

**Legislative Council Panel on Constitutional Affairs**

**Appointment of Under Secretaries  
under the Political Appointment System**

**Purpose**

In response to the request put by certain Members at the panel meeting held on 16 November 2009, we have prepared this paper on the appointment of Under Secretaries under the Political Appointment System.

**Background**

2. The Government, after public consultation, issued the Report on Further Development of the Political Appointment System in October 2007 setting out the way forward on the creation of two additional layers of politically appointed officials, namely Under Secretaries and Political Assistants.

3. The Government has clearly indicated in the Report that people with political party, academic, professional, business, civil service and other backgrounds can serve in the new political positions, so as to enrich and broaden the opportunities for political participation.

4. The LegCo Finance Committee approved in December 2007 the creation of 24 additional politically appointed positions (comprising 11 Under Secretary positions and 13 Political Assistant positions). The Government announced in May 2008 the appointment of eight Under Secretaries and nine Political Assistants. (One of the Under Secretaries took up the position of the Director of the Chief Executive's Office with effect from 1 August 2009.)

5. Regarding the outstanding positions, the Government's consistent position is that such positions will be filled as and when there are suitable candidates. If necessary, this could be done in phases.

## **Appointment of two new Under Secretaries**

6. The Government announced on 22 October 2009 the appointment of two new Under Secretaries under the Political Appointment System. With effect from 1 November 2009, Mr Lai Tung-kwok has assumed the position of Under Secretary for Security, and Miss Adeline Wong has assumed the position of Under Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs. When announcing the appointment, the Government arranged for the newly-appointed Under Secretaries to meet with the media and made public their remuneration.

7. In response to the concerns raised by a Member in his letter of 2 November 2009 addressed to the Panel Chairman and forwarded to the Government, we have made it clear that appointing individuals with civil service background is consistent with the design of the Political Appointment System. As a matter of fact, the Government has clearly indicated in the Report on Further Development of the Political Appointment System (see paragraph 3 above) that individuals with civil service background could be a source of candidates for the new political positions, though they will have to leave the civil service to assume these positions.

8. The Under Secretaries appointed by the Government in 2008 has already covered people from very different backgrounds, including academic, media and political party backgrounds. For the appointment of two Under Secretaries with civil servant backgrounds this time, we consider that it can enrich the experience possessed by the political team as a whole. In line with established practice, the appointment of these two Under Secretaries is made under the principle of meritocracy.

Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau  
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