

Panel on Manpower

List of outstanding items for discussion

(position as at 11 December 2009)

**Proposed timing
for discussion**

Items proposed by members

1. Age discrimination in employment

At the meeting on 20 July 2006, the Administration briefed members on measures to address the problem of age discrimination in employment. Members considered that the Administration should introduce legislation on age discrimination in employment.

First quarter of
2010

2. Review of the Employment Ordinance - the requirement of "continuous contract"

At the meeting on 2 November 2001, Hon LEUNG Fu-wah indicated that he and two other members in the Labour Constituency would jointly introduce a Member's Bill to extend the applicability of the Employment Ordinance (EO) to those who are employed by the Government on non-civil service contract terms. They would make another proposal to extend the same to those who are not employed under a continuous contract ("continuous contract" is defined under EO as a contract of employment under which an employee has been employed for four weeks or more and has worked for 18 hours or more in each week, i.e. fulfilling the so-called "4-18" requirement). The Member's Bill, jointly proposed by Hon CHAN Kwok-keung, Hon LI Fung-ying and Hon LEUNG Fu-wah, was ruled out of order by the President on 14 March 2002, as the Bill related to public expenditure and Government policy.

Third quarter of
2010

At the meeting on 16 May 2002, the Panel agreed that the protection of workers not employed under a continuous contract should be discussed at a future meeting. On 16 June 2005, the Administration advised the Panel that the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) would conduct a special topic enquiry to gather updated information on employees who were not working under a continuous contract and study overseas experience.

The Panel considered the report on the result of C&SD's survey on "Benefits of employees under the Employment Ordinance" (LC Paper No. CB(2)665/07-08 issued on 19 December 2007) at the meeting on 17 January 2008. The Panel urged the Administration to consider relaxing the "4-18" requirement and enhancing the rights and benefits of employees who were not employed under a continuous contract. The Administration advised that it would conduct an internal review on the definition of "continuous contract" under EO in the light of recent developments in the labour market. The Administration further advised in its letter dated 5 March 2008 that given the complexity of the subject, the review would take time. The Administration's response was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1308/07-08 on 10 March 2008.

In their letter dated 14 October 2008, Hon WONG Kwok-kin, Hon WONG Kwok-hing, Hon IP Wai-ming and Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou requested the Government to review EO, in particular the "4-18" requirement.

3. Review on the scope of the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund and its operation

At the meeting on 15 November 2007, Hon LEE Cheuk-yan, Hon LI Fung-ying and Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung requested the Administration to review the scope of ex gratia payment from PWIF to provide more protection for employees of insolvent employers so that they could also apply for ex gratia payment on items such as annual leave pay and maternity leave pay. The Administration advised that the suggestion to broaden the scope of ex gratia payment from PWIF would require discussions by the Fund Board and labour-management consensus. The Administration would consider the issue on the operation of PWIF subsequent to the revision of the Business Registration Certificate levy rate in early 2008.

First quarter of
2010

The Administration consulted members on the proposal to expand the scope of PWIF to cover untaken annual leave pay under EO at the Panel meeting on 18 June 2009. A motion proposing amendments to the Administration's proposal was moved and passed by members. Members requested the Administration to consult the PWIF Board and LAB on the revised proposal and revert to the Panel in the 2009-2010 legislative session.

4. Protection against anti-union discrimination

At the meeting on 6 May 2003, Hon LEE Cheuk-yan requested the Administration to respond to the recommendations of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) to address the complaints lodged by the trade union of Cathay Pacific Airways concerning discrimination against trade union. The Administration undertook to respond when official documents were received from ILO. In November 2003, May 2005 and May 2006, the Administration prepared submissions to ILO about the case progress.

To be confirmed

5. Establishment of a central compensation insurance fund

Following the "911" terrorist attack in 2001 and the outbreak of SARS in 2003, there were concerns over the potential non-availability of employees' compensation insurance (ECI) cover for certain risks e.g. infectious diseases.

To be confirmed

On 19 May 2005, the Panel was briefed on the proposed measures to improve the ECI system in Hong Kong. The Administration presented its research findings on the operation of the ECI schemes in some overseas countries and the views received from the insurance industry. As replacing a private market by a central ECI scheme would have significant impact on insurers, LAB agreed to test run a "residual scheme" proposed by the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers. The scheme sought to act as a market of last resort to assist employers who had difficulties finding ECI cover. At the meeting, the Panel urged the Administration that, while introducing the residual scheme, it should also consider pursuing a central ECI scheme in the long run.

At the meeting on 15 March 2007, the Panel was briefed on the structure and mode of operation of the Employees' Compensation Insurance Residual Scheme (the Scheme), scheduled to be launched by the insurance industry on 1 May 2007. The Panel was advised that a mid-term review of the progress of the Scheme would be conducted one year after implementation and an overall review after operating the Scheme for two years.

The outcome of the review of the Scheme was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)2509/08-09 on 22 September 2009.

**Proposed timing
for discussion**

6. Employment policy

Hon CHAN Yuen-han, Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon KWONG Chi-kin suggested in their letter dated 16 December 2004 that the relationship between population and employment policy should be examined to facilitate the formulation of long term population policy and employment policy.

To be confirmed

7. Establishment of a re-employment support scheme and employment services for unemployed Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients

Hon CHAN Yuen-han, Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon KWONG Chi-kin suggested in their letter dated 16 December 2004 that the establishment of a re-employment support scheme to encourage the unemployed to join the labour force should be discussed by the Panel.

