

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)1005/14-15  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/MP

**Panel on Manpower**

**Minutes of policy briefing cum meeting  
held on Tuesday, 20 January 2015, at 4:30 pm  
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS (Chairman)  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, SBS, JP  
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau  
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung  
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP  
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP  
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, JP  
Hon CHUNG Kwok-pan
- Member attending** : Hon WONG Kwok-hing, BBS, MH
- Member absent** : Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che

**Public Officers attending** : Item IV

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

Miss Annie TAM Kam-lan, JP  
Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Mr Donald TONG Chi-keung, JP  
Commissioner for Labour

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

Mr David LEUNG, JP  
Deputy Commissioner for Labour  
(Occupational Safety and Health)

Item V

Mr Eddie NG, SBS, JP  
Secretary for Education

Mr Brian LO, JP  
Deputy Secretary for Education (1)

Ms Pecvin YONG  
Principal Assistant Secretary (Further Education)  
Education Bureau

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

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

Ms Mina CHAN  
Council Secretary (2) 1

Miss Lulu YEUNG  
Clerical Assistant (2) 1

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**I. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting**  
(LC Paper No. CB(2)649/14-15)

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 December 2014 were confirmed.

**II. Information papers issued since the last meeting**  
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)580/14-15(01), CB(2)602/14-15(01), and CB(2)640/14-15(01))

2. Members noted that the following papers had been issued since the last meeting -

- (a) letter dated 15 December 2014 from 關注公共交通事務聯盟;
- (b) letter dated 7 January 2015 from Mr TANG Ka-piu; and
- (c) submission dated 8 January 2015 from 爭取標準工時聯盟.

**III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion**  
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)651/14-15(01) and (02))

Regular meeting in February 2015

3. Members agreed that the following items proposed by the Administration be discussed at the next regular meeting at 10:45 am on 10 February 2015 -

- (a) Work safety of repair, maintenance, alteration and addition works ("RMAA"); and
- (b) Findings of a survey on the taking of statutory holidays and general holidays by employees.

4. Pointing out that a comprehensive review on the implementation of the Work Incentive Transport Subsidy ("WITS") Scheme was being conducted, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan suggested that the Panel should gauge views from deputations on the subject before the Administration's conclusion of the review. Mr SIN Chung-kai, Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung expressed support for the suggestion. At the

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invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("SLW") advised that the comprehensive review of the WITS Scheme, including its objectives, eligibility criteria, modus operandi and effectiveness, being conducted by the Labour Department ("LD") was initially expected to be completed around mid-2015. In the light of members' views, the Chairman suggested and members agreed that the Panel would receive views from deputations on the subject at the February meeting. To facilitate discussion, the Administration was requested to provide members with the latest information on the implementation of the Scheme.

*(Post-meeting note: The discussion on item "Work safety of RMAA" was subsequently deferred to a future meeting with the concurrence of the Panel Chairman.)*

Issues relating to proposals for appointing subcommittee(s) under the Panel

5. At the invitation of the Chairman, SLW provided members with an update on the work progress on working hours policy, and advised that the Administration would revert to the Panel on the work progress of the Standard Working Hours ("SWH") Committee in March 2015. As regards the review of the arrangement of offsetting severance payments ("SP") and long service payments ("LSP") payable to employees ("the offsetting arrangement"), SLW advised that the Administration would continue to listen to the views of different sectors on the subject, which was a complex issue, in a holistic and careful manner.

**IV. Briefing by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare on the Chief Executive's 2015 Policy Address**

(LC Paper No. CB(2)651/14-15(03), The 2015 Policy Address booklet and The 2015 Policy Agenda booklet)

6. At the invitation of the Chairman, SLW briefed members on the major new and on-going initiatives pertaining to the labour and manpower portfolio to be undertaken by the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") and LD, as set out in the Chief Executive ("CE")'s 2015 Policy Address and Policy Agenda.

*(Post-meeting note: The speaking note of SLW tabled at the meeting was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)688/14-15 on 21 January 2015.)*

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Employees' rights and benefits

7. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of specific policy initiatives on enhancing employees' rights and benefits in the 2015 Policy Address. He was concerned that there was no significant progress in legislating for SWH and abolition of the offsetting arrangement. The proposed increase in the Statutory Minimum Wage ("SMW") rate from May 2015 was minimal and could hardly catch up with the inflation in the past two years. Mr POON Siu-ping also expressed disappointment that the Administration's plan to progressively reduce the proportion of accrued benefits attributed to employer's contribution in the Mandatory Provident Fund account that could be used by the employers to offset LSP and SP and the setting up of a special taskforce to undertake a study on improving protection for workers in high-risk occupations, which were stated in CE's election manifesto, were not included in the 2015 Policy Address.

