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### Replies to supplementary questions raised by Legislative Council Members in examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2022-23

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Civil Service

Session No. : 1

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-CSB01**

**(Question Serial No. S002)**

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (4) Civil Service Training and Development

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

Regarding Reply Serial Number CSB009 in relation to civil service training, the Government said that it had been committed to enhancing national studies training for civil servants. But the training performance and training opportunities of the past showed that there seems to be much room for improvement, in order to meet public expectations that civil servants should have a deep understanding of the country. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) Although there was a significant increase in the number of civil servants who went to the Mainland to join national studies programmes and visits in 2019, the number of participants was only 1 000. Under the epidemic, while cancellation of physical exchange activities was inevitable, it does not mean that all kinds of exchange have to be stopped. Has the Government communicated with Mainland authorities to discuss the feasibility of conducting online training courses for civil servants of both places? If yes, what are the details; if not, the reasons;
- (2) The Civil Service College (the College) was established at the end of last year. What specific plans does the College have to enhance civil service training in various areas? What is the progress of discussion with relevant Mainland departments on increasing the quotas for courses in the Mainland and face-to-face exchanges; and
- (3) Will the Government require all new recruits to join national studies programmes at least once during probationary period and fulfill the relevant programme requirements as one of the benchmarks of passing the probationary period?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Wai-keung

Reply:

- (1) National studies training programmes organised for civil servants at different levels can broadly be classified into local programmes and programmes held in the Mainland. In the past two years (2020 and 2021), owing to the epidemic, all training programmes, thematic visits as well as staff exchange programmes in the Mainland had to be cancelled, and some of the local programmes had to be switched to the on-line delivery mode. In mid-2021, after the epidemic situation stabilised, we resumed some of the

local programmes and also organised seminars via video conferencing. The number of civil servants participating in national studies training programmes (including Basic Law training) in 2020 and 2021 was 7 100 and 24 500 respectively.

Despite the epidemic, the Civil Service Bureau, through the former Civil Service Training and Development Institute, proactively strengthened training for civil servants by way of e-learning during the period. With the support and assistance of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council (HKMAO), we have in fact invited experts and scholars from the Mainland to deliver a number of quality on-line talks and jointly develop more e-learning resources of quality content. These include:

- launching an on-line talk for civil servants in November 2020, in tandem with the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law. The talk was delivered by Professor Bi Yanying of the University of International Relations who was involved in the drafting of the Hong Kong National Security Law;
- launching a video talk on the Hong Kong National Security Law delivered by the then Deputy Director of HKMAO, Mr Deng Zhonghua in April 2021 to enhance civil servants' (in particular new recruits') accurate understanding of the National Security Law and raise their awareness of safeguarding national security;
- in June and July 2021 respectively, organising for senior civil servants a thematic talk for the first anniversary of the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law delivered by Professor Wang Zhenmin of the School of Law of Tsinghua University; and a talk on "The Communist Party of China in the New Era, and its Relationship with 'One Country, Two Systems'" delivered by Mr Feng Wei, former Deputy Director of HKMAO, addressing the Party's important role in the new era and the relationship with "One Country, Two Systems".

Apart from organising the above on-line talks, we have spared no efforts to enhance national studies training through various new initiatives, which include –

- launching the "Tsinghua Lecture Series" (in December 2020) in collaboration with Tsinghua University and continuing to run it in 2021 to provide middle and senior-level civil servants with a series of pre-recorded lectures on national policies and the latest development in the Mainland;
- enhancing training for civil servants on the country's foreign affairs, through strengthened collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (OCMFA) in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). Since January this year, the College and the OCMFA have been organising a series of monthly talks on the country's foreign affairs;
- launching a Master Programme in Public Policy organised by Peking University in 2022 for senior civil servants nominated by their departments, while continuing to sponsor senior civil servants nominated by their departments to attend the Project of Hong Kong Public Administrative Talents, Executive Master of Public Administration Programme, Tsinghua University.

The above menu of initiatives on strengthening civil service training fully demonstrates our strong commitment and strenuous efforts to make our way out of the constraints caused by the epidemic and proactively leverage on e-learning to maintain provision of national studies training for civil servants.

