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***Legislative Council***

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**Establishment Subcommittee of the Finance Committee**

**Minutes of the 16<sup>th</sup> meeting**  
**held in Conference Room 1 of Legislative Council Complex**  
**on Wednesday, 15 May 2019, at 8:30 am**

**Members present:**

Hon Mrs Regina IP LAU Suk-ye, GBS, JP (Chairman)  
Hon Holden CHOW Ho-ding (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon WONG Ting-kwong, GBS, JP  
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS, JP  
Hon Steven HO Chun-yin, BBS  
Hon WU Chi-wai, MH  
Hon YIU Si-wing, BBS  
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen  
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki  
Hon KWOK Wai-keung, JP  
Hon Christopher CHEUNG Wah-fung, SBS, JP  
Dr Hon Elizabeth QUAT, BBS, JP  
Hon Martin LIAO Cheung-kong, SBS, JP  
Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, SBS, JP  
Ir Dr Hon LO Wai-kwok, SBS, MH, JP  
Hon Alvin YEUNG  
Hon CHU Hoi-dick  
Hon HO Kai-ming  
Hon SHIU Ka-fai  
Hon YUNG Hoi-yan  
Dr Hon Pierre CHAN  
Hon CHAN Chun-ying, JP  
Hon Jeremy TAM Man-ho  
Hon AU Nok-hin  
Hon Vincent CHENG Wing-shun, MH  
Hon Tony TSE Wai-chuen, BBS

**Members absent:**

Hon James TO Kun-sun  
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung  
Hon IP Kin-yuen  
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan  
Hon SHIU Ka-chun

**Public Officers attending:**

Ms. Kinnie WONG Kit-yee	Deputy Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury (Treasury) 1 (Acting)
Mr Brian LO Sai-hung, JP	Deputy Secretary for the Civil Service 1
Mr Patrick NIP Tak-kuen	Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs
Mr Roy TANG Yun-kwong	Permanent Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs
Ms Maisie CHAN Kit-ling	Deputy Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (3)
Ms Queenie WONG Ting-chi	Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (6)
Mr Clement LEUNG Cheuk-man	Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Creative Industries)
Ms Julina CHAN Woon-yee	Deputy Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Creative Industries)
Mr LEUNG Ka-wing	Director of Broadcasting Radio Television Hong Kong
Mrs Sharon YIP LEE Hang-yee	Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Developments) Radio Television Hong Kong

**Clerk in attendance:**

Ms Connie SZETO	Chief Council Secretary (1)4
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**Staff in attendance:**

Mr Hugo CHIU	Senior Council Secretary (1)4
Ms Alice CHEUNG	Senior Legislative Assistant (1)1
Miss Yannes HO	Legislative Assistant (1)7
Ms Haley CHEUNG	Legislative Assistant (1)10

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The Chairman drew members' attention to the information paper ECI(2019-20)3, which set out the latest changes in the directorate establishment approved since 2002 and the changes to the directorate establishment in relation to the six items on the agenda. She then reminded members that in accordance with Rule 83A of the Rules of Procedure ("RoP"), they should disclose the nature of any direct or indirect pecuniary interest relating to the item under discussion at the meeting before they spoke on the item. She also drew members' attention to RoP 84 on voting in case of direct pecuniary interest.

**EC(2018-19)36      Proposed creation of two supernumerary posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade A (D6) and one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) and redeployment of two permanent posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) and one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau for four years with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee for the establishment of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Office to spearhead the efforts in taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development**

2.      The Chairman remarked that the staffing proposal was to create two supernumerary posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade A (D6) and one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) and redeployment of two permanent posts of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) and one Administrative Officer Staff Grade C (D2) in the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau for four years with immediate effect upon approval of the Finance Committee ("FC") for the establishment of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Office ("Greater Bay Area Development Office") to spearhead the efforts in taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development. She pointed out that

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discussion of the item was carried over from the meeting on 7 May 2019.

