' consideration of the related subsidiary legislation.

46. Mr IP Yum-tak stated that the Government Mod 1 Staff General Union would support a universal poll among all MOD 1 staff regarding the conversion proposal. Mr LEUNG Chau-ting opined that the Government had not consulted MOD 1 staff not represented by the Staff Side of MOD 1 SCC. Mr CHAN Hin-Cheong stated that seminars on the conversion proposal had been organized for MOD 1 staff associations but some associations had not attended such meetings. Mr CHUNG Tak-cheung opined that the existing staff consultation mechanism should be followed in considering the conversion proposal; otherwise the universal poll would have profound implications on the established staff consultation system.

47. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was of the view that MOD 1 staff should be allowed to convert their status to Category A staff, without being subject to inter-departmental posting.

48. Mr WONG Kwok-hing requested the Administration to discuss with the staff associations on the conversion proposal again with a view to further improving the

Action

arrangements and removing any conflicts between the staff associations and the Administration. To address staff's concern about the inter-departmental posting arrangement, CSB should ensure that only when there was a mismatch of MOD 1 common grade staff, the Administration would consider implementing the posting arrangement.

49. SCS responded that the conversion proposal was worked out after careful consideration of all relevant factors and protracted consultation with the Staff Side of MOD 1 SCC, and the proposal was endorsed by the Standing Commission. As part of the conversion to Category A status, MOD 1 staff who opted for conversion would be subject to inter-departmental posting. An increase in the leave earning rate for MOD 1 staff was not acceptable given that their responsibilities and conditioned working hours had not been changed.

50. In response to the Chairman's enquiry regarding the timing for submission of the relevant subsidiary legislation to the Legislative Council, SCS replied that it would be introduced into the Legislative Council in May 2008.

VI Any Other Business

51. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 12:45 pm.

Council Business Division 1
Legislative Council Secretariat
16 May 2008