

**For information on
20 April 2007**

Sexual Minorities Forum

Appointment and Promotion Policy and Practices in the Civil Service

Purpose

This paper seeks to brief members on the captioned issues raised by a member at the sixth meeting of the Sexual Minorities Forum on 1 December 2006. At that meeting, a member asked whether or not one's sexual orientation would be a factor in considering his/her appointment and promotion in the civil service and the implementation of Code of Practice on Employment for Discrimination on the Ground of Sexual Orientation (the Code of Practice) in the civil service.

Appointment policy

2. Appointments to the Civil Service are based on the principle of open and fair competition. The Government's appointment policy is to appoint "the best person for the job".

Open and fair selection mechanism

3. The entry requirements for civil service grades and ranks are set with reference to academic or professional qualifications, technical skills, working experience, language proficiency and other qualities or attributes as required on the basis of the operational need of the grades/ranks concerned. All applicants must meet the basic entry requirements in order to be considered for appointment. Those who meet the entry requirements are required to go through a competitive selection process, including interviews and written examinations (as necessary). The

appointment authority would, having regard to the job requirements, select candidates on the basis of their ability, working experience and performance in written examinations and interviews, etc.

Code of Practice on Employment for Discrimination on the Ground of Sexual Orientation

4. The Government is an equal opportunities employer and is committed to eliminating all forms of discrimination, including sexual orientation, in all appointments. Appointment practices in the civil service have strictly followed the Code of Practice issued by HAB in 1998 (the Code). For instance -

- Selection criteria for grades/ranks are related to the job and do not make reference to sexual orientation. Instead, selection is based on the character, ability, potential and performance as well as qualifications and experience prescribed for the ranks (para. 3.2).
- Terms of appointment and conditions of service are made known to all employees and job applicants and reviewed from time to time (para. 3.3).
- Where vacancies are to be filled by means of open or in-service recruitment, the advertisements will be circulated to all eligible serving officers (para. 4.2 and 4.3).
- Candidates applying for government posts are not required to indicate their sexual orientation during the application process (para. 4.4).
- During an interview, interviewers would not raise questions that relate to the candidates' sexual orientation. All discussions regarding the candidates and the reasons for appointment/non-appointment are duly recorded (para. 4.5).
- Shortlisting criteria are drawn up by objective standards e.g. based on work experience and/or academic qualifications (para. 4.6).

- Promotion exercises are conducted in the same manner as above. The detailed assessment of all candidates' abilities and qualities are duly recorded (para. 6.1).
- Where job applicants/ serving officers consider that they have been discriminated against in a recruitment/ promotion exercise, they may bring the matter to the attention of the relevant departments. Our established complaint channels would investigate allegations on the part of its personnel, including mistreatment arising from discrimination. Where, after such investigation, misconduct is established, it will take corrective measures as deemed appropriate, which may include disciplinary action (para. 8.1).
- The Government is committed to foster a culture of courtesy, respect and tolerance throughout the public service. To that end, civil service training incorporates elements aimed at instilling human rights awareness. For example, the 'Basic Training Package' for civil servants emphasizes the importance of impartiality in all dealings with the public, which entails fair and equal treatment for all. Another example is the 'Valuing Diversity Web Package' launched in 2005 with special modules on equal opportunities. The above principles are also highlighted in the customer service training courses for front-line officers and equal opportunities training courses for new recruits. These efforts will continue (para. 10.1).

Civil Service Bureau
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