Impacts of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development on Hong Kong

3. Mr SHIU Ka-fai expressed support for this staffing proposal and the expeditious establishment of the Greater Bay Area Development Office. He pointed out that there were quite a number of successful cases of integrated development similar to the Greater Bay Area around the world (such as those in Japan and the United States). He opined that, through the Greater Bay Area Development, which would present a huge opportunity for the people of Hong Kong, the lives of the people of the three regions could be improved, and the economic development of the entire region could be enhanced. He urged the Administration to strive for policy measures that would be beneficial for Hong Kong people working, doing business and living in the municipalities of the Greater Bay Area.

4. Dr KWOK Ka-ki noted that the Greater Bay Area Development Office would be responsible for supporting the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region ("HKSAR") Government in taking part in the regularly-held plenary meetings and working meetings of the Leading Group chaired by Vice Premier of the State Council, Mr HAN Zheng ("the Leading Group"), which served as a top-tier body to take forward the Greater Bay Area Development. In this connection, he queried that the Greater Bay Area Development was a top-down political slogan and project proposed by the Central Government to lead ultimately to the disappearance of Hong Kong, and that the key responsibility of the Commissioner for the Development of the Greater Bay Area ("CGBA") was to carry out political missions. Furthermore, Dr KWOK enquired about how, in the face of the massive bureaucracy of the Mainland Government, CGBA would safeguard the rights and interests of Hong Kong people, particularly those of young people, in the course of taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development.

5. Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs ("SCMA") stressed that the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area ("the Outline Development Plan"), which provided guidance for the development of the Greater Bay Area covering the period from now to 2022 in the immediate term and extending to 2035 in the long term, involved a wide range of areas, covering such practical work as developing an international innovation and technology hub, expediting infrastructural connectivity, building a globally competitive modern industrial system, taking forward ecological conservation, developing a quality living circle for living, working and travelling, strengthening cooperation and jointly participating in the Belt and Road

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Initiative and jointly developing Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao cooperation platforms. It did not involve any political missions as mentioned by Dr KWOK. With concrete policy measures being rolled out and implemented gradually, the Government would draw up strategies and work focuses in respect of Hong Kong in the different phases of the Greater Bay Area Development.

6. As regards the concerns regarding the work of the Greater Bay Area Development Office and CGBA, SCMA reiterated that they would be responsible for such practical work as taking forward policy measures that facilitated Hong Kong's development in the Greater Bay Area. After attending the second plenary meeting of the Leading Group in Beijing, the Chief Executive ("CE") announced that eight policy measures would be introduced by the Central Government for taking forward the development of the Greater Bay Area, including the method for calculating "183 days" for paying individual income tax on the Mainland and provision of subsidies by municipal governments for non-Mainland (including Hong Kong) high-end talents and talents in short supply to offset the income tax differential between the two places, all of which were concrete policy measures for facilitating Hong Kong people's development in the Greater Bay Area. He stressed that, in taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development, the Government would, in accordance with the requirements and directions set out in the Outline Development Plan, fully implement the principles of "one country, two systems" and "Hong Kong people administering Hong Kong" with a high degree of autonomy, and act in strict adherence to the Constitution and the Basic Law while fully appreciating and leveraging the advantage of "one country, two systems".

Establishment of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Office

7. Mr Tony TSE indicated support for this staffing proposal. He expressed concern over the supernumerary nature of the proposed posts of CGBA and Assistant Commissioner for the Development of the Greater Bay Area (1). He pointed out that while professional and consultancy services would be a key focus of the Greater Bay Area Development, the Greater Bay Area Development Office did not employ professional personnel with the relevant experience. He enquired about the ways in which CGBA would strengthen communications between the industry and the Government.

8. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired about the performance indicators the Administration would set for the work of CGBA, particularly those to be taken into consideration four years later when determining the need for retaining the post.

