

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)843/13-14
(These minutes have been seen
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/MP+WS

Panel on Manpower and Panel on Welfare Services

Minutes of joint meeting
held on Monday, 9 December 2013, at 2:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 of the Legislative Council Complex

Members present : Members of the Panel on Manpower

Hon LEE Cheuk-yan (Chairman)
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, BBS (Deputy Chairman)
* Hon Albert HO Chun-yan
* Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP
* Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
* Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
* Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki
Hon KWOK Wai-keung
Hon SIN Chung-kai, SBS, JP
* Hon POON Siu-ping, BBS, MH
* Hon TANG Ka-piu
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP

Members of the Panel on Welfare Services

Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP (Chairman)
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che (Deputy Chairman)
Hon TAM Yiu-chung, GBS, JP
Hon Frederick FUNG Kin-kee, SBS, JP
Hon Alan LEONG Kah-kit, SC
Hon Frankie YICK Chi-ming
Hon Gary FAN Kwok-wai
Hon CHAN Chi-chuen
Dr Hon Fernando CHEUNG Chiu-hung
Dr Hon Helena WONG Pik-wan

**Members
absent** : Members of the Panel on Manpower

Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
* Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan

Members of the Panel on Welfare Services

Hon Ronny TONG Ka-wah, SC
Hon WONG Yuk-man
Hon CHAN Han-pan

(* Also member of the Panel on Welfare Services)

(# Also member of the Panel on Manpower)

**Public Officers
attending** : Item II

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

Ms Doris CHEUNG Mei-chu, JP
Deputy Secretary for Labour & Welfare
(Welfare)¹

Mr Byron NG Kwok-keung, JP
Deputy Commissioner for Labour
(Labour Administration)

Mr FUNG Man-chung
Assistant Director of Social Welfare
(Family & Child Welfare)

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

**Attendance
by invitation**

: Item II

Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress
of Hong Kong

Mr NGAN Man-yu
Deputy Spokesperson on Manpower

Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs

Miss LAW Pui-shan
Policy Research Officer

The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions
Women Affairs Committee

Ms Juan LEUNG Chung-yan
Director

Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress
of Hong Kong (Women Affairs Committee)

Miss Sofie WU
Member

Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress
of Hong Kong (Family Affairs Committee)

Mr Sam LAM
Member

Liberal Party

Miss Lian CHAN
Member

Foreign Domestic Helpers Concern Group

Mr Micheal LEE
Convenor

天水圍基層婦女關注會

Ms CHAN Wah-chun
Representative

推廣員及零散工工會籌備組

Miss NG Cheuk-ling
Organizer

Hong Kong Women Workers' Association

Miss LEUNG Wei-ching
Organizer

託兒權益行動組

Miss LAM Yu-nog
Member

天水圍婦女權益會

Ms CHEUNG Man
Representative

Tin Shui Wai Community Development Network

Ms CHUNG Yuen-yi
Chairperson

天水圍照顧者權益關注組

Ms LAU Saning
Representative

照顧者權益會

Mr CHAN Wai-lun
Organizing Officer

天水圍婦女就業關注組

Ms GUO Chunli
Representative

兒童照顧者聯席

Mr Herrick LEE Yen-hao
Member

Hong Kong Federations of Women's Centres

Mr LEUNG Shek-lun
Advocacy Officer

深水埗關注託兒小組

Ms YANG Quliu
Member

基層婦女就業關注組

Ms Qiu Suhua
Member

長沙灣社區託兒關注組

Ms YE Chun-lan
Member

爭取增加託兒服務小組

Ms HUANG Yingjuan
Member

Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong Diocesan Pastoral Centre
for Workers (NT)

Mr Augustine YU Siu-po
Acting Centre Supervisor

Northern District Employment Concern Group

Ms Venny KWOK
Convener

Smart & Beauty House

Mr CHOW King
Group Member

Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union

Ms CHUNG Bik-miu
Chairperson

Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions
(Women Affairs Committee)

Ms CHEUNG Lai-ha
Chairperson

The Lion Rock Institute

Miss Samantha Denford
Research Assistant

Tin Shui Wai Community Development Alliance

Mr KONG Kin-sing
Social Worker

Labour Party

Ms Judy NG
Representative

Manpower Concern Group

Mr WONG Kwai-sang

The Democratic Party

Ms CHAN Shu-ying
Member

Clerk in attendance : Miss Betty MA
Chief Council Secretary (2) 1

Staff in attendance : Ms Rita LAI
Senior Council Secretary (2) 1

Ms Kiwi NG
Legislative Assistant (2) 1

Miss Lulu YEUNG
Clerical Assistant (2) 1

Action

I. Election of Chairman

Miss CHAN Yuen-han was elected Chairman of the joint meeting.

