

立法會
Legislative Council

LC Paper No. CB(2)2029/14-15
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by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/MP

Panel on Manpower

Minutes of meeting
held on Tuesday, 14 July 2015, at 4:30 pm
in Conference Room 1 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 Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che
Hon IP Kwok-him, GBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Kwok-hung
Hon CHAN Yuen-han, SBS, JP
Hon LEUNG Che-cheung, BBS, MH, JP
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
- Members absent** : Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau
Dr Hon KWOK Ka-ki

Public Officers attending : Item II

Mr Jeff LEUNG Wing-yan
Deputy Commissioner for Labour
(Occupational Safety and Health)

Dr Raymond LEUNG Lai-man, JP
Occupational Health Consultant
Labour Department

Dr Mandy HO Mang-ye, JP
Occupational Health Consultant
Labour Department

Item III

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

Ms Melody LUK Wai-ling
Assistant Commissioner for Labour
(Labour Relations)

Mr MA Kwok-kuen
Senior Labour Officer
(Workplace Consultation Promotion)
Labour Department

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

Ms Kiwi NG
Legislative Assistant (2) 1

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I. Information papers issued since the last meeting

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1793/14-15(01), CB(2)1885/14-15(01) and CB(2)1910/14-15(01))

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

- (a) referral from the Public Complaints Office on policies relating to support for child carers;
- (b) referral from the Public Complaints Office regarding the alignment of statutory holidays ("SHs) with general holidays ("GHs); and
- (c) letter dated 13 July 2015 from Dr CHIANG Lai-wan regarding the fatal traffic incident occurred on Tsing Ma Bridge on 8 July 2015.

In respect of item (c) above, members agreed to Dr CHIANG Lai-wan's suggestion that the Panel should request the Labour and Welfare Bureau to provide a written response to the issues of concern raised in her letter.

II. Report on occupational diseases and occupational health performance in Hong Kong in 2014

(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1872/14-15(01) to (02) and CB(2)1886/14-15(01))

2. At the invitation of the Chairman, Deputy Commissioner for Labour (Occupational Safety and Health) ("DC for L (OSH)") briefed members on the occupational diseases and occupational health performance in Hong Kong in 2014, and the related promotion and enforcement work of the Labour Department ("LD") as detailed in the Administration's paper.

3. Members noted the background brief entitled "Occupational diseases and occupational health performance in Hong Kong" prepared by the Legislative Council ("LegCo") Secretariat.

4. Members further noted that the following organisations had provided the Panel with written submissions -

- (a) 勞工工作者聯合陣線;

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- (b) Hong Kong International Terminals Group Employees General Union and Hong Kong Docks & Ports Industries Union;
- (c) 人手比例不符最低工資關注組; and
- (d) The Federation of Hong Kong & Kowloon Labour Unions ("FHKKLU").

Occupational diseases

5. Mr POON Siu-ping noted with concern about an increase in the number of confirmed cases of occupational diseases in 2014 (i.e. 243 cases) as compared with the corresponding number in 2013 (i.e. 198 cases), in particular cases of occupational deafness, silicosis and tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm. Mr POON was of the view that the Administration should conduct a review of the list of compensable occupational diseases in the Second Schedule to the Employees' Compensation Ordinance ("ECO") to examine whether its scope and coverage should be expanded so as to further enhance the protection for employees.

6. Mr WONG Kwok-hing said that the Hong Kong Federation of Trade Unions was in support of FHKKLU's suggestion that strain and varicose veins of the lower limbs arising from standing for a prolonged period of time while at work, in particular those of employees in the catering and retail sectors, should be classified as an occupational disease under ECO, Occupational Deafness (Compensation) Ordinance ("ODCO") and Pneumoconiosis and Mesothelioma (Compensation) Ordinance ("PMCO").