8. Mr Tommy CHEUNG, on the other hand, expressed grave concern about the progressive enhancement of employees' rights and benefits over the years, including the introduction of the SMW regime and the impending implementation of statutory paternity leave which had made it difficult for the small and medium-sized enterprises ("SMEs") to run their business.

Labour force

*Supplementary Labour Scheme ("SLS") and the enhancement measures*

9. Drawing reference to the Canadian practice, the Deputy Chairman considered that employers who were unable to recruit local workers to fill their job vacancies could be allowed to import workers after having conducted an open recruitment in the local labour market for a period of time.

10. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed concern about the approving mechanism for importation of low-skilled workers under SLS. Given that the Labour Advisory Board ("LAB") comprised equal numbers of representatives from the employer and employee groups, Miss CHAN was concerned that in the event of a tie vote over an application for importation of labour under SLS, the Chairman of LAB, i.e. Commissioner for Labour ("C for L"), might exercise his discretion in support of the application concerned.

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11. SLW and C for L responded that it had always been the Administration's policy to accord priority to the employment of local workers and safeguarding their wage levels. To this end, for each application under SLS, the employer had to first launch a four-week local recruitment exercise and accord priority to hiring local skilled workers to fill the vacancies. During the recruitment period, LD would conduct proactive job matching for the vacancies. LD would also disseminate such vacancy information to relevant training bodies and labour unions, inviting them to refer suitable local job-seekers for interview. Only if employers were genuinely unable to recruit the required workers locally would their SLS applications be considered. LAB, which was an important advisory body on labour matters, would be consulted on each application under SLS before the Administration made a decision. Should LAB members have any concern or objection, they should provide justifications so that C for L could take them fully into account in deliberating on individual SLS applications.

12. Mr Tommy CHEUNG expressed strong dissatisfaction about the difficulties encountered by the catering sector in applying for labour importation through SLS, although the sector faced serious shortage of labour.

13. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions objected to expanding the importation of labour under SLS, having regard to the need of safeguarding employment of local workers. Mr WONG noted with concern about the Administration's plan to introduce further enhancement measures to relieve the labour shortage problem in the construction industry. He cast doubt as to whether the so-called further enhancement measures to SLS would circumvent LAB in vetting importation of labour applications and asked how the Administration would ensure priority be given to the employment of local workforce. Mr TANG Ka-piu, Miss CHAN Yuen-han and Mr LEE Cheuk-yan shared similar concerns. Mr LEE said that the Hong Kong Confederation of Trade Unions had received reports from local workers on fake recruitment in which the employers concerned had no intention to recruit local workers, but merely conducted the recruitment so as to meet the prerequisite requirement under SLS. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung was concerned that the bargaining power of vulnerable workers in industries other than the construction industry would also be adversely affected following the importation of labour in the construction industry.

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14. Responding to members' concerns and views, SLW stressed that approval for importation of labour for the construction industry would be considered in accordance with the existing mechanism. He said that the Administration had rolled out the enhancement measures to SLS since April 2014 to expedite the preparatory work, largely within the Administration, for SLS applications involving 26 trades with manpower shortage, as submitted by contractors for public sector works projects. SLW further said that having regard to the unique operational characteristics of the construction industry and the latter's uncertainties in applying for labour importation under SLS not encountered by other industries, allowing imported skilled workers to work across more than one public sector works project under the same contractor as proposed under the further enhancement measures could enhance the flexibility of deployment of workers, maximise their productivity and control costs more effectively.

15. In response to Mr LEE Cheuk-yan's enquiry, SLW advised that among the 18 applications so received for public sector works projects of the construction industry, two applications involving some 180 skilled workers had been approved as of end of 2014 since the introduction of the enhancement measures while other applications were being processed. An application had been withdrawn by the employer concerned. SLW added that 32 local construction workers had also been employed during the local recruitment for these projects.

*Labour supply in construction industry*

16. Referring to the acute problems of shortage and ageing of skilled workers in the construction industry, Mr Tommy CHEUNG said that the Liberal Party had envisaged the situation in view of the successive commencement of major infrastructure projects and had called on the Administration to expand importation of labour several years ago. Mr LEUNG Che-cheung sought information on the specific work types and the respective shortfall of workers involved.

