

Annual Report for 2008/2009

1. Introduction

1.1 The Council was elected on 6th June 2008 at the 29th AGM. During the 2008/09 term of office, 6 Council meetings were held to discuss and administer the affairs of our Association. There were also meetings and liaisons with other government staff associations concerning affairs affecting the common interests of professionals in the civil service.

1.2 The Council received many valuable feedback and suggestions on various civil service issues from our Members. We also sought advice from our Hon. Advisers, (Ir Dr. the Hon. Raymond HO Chung-tai, Ir Prof. LAU Ching-kwong and Ir Prof William KO Chan-gock) on issues concerning the civil service and engineering profession. The Council also met representatives of the Civil Engineering Graduates (CEGs) and NCSC Engineers/Assistant Engineers, including Assistant Geotechnical Engineers (NCSC Es/AEs) whose major concern was undoubtedly their career prospects.

1.3 The Council maintained close communications with our Hon. Adviser, Ir Dr. the Hon. Raymond HO, PS for Dev (Works) and the Works Directors. We have also established a regular dialogue with DCED on issues such as Engineer Grade strength/establishment, promotion prospect, performance appraisal, NCSC staff, etc.

1.4 The Council reluctantly accepted but respected the resignation of Ir CHU kin-hong Stephen as Council Member with effect from 27th October 2008 and would like to thank him for his valuable services and contributions over the years.

2. **Civil Service Issues**

2.1 *In the past year, we actively participated in many major issues concerning the civil service. Salient points are mentioned in the following paragraphs:*

Creation of Engineer Grade Posts

2.2 *In order to maintain Hong Kong's competitiveness as a top-class metropolis through the successful implementation of the upcoming mega-scale infrastructure projects, the Association considers that the creation of Engineer Grade posts in terms of ranks and numbers should be accorded with top priority.*

2.3 *Our fellow engineering colleagues have been tackling many difficulties brought by the change in political and social environment on implementation of public infrastructure projects. The progress/achievement of many public works projects in recent years are often at the expense of the colleagues working overtime and shouldering unprecedented working pressure than before. In contrary to the increase in complexity and workload, there has not been a comparable increase in the strength of the Engineer Grade in the past ten years. This, couples with the increase in controversy of many public infrastructure projects, has already stressed Engineers in the Government to their limits.*

2.4 *Therefore, we have urged the Administration to review the manpower model for the Engineer Grade. We have requested the Administration to increase the number of engineers of various ranks to cope with the social demand and to create more Directorate Grade Engineer posts in order to steer and uphold the timely delivery of the public infrastructure projects in view of the increased complexity/controversy. In addition to these, how serving NCSC engineers could be deployed back into the civil service in view of their acquisition of government experience and the application of incremental credit for experience (ICE) for the Engineer Grade are two issues of direct relevance to retain a team of quality engineering workforce within the Government to implement the infrastructure developments of Hong Kong as planned.*

Merging of Engineer Grades in CEDD and WSD

2.5 *The Administration rolled out last year the consultation paper and conducted consultation sessions with the staff side on its proposal to merge the Engineer Grades within CEDD and WSD. We have noted that the major concerns of engineering colleagues lie with promotion prospects, posting arrangements, scope and implementation plan of the proposed merge and performance appraisal system.*

2.6 *We advocate that the Administration should provide a comprehensive perspective on the rationale, benefits and details of the proposed merging arrangements and fully consult the staff side prior to the implementation of the intended merging. We request that the proposed merging mechanism should be fair to engineers of all departments involved. We encourage all colleagues to actively participate in the consultation and discussion forums put forward by the Administration and express their views and concerns on the Administration's merging proposal. The Council will continue to monitor the development closely.*

Post-Service Outside Work for Directorate Civil Servants

2.7 *In response to the review on control regime for post-service outside work for directorate civil services, the Association, with Hong Kong Senior Government Officers Association (HKSGOA) and other government staff associations, has written to the Committee on Review of Post-service Outside Work for Directorate Civil Servants expressing our objection to any across-the-board lengthening of the sanitization period or tightening of the existing policy on the matter.*

2.8 *The Association considers that the right to employment after retirement should not be usurped. Retired professionals, be it doctors, accountants, lawyers, architects, surveyors or engineers, are valuable assets to the community and the experience they collected can contribute positively to the advancement of their respective professions and to the betterment of the Hong Kong society as a whole. The Association is of the view that the existing regulations governing the post-service outside work for civil servants are effective*

in preventing possible conflict of interests between the civil service job and post-service employment. The rule-abiding civil servants should not be penalized by few isolated cases that have drawn special concerns from the community.

