

For discussion
on 9 February 2022

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL PANEL ON PUBLIC SERVICE

Policy Measures of Civil Service Bureau in the 2021 Policy Address

Purpose

This paper outlines the policy measures relating to Civil Service Bureau (CSB) featured in the 2021 Policy Address and Policy Address Supplement.

Details

2. With the implementation of The Law of the People's Republic of China on Safeguarding National Security in the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (the National Security Law) and improvement to our electoral system, chaos has ended and social order has been restored. We are now embracing a new era where we can focus on economic development and improving people's livelihood. The 2021 Policy Address delivered by the Chief Executive focuses on developing and mapping out Hong Kong's future, and puts forth a number of new measures.

3. In order to achieve good administration and governance so that we could implement various measures and long-term development plans to benefit the public and resolve the society's problems, the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will enhance the effectiveness of governance in five aspects, which include: re-organising the government structure, attracting talents to join the Government as politically appointed officials, reviewing the selection and appointment mechanism for senior levels of civil service, advocating dedicated positions with specific responsibilities, and enhancing Government's capability in information dissemination and public communication.

Strengthening Governance

4. As the backbone of the HKSAR Government, the civil service plays a vital role in implementing “One Country, Two Systems”. CSB will strengthen the main elements of the management of the civil service, including recruitment, training and the selection and appointment mechanism for senior civil service positions, so that the civil service can zealously embrace the opportunities and challenges of the new era.

Review of the Basic Law Test in Civil Service Recruitment

5. For all civil service positions requiring academic qualifications at or above completion of secondary education level, the job applicants must sit the Basic Law Test (BLT). Last August, CSB stipulated a pass result in the BLT as an entry requirement for these positions. Regardless of the performance of the candidates in other parts of the assessments, applicants for the jobs concerned must pass the BLT in order to be considered for appointment.

6. In order to ensure that new recruits to the civil service will have basic understanding of the Basic Law and the National Security Law, we are reviewing and updating the assessment content of the Basic Law Test, and will include the National Security Law in the scope of assessment to render the test better-suited to the requirements of the relevant civil service posts.

7. We believe that the updated Basic Law and National Security Law Test can further promote the learning and deepen the understanding of the Basic Law and the National Security Law among those who are interested in joining the civil service. The new assessment content is expected to be incorporated in the Basic Law and National Security Law Test from mid-2022 onwards.

Requirement for Government Staff to Sign Declaration

8. CSB introduced, in October 2020 and January 2021 respectively, the arrangements for requiring new appointees to the civil service and serving civil servants to sign a declaration to uphold the Basic Law, bear allegiance to the HKSAR of the People's Republic of China, be dedicated to their duties and be responsible to the HKSAR Government. Starting from October 2020, prospective appointees to the civil service shall sign the declaration as one of the conditions for appointment, and it must be completed before being appointed. Civil servants appointed to senior positions such as Heads of Departments are also required to take an oath.

9. At present, all serving civil servants, including those who joined the HKSAR Government before 1 July 2020, have signed the declaration; and all of the 129 officers who neglected or refused to duly sign and return the declaration without any reasonable explanation, have already left the Government for various reasons, including termination of probationary service in accordance with the Civil Service Regulations (CSRs), retirement in the public interest under section 12 of the Public Service (Administration) Order, resignation, or dismissal due to misconduct.

10. The declaration requirement was also extended to Government staff appointed on non-civil service terms on or after 1 July 2020. Serving non-civil service Government staff concerned have signed their declarations. 149 full-time and 386 part-time non-civil service Government staff who neglected or refused to duly sign and return the declaration without reasonable explanation have all left the Government already.

11. The requirement for civil servants and non-civil service government staff to sign the declaration is an open acknowledgement of the acceptance and a genuine manifestation of the responsibilities of and expectations on them, thereby further safeguarding and promoting the core values that should be upheld by all government staff, and ensuring the effective governance of the HKSAR Government. This also accords with the requirement of the National Security Law.