- (2) The College was established in December 2021 to further enhance training for civil servants in terms of both quality and quantity, deepen civil servants' understanding of the country's development and the constitutional order of the HKSAR, strengthen training in leadership development and innovation and technology application, and broaden their international horizons and global outlook. Specific plans include:

Training on Constitutional Order and National Studies: Enhancing the understanding of the civil service on the constitutional order of the HKSAR, which includes understanding of the country's Constitution, the Basic Law of the HKSAR and the National Security Law, is the top priority of civil service training. The College will establish a more systematic training framework and designate training programmes for mandatory attendance by different levels of officers. All new recruits shall complete the foundation training within a specified period to enhance their understanding of the HKSAR's constitutional order, the country's development and national security. The College will also increase the number of training places and arrange for more middle and senior-level civil servants to take part in national studies programmes in the Mainland as they advance in their career. Apart from the country's latest policies and development, the content of the programmes would also cover the country's Constitution and the Basic Law and safeguarding national security as elucidated by authoritative experts in the Mainland. Furthermore, the College will arrange for senior civil servants to attend master programmes on public policy organised by Mainland institutions, including the Master Programme in Public Policy offered by Peking University, as well as the Project of Hong Kong Public Administrative Talents, Executive Master of Public Administration Programme offered by Tsinghua University. These programmes provide opportunities for civil servants to deepen their understanding of the country's system, the relationship between the Central Authorities and the HKSAR, and the country's development.

Training on Leadership Development: The College will establish a more comprehensive framework for leadership development, providing directorate and senior officers with a series of flagship leadership development programmes, executive workshops and thematic seminars which cover the three key areas of "leadership and public policy", "innovation and technology application" and "public communication and crisis management". We will also launch expert seminar series on different themes, such as seminars in the "Expert Round Table for Economic Development Series", to strengthen civil servants' interaction and exchanges with leaders from different sectors, and enhance their leadership and management capabilities.

Training on Innovative and Technology Application: The College will continue to enhance training on innovation and technology (I&T) application for civil servants at different levels. We will collaborate with different government departments and organisations in running training programmes, and engages experts, academics, industry practitioners and government officials to introduce the latest I&T developments and share experience with the participants. The training content will cover leadership and

innovation, I&T application, smart city development, use of social media and design thinking, etc. The College has also enhanced the element of I&T application in different leadership and national studies programmes, so as to introduce the development of I&T promotion in the Mainland and smart city implementation, by means including visits to key I&T facilities and institutions in the Mainland.

Training on Global Perspectives of Civil Servants: In face of the increasingly sophisticated international landscape, civil servants need to acquire a deeper understanding of the national development strategy and the evolving global order. To deepen civil servants' understanding of the international scene and the country's positioning, the College will enhance training for civil servants in learning more about the country's foreign affairs through close collaboration with the OCMFA. This will enable them to act in better concert with the country's foreign affairs policy in handling the relevant areas of work. As already been mentioned in part (1) above, starting from January 2022, the College and the OCMFA have been organising a series of monthly talks delivered by relevant officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs covering various topics.

We look forward to resuming, as soon as the epidemic situation has stabilised, the training programmes and exchange activities in the Mainland. The College is actively preparing for the Civil Service Staff Exchange Programme in 2022-23 and the extension of the programme to cover the Mainland municipalities in the Greater Bay Area (GBA). We are exploring with the relevant Mainland authorities possible ways to deepen such exchanges, so that our civil servants will have opportunities to stay longer in the Mainland to experience more deeply the development of the GBA municipalities, thereby enabling them to play a more active role in the development of the GBA in their respective areas of work. Specific programme arrangements are pending confirmation.