7. Mr POON Siu-ping, Miss CHAN Yuen-han and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung shared similar views. Miss CHAN Yuen-han stated that she was the President of the Hong Kong Department Stores & Commercial Staff General Union. Drawing reference to the prescription of occupational deafness as an occupational disease in the 1990s, Miss CHAN called on the Administration to seriously consider conducting a comprehensive study on the proportion of employees suffering from lower limb varicose veins, in particular female employees engaged in the retail and catering sectors for a certain period of time, say, five years. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung enquired whether the Administration would consider making it mandatory for employees to take rest breaks at

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regular intervals after prolonged standing so as to prevent sustaining lower limb varicose veins. Mr LEUNG further asked whether the Administration had conducted a study on the correlation between prolonged standing and lower limb varicose veins.

8. In response to members' concerns and views, DC for L (OSH) made the following points -

- (a) LD would make reference to the criteria adopted by the International Labour Organization ("ILO") as well as the local pattern of the disease and other relevant factors in considering whether a disease should be prescribed as an occupational disease under the labour legislation, i.e. diseases having specific or strong relationship with occupations, generally with only one causal agent;
- (b) LD reviewed the list of compensable occupational diseases from time to time and had updated the list in the light of international standards. Since 1991, there had been four amendments to the list, which included the addition of 13 new occupational diseases and expansion of the coverage of three occupational diseases. The Administration would continue with such reviews; and
- (c) the Administration had not conducted a study on the correlation between prolonged standing and lower limb varicose veins. Yet, it was noteworthy that strain and varicose veins of lower limbs was not prescribed by ILO as an occupational disease because it did not satisfy the criteria for prescribing as an occupational disease and might be related to various factors other than work, such as personal habits and age.

9. Miss CHAN Yuen-han and the Chairman, however, considered that in the absence of a working hours policy in Hong Kong, it was inappropriate to determine whether strain and varicose veins of lower limbs should be prescribed as an occupational disease merely in light of the international practices, given that local employees in the retail and catering sectors worked longer working hours than those in many overseas places.

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10. Mr POON Siu-ping remained concerned about the inadequate protection of occupational health of employees in the catering and retail sectors given that lower limb varicose veins was not prescribed as an occupational disease. The Chairman considered that long working hours was a contributing factor to such a disease which was suffered by many employees in the catering and retail sectors. Mr POON pointed out that tenosynovitis of the hand or forearm was prescribed as an occupational disease under ECO and therefore strain of the lower limbs should be treated in the same manner. He appealed to the Administration to make reference to the experience of expanding the coverage of compensation under ODCO to employees who had developed noise-induced monaural hearing loss, which did not satisfy the ILO criteria for occupational diseases, and consider prescribing work-related strain of lower limbs as an occupational disease.

11. In respect of some 10 300 clinical consultations provided by the occupational health clinics ("OHCs") in 2014, Mr POON Siu-ping sought information on the number of cases involving strain of lower limbs. To facilitate the Panel's future discussion on the subject, Mr POON urged the Administration to analyse whether the cases concerned were work-related. The Chairman considered that the Administration should consider maintaining such statistics according to the types of work of employees concerned. DC for L (OSH) agreed to provide the requisite information if available after the meeting.

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Occupational health of container terminal workers

12. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was gravely concerned that some gantry crane operators at container terminals had been suffering from repetitive neck and back strain. While acknowledging the importance for crane operators to maintain a proper posture when handling containers, Mr LEE was of the view that the design of the set-up and the operators' seats were of equal importance to safeguard the occupational health of the crane operators. He enquired whether LD had asked the management of container terminals to make necessary improvements so as to safeguard the occupational health of crane operators. Mr LEE was also concerned about whether crane operators had been provided with sufficient rest breaks at work. To his understanding, there were different rest break arrangements for employees directly engaged by the terminal service operators and those workers engaged by outsourced service contractors.