II. Women Employment

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)438/13-14(01) and (02))

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("SLW") briefed members on the various support services and measures provided by the Government to facilitate women in joining or re-joining the employment market, details of which were set out in the Administration's paper.

3. Members noted the background brief entitled "Women employment" prepared by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Secretariat.

Views of deputations

4. At the invitation of the Chairman, 32 deputations presented their views on the subject of women employment. A summary of the views of deputations is in the **Annex**.

(Post-meeting note: The submissions tabled at or received after the meeting were issued to members vide LC Paper Nos. CB(2)486/13-14, CB(2)540/13-14 and CB(2)559/13-14 on 10, 17 and 19 December 2013 respectively.)

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[To allow more time for discussion, members agreed to extend the meeting by 15 minutes.]

Discussion

5. In response to the views of deputations, SLW advised that -
- (a) the Steering Committee on Population Policy released its consultation document on 24 October 2013 ("the Consultation Document") and launched a four-month public engagement exercise. The Administration would listen to the public's views on issues such as how to unleash the potential of existing population, including, among others, female home-makers who wished to enter or re-join the employment market to take up employment;
 - (b) the Administration fully understood the difficulties encountered by females when joining or re-joining the employment market and attached great importance to the views expressed by the deputations on the subject. While acknowledging the considerable contribution of female home-makers to the community, the Administration was exploring various measures to remove barriers that hindered the females from entering or re-joining the labour market;
 - (c) in 2012, there were 682 800 economically inactive females aged 15 and over who were engaged in household duties. According to the survey findings of a Special Topic Enquiry on "Desire of economically inactive persons for taking up jobs if being offered suitable employment" conducted by the Census and Statistics Department ("C&SD") between April and June 2011, around 8% of female home-makers aged 30 to 59 would be willing to work if being offered suitable employment. The Administration would endeavour to create a supportive environment conducive to these women to enter or re-join the labour force, thus facilitating women to realise their potential at work while balancing their needs to take care of their families at the same time;
 - (d) the Administration planned to introduce a bill into LegCo around March/April 2014 on the provision of three-day statutory paternity leave;

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- (e) as regards legislating for standard working hours, the two working groups formed under the Standard Working Hours Committee, namely "Working Hours Consultation Group" and "Working Hours Study Group" would strive to complete their work by end-2014, and submit reports to the Committee for deliberation and making recommendations on the policy direction;
- (f) a review on the continuous contract requirement (i.e. an employee employed by the same employer for four weeks or more and worked for 18 hours or more each week, commonly referred to as the "4-18" requirement) under the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) ("EO") was undertaken by the Labour Department ("LD"). The Administration would further consult the Labour Advisory Board ("LAB") on possible approaches to deal with the continuous contract requirement. The Panel on Manpower was briefed in July 2013 on several possible approaches to deal with the issue;
- (g) the Administration was committed to encouraging employers to implement family-friendly employment practices ("FFEP") which were crucial to help employees balance their roles and responsibilities in work and family. It was imperative for employers to change their mindset and provide employees with flexible and varied work arrangements and support; and
- (h) while there was an overall unused quota for various child care services, the Administration was aware of the district variations in the utilisation rates of different types of child care services. Deployment of resources was being undertaken in a flexible manner where necessary. As regards the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project ("NSCCP"), it aimed to provide needy families with more flexible child care services and to foster, at the same time, mutual help and care in the community. While a total of at least 720 places were offered under NSCCP, the service operators had the flexibility to increase the number of home-based child care places on top of the minimum requirement set by the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") to meet the actual service demand. In effect, a working group on child care services ("the Working Group") under the Special Needs Groups Task Force of the Commission on

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Poverty had met with a number of service operators, users and child carers and considered the mode of service provision appropriate. Home-based child carers were recruited and trained by the service operators and their residences were subject to inspection. As NSCCP was not an employment project, child carers did not have employment relationship with the service operators. They were provided with an incentive payment at an hourly rate of \$18 to \$22. The Administration would keep in view the service demand and operation of various child care services.

[Members agreed to further extend the meeting by 15 minutes.]

Provision of child care services

6. Noting that there was a mismatch problem of the provision of child care services and the service needs in some districts, Mr POON Siu-ping called on the Administration to address the issue and adjust the resources allocation as soon as practicable.

