

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)521/10-11
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/MP

Panel on Manpower

Minutes of meeting
held on Thursday, 21 October 2010, at 2:30 pm
in the Chamber of the Legislative Council Building

Members present : Hon LEE Cheuk-yan (Chairman)
Hon LI Fung-ying, SBS, JP (Deputy Chairman)
Hon CHEUNG Man-kwong
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Andrew CHENG Kar-foo
Hon WONG Kwok-hing, MH
Hon Andrew LEUNG Kwan-yuen, GBS, JP
Dr Hon LAM Tai-fai, BBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon WONG Sing-chi
Hon IP Wai-ming, MH
Dr Hon PAN Pey-chyou
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung

Member attending : Hon Cyd HO Sau-lan

Members absent : Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC

Public Officers : Item I
attending

Mr Kenneth CHEN Wei-on, JP
Acting Secretary for Education

Mr Raymond H C WONG, JP
Permanent Secretary for Education

Ms Michelle LI, JP
Deputy Secretary for Education

Miss Linda SO
Principal Assistant Secretary (Further Education)

Item II

Mr Matthew CHEUNG Kin-chung, GBS, JP
Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mr Paul TANG Kwok-wai, JP
Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mrs Cherry TSE LING Kit-ching, JP
Commissioner for Labour

Mrs Erika HUI LAM Yin-ming, JP
Deputy Commissioner for Labour (Occupational
Safety and Health)

Mrs Tonia LEUNG SO Suk-ching
Assistant Commissioner for Labour (Employment Services)

Mr Charles HUI Pak-kwan
Assistant Commissioner for Labour (Labour
Relations) (Acting)

Clerk in : Mr Raymond LAM
attendance Chief Council Secretary (2) 1

Staff in : Ms Clara TAM
attendance Assistant Legal Adviser 9

Miss Josephine SO
Senior Council Secretary (2) 1

Ms Camy YOONG
Clerical Assistant (2) 1

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I. Briefing by the Secretary for Education on relevant policy initiatives in the Chief Executive's 2010-2011 Policy Address
(LC Paper No. CB(2)39/10-11(01))

Acting Secretary for Education ("Atg SED") briefed Members on the latest progress of the development and implementation of the Hong Kong Qualifications Framework ("QF"), one of the on-going initiatives of the Education Bureau in the 2010-2011 Policy Agenda, as detailed in the Administration's paper.

(Post-meeting note: The speaking note of Atg SED was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)116/10-11 on 22 October 2010.)

2. Mr WONG Kwok-hing noted that so far, 15 Industry Training Advisory Committees ("ITACs") had been established in different sectors, covering about 42% of the total labour force in Hong Kong. He enquired whether the Administration had any timetable to set up more ITACs in other industries.

3. Atg SED responded that the Administration had been adhering to the "industry-led" principle in assisting various sectors in setting up ITACs. So far, 15 ITACs had been established for different industries. The Administration would continue to reach out to employers, employees, professional bodies and other stakeholders with a view to setting up more ITACs in other industries. In particular, it was exploring with relevant stakeholders of the four economic pillars and the six priority industries, in an endeavour to set up more ITACs in these industries. Atg SED said that ITACs were tasked to formulate Specifications of Competency Standards ("SCSs") for their own industries. As SCSs were drawn up by the respective industry, they were most relevant to industry needs. Based on SCSs, training providers would be able to design training courses which suited the requirements of the respective industry.

4. Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked whether the Administration had any plan to steer the establishment of ITACs and implementation of QF for the wine-related business, including wine appreciation and training.

5. Ms Cyd HO and Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che expressed similar concern about the implementation of QF for people working as care-taker in residential care homes for the elderly. Mr CHEUNG asked whether employers and employees could take a lead in establishing ITACs and drawing up SCSs of their respective industries.

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6. Deputy Secretary for Education ("DS(Ed)") responded that for wine-related business, some aspects were already covered by existing ITACs such as Retail. The Administration would take into account Members' suggestions and continue to reach out to employers, employees, professional bodies and other stakeholders to promote QF and encourage them to form more new ITACs for their industries.