Second quarter of
2010

At the meeting on 17 November 2005, Hon CHAN Yuen-han expressed concern about the employment services provided to unemployed Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients.

8. Progress of establishment of a Qualifications Framework

Hon CHAN Yuen-han, Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon KWONG Chi-kin suggested in their letter dated 16 December 2004 that the progress of the establishment of the Qualifications Framework (QF) proposed by the Administration should be discussed by the Panel.

Second quarter of
2010

The Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (AAVQ) Bill was introduced into the Legislative Council on 6 July 2005. At the House Committee meeting on 8 July 2005, a Bills Committee was formed to scrutinise the Bill. The Bills Committee completed its scrutiny of the Bill on 27 March 2007. The Bill, with amendments, was enacted on 2 May 2007.

The AAVQ Ordinance commenced full operation on 5 May 2008. The Administration reported to the Panel the progress of implementation of the QF at its meetings on 23 October 2008 and 16 July 2009. It will further report progress to the Panel in due course.

**Proposed timing
for discussion**

9. Recognition of sick leave certificates issued by registered chiropractors as valid sick leave certificates

The item was proposed by Hon CHAN Yuen-han, Hon WONG Kwok-hing and Hon KWONG Chi-kin on 8 April 2005. They considered that EO should be amended to recognise sick leave certificates issued by registered chiropractors as valid sick leave certificates.

Second quarter of
2010

Hon WONG Kwok-hing raised the subject again at the meeting on 18 January 2007. According to the Administration, a working group, comprising officers from different departments and bureaux, had been set up to study the issues pertinent to the recognition of medical treatment, examination and certification given by registered chiropractors for entitlement of employee benefits under the relevant labour legislation. Members noted that the Administration would revert to the Panel on its findings and recommendations when the working group completed the study.

In their letter dated 14 October 2008, Hon WONG Kwok-kin, Hon WONG Kwok-hing, Hon IP Wai-ming and Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou requested that the issue be discussed by the Panel.

10. Paternity leave

On 21 June 2006, Hon WONG Kwok-hing raised a question on paternity leave at the Council meeting. In response to his request, the Administration sought the advice of the Equal Opportunities Commission and the Department of Justice and responded on 11 October 2006 that it was unlikely that any lack of legislation for paternity leave would constitute family status discrimination under the Family Status Discrimination Ordinance.

Second quarter of
2010

Noting that the Administration was studying the feasibility of legislating for paid paternity leave, Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung requested at the meeting on 19 April 2007 that a progress report should be submitted to the Panel. The Administration agreed to report to the Panel the findings of the study at an appropriate time.

In their letter dated 14 October 2008, Hon WONG Kwok-kin, Hon WONG Kwok-hing, Hon IP Wai-ming and Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou requested that the provision of paternity leave be discussed by the Panel.

11. Implementation of family-friendly employment practices and provision of rest break for employees

At the meeting on 21 December 2006, some members expressed concern that working long hours without breaks would have adverse impact on occupational safety. Hon LEE Cheuk-yan suggested that the provision of rest break for employees be discussed by the Panel.

To be confirmed

At the meeting on 17 January 2008, Hon LEE Cheuk-yan suggested that issues in connection with the implementation of family-friendly employment practices such as reduction of working hours, provision of rest breaks for employees, and same entitlement of general holidays and statutory holidays for employees should be discussed by the Panel.

In their letter dated 14 October 2008, Hon WONG Kwok-kin, Hon WONG Kwok-hing, Hon IP Wai-ming and Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou suggested that the formulation of family-friendly policies and inclusion of general holidays as statutory holidays be discussed by the Panel.

12. Transport Support Scheme (TSS)

At the meeting on 21 January 2009, members passed a motion urging the Administration to cancel the one-year subsidy duration of TSS for the four remote districts and to extend TSS to all districts and relax its coverage to include part-time workers. The Administration held the view that providing the subsidy on a permanent basis departed from the objective of TSS. The Administration's response to the motion was circulated to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1027/08-09 on 6 March 2009. The Administration undertook to review TSS one year after the implementation of the relaxation measures i.e. July 2009. Outcome of the review would be reported to the Panel in the 2009-2010 legislative session.

early 2010

The Panel discussed the progress of the review of TSS at the meeting on 19 November 2009. The Administration advised that it aimed to complete the review before the end of the year, map out the way forward and then report to the Panel as soon as possible. The Panel will hold a special meeting on 14 January 2010 to receive the views of deputations on TSS.

**Proposed timing
for discussion**

13. Employee compensation for injury/death caused by accidents en route to work

The item was proposed by Hon LEE Cheuk-yan at the Panel meeting on 19 February 2009.

To be confirmed

14. Mandatory wage requirement for non-skilled workers engaged in government service contracts after the implementation of the statutory minimum wage

At the Bills Committee on Minimum Wage Bill meeting on 28 September 2009, members requested the Administration to provide a paper on the subject for discussion by the Panel.

To be confirmed

Items likely to be proposed by the Administration

15. Overview of Labour Department's efforts in labour administration in 2009

First quarter of
2010

16. Implementation of the certification requirement of the second phase of the Factories and Industrial Undertakings (Loadshifting Machinery) Regulation

First quarter or
second quarter of
2010

17. A review of occupational diseases in Hong Kong in 2009

Second quarter of
2010

18. System for recognition and monitoring of Mandatory Safety Training Courses

Second quarter or
third quarter of
2010

19. Hong Kong's occupational safety performance in 2009

Third quarter of
2010