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9. SCMA replied that it was more prudent to propose creating two four-year supernumerary directorate posts for the time being. The Government would review the long-term manpower need of the Office having regard to the work arising from the progress and development of the Greater Bay Area, and might seek long-term resources with justifications through established mechanism in due course. He advised that the key responsibilities of CGBA included bolstering internal coordination within the HKSAR Government and strengthening liaison with the central ministries, which were important for the advancement of the Greater Bay Area Development. The concrete policy measures to be rolled out over the next four years in respect of the various areas of the Outline Development Plan and the relevant implementation progress could reflect the effectiveness of the work of the Greater Bay Area Development Office. As regards promotion of the development of professional services in the Greater Bay Area, SCMA explained that while the relevant policy bureaux/departments would be responsible for promoting the development of professional services, the Greater Bay Area Development Office would dovetail with their efforts by measures including keeping in close contact with Mainland authorities to strive for policy innovation and breakthroughs. The Office would also strengthen communications with chambers of commerce and professional associations, with a view to gaining better understanding and insights of industry needs in the process.

10. Mr AU Nok-hin enquired about the difference between the work of Deputy Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (3) ("DS(CMA)3") and that of Principal Assistant Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs (6) (PAS(CMA)6) following their redeployment to the Greater Bay Area Development Office, and whether such deployment arrangement would affect the staffing of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau in carrying out other duties. He reiterated the problem of Hong Kong people being sidelined by local governments and enterprises when doing business in the Greater Bay Area and reminded the Government of the need to maintain the system and edge of Hong Kong in taking forward the development of the Greater Bay Area.

11. SCMA said that the Greater Bay Area Development Office would strengthen communications and contact with Mainland authorities to deepen their understanding of the system of Hong Kong. The Permanent Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs ("PSCMA") added that, apart from taking charge of the work relating to the Greater Bay Area Development, DS(CMA)3 and PAS(CMA)6 would still be responsible for their existing duties upon redeployment to the Greater Bay Area Development Office.

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Work of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Office

*Developing tourism*

12. Mr YIU Si-wing pointed out that the HKSAR Government, the Macao Special Administrative Region Government and the Guangdong Provincial Government had been proactively promoting the development of multi-destination travel. Given that overseas visitors and Mainland visitors were provided with the same arrival and departure treatment in Hong Kong, a large number of Mainland visitors going through immigration clearance during peak periods of visitor arrival and departure might cause inconvenience to overseas visitors, and this would not be conducive to Hong Kong's development of multi-destination travel. He enquired whether the Greater Bay Area Development Office would coordinate with the relevant Mainland departments with a view to providing measures that could offer convenience to overseas visitors at various border control points. Given the considerable resources allocated by Hong Kong and Macao for promoting tourism overseas, Mr YIU opined that the three governments should jointly discuss the strategies and measures for promotion of multi-destination travel. He also enquired about the respective roles of and division of responsibilities among the Greater Bay Area Development Office, the Tourism Commission and the Hong Kong Tourism Board in the aforementioned matter.

13. SCMA replied that the Greater Bay Area Development Office was mainly responsible for formulating and coordinating the overall policies for the HKSAR Government to participate in and take forward the development of the Greater Bay Area, offering advices about concrete strategies and work focuses, and coordinate extensively with relevant policy bureaux/departments on efforts involving various policy areas. He pointed out that with promotion of multi-destination travel being one of the work focuses of the Greater Bay Area Development, relevant policy bureaux would keep close contact with the Guangdong Provincial Government and relevant central ministries for formulation and implementation of concrete policy measures, including the overall expenditure on publicity efforts. In respect of the suggestions proposed by the travel trade and issues which the trade hoped the Government would follow up further, SCMA stated that it was more appropriate for the trade to relay their views to relevant policy bureaux and send copies of such documents to the Greater Bay Area Development Office for the latter to take note. The tourism trade might also convey their views to or seek assistance from the Greater Bay Area Development Office directly, and the Office would communicate and liaise with relevant policy bureaux.

