

The Federation of Hong Kong & Kowloon Labour Unions

Suggestions on the Admission of Mainland Professionals Scheme

We would like to thank the Legislative Council Panel on Manpower for inviting views on the Admission of Mainland Professionals Scheme (the Scheme) from us. We believe that the Scheme is far from perfect. We would also like to express our deep regrets on the fact that the Administration has laid down a policy with far-reaching effects on local employees without consulting the labour sector and the Labour Advisory Board.

We hope that Members of the Legislative Council would urge the Government to expeditiously make suitable adjustments to the Scheme prior to its implementation so as to protect employees' rights to employment. Our suggestions on the Scheme are as follows:

A. Publish information about the companies which have made an application, such as their names, the positions applied for and the salaries, so as to enhance the transparency of the Scheme

The transparency of the Scheme should be enhanced to ensure that applications are made only for the admission of those mainland professionals that Hong Kong lacks. This will prevent the Scheme from being abused and ensure that locally-trained talents will have the priority for employment opportunities. Conditions for assessment and approval, as well as information such as the names of the companies which have made an application, the positions applied for and the salaries, should be published, so that local talents can exercise their priority in choosing those positions. It can in turn boost public confidence on the Scheme.

B. Set an upper limit on the number of professionals to be admitted and conduct regular reviews

To strike a balance between the supply and demand of local and mainland talents, there should be an upper limit on the number of talents to be admitted under the Scheme. Regular reviews should also be conducted. Regarding the upper limit on the number of professionals to be admitted, a reasonable number can be set with reference to the manpower requirements according to the

Education and Manpower Bureau and the number of tertiary students trained annually. Setting an upper limit on the number of professionals to be admitted can help avoid negative impacts on those who wish to study and take up those positions. It can also minimize the impediments on the prospects and employment opportunities of locally-trained tertiary students.

C. Set minimum salaries for professionals to be admitted

In order to maintain the remuneration of local and mainland professionals at a reasonable level, it is particularly important to set minimum salaries for the admission of mainland professionals. Although the Government has announced that the remuneration level of the mainland professionals will be broadly in line with the market rates for local professionals, the concern of the public is how market rates will be defined. According to the existing Admission of Talents Scheme, the monthly salaries of many talents with a doctor's degree range between \$20,000 and \$50,000 only. As salaries are determined by the supply and demand in the market, admission of a large number of mainland professionals will definitely change the forces of supply and demand in a free market, and their salaries will inevitably be affected. Setting minimum salaries for the professionals to be admitted can therefore ameliorate the impacts of the Scheme on employees' rights.

D. Representatives from the labour sector should be included in the regulatory framework

The Scheme is not only an immigration policy but also a long-term manpower policy which will have far-reaching effects on the employment opportunities and salaries of local employees and tertiary students. It is essential to set up a regulatory body to strictly assess applications before granting approvals. We therefore believe that the Scheme should be closely regulated and representatives from the labour sector should be included in the regulatory framework so as to prevent the Scheme from being abused and mainland employees exploited.