Strengthening Civil Service Training

(a) Civil Service College

12. The establishment of the Civil Service College is a major undertaking by the HKSAR Government to enhance training for civil servants on all fronts. The Government proposed to establish a civil service college in the 2017 Policy Address, and announced in the 2018 Policy Address that a site in Kwun Tong had been identified for composite development, including the construction of the College and other facilities, based on the principle of “single site, multiple uses”. Funding approval for the Kwun Tong Composite Development project was obtained from the Legislative Council Finance Committee on 8 October 2021. The construction works are expected to commence this year. Subject to the actual progress of the construction works, the composite development is expected to be completed by phase beginning from the end of 2026.

13. Pending commissioning of its long-term accommodation in Kwun Tong, the Government established the College on 9 December 2021. The interim accommodation is located in the North Point Government Offices (NPGO), and is the premises of the former Civil Service Training and Development Institute. The facilities of the premises have been upgraded and refurbished.

14. Meanwhile, the recruitment exercise of the Head of the College is underway. By way of conducting an open-cum-in service recruitment exercise, we look forward to appointing a suitable candidate to the post in the first half of this year to steer further development of the College and drive the efforts of delivering various initiatives on the front of civil service training.

(b) Current New Initiatives in Strengthening Civil Service Training

15. The Government has also set up the Civil Service Training Advisory Board, which comprises prominent leaders in the business, professional and academic fields and government officials, to give guidance on training programmes for the civil service and its long-term development strategy. The Advisory Board has set up four working

groups to examine four key areas of training for civil servants in a focused manner, namely national studies and the Basic Law, leadership development, innovation and technology applications, and international collaboration. The working groups will map out the way forward for enhancing training in the respective areas, so as to strengthen training and development for the civil service.

16. The civil service is the backbone of the HKSAR Government, shouldering the responsibilities of thoroughly implementing “One Country, Two Systems”. It is of utmost importance for civil servants to understand accurately the constitutional order established under the Constitution of our country and the Basic Law to ensure the steadfast and successful implementation of “One Country, Two Systems”. Civil servants must also have an accurate understanding of the Hong Kong National Security Law, enhance their awareness of safeguarding national security and act in full accord with the HKSAR Government in discharging its duty to safeguard national security. The Government has strengthened training for civil servants on the country’s Constitution, the Basic Law and the National Security Law. With the establishment of the Civil Service College, and upon resumption of normal cross-boundary flow of people between Hong Kong and the Mainland, we will continue to enhance training in this area both in breadth and depth. We will establish a more systematic training framework and designate training programmes for mandatory attendance, so as to enhance the understanding of civil servants on our country’s development and the HKSAR’s constitutional order.

17. On the front of national studies training, we will also arrange for more middle and senior-level civil servants to take part in national studies programmes or thematic visits in the Mainland that suit their ranks as they advance in their career, so that they will have appropriate opportunities to deepen their understanding of the country at different career stages. Participation in programmes held in the Mainland will also constitute a part of the training framework for civil servants. The Civil Service Staff Exchange Programme between Hong Kong and the Mainland will be extended to cover the Mainland municipalities in the Greater Bay Area (GBA). This will provide our civil servants with the opportunity to experience more deeply the development of the GBA municipalities, so as to enable them to play a more active role in the development of the GBA in their respective areas of work.

18. 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, we will enhance training for civil servants in learning more about the country's foreign affairs through close collaboration with the Office of the Commissioner of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs ("OCMFA") in the HKSAR. This will enable them to act in better concert with the country's foreign affairs policy in handling the relevant areas of work. On 17 December 2021, the Civil Service College and the OCMFA jointly held a thematic briefing session on "International Landscape and China's Foreign Relations in 2021" delivered by the Commissioner, Mr Liu Guangyuan. Starting from January 2022, the Civil Service College would run in collaboration with the OCMFA a series of monthly talks on the country's foreign affairs. The first talk of the series took place on 27 January 2022. The topic of the talk was "In-depth Study of Xi Jinping Thought on Diplomacy for a Brighter Future of Hong Kong", and was delivered by the Director-General of the Policy Planning Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr Miao Deyu.