17. In the light of the Administration's public housing and public rental housing production targets for the following decade, Mr CHUNG Kwok-pan sought information on the manpower requirement in the construction industry and the relevant timetable for importation of labour to increase the necessary labour supply.

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18. Dr KWOK Ka-ki was concerned that importation of labour under SLS might jeopardise the interest of the labour sector, in particular the construction industry. Dr KWOK held the view that the Administration should address labour shortage in the construction industry by improving the working conditions and environment therein. Notwithstanding the increase in the issuance of suspension notices and improvement notices by LD in 2014 as compared with previous years, Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned that the accident rate in the construction industry had remained high. In his view, the Administration should enhance its efforts in addressing the safety issues with a view to attracting new entrants to join the industry. Mr POON further pointed out that the Administration should introduce specific measures to develop the potential workforce provided by new arrivals from the Mainland on the strength of One-way Permits up to 150 persons daily.

19. Mr TANG Ka-piu drew members' attention to the fact that the number of registered construction workers for specific work types had already been increased by 20% to 30% as a result of the training efforts of the Construction Industry Council ("CIC") in recent years. Drawing reference to the importation of labour in Macao, Mr TANG expressed grave concern that importation of labour would result in the suppression of wages for local construction workers and undermine the development of the construction industry.

20. In response to members' views and concerns, SLW said that manpower development for the construction industry was spearheaded by the Development Bureau ("DevB") while LD administered SLS which served as a platform for considering importation of technician-level labour to Hong Kong as necessary. According to CIC's latest manpower forecast in October 2014, the construction industry needed additional skilled workers of about 10 000 to 15 000 in the coming few years. As mentioned earlier, the Administration had rolled out enhancement measures to SLS specifically for 26 trades identified with manpower shortage. Sharing members' views on the importance of attracting local workers to join the construction industry, SLW advised that the Administration had earmarked \$100 million to support CIC in introducing new training initiatives to upgrade the skills of semi-skilled workers to the level of skilled workers. In addition, LD and DevB were working on measures to improve work safety in the construction industry so as to attract young people to join the industry.



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*Talent list and talent admission schemes*

21. Dr KWOK Ka-ki and Mr LEE Cheuk-yan sought clarification on the saying that a talent list for importation of various global talents to Hong Kong was being drawn up. Dr KWOK was concerned that admitting foreign professionals to Hong Kong would deprive the local young people of employment opportunities and Mr LEE was of the view that it would impede upward mobility of the younger generation.

22. In reply, SLW said that the talent admission schemes had been in place for years in Hong Kong. As set out in the 2015 Policy Address, the Administration would study, having regard to overseas experience, the feasibility of drawing up a talent list to attract, in a more effective and focused manner, high-quality talents to support Hong Kong's development as a diversified and high value-added economy. Yet, the study had not started. Referring members to the projected decline of local labour forces from the peak of 3.71 million in 2018 to 3.51 million in 2035, SLW advised that it was therefore necessary to replenish the workforce to sustain Hong Kong's economic development.

23. Mr POON Siu-ping was of the view that LWB should play a gate-keeping role in respect of admitting professionals and skilled labour to Hong Kong under the talent admission schemes.

24. SLW responded that contractors having genuine difficulties in recruiting suitable staff locally might consider applying for importation of workers at or below technician level through SLS which was administered by LD. The admission of professionals under the talent admission schemes was separately administered by the Immigration Department.

Employment support for different target groups

*Elderly employment*

25. While expressing support for a longer working life to help address the problem of a shrinking labour force in Hong Kong, Mr LEUNG Che-cheung was concerned about the elderly-friendly measures taken by the Administration to assist elderly people to remain in or return to the job market. Specifically, Mr LEUNG raised concern about the difficulties in taking out employees' compensation insurance ("ECI") for elderly employees and enquired whether the age limit for the elderly under the Public Transport Fare Concession Scheme for the Elderly and

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Eligible Persons with Disabilities ("the Concession Scheme") could be lowered from 65 to 60 with a view to promoting elderly employment.