7. Responding to Mr WONG Kwok-hing's enquiry about the progress of implementation of the Recognition of Prior Learning ("RPL") mechanism, Atg SED informed Members that the RPL mechanism had been piloted for three industries, namely the Printing and Publishing, Watch and Clock, and Hairdressing industries, with effect from June 2008. As at the end of September 2010, more than 1 400 applications involving over 5 200 clusters of competencies at various QF levels had been processed by the assessment agency of the three industries. 99.5% of the applicants were successfully awarded statements of attainment in respect of the cluster of competencies assessed. Applicants who failed in the assessment tests were offered free-of-charge counselling service by the assessment agency to prepare them better for further assessment, if they so wished.

8. Atg SED further said that the Administration would step up publicity and organize briefings to employees concerned to enhance their awareness of the RPL mechanism. It would also explore with industries which had developed SCSs on the possible extension of the RPL mechanism to these industries.

9. Ms Cyd HO expressed concern whether clear progression pathways were provided under QF for people with different skills or academic backgrounds to draw up their own plans to upgrade their skills or knowledge and pursue lifelong learning. She enquired about the measures put in place by the Administration to facilitate employees' continued learning.

10. Atg SED and DS(Ed) responded that -

- (a) QF was a seven-level hierarchy which ordered and supported qualifications in the academic, vocational and continuing education sectors. Each level was characterized by its generic level descriptors which described the standards and common features of qualifications at the same level;
- (b) QF was essentially an infrastructure to foster the development of flexible and diverse progression pathways

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with multiple entry and exit points. It provided objective benchmarks for quality assurance of different levels of qualifications, giving clear information on the standard of courses, qualifications and providers. It enabled progression pathways to be mapped out, giving learners a sense of direction in lifelong learning. With the introduction of QF, the training market should become more vibrant and responsive. The training should be more relevant to the needs of the industries and the learners;

- (c) RPL was an avenue put in place to enable serving workers, in particular those skilled workers with low educational attainment, to acquire qualifications recognized under QF and then progress through further learning; and
- (d) to support the implementation of QF, the Administration had launched a number of financial assistance schemes including the accreditation grants for course providers, subsidies for registration of qualifications with the Accreditation Authority and the Qualifications Register ("QR") Authority, accreditation and start-up grants for RPL assessment agencies, and reimbursement of RPL assessment fees to employees.

11. In response to Ms Cyd HO's and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung's concern about the composition of ITACs, DS(Ed) advised that given the importance of its work, it would be crucial for ITACs to receive the full backing of the industry sectors concerned and encompass a wide spectrum of views from and within the respective industry sectors. Major stakeholders such as employers, employees, trade associations and unions, and professional bodies would be represented on ITACs. The exact composition and modus operandi of individual ITACs would be subject to discussion and agreement with the respective industry sector.

12. Expressing deep concern about the qualification and level of professional competency of employees, in particular those working in the banking sector, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung requested the Administration to provide detailed information on the existing 15 ITACs set up for different industries, including a full list of ITACs and their membership.

13. The Chairman noted that up to the end of September 2010, a total of 126 courses had been developed by education and training providers based on SCSs drawn up by ITACs, and around 7 000 employees had taken part in these programmes. He enquired about the distribution of

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those 126 courses by industry/sector. He also asked whether the Administration had set any specific target in respect of the development of the RPL mechanism in the coming two years.