7. Pointing out that the 690 subsidised places of full-day standalone Child Care Centres ("CCCs") for the territory had remained unchanged for a number of years and that the utilisation rate in many districts including Sham Shui Po and Tsuen Wan/Kwai Tsing was 100%, Dr Helena WONG expressed the view that the provision of child care services was far from adequate and it made it difficult for females with young children to join the labour force. Dr WONG asked whether the Administration would consider allocating more resources to child care services by, say, increasing the number of subsidised full-day child care places to 1 000 in the coming year.

8. Assistant Director of Social Welfare (Family & Child Welfare) ("ADSW (F&CW)") responded that while the number of SWD subsidised full-day standalone CCC places stood at 690, the number of children aged below three was at a similar level with that in 2001. Despite a rebound of birth rate in the recent years, the number of children in this age group in 2011 had only grown by less than 1% when compared to that in 2001. Specifically, the number of newborn babies had decreased from some 86 000 in 1981 to some 48 000 in 2001 and that the number of children aged below three had also decreased from some 195 000 in 1996 to some 149 000 in 2001. Echoing SLW's earlier remarks, ADSW (F&CW) said that there were still unused quotas for various child care services given the utilisation rates for the 1 000 child care places for children aged

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below two and the 23 000 child care places for children aged between two to three in Kindergarten-cum-Child Care Centres were 70% and 78% respectively. While noting the actual service needs varied at the district level, ADSW (F&CW) said that the Working Group was conducting a comprehensive review on the provision of child care services and SWD would continue to closely monitor the demand of various child care services. The Administration would consider adjusting resource allocation and increasing the provision of service places and relevant subsidy when the needs arose. As a short-term measure, consideration would be given to examining the feasibility of in-situ service expansion in existing CCCs subject to the relevant requirements under the Child Care Services Ordinance. In the long run, the provision of child care services in specific districts would be drawn up having regard to the circumstantial changes, including the demographic profile and service needs in different districts.

Admin

9. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan requested the Administration to provide the timetable for in-situ service expansion in existing CCCs by districts as a short-term measure to provide additional child care places.

10. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung expressed disappointment about the deficiencies in various complementary measures for child care support, including limited number of subsidised child care places and trained child carers in face of the great service demand and the lack of suitable venues for setting up CCCs in the community. In his view, such measures were crucial to releasing female home-makers to join the labour market.

11. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of coordinated efforts in addressing issues relating to women employment. Notwithstanding the deliberations on the subject by various committees and working groups over the years, little progress had been made to improve the situation. To provide support services for working parents, Mr LEE asked whether the Administration would consider implementing flexible and quality after school care programmes till, say, 6 pm or 7 pm, in all primary schools across the territory.

12. Deputy Secretary for Labour & Welfare (Welfare)¹ ("DS/LW(W)") said that various after school care and learning programmes were run by schools and non-government organisations, subsidised by SWD or the Education Bureau ("EDB"). Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's suggestion of extending the programme to all primary schools would need to be studied further. ADSW (F&CW) added that the Working Group, comprising representatives of SWD, EDB, the stakeholders and special needs groups,

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was undertaking a review on the child care services, including the After-school Care Pilot Scheme under the Community Care Fund. The review results would be made available in due course.

13. The Chairman said that the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions considered that the support services and measures provided by the Finnish Government provided useful experience on how to release females to join the workforce. The female labour force participation rate ("LFPR") in Finland had consequently increased from some 40% to more than 70% over the past years.

NSCCP

14. Dr Helena WONG pointed out that as a matter of fact, some participants of NSCCP aimed to earn an income to support their family by taking up the role of child carers. Dr WONG asked whether the Administration would consider regularising the child care services under NSCCP such that child carers could receive an hourly payment of no less than the statutory minimum wage rate.

15. Mr KWOK Wai-keung considered that NSCCP should have a clear positioning for its future development. Should the Administration regard child carers of NSCCP as volunteers, the Administration should formulate concrete plan to promote community participation and convey a clear message to the public about the nature of the programme. Citing the development of environmental protection and recycling industries in South Korea as an example, Mr KWOK said that a considerable number of volunteers were engaged in processing recycled items for the purpose of raising fund for non-profit-making organisations. Mr KWOK added that the Administration should allocate more resources for providing additional child care places under NSCCP to meet the actual service demand.

16. In response, DS/LW(W) reiterated that the Working Group was studying ways to enhance the child care services, including NSCCP. Members' views on the subject would be taken into consideration in the review.

17. In response to Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's comment on the limited child care places under NSCCP, ADSW (F&CW) said that while the minimum number of places under NSCCP was 720, service operators would be given additional resources to provide additional child care places to meet the actual service demand. There was an increase in the service usage

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with increasing number of child beneficiaries from some 7 000 in 2010-2011 to 10 333 in 2012-2013. Moreover, a total number of 1 650 child carers who were registered under NSCCP had received proper training.