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*Taking forward ecological conservation*

14. Mr CHU Hoi-dick pointed out that in taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development, the Administration put emphasis only on infrastructure and the development of industries, without giving regard to advancement of ecological conservation. He requested the Administration to spell out the concrete policies and objectives of taking forward ecological conservation in the Greater Bay Area. Furthermore, he noted that while the Environment Bureau had long discussed the relevant cross-boundary issues (including ecological conservation, pollution and environmental protection) with relevant ministries of the Mainland, no concrete policy measures had been implemented so far. He questioned why ecological conservation policies in relation to the Greater Bay Area did not fall under the purview of a policy bureau. He also enquired about the division of responsibilities between the Greater Bay Area Development Office and the Environment Bureau in relation to advancement of ecological conservation in the Greater Bay Area, how CGBA would help implement the relevant policy measures and whether CGBA would announce the details of the overall policies of the Greater Bay Area and regularly update the Hong Kong public on the relevant progress.

15. SCMA pointed out that with the taking forward of the ecological conservation of the Greater Bay Area being a key policy area covered under the Outline Development Plan, the Environment Bureau would hold discussions and formulate concrete policy measures with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the relevant central ministries according to the directions (including establishing ecological protection barriers, stepping up environmental protection and management, and the introduction of an innovative green and low-carbon mode of development) set out in the Outline Development Plan. He reiterated that the Greater Bay Area Development Office was mainly responsible for formulating and coordinating the overall policies in relation to the HKSAR Government's participation in the Greater Bay Area Development, coordinating various policy bureaux/departments for prioritization and implementation of key policies, and supporting CE in her capacity as the Chairperson of the Steering Committee for the Development of the Greater Bay Area ("the Steering Committee"). The Government would explain to the public in detail the policy measures for taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development, while various policy bureaux would report to the relevant Panels on the progress in different policy areas. He added that CGBA would help formulating the overall policies of taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development and providing strategic advice on the work priorities for the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, while the finalized policy measures would be implemented by the Steering Committee. In her speech delivered in a symposium held by the



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governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao on 21 February 2019, CE had set out the direction and focuses for the HKSAR Government in taking forward the development of the Greater Bay Area. Such details were also laid out in the relevant documents submitted by the Administration to the Legislative Council.

16. As regards division of responsibilities between the Greater Bay Area Development Office and the Environment Bureau, PSCMA advised that while the Environment Bureau would carry out discussions with the Guangdong Provincial Government on advancement of ecological conservation of the Greater Bay Area (such as water resources, air pollution, energy issues, ecological conservation and green economy), it might not be appropriate for policy bureaux to deal with, on their own, any policy that fell under the purview of the Central Authorities and required decisions made by the Central Government. In this connection, the Greater Bay Area Development Office would perform its functions of carrying out internal coordination and external lobbying. In terms of internal coordination, CGBA would obtain relevant information through coordination with the Environment Bureau and pass it on to the Steering Committee for discussion and decision. In terms of external lobbying, CGBA need to persuade, through meetings of the Leading Group, including meetings of the office chaired by the Vice Chairman of the National Development and Reform Commission ("NDRC") under the Leading Group, the Central Government and particularly NDRC as well as the relevant ministries, to gain their approval and support to policy measures proposed by the HKSAR Government.

*Developing strategies for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area*

17. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen noted that CGBA needed to provide SCMA with strategic advice on the work priorities of the HKSAR Government in participating in and taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development. He enquired about the role of the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau in taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development and the overall/phased policy measures that had been formulated.

18. SCMA advised that CGBA was mainly responsible for providing SCMA with assistance in taking forward the overall policies for the Greater Bay Area Development. SCMA's future priorities in taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development included developing an international innovation and technology hub to broaden the environment for the development of innovation and technology in Hong Kong, promoting the efficient flow of essential factors of production in the Greater Bay Area and enabling the sectors where Hong Kong's strengths lied to further develop in

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the Greater Bay Area.

Publicity and engagement with Stakeholders

19. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen enquired about the stakeholders, apart from business and professional bodies, the Administration would consult in taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development. He also enquired whether the Administration would remind the public of the challenges and points-to-note when working or living in the Greater Bay Area.

