

**Public Hearing of Public Accounts Committee  
of the Legislative Council on 18 May 2019**

**Director of Audit's Report No. 72  
Chapter 3: Employment services provided by the Labour Department**

**Opening remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare**

Chairman,

The Government accepts the recommendations set out in Chapter 3 of the Director of Audit's Report No. 72 on the employment services provided by the Labour Department (LD). We will explore practicable ways to take forward the recommendations of the Audit Commission to strengthen LD's employment and recruitment services.

2. LD has been striving to provide effective and convenient employment and recruitment services for job seekers and employers. It reviews its operation from time to time and initiates adjustments or enhancements in a timely manner. Riding on the solid growth of the local economy, labour demand in recent years surged and unemployment rate held low, decreasing significantly from 3.4% in 2016 to the 20-year low of 2.8% in 2018. While the total number of unemployed persons shows a corresponding downward trend, the number of private sector vacancies recorded by LD reached a historic high of over 1.46 million in 2018. Amidst the significant tightening of labour market, quite a number of employers are facing problems of insufficient manpower and recruitment difficulties. As such, job centres and industry-based recruitment centres of LD proactively adopt measures and strengthen liaisons with employers to help them recruit workers. Job centres in various districts also organise a large number of district-based and thematic job fairs to facilitate job seekers in their locality to meet with employers and attend on-the-spot interviews in the centres. Employers have responded favourably and participated actively in these events.

3. We have also noted the continuous upsurge in the penetration rate of smart phones in Hong Kong. Many job seekers search and apply for jobs through job portals or mobile applications. To match job seekers' needs and enhance the efficiency in disseminating job vacancy information and the whole

recruitment process, LD also provides its on-line platform, Interactive Employment Service (iES), on which employers are welcomed to open up their contact details along with the vacancy information to enable job seekers to approach them direct for application. As a user-friendly measure, job seekers are not required to register with LD before gaining access to the relevant information and applying for these vacancies. LD will continue to enhance the design and functionality of the iES website and its mobile application to improve user experience and expedite job seekers' search for suitable vacancies and access to the required employment information.

4. Young people, elderly persons, the ethnic minorities and persons with disabilities may face different problems and considerations in their job search. To support their employment, LD implements a wide range of initiatives targeting at the particular employment needs of each of these groups.

5. We noticed that the Audit Commission's study and recommendations on LD's employment services were made against the background of solid growth of the local economy and tight labour market situation in the past several years. The number of job vacancies needed to be filled was on the increase while the number of job seekers was on the decline. LD will continue to keep tabs on the changes in the economy and, in view of the latest labour market situation, explore measures for furtherance of the Audit Commission's recommendations to better serve the needs of job seekers and employers.

6. My colleagues and I would be pleased to answer questions raised by Members. Thank you, Chairman.

Labour and Welfare Bureau  
Labour Department  
May 2019