FFEP

18. Expressing concern about whether importation of labour would be employed to address the problem of lowering LFPR as stated in the Consultation Document, Mr KWOK Wai-keung enquired about the specific measures to be taken to unleash the labour force. In his view, the Administration should develop more home-based job opportunities to facilitate women to work at home while undertaking household duties.

19. Deputy Commissioner for Labour (Labour Administration) ("DC for L(LA)") said that the Administration had all along encouraged employers to adopt FFEP and to allow flexible work arrangements. The Administration would continue to work in this direction.

20. Mr POON Siu-ping considered it difficult to change employers' mindset in adopting FFEP merely through publicity. With respect to LD's role as a facilitator of FFEP, Mr POON enquired about the specific measures taken to foster a family-friendly culture in employment, the indicators for assessing the effectiveness of the measures as well as the results in the past few years.

21. DC for L (LA) advised that in the past few years, various Government bureaux/departments and the Family Council had strived to encourage employers to adopt employee-oriented management measures and implement FFEP. It was evident that there was an increasing number of employers granting their employees benefits that exceeded the statutory requirements under EO and provided them with flexible and varied work arrangements and support, such as granting paternity leave, compassionate leave and special casual leave, and implementing flexitime. Moreover, an increasing number of employers participating in the "Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme" organised by the Family Council and the "Caring Company Scheme" organised by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service also showed the increasing recognition of FFEP by employers. Through LD's promotional efforts to showcase exemplary examples in implementing FFEP by enterprises of different sizes, employers were enlightened on the business cases of adopting such measures which would be beneficial to business development and staff recruitment and retention. The Administration would continue in such direction.

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22. DC for L (LA) added that the nine industry-based tripartite committees and the 18 Human Resources Managers Clubs also reflected that more employers were willing to implement FFEP with increasing resources allocation for the purpose of staff retention. As a step forward to promote FFEP, the Administration planned to introduce a bill for the provision of statutory paternity leave in the 2013-2014 legislative session.

Protection of female employees' rights and benefits

23. Dr Fernando CHEUNG expressed concern about the protection and benefits of female employees not engaged under a continuous contract. While these female employees were accorded certain levels of protection and benefit under existing labour legislation depending on their length of employment or weekly working hours with the same employers, they were not entitled to other employment benefits (including rest days, paid statutory holidays, annual leave, sickness allowance, severance payment and long service payment) under EO. Mr TANG Ka-piu shared a similar concern. Dr CHEUNG noted from the results of a special topic enquiry on employees engaged under employment contracts with short duration or working hours (hereafter referred to as "SDWH employees") as published by C&SD in July 2011, that there were 148 300 SDWH employees at the time of enumeration. Dr CHEUNG enquired about the proportion of female workers among the SDWH employees.

24. DC for L(LA) pointed out that among the 148 300 SDWH employees, 50 200 employees, who usually worked 18 hours or more per week and were employed in their present jobs for less than four weeks at the time of enumeration but expected to continue working in their present jobs for four weeks or more, should not be considered as SDWH employees. Among the remaining 98 100 employees not engaged under a continuous contract, overall speaking about half of them were female. While in this group there were 56 300 employees who usually worked less than 18 hours per week, around 75% were female. DC for L(LA) added that the Administration attached great importance to the review of the continuous contract requirements. In dealing with the issue, several approaches had been put forward for deliberation. While LAB had deliberated on the pros and cons of the various approaches, members of LAB had not come to a view and would consult their respective employers' associations and employees' unions and continue to deliberate on individual approaches in greater details at a meeting scheduled for early 2014.

Action

25. In response to Mr TANG Ka-piu's enquiry about the details of the proposed approaches to deal with the continuous contract requirements, DC for L(LA) advised that a consensus on the approach was yet to be reached. While lowering the threshold of 18 hours per week to 16 hours per week was one of the possible approaches to deal with the continuous contract requirements, consideration was also being given to accepting less than 18 working hours in one of the four weeks. DC for L(LA) reiterated that members of LAB were consulting their respective employers' associations and employees' unions. After LAB's deliberation on the results of the consultation in the first quarter of 2014, the Administration would revert to the Panel on Manpower.

