

香港特別行政區政府

The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

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23 May 2012

Clerk to the Finance Committee
Legislative Council Secretariat,
Legislative Council Complex,
1, Legislative Council Road,
Central, Hong Kong.
(Attn: Mr Daniel SIN)

Dear Mr SIN,

Finance Committee
Follow up to Meeting on 20 April 2012

FCR(2012-13)13 on Investing in Construction Manpower

I refer to your letter of 24 April 2012 to the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury.

At the Finance Committee meeting held on 20 April 2012 discussing the subject agenda item, Members requested the Administration to provide information about the training and other related measures to attract more young people to join lift and escalator repair and maintenance industry; and measures to enhance the safety and working environment of the construction industry, especially during the summer season.

Enhancing manpower in lift and escalator industry

We project that the supply of lift and escalator workers should be adequate to meet the demand in the next few years. Notwithstanding this, in view of the concern of the industry stakeholders on how to attract new entrants to the industry in the long term, the Administration, the Construction Industry Council (CIC) and the Vocational Training Council (VTC) have maintained dialogue with the stakeholders, including the Hong Kong Federation of Electrical and Mechanical Contractors, the Lift and Escalator Contractors Association (LECA) and the Hong Kong General Union of Lift and Escalator Employees, etc and paid close attention to the manpower situation, including that for the lift and escalator repair and maintenance work. We have also formulated a series of measures in

this aspect. The CIC is discussing with the LECA about joining the Contractor Cooperative Training Scheme whereby participating contractors will employ trainees on a “first-hire-then-train” basis to provide further on-the-job training opportunities. In addition to its diploma programme and trade skills courses for lift and escalator workers, VTC is exploring to apply to the Employees Retraining Board for subsidy to offer a short introductory training course for prospective candidates to join the lift and escalator industry. We believe that these initiatives will help attract more people to join the lift and escalator industry.

Improving the safety and working environment of construction sites

The Administration and the CIC have been attaching high importance to construction site safety and striving to improve the site operating environment and uplift site cleanliness and tidiness. Such efforts will attract more new entrants to the industry.

For site safety, following the concerted efforts of the Government and the industry, the overall construction site accident rate has been on a downward trend in the past ten years. The accident rate has dropped by over 50% from 114.6 (per 1 000 workers) in 2001 to 52.1 in 2010, and the corresponding rate for public works contracts dropped by over 70% from 34.7 (per 1 000 workers) to 9.8. That said, a total of 23 fatal incidents recorded in 2011 has aroused our concern. To this end, on top of the Construction Site Management System and Pay for Safety Scheme which have long been implemented, we are launching enhanced measures to further improve site safety performance in public works projects. These measures include an enhanced merit and demerit system for the safety performance of contractors, enhanced care for workers, especially the new comers to the construction sites, enhanced safety training to workers, nurturing the safety consciousness of workers and enhanced promotional efforts. Other enhanced measures include introduction of a pre-warning system on potential hazardous sites, use of graphical method statement to help workers understand the safety procedures and hidden danger. Our target is to achieve “Zero Accident” in the construction site.

The Committee on Construction Site Safety under CIC has set up various Task Forces to identify and review improvement measures in aspects, including site safety training, site cleanliness and tidiness, working in hot weather, etc.. Guidelines have been issued to encourage industry stakeholders to take concerted efforts in improving site safety performance, working conditions and work arrangement in hot weather. Besides, the CIC has recently rolled out a new initiative to issue Site Safety Alert after a site accident to give initial recommendations to the industry stakeholders on safety measures to minimize the recurrence of similar type of accidents.

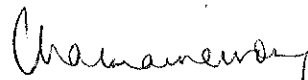
In order to promote construction site safety to relevant construction industry bodies and personnel, the Development Bureau, the CIC and the Hong Kong Construction Association (HKCA) co-organised a Construction Safety Week with the theme of ‘Zero Accident’ to advocate the message of “Zero Accident, We Build, We Care” to the industry. This is to encourage the construction industry stakeholders to join hands in establishing a “Zero Accident” construction site environment. We have 25 organizations in the construction industry as supporting organizations for the campaign. The Construction

Safety Week is held from 20 to 24 May 2012 for five days comprising a series of activities, including roving exhibitions, safety summit, safety conference, site visits and Considerate Contractors Sites Award Scheme 2011 award presentation ceremony, etc. To demonstrate the commitment and efforts of the construction industry in establishing a safe and healthy construction site environment in order to achieve the vision of "Zero Accident", we have drawn up a Joint Declaration and held a signature campaign to encourage the construction industry personnel to strive to achieve the target of "Zero Accident" as advocated in the Joint Declaration. Just within one week upon the launching of the Joint Declaration, nearly 200 organizations and more than 6 000 individuals have signed the Joint Declaration through various means.

In a bid to enhance site operating environment to attract more people to join the construction industry, we have required the contractors under public works contracts to provide welfare facilities for workers, including drinking water dispensers, storage compartments, showering facilities, etc.. With the onset of the summer season, we would specifically remind the contractors to adopt caring measures for the workers, such as enhancing the knowledge of workers on working in hot weather and providing shelter areas and sufficient drinking water.

In addition to the above initiatives, to uplift the image of construction sites by enhancing their cleanliness and tidiness, we have incorporated provisions in public works contracts since November 2010 to ensure that contractors would allocate sufficient resources to upkeep the cleanliness and tidiness of construction sites and the neighbouring areas. To further strengthen the image building for the construction industry and the site personnel, we have requested contractors of all public works contracts with a construction period of not less than 12 months to provide uniform for the site personnel since May 2011. Besides, hoardings with aesthetic appearance that blend in with the surrounding will be erected under new public works contracts.

Yours faithfully,



(Charmaine H W WONG)
for Secretary for Development

c.c. Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury
Director (Training), Construction Industry Council