14. DS(Ed) replied that -

- (a) in parallel with the implementation of QF, the RPL mechanism had been developed so as to enable employees to obtain formal recognition for the knowledge, skills and experience they acquired at the workplace, and to facilitate further learning without starting from scratch. The RPL mechanism had been piloted for three industries;
- (b) subsequent to the pilot scheme, the Administration had been working closely with other industries with a view to extending the RPL mechanism to the sectors which had completed their respective SCSs. Following consultations with the relevant ITACs, two more sectors, namely the property management industry and the Chinese catering industry, were ready to launch the RPL mechanism under a "collaborative model" for their practitioners in order to cater for the specific circumstances and needs of the industries concerned. It was expected that the RPL mechanism would be in place for the property management industry and the Chinese catering industry in early 2011 and late 2011 respectively; and
- (c) regarding the distribution of those 126 courses developed by education and training providers based on SCSs, 26 of them were related to the printing and publishing industry, 19 were designed for the watch and clock, 78 for the hairdressing and three for the building management sectors.

15. The Chairman enquired whether those 126 SCS programmes registered in QR would lead to the attainment of qualifications merely at the junior levels (i.e. QF Levels 1 to 4) and recognition of QF qualifications at higher levels could only be achieved by attending and completion of formal courses run by local universities or tertiary institutions, such as courses at or above sub-degree or degree levels. He said that if serving employees were required to obtain academic qualifications before they could apply for QF qualifications at higher levels, some of them, in particular workers engaged in elementary occupations, might have difficulties to progress up the articulation ladder. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung shared similar concern and expressed concern

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about the possibility that seeking recognition of QF qualifications at higher levels might place a financial burden on elementary workers.

16. In response, DS(Ed) advised that the SCS courses currently registered in QR were mainly skills upgrading courses targeted at helping serving workers to gain QF qualifications at junior levels. This would pave the way for workers to progress to qualifications at higher levels. The Administration believed that the increase in the number of qualification holders at junior levels, including those through the RPL mechanism, would boost the development of more training programmes by course providers at higher levels, such as at Levels 4 and 5.

17. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed concern about the little progress in RPL, given that only 1 400 applications had been processed under the RPL mechanism since it was piloted in three industries in June 2008. He asked about the reason for the low participation rate of workers in RPL.

18. In response, Atg SED explained that the three industries involved in the two-year RPL pilot scheme were the printing and publishing, watch and clock, and hairdressing industries. Upon discussions with ITACs and the labour unions, the Administration had agreed to introduce a five-year transitional period for each of the participating industry under the RPL mechanism. During the transitional period, practitioners in the relevant industries might apply for recognition of QF qualifications at Levels 1 to 3 based on their years of service and relevant working experience without the need to undergo an assessment test. After the expiry of the transitional period, all levels of RPL qualifications must be attained through assessments. Given that there would be a transitional period of five years, it was expected that employees in the three industries might want to apply for RPL qualifications at a later stage. Stakeholders in the industries concerned generally expected that the number of applicants would increase gradually at the later stage of the transitional period. The Administration would continue to enhance publicity of QF and RPL through different channels, and work in collaboration with stakeholders, including assessment agency, trade associations and labour unions, to bring the message to workers.

II. Briefing by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare on relevant policy initiatives in the Chief Executive's 2010-2011 Policy Address

(LC Paper No. CB(2)39/10-11(02))

19. Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("SLW") briefed Members on

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the new and on-going initiatives of the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") in respect of the labour and manpower portfolios in the 2010-2011 Policy Address and Policy Agenda, as set out in the Administration's paper.

Standard working hours

20. Mr WONG Kwok-hing noted that the Administration would commence an in-depth study on the subject of standard working hours. He asked whether the Administration had drawn up any plan or timetable for introducing a bill on standard working hours.

21. In response, SLW advised that "standard working hours" was a complex and controversial issue. At present, employers, employees and various sectors of the community had divergent views on whether standard working hours should be introduced in Hong Kong. As the imposition of standard working hours would have far-reaching implications on Hong Kong's society and economy, the Administration had to handle it with care to strike a balance between the interests of various sectors. Affordability of the small and medium-sized enterprises in the low paying sectors was a factor that should be borne in mind, particularly when there were, as yet, no concrete data on whether and if so, how they might be affected by the newly-enacted Minimum Wage Ordinance ("MWO"). Nevertheless, the Administration would embark on a policy study on the matter and consult relevant stakeholders on the issue.

