

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Public Service

**Motion Passed under Agenda Item V
“Employment of Non-ethnic Chinese in the Civil Service”
at the Meeting on 26 February 2018**

At the meeting of the Legislative Council Panel on Public Service held on 26 February 2018, the following motion under Agenda Item V “Employment of Non-ethnic Chinese in the Civil Service” was passed:

“To promote racial integration and provide better services to people of different races in Hong Kong, this Panel urges the Government to set up for departments closely related to ethnic minorities some ratios in respect of employing non-ethnic Chinese with designated language competencies as holders of civil service posts.”

The Government’s response to the motion is as follows:

2. Appointment to the civil service is based on the principle of open and fair competition. All candidates in an open recruitment exercise are assessed on the basis of their ability, performance and character, and having regard to the stipulated entry requirements (including language proficiency) set according to the job requirements of the grade concerned. Race is not a relevant consideration in the selection process. All applicants for civil service jobs are required to meet the basic entry requirements of the relevant posts and to compete with each other on an equal basis so as to ensure that they are competent to perform their duties for maintaining the quality of public services.

3. Where the services of individual offices within a department have interface with non-ethnic Chinese (NEC), the department concerned would, if operationally required, employ people possessing knowledge in NEC languages and cultures for relevant jobs, so as to facilitate the provision of public services for these communities. For instance, in districts where there are contacts with NEC communities, the Police Force, Social Welfare Department and Labour Department have stipulated proficiency in specified NEC languages as one of the entry requirements for relevant positions so as to meet operational needs. Relevant details are set out in the discussion paper (LC Paper No. CB(4)627/17-

18(05)) submitted by this Bureau to the Panel. For these departments, it is impractical to prescribe a certain percentage of positions for employing NEC from the operational perspective. For example, if the Chinese language proficiency requirements (LPRs) are waived merely for the purpose of employing a prescribed percentage of NEC, not only might it be unfair to other job applicants competing in the process, but the Government's public services would also be affected since the employees concerned might not be able to communicate effectively with the general public.

4. We consider that ensuring equal opportunities in employment is more effective in promoting social integration than prescribing a percentage of positions for employing NEC. The Government, being the largest employer in Hong Kong, is a strong advocate for equal opportunities in employment. Noting that the Chinese LPRs of civil service grades could be a hurdle to job application by many NEC, bureaux/departments conduct reviews of LPRs of civil service grades from time to time. It is the Government's policy to ensure that the Chinese LPRs for all civil service grades are no more than necessary for performance of the job, so that NEC, like other applicants, have equal access to government job opportunities. In the Policy Address delivered last year, the Chief Executive mentioned that with a view to increasing government job opportunities for NEC, Civil Service Bureau would coordinate with departments to conduct a comprehensive review on the entry requirements relating to Chinese proficiency for all the grades of the civil service. The review has been completed. After review, 22 new grades will lower their Chinese LPRs, bringing the number of grades that have lowered/will lower their Chinese LPRs since 2010 to 53.

5. We consider that the above two-pronged approach, namely, departments employing NEC on operational needs and ensuring equal opportunities for NEC in their applications for civil service jobs, would provide NEC with more government job opportunities while upholding the quality of public services. We will continue to proceed along this direction.

Civil Service Bureau
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