19. On the front of training for senior civil servants, we will strengthen collaboration with renowned Mainland institutions. For the Master Programme in Public Policy jointly designed and organized with the Peking University, the inaugural programme will be launched in September this year. The duration of the whole programme is two years, with the first year to be attended in the Peking University. We will arrange for around 15 senior civil servants from different bureaux/departments to attend the programme. Moreover, since 2021, we have been providing annual sponsorship for 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, so as to broaden their horizons and enhance their expertise in public administration.

Review of Selection and Appointment Mechanism for Senior Levels of Civil Service

20 The HKSAR Government needs a professional and highly efficient government team consisting of people devoted and loyal to our country and Hong Kong, adept at policy making as well as execution, and driven by a strong sense of responsibility and commitment to serving the people of Hong Kong with assiduity. Directorate civil servants not only take up leadership positions in the civil service of the HKSAR Government, but also play a critical role in the effective implementation of policies in the HKSAR. They need to possess the aforesaid qualities so as to lead the civil service in proactively addressing various challenges

21. All along, civil service appointments are based on the principle of open and fair competition. The most meritorious and the most suitable persons are selected to fill civil service vacancies. With a view to ensuring that the civil service can keep abreast with the times and strive for excellence in the new era, CSB will review the existing selection and appointment mechanism for the senior levels of the civil service, while continuing to uphold the principle of meritocracy and on the basis of ensuring the stability of the civil service. In the past few months, the Secretary for the Civil Service had met with the Public Service Commission as well as directorate civil servants (including Permanent Secretaries and Heads of Department) to explain the review directions and to listen to their views.

22. In the coming few months, we will focus our work on a few areas. We will review and clearly delineate the requirements for directorate civil servants, with the view of appointing visionary and competent officers with integrity to the most suitable positions. We will also review the appraisal arrangement for directorate civil servants, with a view to enabling a more comprehensive and detailed reflection of the competencies and potential of directorate civil servants in their appraisal reports. Based on considerations such as the job requirements of individual posts, the circumstances of individual departments / grades and the way how previous recruitment exercises have been conducted, we will identify suitable posts and look into the feasibility of widening the scope of grades and ranks that could be considered for promotion to such posts, and to conduct in-service or open recruitment on a pilot basis. We will

also consider, amongst others, appointing the relevant directorate officers on civil service agreement terms and providing an appropriate level of remuneration package to encourage aspiring officers to apply for the posts. We target to report to the Panel our work in mid-2022.

Advocating Dedicated Positions with Specific Responsibilities

23. In addition, the Policy Address also suggests Directors of Bureaux to make greater use of commissioner posts (e.g. Commissioner for Heritage, Commissioner for Sports and Commissioner for the Development of the Guangdong Hong Kong Macao Greater Bay Area) to take forward the relevant work, and to play an “advocacy” role in certain specific areas. This serves to highlight the importance the Government attaches to the relevant policy areas and avoid the undesirable situation of fragmentation of responsibilities among different departments or that the public not knowing which bureau or department to turn to for assistance. CSB will discuss with relevant policy bureau, when the re-organization of the Government structure has taken shape, about creating more dedicated commissioner posts with dedicated responsibilities to promote the work of the relevant policy areas.

Civil Service Establishment

24. The civil service is the core team formulating and implementing the Government’s policies and measures. Between 2017-18 and 2021-22, the civil service establishment has increased by about 19 500 posts (11%). The projected establishment by end-March 2022 will be 197 646 posts.