20. SCMA stated that apart from business and professional bodies, the Administration would also consult various sectors extensively about their views on the Greater Bay Area Development. Moreover, the public might also give their views to the Government via a dedicated website. In respect of publicity, the Government had set up a dedicated website to provide a one-stop source of information for the public, including an overall description of the Greater Bay Area Development, the opportunities therein and the challenges to be faced.

21. Dr KWOK Ka-ki opined that the public was skeptical about the effectiveness of allocating a substantial amount of resources to the Greater Bay Area and the relevant infrastructure by the Government. He also queried whether the Administration had consulted the Hong Kong public on Hong Kong's participation in the Greater Bay Area.

22. SCMA replied that various policy bureaux had all along been consulting relevant stakeholders on different policy areas. Many of the policy measures introduced by the Central Government in taking forward the Greater Bay Area Development were implemented in response to requests made to the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Central Government by the HKSAR Government in accordance with the aspirations of members of different sectors and the public in Hong Kong. He pointed out that the commissioning of the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link and the latest tax arrangements of the Mainland were widely supported by the public and various stakeholders.

Voting on the item

23. The Chairman put the item EC(2018-19)36 to vote. At the request of members, the Chairman ordered a division, and the division bell rang for five minutes. Sixteen members voted for the item, and five against it. The Chairman declared that the Subcommittee agreed to recommend the item to FC for approval. The votes of individual members were as follows:

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*For*

Mr WONG Ting-kwong  
Mr Steven HO  
Dr Elizabeth QUAT  
Mr POON Siu-ping  
Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok  
Mr Holden CHOW  
Ms YUNG Hoi-yan  
Mr Vincent CHENG  
(16 members)

Mr WONG Kwok-kin  
Mr KWOK Wai-keung  
Mr Martin LIAO  
Dr CHIANG Lai-wan  
Mr HO Kai-ming  
Mr SHIU Ka-fai  
Mr CHAN Chun-ying  
Mr Tony TSE

*Against*

Mr CHAN Chi-chuen  
Mr Alvin YEUNG  
Mr AU Nok-hin  
(5 members)

Dr KWOK Ka-ki  
Mr CHU Hoi-dick

24. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen requested that the item be voted on separately at the relevant FC meeting.

**EC(2019-20)1      Proposed making permanent of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) supernumerary post in the Radio Television Hong Kong (RTHK) with effect from 27 May 2019 or with immediate effect upon approval by the Finance Committee, whichever is later, to enhance RTHK's governance and to steer its strategies on resources planning and deployment in the light of the substantial growth both in terms of the establishment and diversity of its work**

25. The Chairman remarked that the staffing proposal was to make permanent of one Administrative Officer Staff Grade B (D3) supernumerary post in the Radio Television Hong Kong ("RTHK") (re-designated from Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Development) to Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Administration and Development) (DD of B (A&D))) with effect from 27 May 2019 or with immediate effect upon approval by FC, whichever is later, to enhance RTHK's governance and to steer its strategies on resources planning and deployment in the light of the substantial growth both in terms of the establishment and diversity of its work.

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26. Dr Elizabeth QUAT, Chairman of the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting, reported the salient points of the discussion of the Panel on this proposal on 11 March 2019. She pointed out that the Panel supported in principle the Administration's proposal and agreed that the proposal be submitted to the Establishment Subcommittee for consideration. Members were concerned about how the proposed permanent post would improve RTHK's management and operation, and how it would help taking forward the new Broadcasting House ("the New BH") initiative. Since the proposed permanent Administrative Officer Staff Grade B post was designated as Deputy Director of Broadcasting, some members worried whether RTHK's editorial independence would thus be subjected to further interference. Besides, the Panel passed a motion at the meeting to urge the Administration to undertake to adopt effective measures to enhance the cost-effectiveness of the operation of RTHK, including reviewing whether it was worth maintaining the education television service, and ensuring that RTHK would make the best use of information technologies, as well as widening the coverage and broadcasting of local sports activities.