22. Mr IP Wai-ming hoped that the Administration would expedite its study regarding the introduction of legislation on standard working hours and start the legislative process as early as possible, with a view to introducing a bill before 2012.

23. In response, SLW said that the Labour Department ("LD") would map out the details of the study and it would be too early to set the timeline. He hoped that the task could be completed within the third term of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

Statutory minimum wage

24. The Chairman, Dr LAM Tai-fai and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung were concerned about the preparation work undertaken by the Administration and its progress in putting in place a statutory minimum wage ("SMW") in Hong Kong. Noting that the Provisional Minimum Wage Commission ("PMWC") would submit its recommendation on the initial SMW rate to the Government for consideration in early November 2010, Mr LEUNG

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and the Chairman asked whether the report of PMWC could be provided to the Legislative Council ("LegCo") for perusal before the Administration accepted the recommendation of PMWC.

25. SLW responded that MWO was passed by LegCo in July 2010. Since then, the Administration had been working in full gear to prepare for the commencement of MWO. Among others, LD had been working on the practical guidelines on MWO for reference of employers and employees and would liaise with various stakeholder groups to draw up industry-based guidelines addressing the unique characteristics of individual sectors. It had also worked hard in preparing publicity activities to enhance employers' and employees' understanding of the legal provisions and their respective obligations and entitlements under the SMW regime. After the Chief Executive in Council had decided on the initial SMW rate, the Administration would submit to LegCo the relevant subsidiary legislation as soon as practicable and the report of PMWC would be made public. If everything went well, the SMW regime would be put in place in the first half of 2011.

26. The Chairman noted that at present, employees of Government outsourced service contractors were remunerated at market rate. Citing security guards as an example, he said that the outsourced contractors were paying them wages not lower than the average market rate for the relevant industry/occupation published in the latest Quarterly Report of Wages and Payroll Statistics issued by the Census and Statistics Department ("C&SD"). The Chairman said that there was a possibility that the initial SMW rate recommended by PMWC would be lower than the prevailing average market rate. Expressing concern whether the Government would continue to act as a good employer and offer wages not lower than the average market rates, he urged the Government to set a good example for the private sector to follow.

27. In response, SLW advised that the Administration would keep in view whether and how the implementation of SMW would affect the wages of workers employed under Government outsourced service contracts. It would take follow-up actions as and where appropriate.

Legislative proposal on compulsory reinstatement and re-engagement

28. Mr WONG Kwok-hing and Mr IP Wai-ming expressed concern about the slow progress of the Administration in taking forward the legislative proposal on compulsory reinstatement and re-engagement in respect of cases of unreasonable and unlawful dismissal. They asked about the legislative timetable for introducing a bill into LegCo to implement the proposal.

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29. In response, SLW and Commissioner for Labour ("C for L") advised that to enhance employees' protection against unreasonable and unlawful dismissal, the Administration had undertaken, on the basis of the proposal supported by the Labour Advisory Board ("LAB") and the Panel in late 2007 and 2008, to introduce a bill to amend the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) ("EO") by removing the requirement for an employer's agreement before an order for reinstatement or re-engagement of an employee who had been dismissed unreasonably and unlawfully could be made. However, in the light of the read-across implications of the Employment (Amendment) Ordinance 2010, which came into operation on 29 October 2010 to create a new offence against wilful default of the sums awarded by the Labour Tribunal or Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board including non-payment of compensation awarded on the ground of unreasonable and unlawful dismissal, LAB had requested that the proposal be re-visited to take into account the full implications of the Employment (Amendment) Ordinance 2010. Against this background, the Administration was in the process of consulting LAB and relevant stakeholders. SLW assured Members that the Administration would strive to introduce the relevant bill as soon as possible.

30. Mr IP Wai-ming expressed dissatisfaction with the Administration's response at paragraph 29 above. He said that he was a former member of LAB and pointed out that LAB had reached consensus on the legislative proposal to introduce compulsory order for reinstatement or re-engagement. He queried the need to re-visit the issue.

31. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung said that he could not understand why the Administration accepted LAB's suggestion to re-visit the legislative proposal on compulsory reinstatement or re-engagement. He questioned the role of LAB in advising the Administration on labour-related policies.

Provision of employment-related transport subsidy

32. Dr PAN Pey-chyou welcomed the Administration's initiative to launch a territory-wide "Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme" ("the new scheme") to subsidize employed members of low-income families in meeting their travelling expenses commuting to and from work. Noting that the Administration was still in the process of formulating the implementation details of the new scheme, he enquired whether consideration would be given to relaxing the thresholds for a person to become eligible for receiving transport subsidy, in particular the requirements in respect of personal asset, monthly income and the total number of hours worked by the person in a wage period. Dr PAN

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pointed out that under the current Transport Support Scheme ("TSS"), which had a 12-month time limit for subsidy payment and was applicable only to four designated remote districts, people who worked less than 72 hours in every four weeks were ineligible for TSS. He suggested that in order to benefit more low-income earners, including part-time employees, the allowance under the new scheme should be calculated on the basis of 72 hours of work in every four weeks, and a person who worked less than 72 hours in every four weeks might also receive an allowance calculated on a pro rata basis according to the actual number of hours worked by the person. Dr PAN further suggested that a mechanism should be established for regular reviews and periodic adjustments of the ceiling of the total value of personal assets, the ceiling of monthly income and the amount of allowance prescribed under the new scheme.

33. SLW responded that the Administration noted that work-related travelling expenses might be a burden on low-income earners. To ease their burden and encourage them to stay in employment, the Administration had decided to launch a territory-wide "Work Incentive Transport Subsidy Scheme" to help all eligible employees in Hong Kong meet part of their travelling expenses. The new scheme would replace the existing TSS and the monthly transport subsidy would be \$600 a person. At this stage, LWB was working on the implementation details. During the process, all views expressed by Members would be carefully considered. The Administration would ensure that the eligibility requirements proposed for the new scheme were fair and reasonable. It was also the aim of the Administration that the new scheme should not be unduly complicated to implement.

Review of the existing arrangement for replacement holiday

34. Responding to Mr IP Wai-ming's enquiry on why the review of the existing arrangement for replacement holiday was confined to Lunar New Year's Day falling on a Sunday, SLW explained that it was provided under EO that if Lunar New Year's Day fell on a Sunday, the preceding day (i.e. Saturday) should be granted to employees as a replacement holiday. In recent years, there were concerns that those employees who worked five days a week from Monday to Friday with day-off on Saturday would then lose a day of Lunar New Year's holiday under this arrangement. There was a suggestion that the Administration should review the existing arrangement for replacement holiday in the event a Lunar New Year holiday fell on a Sunday.

35. Notwithstanding the above explanation, Mr IP Wai-ming said that it would be more desirable to review in one go the replacement

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arrangement for all statutory holidays and public holidays should they fall on a Sunday or a Saturday. He was also concerned about the arrangement for replacement holiday in the event that a statutory holiday clashed with the appointed rest day of an employee.

36. SLW advised that employees of different industries might have diverse work patterns, and the modes of operation of different establishments might differ widely. It would therefore be advisable for the Administration to study carefully the possible effects of introducing any change to the existing arrangement on employees, employers and the economy as a whole. The situation where Lunar New Year's Day fell on a Sunday would next arise in 2013. The Administration would, in the meantime, conduct a detailed study on the matter and consider the way forward in the light of the study outcome and the views of relevant stakeholders. On the question of a statutory holiday clashing with an employee's rest day, EO had specifically provided that where a statutory holiday fell on an employee's rest day, the employee was entitled to a replacement holiday on the day after the rest day. By requiring the granting of rest days in addition to any statutory holidays, sufficient protection had been accorded to employees.

