

# 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 Patrick Nip, at the special meeting of the Legislative Council Finance Committee today (April 12):

Chairman and Members,

Among the matters related to the civil service in the 2021-22 Draft Estimates of Expenditure, I would like to focus my introduction on three items.

The first item is the civil service establishment. It is of utmost importance to maintain the sustainability of public finance amidst the economic downturn. We will have zero growth in the civil service establishment in 2021-22 in order to contain the growth in establishment expenditure. We have encouraged 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 an increase in the civil service establishment.

The second item is on the creation of time-limited jobs under the Anti-epidemic Fund. To relieve the worsening unemployment situation due to the epidemic and the anti-epidemic measures, the Government has earmarked \$6.6 billion under the Anti-epidemic Fund last year to create 30 000 time-limited jobs in the public and private sectors within two years for people of different skill sets and academic qualifications. The Civil Service Bureau is co-ordinating the relevant work. As at the end of March 2021, around 31 000 jobs had been created, with half of the jobs being created in the Government and the other half in the non-governmental sector. Among the jobs already created, over 20 000 jobs have been filled while the recruitment for the remaining 11 000 jobs is in progress or will commence shortly. In view of the persistently high unemployment rate, the Government announced in the 2021-22 Budget to further earmark \$6.6 billion to create an additional 30 000 time-limited jobs. Relevant government departments will liaise with the non-governmental organisations or relevant associations under their purview to formulate details of the additional jobs.

The third item is about financial provisions. In the 2021-22 Draft Estimates of Expenditure, we have reserved over \$2,700 million for the Government, as a good employer, to continuously improve the medical and dental services for civil service eligible persons (including pensioners). Over \$1,050 million out of the said provision is for providing medical and dental services at Families Clinics and government dental clinics. Apart from meeting the operating expenses of the clinics, the provision will also be used for strengthening manpower support and setting up an additional specialised dental surgery. Also, we have reserved \$1,660 million for the

payment and reimbursement of medical fees and hospital charges, to meet expenses on reimbursement of medical fees, which are not entirely predictable.

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