26. SLW responded that there was no age limit for procurement of ECI (commonly known as "labour insurance"), while the setting of the premium levels by the insurance sector was subject to various factors. With the Administration's encouragement, the insurance sector had set up the Employees' Compensation Insurance Residual Scheme ("ECIRS"), as a market of last resort, to provide assistance to employers having difficulties in securing ECI. ECIRS had been operating smoothly for years. The Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau / the Office of the Commissioner of Insurance and LD would collaborate with the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers and the insurance sector to promote ECIRS and to launch publicity to explain the points-to-note of taking out ECI policies to employers so as to allay their concern over difficulties in taking out such policies for elderly employees. SLW further said that the Concession Scheme would be extended to maxicabs from the first quarter of 2015, and a review on the Concession Scheme would be conducted one year after operation. While the present target elderly beneficiaries were people aged 65 or above, he did not rule out the possibility of introducing further enhancement of the Concession Scheme.

27. The Deputy Chairman enquired whether the elderly were eligible to apply for the Old Age Living Allowance ("OALA") if they took up part-time job. In response, SLW affirmed that the eligibility of the elderly concerned for making application for OALA would not be affected if the prescribed income limit had not been exceeded.

28. Referring to the Administration's plan of extending the retirement age for new recruits of government employees from mid-2015, Mr SIN Chung-kai enquired whether, under the premise of not legislating for retirement age, the Administration would introduce specific measures to encourage employers in the private sector to follow suit so as to address the challenges arising from an ageing population.

29. SLW advised that by taking the lead in extending the retirement age for government employees, the Administration expected that it would have a demonstration effect to the private sector. In addition, LD would launch various promotional and educational activities to publicise relevant messages across the community and encourage employers to adopt elderly-friendly employment practices at workplaces. The Administration would continue to provide on-the-job training allowance of up to \$3,000 per month for employers of mature job seekers for a

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period of three to six months under the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged. The Administration would extend the programme to cover part-time jobs in the second half of 2015. The Administration would also propose to relax the upper age limit for Category B Security Personnel Permits, which was currently set at 65 years old. Moreover, the Employees Retraining Board ("ERB") would, amongst other target groups, provide training for the elderly in the future, and help elderly people rejoin the job market.

30. In response to Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung's concern, SLW assured members that the proposed relaxation of age limit for Category B Security Personnel was to provide them with an option to work beyond age 65, and their entitlements under the Employment Ordinance would not be affected.

*Women employment*

31. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung was of the view that complementary measures, such as child care support, were crucial to releasing female homemakers to attend training courses so as to equip them for joining the labour market. Mr LEUNG held the view that more resources should be provided by ERB to the training bodies in this regard.

32. SLW shared the view that child care support was crucial to releasing the females to join the labour force and would relay it to ERB for consideration. SLW added that the Administration would launch a series of measures to enhance child care services helping women balance their work and family commitments, including the provision, by phases, about 5 000 additional places of Extended Hours Service at aided child care centres and kindergarten-cum-child care centres from 2015-2016 onwards and the strengthening of the after-school care services. He would brief members on the details at the policy briefing of the Panel on Welfare Services.

Adoption of family-friendly employment practices ("FFEP")

33. Mr KWOK Wai-keung expressed disappointment that no specific measures with legislative effect, other than publicity and education efforts, would be introduced to require employers to adopt FFEP in the 2015 Policy Address. Mr KWOK was concerned that there was little progress in adopting FFEP by employers, albeit the publication of a booklet "Good People Management and Family-friendly Employment Practices" by LD in 2009.

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34. SLW responded that there were notable gradual improvements in the adoption of FFEP in the past years, including the implementation of the five-day week in the Government and the impending provision of three-day paid statutory paternity leave to eligible male employees.

SMW

35. Noting that the SMW rate would be increased to \$32.5 per hour from 1 May 2015, subject to the Legislative Council's approval, Mr WONG Kwok-hing called on the Administration to seriously consider conducting the review of the SMW rate on an annual basis so as to ensure the adjustment would not lag behind the inflation and thereby safeguarding the livelihood of low-income employees.

Working Holiday Scheme ("WHS")

36. In the light of the popularity of WHS among the youngsters, the Deputy Chairman called on the Administration to strengthen the exchange of job vacancy information with the WHS partner economies with a view to facilitating the Hong Kong participants in securing employment as far as practicable before departing for the hosting economies.

37. In response, SLW said that the Consulates-General, which should be well versed in the hosting economies, could readily provide relevant information including where participants could look for jobs in their home countries. For example, the Consulate-General of Ireland had indicated willingness to consider providing briefings to the Hong Kong participants before their departure for Ireland.