25. We will have zero growth in the civil service establishment in 2021-22 in order to ensure steady development of the civil service while maintaining the sustainability of public finance. We encourage bureaux and departments to enhance effectiveness and efficiency through re-prioritisation, internal redeployment and streamlining of work processes, so that the workload can be coped with even without increase in civil service establishment.

Strengthening the Management of Probationary Civil Servants

26. The Government attaches great importance to the conduct of civil servants. The conduct of civil servants should not lead the public to cast doubt on them, and civil servants must absolutely not participate in any unlawful activities. The Government adopts a zero-tolerance attitude towards the breaching of the law by civil servants. With the arrest of a number of civil servants in the social unrest earlier, the Government has tightened the scrutiny of probationary civil servants, with a view to instilling a stronger sense of discipline and integrity among civil servants.

27. All along, it has been the responsibility of the Heads of Departments/Grades to apply stringent standards in assessing the performance and conduct of probationers in accordance with the provisions of CSRs, to ensure that only those who are considered suitable in all respects are allowed to pass the probation bar. For probationers who have been arrested and charged with offences related to their suspected involvement in unlawful public activities, the Department should terminate their probationary service in accordance with the CSRs.

Extension of Service of Civil Servants

28. To be more targeted in achieving the goal of expanding the labour force, the Government launched in July 2018 the option for serving civil servants who joined the Government between 1 June 2000 and 31 May 2015 to choose to retire at 65 (for civilian grades) or 60 (for disciplined services grades). At the end of the option period, some 47 000 civil servants, representing about 83% of those eligible, had opted for the new retirement age. The option taken by the eligible civil servants had been implemented on 15 March 2021. At the same time, having regard to factors such as their overall manpower situation, genuine and operational needs, as well as succession planning, departments have been deploying, where necessary, the various flexible measures for extending the service of civil servants, including the Post-retirement Service Contract Scheme, final extension of service and the adjusted further employment mechanism, to retain civil servants having reached their retirement age to meet manpower needs and to pass on experience within the civil service.

Grade Structure Review for the Disciplined Services

29. The Chief Executive-in-Council decided on 10 August 2021 to accept in full the recommendations made by the Standing Committee on Disciplined Services Salaries and Conditions of Service and the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service in the Report on the Grade Structure Review for the Disciplined Services (the Report). The Report covered enhancement in areas including pay, grade structures, conditions of service, etc., with an aim to ensure that the grade structures and remuneration of the disciplined services are still effective in attracting and retaining talent under the current social environment with the job nature, responsibilities and workload of the disciplined services. With approval from the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council, recommendations on salary and increment, as well as the normal conversion arrangement for serving staff in the affected ranks, have come into effect starting from 1 September 2021.

Civil Service Medical and Dental Benefits

30. The Chief Executive announced in her 2018 Policy Address the introduction of Chinese Medicine as part of the civil service medical benefits. Subsequently, the Government launched the Pilot Scheme on Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics (Pilot Scheme) in March 2020. Two Civil Service Chinese Medicine Clinics (CSCMCs) have been set up at the Chinese Medicine Clinics cum Training and Research Centres in the Eastern and Tsuen Wan districts respectively, which offer free general consultation and acupuncture services to civil service eligible persons (CSEPs), providing them with an additional choice when seeking medical treatment.

31. The Pilot Scheme has been very well received by the CSEPs with an average utilisation rate of over 95% since service launch. The Government has conducted a review of the Pilot Scheme about one year after its implementation. Announcement was made in October 2021 that the Pilot Scheme would be regularised, and the annual service capacity would be enhanced from 63 000 discs currently to around 100 000 discs by 2022-23 by way of increasing the capacity of the two CSCMCs and setting up a new CSCMC. In addition, a series of measures have been/would be taken to enhance the Chinese medicine services, including

launching a designated webpage on CSCMCs in October 2021 to enhance communication with CSEPs and information dissemination, as well as introducing a mobile application within 2022 to facilitate appointment booking of Chinese medicine services. The Government will continue to enhance the Chinese medicine services for CSEPs in close collaboration with the Hospital Authority and the service operators of the CSCMCs, with a view to providing more comprehensive civil service medical benefits to CSEPs in the long run.