Creation of the proposed post on a permanent basis

27. Dr KWOK Ka-ki remarked that RTHK was facing various problems, including delay in the construction of the New BH, RTHK's serious lack of resources and frontline staff, and a high proportion of non-civil service contract ("NCSC") staff in RTHK. He opined that the Administration should first resolve the above problems before submitting this staffing proposal. Dr KWOK was also concerned whether the purpose of this staffing proposal was to turn RTHK into a government mouthpiece. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen concurred that the Administration should submit this staffing proposal only after confirmation of the plan for the development of the New BH. He said that he might propose a motion to adjourn the discussion on this agenda item.

28. Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Creative Industries) ("PSCED(CCI)") and Director of Broadcasting, RTHK ("D of B") stressed that DD of B (A&D), whose duty was to steer RTHK's strategies on resources planning and deployment and supervise all work relating to administration and development, would not interfere with RTHK's programme production and editorial independence. In the Director of Audit's Report No. 71 ("Audit Report No. 71"), the Audit Commission had made various recommendations ("the Audit recommendations") on RTHK's operation and utilization of resources so as to improve RTHK's governance, oversight, management and control. Apart from following up the Audit recommendations, DD of B (A&D) would lead and take forward the New BH project. D of B stressed that the

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Deputy Director of Broadcasting (Developments) ("DD of B (Developments)") had never interfered with the contents of the programmes produced by RTHK.

29. Mr CHAN Chi-chuen noted that on 14 May 2019, the RTHK Programme Staff Union issued a statement ("the RTHK Union statement") expressing objection to this staffing proposal. A number of concerns were raised in the statement, including: (a) the Departmental Secretary had presently shared the administrative functions of DD of B (Developments), thus obviating the need to make the relevant post permanent; and (b) the post of DD of B (Programmes) had been left vacant for nearly a year. Currently, two Assistant Directors of Broadcasting (ADs of B) were just doubling-up the post. Creation of the proposed permanent post would cause interference in RTHK's personnel appointment by the executive authorities. Mr CHAN considered that the Administration should respond to the RTHK Union statement. He was also concerned whether the Administration would interfere with RTHK's programme production through influencing RTHK's internal staff promotion and transfer. Mr Alvin YEUNG requested the Administration to respond to the RTHK Union statement, including why the post of DD of B (Programmes) had been left vacant for a prolonged period of time. Mr CHU Hoi-dick also remarked that some staff members of RTHK were concerned whether DD of B (A&D) would interfere with staff promotion and transfer and influence the decision on filling the vacancy of DD of B (Programmes).

30. Mr AU Nok-hin asked why the post of DD of B (Programmes) had been left vacant for a prolonged period of time, whether the recruitment exercise for the post had met with any difficulties, and whether the post would be filled by internal promotion.

31. PSCED(CCI) and D of B pointed out in response that as a government department, RTHK's arrangements of promotion and transfer of its civil service staff were handled in accordance with the Government's established mechanisms (including annual performance appraisal and review, as well as formation of a promotion board when a vacancy was available for promotion), without being affected by individual staff members. In respect of appointment arrangements for posts at D2 or above, appropriate means of check and balance had also been put in place, including the Civil Service Bureau and the Public Service Commission which would respectively conduct vetting and offer advice. PSCED(CCI) added that while the post of Departmental Secretary was served by an executive grade officer, with the number of posts in RTHK reaching some 750 in 2019-2020 and the estimated expenditure amounting to \$1 billion, coupled with various large-scale projects (including the plan for the development of the New BH), it would be more suitable to engage an

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administrative grade officer who could use his/her rich experience in administration, coordination and communication in planning and managing RTHK's resources.