Paternity leave

37. Mr WONG Kwok-hing recalled that the Administration had embarked on a study to consider the feasibility of legislating for paid paternity leave. He enquired about the progress of the study.

38. SLW responded that the study was in progress and was expected to be completed in the first half of 2011.

Promoting family-friendly employment practices

39. Mr CHAN Kin-por said that he had moved a motion at the Council meeting on 16 December 2009 urging the Government to promote a new occupational culture campaign for work-life balance to alleviate pressure in life brought by various problems at work. He asked how the Administration would address various concerns raised by Members during the motion debate. Citing the successful case of Singapore, Mr CHAN urged the Administration to set up a special task force and to adopt a new thinking in considering whether a new occupational culture policy on work-life balance should be formulated for Hong Kong.

40. SLW responded that the Administration shared the view of Mr CHAN Kin-por that a balanced life between work and family was

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important to employees' wellness. For this reason, LD had been encouraging employers to adopt family-friendly employment practices ("FFEP"). Through LD's promotion efforts, the number of employers adopting different forms of FFEP measures, such as providing paid paternity leave/compassionate leave, had been increasing in recent years. More and more enterprises were building up a pro-family friendly corporate culture as they realized that putting FFEP measures in place could improve staff morale and build up a healthy workforce. LD would continue to promote FFEP to the public with a view to encouraging a wider adoption of such practices in the workplace.

Review of the Employment Ordinance in respect of the requirement of "continuous contract"

41. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed deep concern about the protection for workers who were not employed under a continuous contract. He said that while "continuous contract" was defined under EO as a contract of employment under which an employee had been employed by the same employer for four weeks or more and had worked for 18 hours or more in each week, many unscrupulous employers had used the loophole in the legislation, i.e. the need to fulfill the so-called "4-18" requirement, to exploit their employees and to evade their liabilities for employee benefits under the law. Expressing disappointment with the lack of progress on the part of the Government to address the problem, Mr LEUNG enquired about the actions that would be taken by the Administration to enhance the protection for employees not employed under a continuous contract.

42. In response, SLW referred Members to the 2010-2011 Policy Agenda booklet which had stated clearly that the Administration would undertake a review of the definition of continuous employment under EO based on the statistical data collected on employees not engaged under a continuous contract and continue to consult relevant stakeholders in the process.

43. C for L supplemented that the Administration had no intention of procrastinating on the issue of reviewing the definition of continuous employment. As a matter of fact, LD had commissioned C&SD to further collect statistical data of employees who were not engaged under a "continuous contract", including their distribution and proportion in the labour market, as well as their occupational characteristics, etc. The Administration would conduct the review on the definition of "continuous contract" in the light of the survey findings, which were expected to be available by the end of 2010, and recent developments in the labour

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market. As "continuous contract" was the basis for determining an employee's eligibility for various employment rights and benefits under EO, any amendment to this statutory definition would have far-reaching implications on the labour market and the community as a whole. It would therefore be prudent and necessary for the Administration to conduct an in-depth and thorough study on the subject before arriving at any recommendation. Given the complexity of the subject, the review would take some time to complete. C for L assured Members that during the process, the Administration would consult relevant stakeholders.

Problem of youth unemployment

44. Dr LAM Tai-fai was concerned about the high unemployment rate of young people aged 15 to 19. He enquired about the measures taken by the Administration to promote youth employment.

45. Sharing similar concern, Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che asked whether the Administration had studied the reasons why the problem of unemployment was particularly serious among young people. He questioned whether the problem was due to the failure of the existing education system in equipping the youth with the necessary skills and knowledge to seek employment.