32. Apart from enhancing the Chinese medicine services, we will continue to provide better quality and systematic medical services for CSEPs with chronic diseases through two services programmes, namely the “Integrated Care Programme” and “Stable Drug Use Pilot Programme” launched in March 2020. Furthermore, we are working towards the setting up of more families clinics and dental clinics with a view to enhancing the medical and dental benefits for CSEPs in the long run.

Mainland and Local Education Allowance

33. Having regard to the Government’s policy of encouraging young people in Hong Kong to actively integrate into the overall development of our country, CSB has implemented the Mainland and Local Education Allowance scheme since 11 October 2021. On the premise that the eligibility criteria and the maximum rates for the former Local Education Allowance scheme remain intact, eligible civil servants (i.e. those who were offered appointment before 1 June 2000 and joined the civil service) can apply for education allowances in respect of their children’s primary and secondary education in the Mainland or in Hong Kong.

Extending Maternity Leave for All Female Government Employees

34. With immediate effect from the date of the announcement of the 2018 Policy Address by the Chief Executive (i.e. 10 October 2018), the maternity leave for all eligible female employees of the Government has been extended from 10 to 14 weeks to allow them more time to take care of their new-born children. As at 30 September 2021, about 5 000 Government employees had benefited from this measure.

Internship in Government Departments and Public Organisations

35. In order to encourage and assist young people to make better planning and preparation before entering the job market, the Government offers different short-term internship opportunities to students every year. In 2021/22, the Government and public organisations provided about 3 500 short-term internship placements to expose more post-secondary students to the work of the Government and public organisations with a view to enabling them to gain valuable experience and broadening their perspectives.

Employment of Non-ethnic Chinese

36. The Government places great emphasis on creating an equitable and caring society for our culturally diverse groups. As far as employment support is concerned, CSB launched an internship programme since 2019 for non-ethnic Chinese students to help them acquire work experience and gear up for employment. So far, a total of around 80 non-ethnic Chinese post-secondary students from the eight universities funded by University Grants Committee and local higher education institutions participated in the programme and were posted to different government departments for an internship lasting about eight weeks.

37. With a view to providing more government job opportunities for non-ethnic Chinese, CSB co-ordinated another comprehensive review by all Heads of Departments/Grades of the Chinese language proficiency requirements for all the grades of the civil service in end 2021. This is to ensure that such requirements are no more than necessary for performance of the job, so that non-ethnic Chinese would have equal access to government job opportunities like other applicants.

Employment of Persons with Disabilities

38. As an Equal Opportunities employer, the Government has all along been leading by example in its commitment to eliminating disabilities and other forms of discrimination in employment. We have formulated and implemented facilitating measures to assist persons with disabilities to apply for government jobs to ensure that they enjoy equal

opportunities in this respect. We have also enhanced our effort in providing students with disabilities with internship opportunities in the Government. Starting from 2018, we have doubled the number of internship places for students with disabilities from an average of 50 per year in the past to 100 per year. We will continue to assign them with diversified jobs having regard to their aptitude and interests. As of end 2021, 490 students with disabilities had participated in the internship scheme.

COVID-19 Vaccination Programme

39. CSB is also responsible for the implementation of COVID-19 Vaccination Programme together with FHB.

40. The Government launched the territory-wide COVID-19 Vaccination Programme in February 2021 to provide to the eligible population the Sinovac and Comirnaty vaccines, which are safe, efficacious and meet quality requirements. Under the Programme, members of the public may get vaccinated through various channels including Community Vaccination Centres (CVCs), general outpatient clinics under the Hospital Authority, hospital covid-19 vaccination stations in public hospitals, elderly healthcare centres under the Department of Health, private clinics providing Sinovac, private healthcare institutions enrolled in the BioNTech Vaccination Pilot Scheme, outreach services and mobile vaccination stations (MVSs), etc. As at 3 February 2022, the Government has provided to the public around 11.15 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines. Around 5.36 million people have received the first dose, accounting for around 79.5% of the eligible population.