26. Having regard to the fact that women outnumbered men in entering employment contracts with short duration or working hours, Dr Fernando CHEUNG suggested that the view of the Equal Opportunities Commission be sought as to whether the 4-18 requirement had barred many female employees from enjoying full employment benefits under EO, and whether it constituted a breach of section 38(1) of the Sex Discrimination Ordinance (Cap. 480), which stipulated that it was unlawful for the Government to discriminate against a woman in the performance of its functions or the exercise of its powers. Members agreed.

Clerk

27. Dr Fernando CHEUNG further suggested that the stance of Women's Commission ("WoC") be sought on the matter. DS/LW(W) said that WoC had deliberated on the Consultation Document and would submit its views to the Chief Secretary for Administration's Office. DS/LW(W) added that LWB and WoC were conducting a time-use survey in collaboration with C&SD to find out the reasons why Hong Kong women left the labour market and the factors that would attract them to take up employment again. The findings would help the Administration consider measures that further promote women employment.

28. Pointing out that a considerable number of women were SDWH employees and were not entitled to full employment benefits, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung held the view that the Administration should strive to develop labour intensive industries, such as environmental protection and waste recycling industries, which would create ample job opportunities for low-skilled and low-educated employees so as to address the problem of taking up fragmented jobs and casual work by female employees.

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29. In closing up the discussion, the Chairman said that various issues of concern relating to women employment warranted to be followed up by a dedicated subcommittee. However, the number of subcommittees on policy issues in action had reached the maximum number of eight as stipulated in the House Rules, and several subcommittees were currently placed on the waiting list for activation. In the circumstances, the Chairman suggested, after consulting Chairman of the Panel on Manpower, that issues relating to child care services would be followed up by the Panel on Welfare Services while issues relating to employment support services and relevant labour legislation would be followed up by the Panel on Manpower as appropriate. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan further suggested that the Working Group should be invited to join the discussion on child care services when the Panel on Welfare Services revisited the issue at its future meetings. Members agreed.

30. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 5:35 pm.

Council Business Division 2
Legislative Council Secretariat
10 February 2014

Panel on Manpower and Panel on Welfare Services

Joint meeting on Monday, 9 December 2013, at 2:30 pm

Summary of views and concerns expressed by deputations on "Women employment"