2.9 *The Association supports that clearer guidelines be in place to allow more appropriate assessment of the post-service employment applications for some senior directorates who have held special or sensitive position before retirement.*

2.10 *The Association will continue to collaborate with HKSGOA and other government staff associations to express views in the interests of our members.*

Performance Appraisal

2.11 *The Council had raised the concerns of our Members on this subject on many occasions in the past years.*

2.12 *While both the Association and our Members accept the justification in setting a quota for the outstanding performers for the obvious purpose of picking the high caliber candidates to move up the career ladder, we are not convinced that there is a need to set arbitrary quotas for the other grades, such as the “Very Effective” grade. This arbitrary quota mechanism could deprive the good performers of proper recognition of performance simply because of the limitation imposed by the quota. This is most demoralizing. The Association will continue to pursue the subject matter with the Grade Management.*

Incremental Credit for Experience (ICE)

2.13 *The Association is deeply concerned with the promulgation of CSB Circular No. 10/2007 which makes “recruitment difficulty” a mandatory requirement when considering the granting of ICE; unlike previously HODs/HOGs are delegated with the authority to judge whether there are operational reasons (e.g. the specific requirement for a certain skill set/experience in a certain post) to do so. In addition, the new policy requires candidates to declare if they are*

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willing to join Government without ICE. For those who are not willing to join Government without ICE, they will be given lower priorities irrespective whether they are the more capable candidates or not. The Council considers that this circular has wrongly placed financial consideration as the overriding factor in its employment policy instead of the capability of the candidates. We have written to CSB and our Hon Adviser to raise our objection on the arrangement.

2.14 The Council will continue to pursue the matter with the Administration via our collaboration with HKSGOA and our Hon. Adviser, Ir Dr. the Hon. Raymond HO.

3. Contract Engineers and Assistant Engineers, including Assistant Civil Engineers (Graduate Training Scheme) and Colleagues in the Geotechnical Discipline (NCSC Es/AEs)

3.1 The Association cares much about the continuous employment and career prospect of the NCSC Es/AEs. Over the years, the Association spent considerable amount of time and effort on this issue.

3.2 Since the recruitment freeze of permanent civil service posts a few years ago, NCSC Es/AEs have been the only additional manpower source to take on the ever-increasing workload in the Works Departments. They have contributed a lot in up-keeping the civil engineering quality in the civil service.

3.3 In 2008, the continuous employment of the NCSC Es and qualified AEs was most encouraging. With the assistance of our Hon. Adviser, Ir Dr. the Hon. Raymond HO, PS for Dev (Works), Heads of Grades and Heads of Works Departments, virtually all NCSC Es and qualified AEs were retained in government employment.

3.4 With the lift of the civil service recruitment freeze in 2008, the Association has been working together with Ir Dr. the Hon. Raymond HO, PS for Dev (Works) and Heads of Grades to understand more on the arrangement of the first revived civil service E recruitment exercise. While this Association congratulates the

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success of 83 no. of serving NCSC Es/AEs in entering the civil service, we are not entirely satisfied with the outcome of the recruitment exercise which does not take full account of the contribution, dedication and past performance of the serving NCSC Es/AEs during the past years.

3.5 We advocate in-service recruitment among the serving NCSC Es/AEs in civil service E recruitments and retention of this group of high caliber staff, who have been working with loyalty and good performance in the government for many years, by creation of more permanent civil service E posts and additional NCSC E posts or by extension of existing NCSC E contracts. In the long term, we hope that all our capable NCSC Es/AEs can be absorbed into the permanent civil service and a clear career ladder can be re-established for our engineering graduates.

3.6 As a relevant issue, the Association considers that the previous years of service of the successful candidates in civil service E recruitment exercises as NCSC Es/AEs have fully demonstrated their competence and suitability in joining the civil service and their years of previous NCSC/ACE(GTS) service should be taken full consideration into reduction of their probationary period/New Agreement Terms under the New Permanent Terms of employment.

4. Liaison Office of Central People's Government in HKSAR

4.1 We have, in the past 12 months, maintained close liaison with the Social Work Department and the Education, Science and Technology Department of the Liaison Office of Central People's Government in HKSAR on issues of common interests.

4.2 We are grateful to the Liaison Office for their assistance in the organization of our visit to Yunnan from 28th June to 2nd July 2008. We visited the ancient city of Lijiang and the lost horizon of Xianggelila. We met the Hong Kong Macau Affairs Office of the State Council of the Yunnan Province and visited the major infrastructures and heritage preservation sites thereat.