41. Hong Kong has procured sufficient vaccine doses for vaccination by the entire population. We will continue to press ahead with vaccination amongst target groups, particularly the elderly over 70 years of age to protect them from serious illness if they were infected and to build a community defence. In view that the vaccination rate of elders is persistently low and growing at a slow rate, we strive to encourage and facilitate elders to get vaccination through different ways, such as organising health talks at shopping centres, housing estates and districts, with healthcare personnel answering enquiries from the elderly

and their families and the provision of vaccination services on-site. Starting from 29 September, COVID-19 Vaccination Stations operated by medical organisations have been set up in three public hospitals under the Hospital Authority, namely Queen Mary Hospital, Queen Elizabeth Hospital and Tuen Mun Hospital to enable patients visiting the hospitals for follow-up appointments and visitors, in particular patients of specialist out-patient clinics, to receive the Comirnaty vaccine. We have set up vaccination stations at another ten public hospitals (i.e. Alice Ho Miu Ling Nethersole Hospital, Yan Chai Hospital, Princess Margaret Hospital, Ruttonjee Hospital, Pok Oi Hospital, North District Hospital, Pamela Youde Nethersole Eastern Hospital, Tseung Kwan O Hospital, Caritas Medical Centre and Prince of Wales Hospital) after the implementation of the pilot scheme.

42. To enable members of the public, in particular elderly persons, to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, two MVSs have commenced operation in December 2021 and January 2022 respectively. These two MVSs, which operate as a vaccination vehicle and a container respectively, can assist people with impaired mobility to receive vaccination. Since commencing operation, they have visited locations in various districts in Hong Kong to provide vaccination services to persons residing in the vicinity and people in the district. Moreover, the MVSs have also provided vaccination services at secondary schools for students and staff members of schools.

43. Currently, the minimum age for receiving the Sinovac vaccine has been lowered to 5 from 21 January 2022 onwards. Parents may make reservations for children to receive the vaccine at Community Vaccination Centres or at private clinics. In addition, schools can liaise with the Education Bureau on arrangements for the outreach Sinovac vaccination service at schools by visiting doctors. As for the BioNTech vaccine, the minimum age for receiving the BioNTech vaccine will be lowered to 5 from 16 February 2022. The Government will also provide a special appointment service for schools at the Children Community Vaccination Centres and a transport service from and to schools. Parents/guardians can also make reservations for children to receive the vaccine through the designated website of the COVID-19 Vaccination Programme and accompany them to receive the vaccine in person.

Third dose of COVID-19 vaccination

44. The Government has put in place vaccination arrangements for persons under certain groups to receive a third dose of a COVID-19 vaccine on a priority basis since 11 November 2021, and the arrangements were expanded on 23 November to cover persons who had received two doses of the Sinovac vaccine with the second dose received six months ago. In accordance with the recommendations by the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases and the Scientific Committee on Emerging and Zoonotic Diseases (Joint Scientific Committees, JSC) under the Centre for Health Protection of the Department of Health, the Government has further expanded the arrangements for the third dose vaccination on 1 January 2022. Members of the public who have received two doses of the BioNTech vaccine or the Sinovac vaccine six months ago can receive a third dose.

45. As for persons with a higher risk of infection including healthcare workers, workers at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of occupational setting who received their second dose over three months ago, they can get the third dose at CVCs. As for individuals who need to travel to overseas places with high risks of infection in the near future and have taken two doses of vaccine for over three months, they may bring along their air tickets to the CVCs. Their requests to receive the third dose earlier will be handled on a discretionary basis in accordance with individual circumstances.