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
1.	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The deputation requested the Administration to strengthen the provision of subsidised child care services in the community, including increasing the number of child care places and extension of service hours during weekdays, weekends and public holidays, with a view to removing the barriers which discouraged females from working. • The Government should allocate additional resources to primary schools for the purpose of providing after school care service to their students so as to relieve the burden of working parents from child caring. • The Government should take the lead to implement family-friendly employment policies and practices ("FFEP") in the civil service, including flexitime and home office, so as to set an example for employers in adopting good "employee-oriented" management measures to help females join the labour market. • The Government should address the employment difficulties and discrimination faced by the new arrival women from the Mainland, including low pay and long working hours. Appropriate training should be provided to these females to assist them in integrating into the society and taking up employment.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
2.	Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Consequent upon undertaking household duties, a considerable number of females could only take up casual work and thus were engaged under employment contracts with short duration or working hours (hereafter referred to as "SDWH employees"). Their entitlements were inadequately safeguarded because of not meeting the continuous contract requirements (i.e. an employee employed by the same employer for four weeks or more and worked for 18 hours or more each week, commonly referred to as the "4-18" requirement) under the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57) ("EO"). ● The provision of subsidised child care services was insufficient to meet the service needs of working mothers who had to work for long hours. It was also unaffordable for those females who earned the statutory minimum wage ("SMW") level to pay the child carer fees which ranged from \$18 to \$24 per hour under the Neighbourhood Support Child Care Project ("NSCCP"). The Government should conduct a review of NSCCP and strengthen the day child care services. ● The Government should formulate or enhance relevant labour legislation to facilitate women employment, including legislating for standard working hours ("SWH") and paternity leave ("PL") and extension of maternity leave, as well as address problems of age discrimination and different pay for equal work between female and male employees.
3.	The Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions Women Affairs Committee [LC Paper No. CB(2)486/13-14(01)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To facilitate females in joining the labour force, the Government should allocate more resources to strengthen child care and after school care services, including increasing the number of child care places and flexibilities of the services. Consideration could be given to regularising NSCCP and raising the hourly payment rate for child carers of NSCCP to a level close to SMW. ● The Government should encourage employers to provide employees with flexible and varied work arrangements and support as well as enhance the protection of employees' entitlements. ● To encourage more females to take up employment across districts and during the less preferable hours, consideration could be given to relaxing the eligibility criteria and extending the coverage of the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy ("WITS") Scheme.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
4.	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (Women Affairs Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was understood that many females were willing to work if there was sufficient support for them to balance their roles and responsibilities in work and family. To this end, the Government should <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- regularise NSCCP and collaborate with training bodies to provide formal training to child carers so as to strengthen the child care support for working parents; and -- enhance the Fee Waiving Subsidy Scheme under the After School Care Programme ("ASCP"), including increasing the number of places for fee waiving and lowering the application threshold such that more needy low-income families not on Comprehensive Social Security Assistance ("CSSA") could also benefit from ASCP. ● To facilitate female home-makers to rejoin the labour market, the Government should allocate more resources for provision of appropriate training and support so that these females could acquire new skills to take up employment.
5.	Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong (Family Affairs Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Government should encourage employers to implement FFEP, including adoption of five-day week, flexitime and flexi-holiday arrangement. Consideration could be given to setting up an award scheme to give recognition of employers who put in place FFEP. ● The Government should encourage employers to extend the duration of the proposed three-day statutory PL, and provide compassionate leave and child care services at workplaces. By making use of information technology, employers could be encouraged to develop flexible work arrangements to facilitate middle-aged women to work at home. ● The Government should expedite the process for legislating for PL so as to facilitate male employees to shoulder the responsibilities of family carers.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
6.	Liberal Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Although there was an imminent need to increase the labour force to address the problem of ageing population, the labour force participation rate ("LFPR") of females in Hong Kong was on a low side. In 2012, the female LFPR in Hong Kong was some 50% as compared with 58% in Singapore. It was largely attributed to the difficulties faced by females to balance their roles and responsibilities in work and family. The provision of some 30 000 child care places in various forms by the Social Welfare Department ("SWD") could hardly meet the actual service demand as the fertility rate was some 91 000 in 2012. • The low-income grassroots families could not afford to hire a foreign domestic helper ("FDH") to undertake household duties. To release the female home-makers of these families to join the labour force, the Government should allocate more resources to strengthen the subsidised child care services. These included increasing the number of places in full-day kindergarten for children aged three to six, after school care for children aged above six, regularising the child care support under NSCCP and considering providing allowance to carers for children aged below 12 at home.
7.	Foreign Domestic Helpers Concern Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having regard to the criminal liability for negligence in taking care of children under the Offences against the Person Ordinance (Cap. 212) ("OAPO"), and the inadequate provision of both subvented and private child care services, many working parents of middle-income families had to engage a FDH to take care of their children and to share the housework. However, FDH employers had to pay excessive intermediary charges and sometimes expenses incurred from premature termination of employment contracts with FDHs. • To facilitate women to remain in employment, the deputation urged the Government to take measures to address problems associated with FDH employment, including strengthening the immigration control of FDHs to prevent job-hopping, studying the viability of stipulating a probation period in the standard employment contract and giving consideration to allowing importation of FDHs from more countries.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
