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Civil Service and Judicial Salaries and Conditions of Service
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Views on Consultation Paper

On the Review of Civil Service Pay Policy and System

We agree with the Task Force's observation on para.11 that the pay reform should tie in with the civil service reform. With the changing of the civil service structure by introducing the ministerial system and the implementation of non civil service appointments as well as direct appointment to the promotion ranks, it is quite evident that the civil service structure and appointment review are undergoing a great deal of changes, and in this connection, the civil service reform should be completed first before consideration of the pay reform.

With this premises in mind it is felt that the questions raised by the Task Force from para.19 onwards should be deliberated in the context of Civil Services Reform. Understanding that the civil service is going to change in future, answering the questions based on the present civil service context is unlikely to be appropriate not to mention that such answers may be misused.

Assuming that the future is the same as now the difficulty of providing relevant answers to the questions is not diminished because there are no specific suggestions or recommendations to comments about. Each department may base on a different understanding of the future civil service to answer the questions and the summation of such replies may be misleading. Having said that, the comments can be useful in setting the future direction of the pay review:

On pay policy, pay system and pay structure, we feel that the salary increments and pension systems should be retained to ensure stability and morale of the civil service. With the introduction of the ministerial system taking over the bureaux secretaries' roles, there is no case to separate the senior civil servants' pay policy from the rest. The affordability to pay is not an issue in Hong Kong given our enormous reserves.

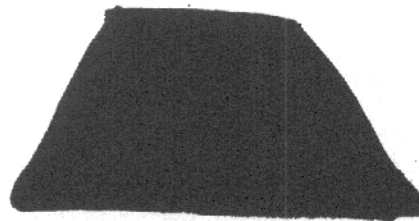
Performance-pay and clean wage policy can be implemented more widely where appropriate. Replacing fixed pay scales with pay ranges has its merits and demerits that should be handled with care to avoid divisiveness among civil servants as mobility among civil servants are limited. Moreover, continuity of public services is a paramount consideration in maintaining social stability. Implementing pay ranges must go hand in hand with measurable performance and appraisal system which can be easily understood by those at stake.

The principle of broad comparability with the private sector has raised a lot of concern with the public counteracted by civil servants unions recently. It is about time to introduce a new system which will not bring the civil service pay issue to the limelight all the time. Where possible decentralization of pay administration to departments is what we should be looking for in future. Department heads are not really heads of the department if they do not have direct control of staff finance which is the biggest spending item of most departments.

More emphasis of performance based rewards may not be entirely appropriate to civil service because civil servants are subject to frequent transfers and individuals are subject to close supervision particularly in the early years of their service. Team-based performance rewards are already difficult to implement not to mention individual performance rewards.

We support decentralization of civil service pay administration as a long term goal and departmentalised common grade staff is something to be favoured to promote staff identification. We also support having a flatter organizations with wider span of management control and fewer rank layers. Without a formal job evaluation system to be operated within the department, it will be difficult to maintain an effective HRM system which is essential for the effective and efficient deployment of human resources which is the greatest asset of all organizations

Finally we see it important to make reference to world trends as revealed in various countries but the choice of models has to be examined carefully in the light of their success and failures. While Hong Kong is in Asia our system owes much to the West, a fact that we must not overlook to avoid abrupt eradicating the foundation of our system."



Government Social Work Officers Association