32. Regarding the arrangement for the post of DD of B (Programmes), PSCED(CCI) and D of B pointed out that the post was presently held by two ADs of B on acting appointment. It was a normal practice to temporarily fill a civil service vacancy on an acting basis. Should there be a suitable candidate, RTHK would fill the vacancy through internal promotion in accordance with the established procedures. PSCED(CCI) reiterated that this staffing proposal was unrelated to the promotion arrangement for the post of DD of B (Programmes).

33. Remarking that a number of duties of DD of B (A&D) were routine work, Mr Tony TSE asked why the Administration created the post of DD of B (Developments) on a supernumerary basis at the beginning.

34. PSCED(CCI) responded that the Administration had all along created directorate posts on the principle of prudence. The post of DD of B (Developments) was created on a supernumerary basis in 2011 in consideration that the main duties of the post were to deal with some time-limited work at that time. Given the change in the duties of the post, coupled with substantial increases in RTHK's establishment, expenditure and value of procurement contracts in recent years, the Government proposed converting the post into a permanent one to enhance RTHK's resource management.

Utilization of resources by the Radio Television Hong Kong

35. Mr CHU Hoi-dick said that although RTHK's establishment in 2019-2020 had increased by 44% over 2010-2011, its output hours of TV programmes in the same period had increased by 2.5 times. He was concerned whether RTHK had sufficient manpower and considered that the Administration should further increase RTHK's estimated expenditure. Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Mr CHAN Chi-chuen raised similar concerns. Mr CHAN also pointed out that RTHK's estimated expenditure in 2019-2020 had actually decreased by 1.9% over the revised expenditure in 2018-2019.

36. PSCED(CCI) responded that RTHK had sufficient resources. Compared with 2010-2011, RTHK's estimated expenditure and establishment in 2019-2020 had grown substantially. Increases in manpower and estimated expenditure in the past nine years were higher than the overall increase in the Government. Thus RTHK had an actual need to convert DD of B (Developments) into a permanent post to enhance

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its resource management. He explained that RTHK's estimated expenditure in 2019-2020 was lower than the revised expenditure in 2018-2019 owing to the decrease in RTHK's technical cost for the transmission of analogue TV service and reduction in one-off expenditure from last year.

Operation and governance of the Radio Television Hong Kong

37. Referring to paragraphs 6 and 18 of the government paper, Mr WONG Ting-kwong agreed that RTHK should enhance its resource management. He said it had been reported that the production cost of some programmes of RTHK was too high and there were improper reimbursements of expenses. He asked about RTHK's progress in following up such problems, and whether DD of B (A&D) would deal with the relevant matters. Mr WONG also requested the Administration to report to the relevant Panels at regular intervals in the future on RTHK's progress in following up the Audit recommendations.

38. Dr Elizabeth QUAT said that the Panel on Information Technology and Broadcasting had all along been concerned about RTHK's future development. She noted that Audit Report No. 71 had pointed out the room for improvement in the cost-effectiveness of RTHK's operation. She had also received complaints from time to time that RTHK's current affairs programmes or personal view programmes were relatively biased. Dr QUAT asked how DD of B (A&D) would enhance RTHK's overall operation.

39. PSCED(CCI) responded that RTHK had completely accepted the Audit recommendations. The Commerce and Economic Development Bureau and RTHK would continue to follow up various measures rolled out for the implementation of the Audit recommendations, and this was also one of the major tasks of DD of B (A&D). RTHK would later submit a progress report to the Legislative Council and the Public Accounts Committee. He stressed that being a government department, RTHK must comply with the Government's internal guidelines in the utilization of resources. He undertook that the Administration would report to the relevant Panels on RTHK's progress in following up the Audit recommendations. D of B added that if the post of DD of B (A&D) was assumed by an officer versed in the Government's procedures and operation, communication with other government departments on such work as procurement and maintenance could be strengthened. This would be conducive to RTHK's resources planning and deployment.

40. Regarding the contents of RTHK's programmes, PSCED(CCI) reiterated that DD of B (A&D) would not interfere with RTHK's editorial work and programme production. Adding that RTHK had always listened to the views of different parties, D of B emphasized that programme

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production was an editorial matter unrelated to the purview of DD of B (A&D) who was responsible for administration and development affairs.