46. In response, SLW and C for L made the following points -

- (a) according to the labour force statistics released by C&SD, the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate decreased from 4.3% in May-July 2010 to 4.2% in June-August 2010. On youth employment, the unemployment rate of the 15-24 age group went up by 1.3 percentage points to 14.5%. Among them, the unemployment rate of youth aged 20-24 went up by 1.4 percentage points to 13.5%, while that of the 15-19 age group increased by 0.4 percentage point to 20.5%. Compared with the 15.7% in the same period of 2009, the unemployment rate for the 15-24 age group was still distinctly lower;
- (b) the total employment showed a significant increase of 12 400, indicating that the market was able to absorb the new batch of fresh graduates and school leavers entering the labour market during the summer. The labour supply was expected to drop as some of the youngsters, who had joined the workforce during the summer months, returned to school for further study following the commencement of the new

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academic year in September. It was expected that the pressure on youth employment would be eased in the near term;

- (c) according to the International Labour Organization, it was a global phenomenon that the youth unemployment rate was substantially higher than the overall unemployment rate;
- (d) young people were more susceptible to unemployment because of a variety of factors, including their limited work experience and low academic qualifications and skills level;
- (e) LD had all along been adopting a multi-pronged strategy to promote youth employment. In close collaboration with stakeholders and other social partners, LD spared no effort to assist young people to develop their careers through providing a full range of recruitment and placement services in general and administering dedicated training and employment programmes for young people, such as the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme, which had diversified elements to cater for the varying needs of youths with different educational attainment and interests. Apart from LD, the Vocational Training Council, the Construction Industry Council and the Employees Retraining Board ("ERB") also ran courses to equip young people with different vocational skills;
- (f) given that the unemployment rate among young people remained high, the Administration had decided to extend to March 2012 the 3 000 temporary work opportunities created for young people aged between 15 and 29 to allow them to gain more work experience; and
- (g) since there was a mismatch in manpower supply and demand, particularly in the construction industry, the Administration would focus on changing the mindset of young people and enhancing their understanding of the prospect of the construction industry. The Administration hoped that through strengthening the promotion and publicity work, youngsters would become more willing to join the construction industry.

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47. Mr CHEUNG Kwok-che considered that the measures mentioned above could hardly solve the structural unemployment problem among the youth. He said that to deal with the problem, the Administration should formulate a more comprehensive and targeted policy on supporting youth employment instead of adopting the current piecemeal and fragmented approach in promoting youth employment through different schemes.

Pilot Employment Navigator Programme

48. Mr CHAN Kin-por welcomed the Administration's initiative to launch by the end of 2010 a two-year Pilot Employment Navigator Programme ("ENP"). He expressed concern about the publicity to promote public awareness of the programme.

49. SLW responded that ENP would be rolled out at the end of 2010 to assist the unemployed to land on sustainable employment. LD would carry out a series of promotional activities, such as issuing press releases, displaying information on LD's homepage and job centres and placing advertisements in mass media, etc. to publicize the programme.

Setting up a pioneer one-stop employment and training centre in Tin Shui Wai

50. Mr WONG Kwok-hing sought detailed information about the pioneer one-stop employment and training centre in Tin Shui Wai, in particular the manpower resources to be provided for implementing the project after all the services of the centre had been rolled out in full scale, the service coverage and target service users, as well as LD's publicity strategy for promotion of services offered by the centre.

51. SLW and Assistant Commissioner for Labour (Employment Services) advised that -

- (a) the pioneer one-stop employment and training centre in Tin Shui Wai would come into operation by mid-2011. The centre would provide employment and training support to needy job seekers, including able-bodied unemployed Comprehensive Social Security Assistance recipients, in a holistic manner. The centre would streamline, integrate and enhance the existing employment and training/retraining services of LD, ERB and the Social Welfare Department;

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- (b) the Government would analyze the employment needs of job seekers with a view to providing them with targeted services. Such services included, for example, case management throughout their pathway to employment, personalized counselling, and post-employment services tailored to their needs. Where appropriate, the Administration would enrol job seekers in special employment programmes and retraining courses to enhance their employability;
- (c) the centre would initially be provided with some 20 administrative and support staff deployed from LD and adequate social workers to undertake case management services; and
- (d) LD would organize a wide range of publicity activities to promote the centre to both employers and job seekers.

52. The meeting ended at 4:32 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
10 December 2010