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勞工及福利局
香港金鐘添美道
政府總部



LABOUR AND WELFARE BUREAU
GOVERNMENT SECRETARIAT

Central Government Offices
Tim Mei Avenue
Admiralty, Hong Kong

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6 September 2013

Miss Betty Ma
Clerk to Panel on Manpower
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Miss Ma,

Proposal to address youth unemployment and related problems

Thank you for your letter of 1 August 2013 referring to us Hon Leung Kwok-hung's letter of 31 July 2013 and the captioned proposal.

This Bureau and the Labour Department (LD) met with “綠色和平經濟與新型社會保障研究會” this May through Hon Leung's arrangement and received the “employment through train” (就業直通車) proposal and the related literature.

The Administration attaches great importance to youth employment. In this connection, a multi-pronged strategy has been in place to assist young people in securing employment through comprehensive employment and supporting initiatives which include the Youth Employment and Training Programme (YETP) and the Special Training and Enhancement Programme (My STEP) under the Support for Self-reliance Scheme (SFS Scheme).

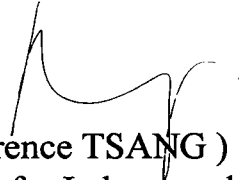
YETP, which is launched by the LD, provides one-stop pre-employment and on-the-job training for young people aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment at sub-degree level or below. It serves as an effective platform to facilitate co-operation among various sectors including the Government, training bodies and employers in promoting youth employment. YETP offers a diversified range of training with no pre-set quota. Enrolment is on a year-round basis without any minimum academic requirements so as to allow participation of any young people who have aspirations to receive training or to seek employment. Since its implementation in 1999, many young people are attracted to join the Programme each year and it has assisted over 190 000 young people so far. Besides, YETP office conducts a trainee development survey each year covering the trainees who have enrolled on the Programme and completed the 12 months' support services. For the last three programme years, over 70% of them were in employment at the time of survey.

In addition, the SFS Scheme, launched by the Social Welfare Department (SWD) under the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance (CSSA) Scheme, aims to encourage and assist the able-bodied CSSA applicants aged 15 to 59 in securing employment and achieving self-reliance while providing them with financial assistance. In particular, My STEP under the SFS Scheme is an employment assistance programme specially designed to help the 'hard-to-assist' CSSA unemployed youth aged 15 to 29 rejoin the workforce or return to mainstream schooling. Under this Programme, operating non-governmental organisations provide a well-planned and co-ordinated range of services for no less than nine months to facilitate the participants to secure and sustain in employment or to return to mainstream schooling. The services range from pre-programme interview, motivational and disciplinary training, pre-training counseling, intensive post-training support, job search guidance, job attachment services, job matching services, provision of Temporary Financial Aid, participation in LD's YETP where appropriate to post-placement support. Since its implementation in October 2006 to December 2012, a total of 1 960 young people have joined the Programme. Amongst them, 1 147 (about 60%) succeeded in seeking full-time employment or education, 1 021 (over 50%) had been in employment or education for three months, and 273 (over 10%) had left the CSSA net. Meanwhile, from October 2006 to July 2013, the number of unemployed CSSA cases dropped from 39 000 to 23 000, representing a rate of decrease of over 40%.

We note Hon Leung's proposal, including the suggestions on YETP. As mentioned in our reply to Hon Leung earlier this month, the proposal,

which include pre-payment of wages before employment, provision of credits to unemployed youth by financial institutions under the social security system and provision of comprehensive employment services to guarantee employment, carries far-reaching implications on our existing social security system and public finance, and need to be examined and handled carefully. The Government has all along been attaching great importance to youth employment and will continue to enhance our services having regard to the latest development of the labour market and the actual situation so as to meet the needs of young people.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Florence Tsang', written over the printed name.

(Florence TSANG)

for Secretary for Labour and Welfare