

(Translation)

Motion on
“Enhancing employment support and creating employment opportunities”
moved by Hon WONG Kwok-kin
at the Legislative Council meeting
of Wednesday, 25 November 2009

Motion as amended by Hon WONG Sing-chi, Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung, Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan, Hon LEE Cheuk-yan and Hon Audrey EU Yuet-mee

That the problem of disparity between the rich and the poor has always been a concern in Hong Kong, and since the reunification, Hong Kong's growth in Gross Domestic Product has exceeded 40% but the population of the poor has increased persistently to over one million, and according to a report published by the United Nations Development Programme, Hong Kong even ranks first in the world in terms of disparity between the rich and the poor; given the continuing socio-economic development as well as changes in the demand for knowledge and technology, the Government should allocate more resources to expand various employment services as well as continuing education and training, and create jobs to assist the grassroots in securing employment, thereby alleviating the disparity between the rich and the poor; in this connection, this Council urges the Government to adopt the following measures:

- (a) while developing the six industries, to provide various concessionary measures particularly targeting at labour-intensive industries, such as the recycling industry, in order to encourage and support the development of these industries;
- (b) to provide avenues to continuing education to enable young people, new arrivals, etc to equip themselves for taking up suitable positions in various sectors and industries;
- (c) to introduce a territory-wide transport subsidy scheme and open it for application by all eligible Hong Kong people, so as to subsidize the costs of low-income employees in working across districts and enable them to have more choices in jobs;
- (d) to provide re-employment support allowance and employment counseling, etc for the unemployed;

- (e) to establish a start-up fund to provide the unemployed with capital to set up their own businesses, and invite professionals to provide support on setting up and operating businesses;
- (f) to promote local community culture economy, and relax the restrictions on on-street arts and cultural activities; and
- (g) to consider allowing regulated hawking activities in specific areas or during specific periods, so as to provide opportunities for running small businesses;
- (h) to provide free medium-term and short-term training places in various courses, including those on basic computer skills and language proficiency, etc, for middle-aged people with low educational attainment and low income, and provide an allowance for value-adding to attract those people to pursue further studies, thereby enhancing their competitiveness and enabling them to enjoy better remuneration packages;
- (i) in the light of the long-term manpower shortage in some industries, such as the testing and certification industry, and the large number of job vacancies in these industries which are suitable for people with average educational attainment, to expeditiously put forward a concrete blueprint on manpower training and planning, so as to strengthen the relevant education and training efforts and attract suitable talents to enter these industries for development;
- (j) to review the licensing policy for ‘dai pai dongs’, which includes assisting the operators of ‘dai pai dongs’ in identifying suitable sites to continue their operation, so as to ensure that the traditional culinary culture of ‘dai pai dongs’ will pass on continuously, thereby creating more employment opportunities; and
- (k) to retain as far as possible the existing open-air bazaars and suspend temporarily the Voluntary Surrender Scheme for hawkers; and
- (l) to establish a standard poverty line to serve as the basis for formulating a comprehensive policy on poverty alleviation and employment of the grassroots, and establish a representative committee on poverty alleviation and employment to promote the implementation of the strategies for alleviating poverty and supporting employment; and
- (m) to include ‘elimination of working poverty’ as one of the objectives for the enactment of legislation on minimum wage;

- (n) to extend the on-the-job training period under the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme ('YPTP-YWETS'), and request the employers participating in YPTP-YWETS to draw up detailed training plans for the trainees and regularly review their training progress, thereby enhancing the effectiveness of YPTP-YWETS and increasing their employment opportunities; and
- (o) to restructure the employment services of the Labour Department, establish district-based skills and employment counselling centres, and provide job seeking allowance and one-stop services for the unemployed and job seekers, which includes providing information on job vacancies and training courses, providing counselling on employment and training for people in need, and assisting job seekers with financial difficulties to apply for other assistance, such as Comprehensive Social Security Allowance, public housing rent reduction, tuition fee remission for their children, waiver of medical fees, etc, with a view to helping them to tide over the difficult times and enabling them to have peace of mind when looking for jobs during the unemployment period; and
- (p) to improve the business environment of the recycling industry, which includes providing more market outlets for the materials recovered, creating job positions in the recycling industry and considering the introduction of a licensing system to upgrade the recycling industry.