- (3) Currently, all civil service new recruits have to complete the Basic Law Foundation Course within three years upon joining the service. To foster new recruits' understanding of the constitutional order of the HKSAR and their sense of national identity, and to raise their self-awareness of safeguarding national security and upholding the civil service's core values in discharging their duties, the College will further strengthen induction training for civil service new recruits. All new recruits would be required to complete within the probationary period a foundation training programme with more comprehensive content. The enhanced contents will cover the HKSAR's constitutional order, the country's Constitution, the Basic Law, the National Security Law, the country's system and major policies, as well as the civil service's core values and public service culture. Officers of degree or professional grades would also be required to take part in advanced training upon confirmation to the permanent establishment, so as to deepen their understanding of the country and its major policies, as well as the principle of "One Country, Two Systems" and national security, etc.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-CSB02**

**(Question Serial No. S003)**

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

Regarding Reply Serial No. CSB010 on the work of human resource management,

- (1) on matters concerning the Grade Structure Review for the Disciplined Services Grades, has the Government received any complaints, requests for assistance or enquiries from the disciplined services grades about the execution details during the implementation of relevant recommendations? If yes, what are the major aspects involved; and when will the Government conduct a review on the implementation and applicability of relevant recommendations; and
- (2) apart from the inclusion of the National Security Law in the scope of assessment for civil service recruitment, how does the Government motivate serving civil servants to enhance their understanding of the content of the National Security Law and its relevance to them?

Asked by: Hon KWOK Wai-keung

Reply:

- (1) There are views that the Government should implement the recommendations in the Report on the Grade Structure Review for the Disciplined Services Grades (the Report) with retrospective effect in the light of the delayed submission of the Report due to the pandemic.

There is no established practice regarding implementation dates for the past grade structure reviews (GSR). The Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service (SCDS), in formulating the recommendations, had given due considerations to the social changes, including the spate of public order events and violence events in 2019 and the COVID-19 pandemic. Having taken into account also considerations including the Government's fiscal position, the financial implications retrospective implementation would entail, societal expectations, and the fact that the SCDS had strived to complete the GSR amidst unprecedented challenges, the Chief Executive-in-Council (CE-in-Council) had decided that the recommendations should be

implemented with effect from the first day of the month of approval by the Finance Committee (i.e. 1 September 2021). The CE-in-Council also reconfirmed that the ten-year interval between each round of comprehensive GSR for the disciplined services grade was appropriate.

- (2) The civil service constitutes an important component of the governing team of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR). Civil servants must stay committed to their duties in whatever posts they hold, act in accord fully with the HKSAR Government in discharging its duty to safeguard national security and ensure that the Hong Kong National Security Law is fully and effectively enforced. The Civil Service Bureau / Civil Service College provides civil servants at different levels with training programmes and e-learning resources to strengthen their understanding of the Hong Kong National Security Law and raise their awareness of safeguarding national security. The specific measures include:

Organising thematic seminars: Since the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law in late June 2020, we have been organising thematic seminars on topics related to national security from time to time with local and Mainland authoritative experts as speakers. These included the seminars delivered by Professor Bi Yanying of University of International Relations in November 2020 and Professor Wang Zhenmin of the School of Law of Tsinghua University in June 2021, which attracted over 220 attendees in total. In addition, we organised a series of three seminars under the theme of “Understanding the Constitutional Order and Safeguarding National Security” in 2021. Guest speakers included Elsie Leung, Maria Tam, Johnny Mok and Professor Albert Chen. The seminars attracted around 1 300 attendees in total. The Civil Service College will continue to organise thematic seminars on the important subjects of the Hong Kong National Security Law and national security.

Strengthening induction training of civil servants: The Civil Service Bureau, through the former Civil Service Training and Development Institute, has incorporated contents related to the Hong Kong National Security Law into Basic Law regular training programmes for new recruits and other civil servants. Starting from April 2021, civil service new recruits of degree or professional grades are required to watch the video talk on the “Hong Kong National Security Law” delivered by the then Deputy Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr Deng Zhonghua as part of their induction training. This year, the Civil Service College will further enhance induction training for civil servants. All new recruits shall complete the foundation training covering contents on the Hong Kong National Security Law within the probationary period. Officers of degree or professional grades will also be required to take part in advanced training upon confirmation to the permanent establishment, so as to deepen their understanding of such subjects as national security.