4.3 *The Council will continue to maintain dialogue with our counterparts on the Mainland so as to enhance our understanding of the political and administrative systems in our Motherland. To achieve this, we look forward to the continued assistance of the Liaison Office.*

5. Government Young Engineers Sub-Committee (GYES)

5.1 *Our GYES has not only coordinated among engineering graduates and NCSC AEs/Es in raising concerns regarding their career prospects in the Government, but also has collaborated with other young engineers organizations in organizing activities for our Members and for the well being of the Society.*

5.2 *After the disastrous earthquake took place on 12th May 2008, GYES joined with 15 other young engineers/engineering students organizations in supporting 512 Young Engineers Alliance (512年青工程師大聯盟) to organize the School Rebuilding Campaign for 5.12 Earthquake Stricken Areas in Sichuan named “One Person One Square Metre” (「一人一平方、共建新學堂」), which aimed to provide support in 4 aspects for school rebuilding projects in Sichuan, namely:*

- (a) fund raising;*
- (b) provision of engineering support;*
- (c) caring and counselling to school children; and*
- (d) training for teachers.*

The 1st school rebuilding project took up by 512 Young Engineers Alliance is the reconstruction of Yuanjia Primary School in the district of Jingyang of the city of Deyang in Sichuan Province (四川省德陽市旌陽區袁家小學). GYES was actively involved in the fund raising and engineering working groups of the project. In particular, GYES rendered full support in organizing the Charitable Soccer Match between the Engineers’ Joint Team and the All Stars Soccer Association Team on 29th March 2009, which raised a total donation amount of over HK\$ 100,000 for the School Rebuilding Campaign. The Association not only organized a Team of 22 players in taking

part in the soccer match, but also raised HK\$ 61,800 of donation. We would like to take this opportunity to thank every player and donor for their participation, generosity and support towards the School Rebuilding Campaign for Sichuan; and to appeal to all colleagues to continue to support all meaningful activities related to the reconstruction work in Sichuan.

5.3 Following the success of the Guangzhou Sun-yat-sen University China Study Tour (廣州中山大學國情研習班) held in April 2008 and with the assistance from the Education, Science and Technology Department of Liaison Office of Central People's Government in HKSAR, GYES will join once again with the seven young sections of professional institutions and government staff association in organizing a China Study Tour to Shenzhen National Administration Academy (深圳國家行政學院) in late June 2009. In the Study Tour, our young engineers would have the opportunity to know more about the latest developments and policies of the Pearl River-Delta of China, as well as to meet and network with their counterparts working in the private sector and in other engineering disciplines.

5.4 GYES and the Association will continue to maintain collaboration with other institutions/associations with common objectives and organize meaningful events for our Members.

6. HKIE Activities

6.1 The Annual General Meeting of the HKIE has been scheduled for 25 June 2009 (Thursday). The election of Vice-President and Elected Ordinary Members (EOM) for the 2009/10 session will also be held on the same day. The Council appeals to all Members to show your support by attending the AGM and casting your votes.

*6.2 Our Council Member, **Ir Helen SZETO Suet-man**, will run for the HKIE EOM election in partnership with **Ir TAI Tak-him** (Assistant Director/E&M of DSD), **Ir LAM King-kong** (Senior Structural Engineer of HD & Chairman of HD Structural Engineers*

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Association), **Ir Timothy SUEN Kai-cheung** (Director of OAP) and **Ir YUEN Pak-leung** (Senior Manager (Engineering Management) of Hospital Authority).

6.3 All the above-mentioned candidates have significant contributions in the engineering sector and participated actively in both the activities of staff associations as well as functions of HKIE in the past few years. They share the same visions about the Institution's future as well as the civil service interests. Same as previous years, this is collaboration amongst engineers of both the public and private sectors covering all engineering disciplines in Government and private practices. These candidates have the support of the government engineers associations. **Your Council therefore appeals to all Members for giving support to them.**

6.4 Your vote really matters. We hope that our voice is constantly heard in the HKIE Council.

7. Membership Drive

7.1 Unity plays an important part in our fight for the benefits for our Members as well as for the civil service at large. It is encouraging to see that our membership has been growing. We hope that our Association will continue to grow. Once again, we appeal to Members to **encourage more fellow engineers to join our Association** so as to boost our representation. Please contact our Hon. Secretary at hksargcea@yahoo.com.hk or your department's representative in Council for membership application.

8. Website

8.1 I am delighted to announce the launch of an official website of the Association:

<http://www.gcea.org.hk/>

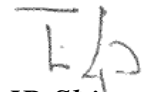
You are strongly encouraged to browse the website regularly to keep updated of the latest activities of the Association, benefits of Members as well as issues of the Engineer Grade.

9. **End-Piece**

9.1 *I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for your support and to thank the Council Members for their dedication and devotion to the affairs of the Association in the past year.*

9.2 *Finally, I look forward to receiving your unfailing support to the Association in the years ahead.*

By Order of the Council



(Ir IP Shing-tim)

Chairman

2 June 2009



Yunnan Visit on 28.6.2008 - 2.7.2008



**Charitable Soccer Match with All Stars Soccer Association
Organized by 512 Young Engineers Alliance on 29.3.2009
to raise funds for the School Rebuilding Campaign
for 5.12 Earthquake Stricken Areas in Sichuan**