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13. The Chairman and Mr POON Siu-ping shared similar views that maintaining the same working posture for prolonged hours in controlling the lifting and lowering of containers would inevitably result in musculoskeletal disorders such as low back pain and shoulder-neck pain. The Chairman was of the view that the Administration should address the issue of long working hours of crane operators. Mr POON called on the Administration to conduct a study in response to the call from the labour sector in determining whether such musculoskeletal disorders of crane operators should be prescribed as an occupational disease.

14. Responding to members' views and concerns, DC for L (OSH) made the following points -

- (a) the neck and back strain of gantry crane operators in controlling the lifting and lowering of containers was a matter of concern to LD. LD had been urging service operators to implement measures to protect the health of the crane operators, including ensuring the integrity of operators' seats and provision of extra back rests for operators;
- (b) LD noticed in recent inspections that the design of operators' seats was in compliance with the requirements set by the International Organization for Standardization. LD was following up with the service operators on the implementation of improvement measures to reduce the potential hazard, including educating the crane operators in respect of maintaining appropriate working posture and work practice, as well as providing necessary information, instructions, training and supervision to the crane operators; and
- (c) it was understood that arrangements had been made for crane operators to take rest breaks at regular intervals. At present, crane operators could take rest when they were on standby, and they were also provided with rest breaks at the control cabin during which they could do some stretching exercise. LD would continue to follow up with the management of container terminals on the implementation of these improvement measures.

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At the request of the Chairman and Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, DC for L (OSH) agreed to provide information on rest break arrangements for crane operators.

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15. Expressing concern about the impact of pollutants caused by emissions from vessels at container terminals on the occupational health of workers, Mr POON Siu-ping sought information on the inspections conducted by LD to observe the working conditions of quay crane operators and measure the level of air impurities inside crane control cabins, including the number and timing of inspections, the relevant assessment standards as well as enforcement actions taken against non-compliance with the safety standards.

16. DC for L (OSH) responded that LD had conducted eight inspections to observe the working conditions of quay crane operators and measure the level of air impurities inside the control cabins and observed the emissions from vessels in recent months. The results showed that the levels of nitrogen dioxide, carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide and dust were far below the relevant legal limits in Hong Kong, which were comparable to the international standards, and the health risk of vessel emissions to the crane operators was considered to be low. LD would continue to monitor and follow up the implementation of improvement measures by the management of container terminals, and would revert to the Panel on the subject in due course.

Heat stroke at work

17. Expressing concern about employees' OSH under hot weather, Mr TANG Ka-piu sought clarification as to whether heat stroke at work was classified as an occupational injury and whether employer concerned was required to report such case under ECO. Pointing out that the temperature of indoor wet market was almost as high as outdoor workplaces, Mr TANG sought information on the criteria for conducting inspections to workplaces with high heat stress and enquired about enforcement actions to be taken if there was no improvement to the workplace concerned after the issuance of warning by LD.

18. DC for L (OSH) affirmed that heat stroke at work was regarded as occupational injury and the employer concerned was obliged to report to LD under ECO. Injured employees were advised to observe the relevant procedures in respect of notification of accidents. DC for L (OSH) advised that LD conducted inspections targeting outdoor workplaces with a higher risk of heat stroke, and would make reference to a host of factors in assessing the risk, including temperature, humidity, nature of work and ventilation at workplaces. LD would issue warnings, improvement notices and suspension notices as appropriate.

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19. In response to Mr TANG Ka-piu's enquiry about the implementation of the Cooling Vest Promotion Pilot Scheme, DC for L (OSH) said that the Pilot Scheme, which was launched in the summer of 2013 and aimed at studying the feasibility of using cooling vests in selected trades involving work in a hot environment, had been completed. The Occupational Safety and Health Council had collated feedback from the participating companies. Mr TANG's suggestion of wider use of the cooling vests in other trades and industries, including the catering sector, was noted.

Clinical consultation service of OHCs

20. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was concerned that there were only two OHCs run by LD in Kwun Tong and Fanling to provide clinical consultation service to all employees in Hong Kong Island, Kowloon, and the New Territories. Given that more than 1 000 000 people were residing or working in the New Territories West ("NTW"), the locations of the two existing OHCs were inconvenient to residents of NTW. Mr WONG called on the Administration to consider conducting a review on the service needs of clinical consultation service of OHCs.