Enhancing e-learning resources: We have launched the dedicated webpage on Safeguarding National Security at the Cyber Learning Centre Plus for civil servants to support civil servants’ continuous learning of topics related to the Hong Kong National Security Law. The e-learning resources available on the webpage include the video talk on the “Hong Kong National Security Law” mentioned above. In addition, the College has actively strengthened the provision of e-learning resources for civil servants. For example, in order to help civil servants to acquire a more comprehensive

understanding of the different important fields in the “Holistic View of National Security”, the College launched under the “Tsinghua Lecture Series” a new series of pre-recorded lectures focusing on three of the major fields in the “Holistic View of National Security”, namely resource security, biosecurity and outer space security, in support of the National Security Education Day this year. These e-learning resources could help civil servants learn from Mainland experts in a more flexible way.

Since the implementation of the Hong Kong National Security Law in late June 2020, the Civil Service Bureau / Civil Service College has organised about 160 training programmes and seminars covering the topics of the country’s Constitution, the Basic Law, the Hong Kong National Security Law and national security, for around 18 000 trainees up to end March this year. During the same period, we recorded 1.87 million page views of the dedicated webpages providing related multimedia resources. We will continue to strengthen civil service training on the country’s Constitution, the Basic Law and the Hong Kong National Security Law, and develop more e-learning resources.

Apart from the above training provided by the Civil Service Bureau / Civil Service College, law enforcement departments also provide training for their staff to meet the specific need of these departments in discharging their day-to-day duties in safeguarding national security.

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-CSB03**

**(Question Serial No. S005)**

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

With regard to the service usage and effectiveness of the Pilot Scheme on Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics, it is mentioned in the Bureau's reply that a new Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinic (CSCMC) will be set up to increase the annual service capacity to around 100 000 by next financial year. Also, it is mentioned that the Bureau is developing a mobile application for appointment booking of Chinese medicine (CM) services which is targeted to be launched within this year. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

- (1) At which district will the Government plan to set up the third CSCMC?
- (2) What are the main functions of the mobile application for appointment booking of CM services?
- (3) Given that there are already nearly 20 healthcare-related government mobile applications at present, is it necessary to develop another one? Will the Bureau consider integrating the mobile application for appointment booking of CM services into the existing "HA GO" or eHRSS by, say, creating a CSCMC function in those mobile applications or, in the long run, allowing access to eHRSS by CM practitioners so as to achieve service interface and interconnectivity between Chinese and western medicine?

Asked by: Hon LEE Chun-keung

Reply:

- (1) Having regard to the review result of the Pilot Scheme on Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics, we will increase the annual service capacity by phases in 2022-23 by enhancing the service capacity of the two existing Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics (CSCMCs) at Eastern District and Tsuen Wan District, and setting up a new CSCMC in the New Territories.
- (2)&(3) HA launched the "18 CM Clinics" mobile application in June 2021 to provide an additional means for members of the public to manage appointments of Government-subsidised Chinese Medicine (CM) out-patient services provided by the 18

CMCTRs. The dedicated appointment booking function page for CSCMCs will be added to the “18 CM Clinics” mobile application, to facilitate civil service eligible persons in making appointments for CSCMC services and managing these appointments through the aforementioned mobile application, in addition to the existing telephone services.

Members of the public can access the “18 CM Clinics” mobile application through a direct link on the “HA Go” mobile application. Furthermore, the Electronic Health Record Sharing System (eHealth), being an electronic platform developed by the Government, aims to build up free and lifelong electronic health records for all members of the public by enabling two-way sharing among public and private healthcare providers and providing an information technology platform for implementing healthcare public-private partnership programmes. The eHealth platform has already been extended to cover CM information, and sharing of CM clinical records by participating CM practitioners via the eHealth platform has been enabled starting from late March 2022.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-CSB04**

**(Question Serial No. S006)**

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

Regarding “Having regard to the prevailing service needs, B/Ds will decide on the number of full-time or part-time Non-Civil Service Contract staff required for anti-epidemic work in the coming year and their employment will be handled in accordance with the established procedures. The Civil Service Bureau does not have estimates on related manpower arrangement for the coming year.”, will the Government inform this Committee of the following:

1. Details of the “established procedures” mentioned in the reply made by the Government;
2. If after assessment of demands, bureaux/departments find it necessary to recruit full-time or part-time Non-Civil Service Contract staff, whether the relevant employment packages, entry arrangements, allocation or uses of resources have to be approved by or reported to the Civil Service Bureau? If yes, what are the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony

Reply:

1. & 2. The Non-Civil Service Contract (NCSC) Staff Scheme aims at providing bureaux/departments (B/Ds) with a flexible means of employment for coping with the changing operational and service needs. B/Ds should observe the guidelines promulgated by the Civil Service Bureau (CSB) on employment of NCSC staff. Under the NCSC Staff Scheme, B/Ds shall have the full authority and discretion to decide on the employment of NCSC staff and related matters, including employment package, employment terms, recruitment, offer of contract, deployment, management, supervision, contract administration and termination, etc. However, the determination of the employment package for NCSC staff shall subject to the established guiding principles that, overall speaking, the terms and conditions of service of NCSC staff should be no less favourable than those prescribed under the Employment Ordinance and no more favourable than those applicable to civil servants in comparable civil service ranks or with a comparable level of responsibility (if any). At the same time, B/Ds will be held fully accountable for

the funding and employment of these staff. In respect of recruitment procedures, Heads of Departments (HoDs) shall decide the appropriate recruitment procedures for recruiting NCSC staff, having regard to the principle of openness and fairness and the need to minimize the risk of corruption or allegations of such. The employment of NCSC staff has to be approved by a directorate officer with delegated authority from the HoD, and a directorate officer not below the deputy head level or equivalent controls and monitors the implementation of the Scheme. B/Ds are required to seek approval from CSB if the number of NCSC staff to be employed exceeds the ceiling prescribed by CSB.

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-CSB05**

**(Question Serial No. S007)**

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau  
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified  
Programme: (2) Human Resource Management  
Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

Some 30 000 jobs were created under the second round of the Job Creation Scheme which rolled out in 2021, while the recruitment of around 12 000 jobs which have not been filled is in progress or will commence shortly. In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee:

1. Is there any target timeframe for completing recruitment of all the jobs? If yes, what are the details? If not, the reasons?
2. Is there any application deadline for the subsidy schemes subsidising private companies to fill short-term manpower gap? If yes, what are the details? If not, the reasons?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony

Reply:

1. & 2. Regarding the second round of the Job Creation Scheme (the Scheme) which rolled out in the second quarter of 2021, it is our target to complete the recruitment of all jobs within two years upon launching of the Scheme. As at end March 2022, there were only 9 000 jobs remained with recruitment yet to be completed, of which most are positions under subsidy schemes subsidising private companies to fill short-term manpower gap. As the implementation of subsidy schemes involves more administrative work, it requires longer time to complete the recruitment process. Application period for each subsidy scheme also varies. The Civil Service Bureau will continue to co-ordinate the work with relevant bureaux and departments with a view to expediting the implementation progress of the Scheme.

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-CSB06**

**(Question Serial No. S008)**

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

Regarding the number of positive cases of Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) involving government employees as shown in the reply made by the Government, please inform this committee:

1. For departments in which manpower shortage was caused by a large number of employees having contracted COVID-19 or being close contacts, will the Government introduce measures to reduce the impact on departmental services? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by: Hon TSE Wai-chuen, Tony

Reply:

In view of the rapidly deteriorating epidemic situation under the fifth wave and the substantial increase of number of infected staff since February this year, when there are infected cases, bureaux and departments (B/Ds) would make suitable redeployment of its manpower having regard to the actual service demand and operational needs to minimise impact on the provision of public services.

Based on the guidelines promulgated by the health authorities, the Civil Service Bureau issued internal guidelines specifying that infected government employees or government employees who are regarded as a close contact of a positive case can resume duty at the workplace once he/she fulfils the isolation or quarantine requirements instructed by the health authorities; departments may also make suitable work arrangements for such staff on a case-by-case basis. As a majority of the government employees have received at least two doses of COVID-19 vaccine, such infected staff can resume duty upon completion of seven-day isolation and do not need to undergo 14-day isolation as required for unvaccinated persons or persons having received only one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, thereby minimising the impact on departmental operation. In the meantime, B/Ds would, depending on the risk exposures and operational needs, provide rapid antigen test (RAT) kits to their staff for conducting RAT and have been maintaining a series of targeted social distancing measures, including staggering of work and lunch hours, arranging video conference instead of physical meeting, etc., with a view to

allowing the provision of public services to members of public in a more flexible manner while protecting the health and safety of government employees during the epidemic.