41. Ir Dr LO Wai-kwok expressed his support for this staffing proposal for improving RTHK's resources planning and governance. Expressing concerns about RTHK's failure to utilize the resources properly, Ir Dr LO pointed out that RTHK had three digital television programme channels, but the programmes broadcast on the channels were inadequate and lacking in substance. He hoped RTHK could produce more or acquire some non-mainstream TV programmes (such as documentaries).

42. D of B responded that RTHK welcomed Members' views on the contents of its programmes. He said that when RTHK 32 was established, the archive was indeed relatively deficient, and that was why "slow TV" programmes were broadcast some of the time. RTHK 32 was currently making continuous improvement to enrich its programmes, including additional sports programmes.

Development of the new Broadcasting House

43. Mr CHU Hoi-dick pointed out that since the Public Works Subcommittee ("PWSC") vetoed the funding proposal for the development of the New BH in 2014, there had been no progress in taking forward the work for the New BH. He questioned whether there was any dereliction of duty on the part of DD of B (Developments). Mr Alvin YEUNG requested the Administration to provide a timetable for the development of the New BH.

44. PSCED(CCI) responded that when PWSC discussed the funding proposal for the New BH in 2014, some members held that the cost estimate was on the high side. DD of B (Developments) had been following up members' proposals and suggested adopting the development proposal of a joint-user building ("JUB"), but difficulties came up during exploration with other government departments on the feasibility of constructing a JUB. DD of B (Developments) added that RTHK had been exploring with other government departments the construction of a JUB and hoped that consensus could be reached with the relevant bureaux/departments in the next few months, so that the Architectural Services Department could work out a conceptual layout and conduct a technical feasibility study for the project. RTHK would then conduct public consultation as well. PSCED(CCI) and DD of B (Developments) also remarked that the development of the New BH was a public works project, and hence it was necessary to conduct a technical feasibility study to ensure proper use of the public coffers. It was estimated that the relevant study would take about a year.



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45. Mr Tony TSE asked how DD of B (A&D) would ensure that the construction cost of the New BH was reasonable, and whether there was any change in the selected site of the New BH.

46. PSCED(CCI) advised that the Administration would optimize the use of land through the JUB proposal and take appropriate measures to control the construction cost of the New BH. He confirmed that the selected site of the New BH remained unchanged.

Non-civil service contract staff employed by the Radio Television Hong Kong

47. Remarking that RTHK was currently employing a large number of NCSC staff, Mr HO Kai-ming opined that RTHK should review whether contract posts should be replaced by civil service posts. He was also concerned that the contracts of some NCSC staff of RTHK whose age had reached 60 were not renewed, and he held that the Administration should examine whether such a practice was inconsistent with the Government's policy of extending the retirement age of civil servants to 65. He called on RTHK to continue to hire such staff. Pointing out the shortage of frontline manpower in RTHK, Mr AU Nok-hin agreed that RTHK should review ways to reduce the proportion of NCSC staff.

48. PSCED(CCI) responded that Audit Report No. 71 had pointed out the high proportion of NCSC staff in RTHK and prolonged employment of some NCSC staff. DD (A&D) would review the relevant issues. DD of B (Developments) added that during the past review of public service broadcasting, RTHK had suspended the recruitment of civil servants. In addition, the job types in RTHK were numerous, resulting in a relatively high proportion of its NCSC staff. Since one of the important purposes in hiring NCSC staff was to deal with non-permanent tasks, RTHK would review whether some NCSC staff posts should be replaced by civil service posts. She also said that the Administration had not set the retirement age for NCSC staff. RTHK would decide whether to continue to hire NCSC staff according to operational needs.

49. The Chairman remarked that as some members were still waiting for their turn to ask questions, the Subcommittee would continue the discussion on this item at the meeting to be held on 28 May 2019.

Action

50. The meeting ended at 10:27 am.

Council Business Division 1  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
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