21. DC for L (OSH) responded that the two OHCs were located in proximity to various public transportation means including mass transportation systems and were considered to be easily accessible from most areas, including NTW. Mr WONG Kwok-hing, however, maintained the view that it was inconvenient for residents and employees in NTW to travel afar for seeking clinical consultation at either OHC. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung echoed similar views. Mr WONG urged the Administration to seriously consider setting up another OHC along the rail line of NTW.

22. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was concerned that new patients seeking consultation at LD's OHCs might not be diagnosed as suffering from occupational diseases but were simply classified as work-related diseases. In respect of the provision of 10 300 clinical consultations by the two OHCs in 2014, Mr LEE sought information on the number of follow-up workplace inspections conducted by LD with a view to making improvement to the working environment as appropriate.

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Admin 23. DC for L (OSH) responded that clinic doctors might arrange inspections to the patients' workplaces, if necessary, together with LD's occupational hygienists to identify the existence or otherwise of hazards in the working environment that were related to the diseases. DC for L (OSH) said that he did not have the information requested by Mr LEE Cheuk-yan on hand, and would provide the information after the meeting.

Admin 24. DC for L (OSH) added that officers of the Occupational Medicine Divisions and Occupational Hygiene Divisions in LD would conduct field surveys to ensure that the requirements of health and hygiene at workplaces were complied with. Apart from investigating suspected occupational disease cases, these divisions were also responsible for promoting the prevention of occupational diseases and health at work. At the request of Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, DC for L (OSH) agreed to provide information on establishment of occupational health staff in LD for conducting inspections to workplaces, and the proportion of such staff establishment to the number of workplaces in Hong Kong and the comparison of such figures with those of other jurisdictions.

25. In response to Mr TANG Ka-piu's enquiry, DC for L (OSH) said that employees who suspected their diseases to be work-related could make an appointment at any OHCs for diagnosis and treatment. The average waiting time for new cases for services of OHCs was about two to six weeks.

III. Promoting family friendly employment practices (LC Paper Nos. CB(2)1872/14-15(03) and (04))

26. With the aid of powerpoint presentation, Deputy Commissioner for Labour (Labour Administration) ("DC for L (LA)") and Assistant Commissioner for Labour (Labour Relations) briefed members on LD's efforts in promoting family-friendly employment practices ("FFEP"), details of which were set out in the Administration's paper.

(Post-meeting note: The softcopy of the powerpoint presentation materials was issued to members vide LC Paper No. CB(2)1917/14-15(01) on 15 July 2015.)

27. Members noted the background brief entitled "Promoting family-friendly employment practices" prepared by the LegCo Secretariat.

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28. Members further noted that Hong Kong Catholic Commission for Labour Affairs ("HKCCLA") had provided the Panel with a written submission.

Effectiveness of promotional efforts

29. Mr POON Siu-ping noted from the Administration's paper that it had since 2006 allocated considerable resources for the promotion of wider adoption of FFEP by employers to help employees balance their work and family lives. Notably, the Family Council and the Home Affairs Bureau had since 2011 launched the biennial "Family-Friendly Employers Award Scheme" ("the Award Scheme") in recognition of companies/organisations which attached importance to family-friendly spirit and adoption of FFEP, with an increase in the number of participating companies/organisations to 1 800 in 2013-2014 Award Scheme. Mr POON expressed concern about the effectiveness of the Administration's efforts in FFEP promotion and enquired whether it had conducted any study on the adoption of FFEP by employers in the last decade and whether there were any concrete performance indicators in this regard.

