

For Information

LegCo Panel on Security

Measures to Combat Illegal Employment

At the meetings of the Security Panel held on 13 November 2003 and 16 January 2004, Members considered LC Paper No. CB(2)271/03-04(04) and CB(2)978/03-04(01) respectively on “measures to combat illegal employment”. The Administration was requested to consider whether certain statistics on Mainlanders arrested for taking up illegal employment in Hong Kong could be released to Members.

The Administration’s Response

2. We have been providing the Legislative Council and the public with information and statistics on the number of operations conducted to combat illegal employment and the number of persons arrested in these operations. We will continue to do so from time to time.

3. As regards the raw data on Mainlanders found taking up illegal employment in Hong Kong, we have been passing such data to Mainland authorities so that they can take appropriate follow-up actions, which include debarring them from obtaining exit approval to visit Hong Kong for different periods of time. We believe this continues to be the appropriate course of action.

4. As regards the specific question of whether detailed statistical analysis on Mainlanders found taking up illegal employment in Hong Kong according to the city from which they came or had obtained the relevant exit approval should be compiled and released to third parties, we believe this is an issue that requires the most careful handling. Such analysis, if released to third parties, could have the undesirable effect of hampering the on-going law enforcement work of Mainland authorities in tackling illegal employment at source. Specifically, if such analysis is taken on its face value, it may well create in our community a labeling effect on visitors coming from certain parts of the Mainland and provoke discrimination against them despite the best intention underscoring the compilation and release of such information. We would therefore consider each request for such information on a case by case basis, having regard to the above considerations and the costs and manpower resources that would be involved in the exercise. We would have to be satisfied that such detailed statistical analysis serves a useful purpose and is worth the costs and manpower resources which would be required.

Security Bureau

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