8.	天水圍基層婦女關注會	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Females of low-income families faced difficulties in joining the labour market because of the need to take care of their families, and they faced immense financial pressure because of lack of financial protection. ● While some females might choose not to join the labour force when their children were young, the Government should provide sufficient child care services to meet their service needs if so required. ● In recognition of the efforts of care-takers at home, the Administration should consider introducing a carer allowance to provide financial support for them.
9.	推廣員及零散工工會籌備組 [LC Paper No. CB(2)559/13-14(01)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● According to the statistics of the Census and Statistics Department, around 75% of SDWH employees were females. The Administration should review the 4-18 requirement so as to provide these females with job security and to safeguard their employment entitlements, including annual leave and severance payment. ● It was noteworthy that many enterprises and even some Government departments engaged a considerable number of SDWH employees in different trades and industries, including the catering and service industries. Worse still, the majority of employees in specific trades such as promoters were SDWH employees who had been working for a long period of time without protection of their employees' rights and benefits. This had given rise to the problem of working-poor of female employees. ● In the light of limited work types available for female workers, which were mostly available in the low-pay and low-skilled industries, the Government should study how to assist females to secure long-term employment.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
10.	Hong Kong Women Workers' Association [LC Paper No. CB(2)486/13-14(02)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was difficult for female home-makers to join the labour force because of the need to take care of the families. To release them to enter the labour market, the Government should provide adequate and flexible child care services. ● Females faced different kinds of difficulties in their employment, including low wages, limited choices of jobs, long working hours, and lack of protection of their employees' rights and benefits. ● The SMW rate should be reviewed on an annual basis and be raised to \$35 per hour. Moreover, it was recommended that the 4-18 requirement under EO be abolished and employees be provided with their employment rights and benefits on a pro rata basis. ● A universal retirement scheme should be introduced to safeguard the protection of female home-makers and employees after retirement.
11.	託兒權益行動組 [LC Paper No. CB(2)486/13-14(03)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The provision of some 5 400 places under ASCP was inadequate to meet the service demand. The Government should consider increasing the number of places and level of subsidy as well as extending the service hours of ASCP. ● Given the extensive service coverage in each district, child care services under the district-based NSCCP were considered insufficient. It was recommended that the target beneficiaries of the programme be expanded to cover children aged up to 12. ● The Government should develop more work types suitable for women so as to facilitate women to join or re-join the labour force.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
12.	天水圍婦女權益會	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Both the child care services under ASCP and that of the After-school Care Pilot Scheme financed by the Community Care Fund were insufficient to meet the service needs. ● Given that NSCCP was a fee-charging programme, the low-income families might not be able to afford the services. ● The Government should consider introducing carer allowance to care-takers of children aged below 12 at home and also enhancing the protection of SDWH employees' entitlements.
13.	Tin Shui Wai Community Development Network [LC Paper No. CB(2)486/13-14(04)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the light of the insufficient child care services in Tin Shui Wai, it was difficult for the female homemakers in the district to join the labour force. The Government should strengthen the services and deploy more resources as necessary. ● The provision of child care services under NSCCP was insufficient. Consideration should be given to regularising the services so as to benefit more target beneficiaries. ● The Government should consider introducing carer allowance to support care-takers of children at home.
14.	天水圍照顧者權益關注組	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The deputation highlighted the difficulties faced by working mothers to work across districts because of the need to take care of their children. The income of part-time jobs was on the one hand limited and on the other hand, it was difficult for them to take up a full-time job while taking care of their children. ● The service of NSCCP was inadequate in Tin Shui Wai. ● To release females to join the labour force, it was imperative that the Government could provide comprehensive child care services.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
15.	照顧者權益會	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Females played an indispensable role in taking care of families, including children and sick family members, which had also released other family members to join the labour force. The low female LFPR was largely attributed to the insufficient child care support. ● Instead of continuing NSCCP which was considered undesirable, the Administration should develop comprehensive child care services which should be affordable, accessible and reliable. ● By making reference to overseas practices, the Administration should consider introducing carer allowance to support care-takers at home. ● The Administration should encourage employers to adopt FFEP so as to help female employees to balance their family and work lives.
16.	天水圍婦女就業關注組	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was understood that a considerable number of females preferred to work so that they could become self-reliant. It would also be beneficial to their mental health. However, the insufficient child care services made it impossible. ● To address the problem of inadequate child care support, the Administration should strengthen the child care services by providing more full-day kindergarten places. ● The legislative process for standard working hours should be expedited to ensure that employees would be able to strike a balance between work and family lives.
17.	兒童照顧者聯席	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To address low female LFPR, the Administration should formulate policies which were family-friendly so as to facilitate females to join or rejoin the labour market. ● Consideration should be given to re-introducing adult education to better equip females for joining the labour market in future. ● The Administration should make better planning for development of different trades and industries other than service and finance industries so as to create more job opportunities for females.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
18.	Hong Kong Federations of Women's Centres	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Disappointment was expressed about the long-lasting problem of insufficient child care services, which had been raised by deputations representing women groups over the years. The low female LFPR was largely due to the government policies which had emphasized females as home-makers. ● Concerns were raised about the inadequate subvented child care places in some districts, including Kwun Tong, Wong Tai Sin and Sai Kung. ● Instead of providing an incentive payment to the child carers under NSCCP, consideration should be given to regularising the service and engaging females as child carers with reasonable wage.
19.	深水埗關注託兒小組	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the light of the inadequate subsidised child care services in the vicinity of their residence and the expensive private pre-school classes, which amounted to some \$3,400 per month, most women of low-income families were in a dilemma between taking up a part-time job and being a home-maker. ● The Administration was urged to strengthen the subvented full-day pre-school services so as to facilitate females to enter the labour market. Consideration should also be given to raising the income limit for public rental housing application.