Other issue

38. Expressing concern about wage default by the Asia Television Limited ("ATV"), Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung held the view that LD should take enforcement action without further delay. SLW responded that as at 31 December 2014, LD laid a total of 34 summonses against ATV and the concerned director for late wage payment for the months July to September 2014. LD was actively investigating the suspected wage offences and maintained close liaison with the Department of Justice with respect to the outstanding wage payment for the month of November 2014. If there was sufficient evidence, LD would take out prosecution against ATV and its responsible persons.

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**V. Briefing by the Secretary for Education on the Chief Executive's 2015 Policy Address**

(LC Paper No. CB(2)651/14-15(04), The 2015 Policy Address booklet and The 2015 Policy Agenda booklet)

39. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the major development the Qualifications Framework ("QF") in 2014, one of the on-going initiatives of the Education Bureau ("EDB"), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper.

*(Post-meeting note: The speaking note of SED tabled at the meeting was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)688/14-15 on 21 January 2015.)*

Development of QF

40. Referring to the initiative of attracting talents from outside Hong Kong as set out in the 2015 Policy Address, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan queried whether it was attributed to the ineffectiveness of the tertiary education as well as the slow development of QF in nurturing home-grown talents. In this connection, Mr LEE sought clarification about the saying that a talent list had been drawn up for importation of various global talents to Hong Kong. Mr LEE was concerned that it would hinder the upward mobility of local employees, in particular the youth.

41. SED responded that it was the objective of QF to continuously enhance the quality, professionalism and competitiveness of the workforce in Hong Kong in an increasingly globalised and knowledge-based economy, which aligned with the population policy of developing and nurturing a population that would continuously support and drive Hong Kong's socio-economic development as put forward by the Steering Committee on Population Policy ("SCPP"). The establishment of QF provided multiple pathways among academic, vocational and continuing education and defined clearly the standards of different qualifications, ensured their quality and indicated the articulation ladders between different levels of qualifications. Notably, through the setting-up of 19 Industry Training Advisory Committees ("ITACs") for 20 industries/sector under QF, the coverage of the workforce had expanded from 46% in 2013 to 52% in January 2015. As regards the drawing up of a talent list, it was one of the strategies deliberated by SCPP to study the feasibility of attracting more talents from outside Hong Kong, which was a complex task. That said, the study had not yet started.

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42. While expressing support for the introduction of QF which gave due recognition to the skills and experience acquired by practitioners in the workplaces of relevant industries, the Deputy Chairman was concerned how far the objective of establishing QF had been achieved since its launch in 2008.

43. SED advised that QF had been implemented for about six years since 2008 and there was steady progress in the development of the key components. Deputy Secretary for Education ("DS(Ed)") added that as mentioned earlier, 19 ITACs for 20 industries/sector, covering 52% of the workforce in Hong Kong had been set up. In addition, the establishment of the QF Fund of \$1 billion starting from September 2014 provided a steady source of income to support the sustainable development and implementation of QF. As at 31 December 2014, the accumulated amount of funding disbursed from the approved commitment for QF Support Schemes amounted to about \$83.8 million, in which 359 education and training providers had received a total grant of \$66.0 million for seeking accreditation of about 4 200 programmes by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications. Over 11 000 applications in nine industries had been processed under the Recognition of Prior Learning ("RPL") mechanism.

44. Referring members to the initiatives in the 2014 Policy Address that young people working or receiving vocational training in different sectors could have their qualifications recognised under QF and pursued different progression pathways, the Deputy Chairman was of the view that the Administration should enhance its publicity efforts in promoting wider acceptance of QF by employers.

45. Sharing the view on the importance of recognition of QF by the community at large, SED said that the Administration would continue its work in this direction with the stable financial support of the QF Fund.

46. Mr TANG Ka-piu said that that the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions had participated in and supported the development of QF. It was hoped that ITAC would be set up for more industries. SED advised that the implementation of QF in Hong Kong was a long term endeavour. The Administration would continue to reach out to stakeholders of different industries to explore the feasibility of setting up new ITACs.

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47. Expressing the view that the implementation of QF was beneficial to the development of various industries, Mr CHUNG Kwok-pan called on the Administration to consider conducting tracking studies on the career advancement of employees after obtaining recognised qualification under QF with a view to establishing its credibility. SED responded that with the establishment of the QF Fund, QF-related studies could be supported and the conduct of tracking studies would be considered.

48. Mr TANG Ka-piu expressed concern that work experience and skills acquired from seafaring were not duly recognised under QF. He called on the Administration to address the issue.

