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27 June 2002

Secretary General  
Joint Secretariat for the Advisory Bodies on Civil Service  
and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service  
Room 701, 7<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Tower Two, Lippo Centre  
89 Queensway  
Hong Kong

Dear Sir,

**Review of  
Civil Service Pay Policy and System**

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With reference to your letters dated 25 April 2002 and 2 May 2002 I forward in the attached paper the departmental management's views on the Task Force's Interim Report, in particular the points raised section 3.51.

Yours faithfully,

( [REDACTED] )  
for Director of Marine

**Departmental Management views on the Interim Report  
of the first-phase Review of Civil Service Pay Policy and System**

**Purpose**

The Chairman of the Task Force on Review of Civil Service Pay Policy and System wrote to Heads of Bureaux/Departments/Grades on 25 April 2002 inviting views on the consultation paper of their Phase I Study. This paper sets out some preliminary views on the questions raised in section 3.51 of the interim report, namely –

- further decentralization of pay administration
- pay and grading responsibilities
- departmentalization of general/common grades
- flatter organization with combined grades/ranks
- job evaluation

**Grade Management Issues**

2. The Marine Department has an establishment of 1548 as at 1 June 2002. There are 48 grades – 22 departmental/common grades with 1160 posts and 26 general grades with 388 posts. Details are set out in the **Appendix**.

3. The core management grades are the professional grades of *Surveyor of Ships* and *Marine Officer* which account for 7.2% of the total establishment. The existing qualification and experience requirements for entry to both grades call for substantial sea experience on the part of the candidates. With the younger generation less inclined to choose a sea career and a diminishing pool of locally trained ex-seafarers, recruitment of local personnel in both grades will become increasingly difficult in the foreseeable future. The same problem faces the support grade of *Marine Controller*, the bulk of whom are deployed on vessel traffic management duties.

4. Regarding the technical grades which have an establishment of 80, there are three grades (**Ship Inspector**, **Electrical Inspector** and **Mechanical Inspector**) with 5 “overlapping” groups of staff (**Ship Inspector/Hull & Deck**, **Ship Inspector/Electrical**, **Ship Inspector/Mechanical**, **Electrical Inspector** and **Mechanical Inspector**) in the Shipping Division and Government Dockyard, and another group of 5 technical staff in Aids to Navigation Unit/Planning and Services Division. The present structure is complex and is not conducive to flexibility in deployment to meet operational requirements.

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5. The clerical (249 posts) and secretarial (40 posts) grades under the management of the General Grades Office form the bulk (74%) of the general grades and account for 18.7% of the Department's establishment. While the present arrangement of centralised management provides economy of scale in recruitment, training and promotion, we have little, if any, control over the quality of staff posted, and the timing of their posting, to the department. We have experienced persistent difficulties in filling some clerical posts, notably in Public Cargo Working Areas which are located in relatively remote areas and involve shift duties, and the Pre-Arrival Notification Centre which involves round-the-clock service.

### Departmental Views

6. The impending implementation of the accountability system in the Government will place a heavy burden on Principal Officials, and in turn Heads of Bureaux/Departments to maximise the use of their staff resources to achieve their policy objectives. On the other hand, the grade management issues facing the Department in particular recruitment difficulties envisaged in the two core management grades in the longer term call for greater authority and flexibility in pay arrangements and grading to be provided to enable the departmental management to compete for scarce skills or expertise/experience in high demand, and to recruit, train and develop the right people to meet operational requirements.

7. Conceptually, we consider that pay arrangements and grading responsibilities should be devolved to individual departments with the following key features –

- a policy framework and broad parameters within which departments operate to be set by the Central Administration
- senior civil servants to be managed centrally
- a clean wage policy with allowances and benefits etc. included in the pay package to simplify administration to be vested in departmental management
- authority to create and delete grades and ranks and to decide on pay to be vested in departmental management
- authority to hire and fire staff on simplified procedures within a broad policy framework to be vested in departmental management
- clerical staff to be departmentalised to facilitate department-based management
- departmental management to explore the scope for a flatter organization with combined grades/ranks
- in respect of common grades, internal relativities between departments should be maintained to minimise competition for expertise/skills
- a robust job evaluation system/procedures to be established and operated at the departmental level for assessing job weighting and ranking
- the weighting attached to educational qualifications as the primary determinant of rank or grade to be reduced in favour of a broader assessment of job demands.

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8. We believe that the following complementary measures will facilitate successful implementation of the pay and grading reform –

- broader delegation of HRM responsibilities to departments so that they have effective control of their staff
- broader delegation of financial management and control responsibilities so that departmental management has the ability to mobilize resources in order to achieve results
- training to be provided in change management and skills like job evaluation which are not at present widely practised in the civil service
- system to be set up to facilitate communication, and sharing of information and best practices between departments to foster a sense of identity and coherence within the Civil Service
- pilot studies to try out proposed new approaches before across the board implementation
- a phased approach to implementation and gradual changes to help build internal competency and experience

Marine Department  
June 2002