

Opening remarks by SCS at LegCo Finance Committee special meeting

Following is the English translation of the opening remarks by the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Joshua Law, at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 7):

Chairman,

Among the matters related to the civil service in the 2020-21 Draft Estimates of Expenditure, I would like to focus my introduction on three items.

The first item is civil service establishment. In 2020-21, the overall growth of the civil service establishment is 3.2 per cent. The additional civil service posts are for enhancing existing services, taking forward new initiatives and meeting the manpower demand of government departments arising from practical operational needs and increased workload so as to ease the work pressure on civil servants. About 90 per cent of the additional manpower belong to middle and lower ranks covering a number of frontline grades. The Government will continue to manage the civil service establishment in a prudent manner and increase manpower resources suitably based on operational needs for implementing new policy measures and enhancing existing services.

The second item is to increase the number of Government short-term internships. 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 internships to students every year. In 2020-21, we plan to substantially increase the number of internship places from some 2,000 to almost 5,000, including inviting public organisations to provide internship places so as to increase the diversity of the programme and the choices for students. The initiative will provide more students with internships, thereby enabling young people to gain work experience and, at the same time, deepen their understanding and knowledge of government operations and different areas of work of the public service.

The third item is about financial provisions. In the 2020-21 Draft Estimates of Expenditure, Head 37 – Department of Health: Programme (7) "Medical and Dental Treatment for Civil Servants" is the Head of Expenditure that has a relatively substantial increase in financial provision in the policy area of management of the civil service. A financial provision of about \$2,420 million is proposed, representing an increase of 36.2 per cent over the 2019-20 Revised Estimate. The increase is mainly for continuously improving the medical and dental services for serving civil servants, pensioners and other eligible persons. About \$1,070 million out of the said provision is for providing medical and dental services at Families Clinics and government dental clinics respectively. Apart from meeting the operating expenses of the clinics, the provision will also be used for setting up additional specialised dental surgeries and strengthening manpower support

for Families Clinics and government dental clinics to meet service and development needs. Also, the Department of Health will implement two new service programmes in Families Clinics; the "Integrated Care Programme" for improving the quality of care for patients with diabetes mellitus, and the "Stable Drug Use Pilot Programme" for enhancing drug safety for patients with chronic diseases and stable condition who are required to take multiple types of drugs. Regarding the payment and reimbursement of medical fees and hospital charges, the proposed allocation is about \$1,350 million.

Chairman, this is the end of my introduction. I would welcome questions from Members.