- End -

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**S-CSB07**

**(Question Serial No. S004)**

Head: (143) Government Secretariat: Civil Service Bureau

Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified

Programme: (2) Human Resource Management, (4) Civil Service Training and Development

Controlling Officer: Permanent Secretary for the Civil Service (Mrs Ingrid YEUNG)

Director of Bureau: Secretary for the Civil Service

Question:

1. With regard to the reply given by the controlling officer on civil service performance management, "the Civil Service Regulations provide that an individual civil servant may be granted an increment only if his/her performance at work (including conduct, diligence and efficiency) has been satisfactory during the appraisal period". In this connection, will the Government inform this Committee of the specific details of the provision cited above, the dates and details of any amendment or addition to the provision since its enactment, and provide the means of public access to the Civil Service Regulations?
2. Please elaborate on the staff performance appraisal mechanism for civil servants by rank (i.e. junior, middle, senior and directorate), including assessment criteria, targets of appraisal, appraising officers and schedule of appraisals (i.e. the number and frequency of appraisals per year), and set out (i) the percentage of civil servants granted increments for satisfactory performance and (ii) the percentage of civil servants subject to stoppage or deferment of increments for poor performance in the past 5 years by rank (i.e. junior, middle, senior and directorate).

Asked by: Hon WONG Yuen-shan

Reply:

The Government has all along strived to maintain an effective performance management system in the civil service. Civil servants at all levels are subject to performance appraisal on an annual basis which enables the management to monitor and assess staff performance. Under the appraisal system, the appraisers (i.e. the appraising officer, countersigning officer and reviewing officer) are all required to make their candid, independent assessment based on facts and observations.

The performance appraisal for a civil servant would generally set out a list of responsibilities of the appraisee for the period covered by the appraisal. The appraising officer (normally the direct supervisor of the appraisee) is required to make assessment on how effectively each



of these responsibilities / objectives has been carried out, and give ratings on the appraisee's overall performance assessment and his / her competencies in various aspects and potential for promotion. Performance rating scales with clear definitions are adopted in the appraisal form to enable the appraisee to understand the level of performance represented by the rating given to him / her, and to achieve better objectivity and consistency in performance assessment. While the competencies subject to assessment may vary among different ranks and grades in view of the different nature of work, the performance assessment mechanism for civil servants largely follows the above framework in general.

Performance management is an on-going process. While appraisal report is normally completed annually (and every six months for officers on probation), sub-standard performers are counselled, monitored and offered assistance by the relevant Department/Grade with a view to bringing their performance up to the required standard. To facilitate timely improvements by the officers concerned, such actions may be taken during the appraisal period, without waiting for the year-end appraisal.

The salary increment of a civil servant may be stopped or deferred if his / her performance has been sub-standard. As at 1 April 2022, about 116 000 civil servants had not reached the maximum pay points of their ranks. In accordance with Civil Service Regulation (CSR) 451, "an officer may be granted an increment only if his/her performance at work (including conduct, diligence and efficiency) have been satisfactory during the appraisal period". CSR 452 also stipulates that if an officer's performance has not been satisfactory, his/her increment must be stopped for a specified period of not less than three or more than six months. Unless a marked improvement of his/her performance is shown, this stoppage will lead to deferment of increment. These provisions have been clearly stipulated in the CSRs. The public may apply for inspection of the relevant provisions through the Code on Access to Information.

From 2017 to 2021 (as of 30 September 2021), a total of 55 officers were subject to stoppage/deferment of increment due to unsatisfactory performance. Besides, the promotion prospect of a civil servant will definitely be affected if he / she has put up a sub-standard performance. For persistent sub-standard performers, if they remain unable to show any improvement in performance during a specified observation period, the Government may require them to retire from the service under section 12 of the Public Service (Administration) Order in the public interest.

- End -