

Ref. SC6/CM/1

STANDING COMMISSION ON CIVIL SERVICE  
SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

Consultative Document -  
Civil Service Consultative Machinery

Four of the terms of reference of the Standing Commission, i.e. I(e), I(f), IV and X, are concerned with Civil Service Consultative Machinery. These terms of reference are reproduced at the Annex to this circular. In paragraph 20.5(c) of the First Report on Civil Service Pay, the Standing Commission stated that it intended to give the subject appropriate priority during 1980. The Commission intends to examine this issue during its current programme of work.

2. The purpose of this circular is to invite staff and management to forward to the Commission their views on how the present consultative machinery might be improved.

3. It is considered that the key factor in any consultative process is effective communication between staff and management, since only by this means can co-operation and understanding be achieved. The Commission would therefore welcome views on how such communication may best be developed. In particular, it would appreciate comments on the following :-

(a) Departmental Consultative Machinery

At present consultation between departmental management and staff is normally conducted through a joint committee or council. Generally speaking, the staff side representatives of these councils comprise grade representatives, association representatives, and certain organised groups of staff. The basic object of such councils is to provide a forum for exchanging views between staff and management, and to foster co-operation and understanding between both sides. The scope of consultation is extensive, ranging from individual grade issues, leave roster arrangements, training, operational procedures, to uniforms, allocation of departmental quarters, office accommodation and working environment, staff welfare and recreation. Where the matters raised have service-wide implications, they are referred to the Civil Service Branch for central consideration after discussion in departmental councils.

The Commission would be grateful for views on the extent to which the composition, procedures and scope of such bodies achieve their intended aims and to receive suggestions for improving or modifying existing arrangements.

(b) Central Consultative Machinery

At present, centralised consultation takes place in the Senior Civil Service Council comprising the Official Side and the Staff Side. The latter is represented by the three main staff associations, i.e. the Hong Kong Chinese Civil Servants Association, the Senior Non-Expatriate Officers Association, and the Association of Expatriate Civil Servants. Matters which affect a substantial part of the civil service as a whole, such as pay reviews, allowances, leave-earning rates, housing, rent for quarters, medical and dental benefits, passages, etc. are discussed by the Council.

Again the Commission would welcome views on the extent to which the present arrangements are considered satisfactory, and suggestions as to how they may be improved.

(c) Other arrangements for consultation

Apart from the arrangements for consultation described in (a) and (b) above, there are other arrangements whereby groups of staff or individual officers have access to their departmental senior officers to bring up matters of a general or specific nature, which will then be followed up by management. Such arrangements are known to be particularly effective in departments with a small staff. Comments on how these existing channels of communication may be further developed would be welcome.

(d) The possibility of establishing a complaints/grievances procedure

It has been suggested that there may be merit in setting up a complaints/grievances procedure in departments, so that they can receive prompt attention by senior management and dealt with effectively. Views on this aspect would be welcome.

(e) The Role of the Standing Commission in the Consultative Process

By virtue of its terms of reference I(e), I(f), IV and X, the Commission is free to make recommendations regarding its own role in the consultative process. In its work so far the Commission has sought views on specific subjects from staff, management and other

interested bodies, for example on principles and practices governing pay (Report No. 1) and on civil service pay itself (Report No. 2). Comments are now invited on the role which the Commission may play in the consultative process, and on how staff relations in the civil service may be improved.

4. All written representations should be sent to the "Secretary-General, Standing Commission on Civil Service Salaries and Conditions of Service" on or before 31st March 1980, at the following address :-

Until 17th March :

Marina House, Third Floor,  
15 Queen's Road Central,  
Hong Kong.

After 17th March :

Room 1321,  
Prince's Building, 13th Floor,  
Chater Road,  
Hong Kong.

5. Heads of Department are requested to bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all their staff, and to forward their own views direct to the Commission.

P.B. WILLIAMS  
Secretary-General

Annex  
(to Appendix II)

- I. (e) to advise the Governor on suitable procedures to enable staff associations (including individual grade associations) to discuss with management their views on matters within the terms of reference of the Commission;
- (f) to advise the Governor on the circumstances in which it would be appropriate for the Commission itself to consider any issue, and on how staff associations and management might represent their views to the Commission in such circumstances;

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IV. The Commission shall give due weight to the need for good staff relations within the Civil Service, and in tendering its advice shall be free to make any recommendations which would contribute to this end.

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X. In carrying out its terms of reference, the Commission should ensure that adequate opportunities are provided for staff associations and management to express their views. The Commission may also receive views from other bodies which in its view have a direct interest.