49. SED advised that QF was a seven-level cross-sectoral hierarchy that supported qualifications of academic, vocational and continuing education. The Administration strived to facilitate the arrangement of credit transfer among different sectors and training institutions as well as the development of multiple pathways among academic, vocational and continuing education and would continue its work in this respect. DS(Ed) added that the seafaring industry was not included in the 20 industries/sector in which ITACs had been set up. Nevertheless, Mr TANG Ka-piu's concern would be relayed to the Transport and Housing Bureau which was discussing with the industry about the matter.

50. Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed concern that some new arrivals who possessed professional qualifications acquired in the Mainland were not duly recognised under QF. To make ends meet, these people had to take up non-skilled work. Miss CHAN was concerned how the Administration would address the problem.

Coverage of QF

51. In respect of the establishment of 19 ITACs for 20 industries/sector covering 52% of the workforce in Hong Kong, Mr SIN Chung-kai was concerned about the percentage of total workforce in various industries who had acquired qualifications recognised under QF since its launch in 2008.

52. DS(Ed) advised that qualifications recognised under QF might be obtained from academic education and training based on the Specification of Competency Standards ("SCSs") for the relevant sectors, which set out the skills, knowledge and outcome standards

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required of employees in different functional areas of the respective sectors. In addition, the RPL mechanism, which was based on SCSs for various industries under QF, provided an alternative route for experienced practitioners to receive formal recognition of their experience, skills and knowledge acquired in the workplaces up to Level 4 under QF. At present, the RPL mechanism had been implemented in 10 industries. As at 30 November 2014, over 11 800 applications involving about 21 300 clusters of competencies had been processed by the assessment agency, details of which were set out at Annex A to the Administration's paper. As regards the specific information requested by Mr SIN Chung-kai, DS(Ed) said that he would provide further response after the meeting.

Admin

53. Given that the setting up of an ITAC was industry-led, Mr CHUNG Kwok-pan and the Chairman enquired how a common consensus was considered to be arrived at such decision. SED explained that it referred to the consent of a simple majority of the stakeholder groups in the industry concerned.

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

Co-operation with other places on QF

54. Noting that the Government had been actively establishing network with QF and quality assurance authorities of other places, including the Mainland, European Commission and New Zealand, to enhance understanding and mutual trust and promote co-operation, Mr POON Siu-ping enquired about the Administration's plan for further co-operation with other areas on QF. Sharing a similar concern, Mr CHUNG Kwok-pan called on the Administration to enhance its efforts in this respect with a view to promoting learners' mobility and progression.

55. SED responded that as Hong Kong was an international city, it was imperative to enhance collaboration and facilitate exchange and experience sharing on QF with other places. The collaboration with the Guangdong Province in this respect was one of the examples. The Administration was working on such direction and would explore opportunities to further enhance collaboration with other areas and places, including South-east Asia, so as to enhance learners' mobility and articulation with these regions.



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Provision of support

56. While acknowledging the merits of the implementation of QF in promoting life-long learning and formal recognition of qualifications, Mr POON Siu-ping and Miss CHAN Yuen-han expressed concern that the long working hours situation in Hong Kong had made it difficult for employees to pursue further studies or skills upgrading. Mr POON said that the Federation of Hong Kong and Kowloon Labour Unions had all along advocated for the provision of paid study leave to encourage employees to pursue further education and training. To tie in with the development of QF, Mr POON enquired whether consideration would be given to legislating for the provision of paid study leave. Miss CHAN shared a similar view.

57. SED responded that the Administration had supported the Vocational Training Council to launch the Pilot Training and Support Scheme which applied the mode of training-cum-work or integration of structured apprenticeship with clear progress pathways plus allowance for several industries, including the retail industry and the electrical and mechanical industry. The Scheme might be extended to more industries later. On the other hand, according to the information gathered by the Hong Kong Institute of Human Resource Management, paid study leave, ranging from five to seven days, were granted by large enterprises to their employees as one of the strategies for human resources management.

**VI. Proposal to appoint subcommittee(s) under the Panel**  
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)651/14-15(05) and (06))

58. The Chairman said that in their joint letters, Miss CHAN Yuen-han, Mr KWOK Wai-keung and Mr TANG Ka-piu proposed the Panel to appoint two subcommittees to study issues relating to SWH and the offsetting arrangement. Owing to time constraint, he suggested and members agreed that discussion on the proposal of appointing a subcommittee to study the offsetting arrangement would be deferred to the next regular meeting on 10 February 2015. Members further agreed that members' views on the proposal of appointing a subcommittee to study issues relating to SWH should be invited by circulation of paper.

59. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:43 pm.