Vaccination of Government and Key Public Service Sector Employees

46. The local epidemic situation has become more severe with the emergence of the more transmissible Omicron variant in the community. As government departments serve the roles of public service provider, regulator and enforcement agency, our staff comes into frequent contact with members of public in discharging their duties. Our staff also play a key role in the anti-epidemic effort. Therefore, it is an obligation for government employees to receive vaccination. To encourage government employees to get vaccinated as early as possible, the Government has implemented a series of facilitative measures, including the “vaccination leave” arrangement, allowing staff to receive vaccination

during duty hours and favourably handling applications for sick leave or vacation leave when staff experience side effects arising from vaccination.

47. Moreover, since the end of May 2021, the Government has adopted the vaccination in lieu of regular testing arrangement by phases. From 28 December 2021 onwards, save for those who are unfit to receive COVID-19 vaccination because of medical conditions supported by a medical certificate, all government employees who have not received their first dose of vaccine are required to take polymerase chain reaction-based nucleic acid tests (PCR tests) outside their working hours in a 3-day cycle at their own expense. For government employees who are unfit to receive COVID-19 vaccination due to medical conditions supported by a valid medical certificate, they are still required to undergo PCR tests every three days. Relevant bureaux/departments will allow these employees to undergo PCR tests where practicable, provided that departmental operations will not be affected, and will continue to fully fund their tests on a reimbursement basis. Making reference to the Government's experience, key public service sectors have implemented similar arrangements for their employees.

48. To further fortify the immune barrier of the government and the community, the Government will implement a "vaccine bubble" arrangement at government buildings and offices with effect from 16 February 2022. Save for those who are unfit for vaccination due to medical conditions supported by a valid medical certificate, all government employees will be required to have received at least the first dose of COVID-19 vaccine before they are allowed to enter government buildings and offices for work-related purposes. Bureaux / departments may exempt pregnant staff according to the circumstances.

49. Upon the implementation of the relevant measures, the COVID-19 vaccination rates among the employees of the Government and major public service sectors have increased significantly. Currently, around 98% of government employees have already taken the first dose of vaccine; while the first dose take-up rates of the employees of the Hospital Authority, residential care homes for the elderly, residential care homes for persons with disabilities, nursing homes and schools have all exceeded 90%.

50. The Government also appreciates the strong support of the business corporations and different sectors for the COVID-19 vaccination programme. Apart from organising various lucky draw campaigns to encourage members of the public to get vaccinated, numerous business organisations and district organisations (such as international business services companies, public utilities, property developers, financial services companies, mass communication companies, airlines, district organisations, etc.) have asked the Government to send outreach teams to provide vaccination for their employees. The outreach teams have conducted 146 vaccination services and about 30 000 persons and their family members of corporates and organizations have been vaccinated. The Government strongly calls on the employers of various trades to actively promote the vaccination programme, including the administration of vaccine of all of their staff. Otherwise, they have to arrange self-paid testing service regularly and take similar arrangements. Through the increase of the vaccination rate of working population, “persons who are suitable for vaccination should get vaccinated” with a view to achieving the protection for themselves and for the community.

Job Creation Scheme

51. In order to relieve the unemployment situation caused by the epidemic and anti-epidemic measures, the Government has earmarked \$6.6 billion under the Anti-epidemic Fund last year to implement the Job Creation Scheme to create around 30 000 time-limited jobs in the public and private sectors within two years. Subsequently, in view of the impact of the epidemic on the labour market and the remarkable result of the first round of the Job Creation Scheme, the Government has earmarked an additional provision of \$6.6 billion in the 2021-22 year to launch the second round of Job Creation Scheme to create around 30 000 additional time-limited jobs. Around 60 000 jobs have been created under the two rounds of the Job Creation Scheme. About 45 000 jobs have been filled.

Advice Sought

52. Members are invited to note the content of this paper.

Civil Service Bureau
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