20.	基層婦女就業關注組	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The deputation highlighted the difficulties faced by women of low-income families in taking up employment because of being unable to get affordable nursery places for their infants, as the monthly charge of some nurseries was as high as \$4,400. ● The Administration was urged to increase resources allocation to child care services so as to shorten the waiting time for the service as well as raise the subsidy level for the service. ● The child care services under NSCCP should be regularised and the child carers should be provided with proper training.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
21.	長沙灣社區託兒關注組	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The deputation highlighted the difficulties of women of low-income families in joining the employment market because of being unable to afford the expensive child care service, which cost more than \$4,000 per month. The Administration was urged to provide comprehensive subvented child care service. ● The deputation also expressed reservations about the service quality of child care services under NSCCP.
22.	爭取增加託兒服務小組	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● In the light of the long waiting time for subvented child care services, the Administration should increase the number of full-day child care places in the kindergartens and child care centres to enable females to join the employment market. It was understood that a considerable number of working mothers encountered difficulties in child caring during school holidays and they had to entrust their children to relatives in the Mainland. ● Centre-based child care service was considered more preferable than care services under NSCCP as many children felt unsettled in the unfamiliar residence of the child carers. ● There were too much constraints and inflexibilities of the child care services provided in the Mutual Help Child Care Centres, which could not cater for urgent service needs.
23.	Catholic Diocese of Hong Kong Diocesan Pastoral Centre for Workers (NT)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most of the females in the North District ("ND") found it unaffordable to make use of the child care services under NSCCP because the hourly payment rate of \$18 for child carer represented almost 60% of the hourly rate of SMW. ● The provision of less than 100 places in the 12 child care centres in ND could hardly meet the service demand. The Administration should increase the number of places for subvented child care services and regularise the child care services under NSCCP. ● Given that most of the residents in ND had to work across districts, it was imperative for the Administration to legislate for SWH and enhance the WITS Scheme.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
24.	Northern District Employment Concern Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Since a considerable number of females in ND were not able to take up employment, many of the families had fallen into the safety net of CSSA Scheme. ● To facilitate women to work, it was recommended that a subvented child care centre be set up in each of the 18 districts on a pilot basis and the number of such centres in each district be increased progressively. ● In the light of the ageing population and the decrease in LFPR, the Government should increase the resources allocation to help release women to join the labour market so as to achieve a win-win situation.
25.	Smart & Beauty House	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It was detrimental to the health of working females who had to undertake household duties while taking up employment. In many cases, they had to work for long hours in the low-pay industries such as cleaning services and received low wages. There had been increasing call that the Administration should provide assistance to these working-poor females.
26.	Hong Kong Domestic Workers General Union	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Administration was urged to abolish the 4-18 requirement to improve the employees' rights and benefits of low-income women who took up fragmented job only because of the need to take care of the families. ● The Administration should consider providing allowance for employment of domestic workers so as to release females from household duties to work, which was considered as a win-win situation. ● The Administration should consider regularising the child care service under NSCCP and raising the hourly payment rate payable to the child carers.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
27.	Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions (Women Affairs Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● To facilitate females to take up employment, the Administration should endeavour to provide affordable and quality child care services. For instance, regularising the child care services under NSCCP. ● The Administration should improve the existing labour legislation to safeguard the employment of women, such as anti-discrimination against pregnancy, provision of full-paid maternity leave and employment entitlements for SDWH employees, and legislating for SWH.
28.	The Lion Rock Institute	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Females should be provided with the choice of being home-makers, which was important for children's upbringing, or taking up employment. ● Should female home-makers join or re-join the employment market after a long period of time staying out of the labour force, they needed some kinds of adjustment. The offer of a wage rate lower than the SMW rate would create more employment opportunities for these women and facilitate their joining the labour market.
29.	Tin Shui Wai Community Development Alliance [LC Paper No. CB(2)540/13-14(01)]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Administration should either fully subsidize welfare organizations to run the child care services or regularise the child care services under NSCCP to provide affordable and quality service. ● The Administration should consider developing environmental protection industry, which was labour intensive, to create more job opportunities for the low-skilled and less-educated labour.

No.	Name of deputation	Major views and concerns
30.	Labour Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Working females encountered considerable pressure in balancing their roles and responsibilities in work and family. ● While welcoming the Administration's plan of legislating for PL, the proposed three-day PL leave was considered too short to allow fathers of newborn babies to take care of their partners before or after confinement, and the newborn. ● To reduce the pressure faced by working parents, the Administration should conduct a review of OAPO in respect of the provision on leaving young persons or children aged under 16 unattended at home would constitute a criminal offence in the light of the latest social-economic changes.
31.	Manpower Concern Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● As a result of an acute shortage of manpower in the telebet department of the Hong Kong Jockey Club during the night time, the workload of staff in handling telephone calls from customers had been increased significantly, which had caused serious health problem of staff concerned.
32.	The Democratic Party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The Administration should make reference to overseas experience of offering subsidies or child care allowance to parents, including working females. ● The Administration should conduct a review on the provision of diversified child care services in the light of the demographic changes and latest service needs, including those aged below two and children requiring after school child care service. ● The Administration should promote FFEP to employers so as to encourage more females to work.