30. DC for L (LA) said that it was difficult to formulate specific indicators for assessment of the effectiveness of putting FFEP in place, having regard to the individual circumstances and affordability of the enterprises, as well as the unique business environment and operations of specific industries. That said, LD had been sharing effective means in implementing various kinds of FFEP through regular meetings with nine industry-based Tripartite Committees and 18 Human Resources Managers' Clubs ("HRMCs"). It was noted from HRMCs that an increasing number of employers of different sizes had recognised the implementation of FFEP could boost staff morale, enhance employer-employee relationship as well as improve productivity and competitiveness for employers, hence achieving a win-win situation for both employers and employees. DC for L (LA) added that although quite a number of enterprises had not enrolled in the Award Scheme, they had indeed put FFEP in place at workplaces. Mr POON Siu-ping's view on setting up indicators for evaluating the effectiveness of FFEP efforts would be taken into consideration.

31. Mr TANG Ka-piu raised queries about the effectiveness of the Administration's promotional efforts in encouraging employers to adopt FFEP. Given the large number of employers in Hong Kong, Mr TANG considered the participation rate of the Award Scheme unsatisfactory and

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sought information on the provision of family leave, including marriage leave, parental leave or compassionate leave, and child care services by the 1 800 companies/organisations which had enrolled in the 2013-2014 Award Scheme. Expressing concern about the coverage of the Award Scheme, Mr KWOK Wai-keung asked about the proportion of employees of the 1 800 companies/organisations concerned to the total workforce in Hong Kong.

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32. DC for L (LA) said that LD would liaise with the Family Council, which was the organiser of the Award Scheme, and provide the requisite information as far as practicable. DC for L (LA) added that LD had since 2006 promoted FFEP through various media and reiterated that an increasing number of employers had recognised the importance of FFEP and implemented various kinds of family-friendly measures such as flexible working hours and setting up nursery room in the workplace for their lactating employees.

33. With reference to the HKCCLA's submission, Mr CHAN Kin-por called on the Administration to study in details the proposed family-friendly measures and put them in place as far as practicable, in particular those facilitating female homemakers to join the labour market. Mr IP Kwok-him called on the Administration to study the feasibility of converting half-day kindergarten places to whole-day places so as to facilitate female homemakers to join the labour market.

34. DC for L (LA) said that LD had been encouraging employers to, having regard to their own affordability, furnish employees with various support such as counselling services on stress or emotional management, organising recreational activities and provision for family leave as appropriate. The suggestion of providing whole-day kindergarten places as a facilitating measure for female homemakers to join the workforce would be relayed to the Steering Committee on Population Policy and the Education Bureau for consideration as appropriate.

Other means to implement FFEP

35. Mr IP Kwok-him was of the view that the Government should take the lead in adopting FFEP and formulate specific measures, such as flexitime and work from home, as in the case of granting five-day full paid paternity leave ("PL") to government male employees so that the private sector would follow suit.

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36. DC for L (LA) responded that FFEP such as flexitime was adopted in various government bureaux/departments in light of individual office's manpower situation. In effect, feasibility was being explored for setting up nursery room in suitable government offices for lactating employees. In addition, computers were provided to government employees to enable the latter to work from home as necessary.

37. Mr CHAN Kin-por said that he was in support of promotion of a work-life balance, and had moved a motion on "Urging the Government to promote a new occupational culture campaign for work-life balance" which was carried at a Council meeting in 2009. Expressing grave reservations about the Administration's promotional efforts, Mr CHAN cited the experience of Singaporean Government in promoting work-life balance by providing financial incentive to encourage employers to implement FFEP and quantifying the benefits brought to both enterprises and employees. Mr CHAN called on the Administration to set up a dedicated cross-departmental task force to foster FFEP as well as provision of financial incentive for employers to put FFEP in place.

38. DC for L (LA) said that in light of the prevailing low unemployment rate, it was believed that there was sufficient incentive for the employers to adopt FFEP with a view to attracting and retaining staff. That said, LD had implemented various measures to help unleash potential workforce. For instance, it would extend the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged, under which an on-the-job training allowance of \$3,000 per month was provided to employers for a period of three to six months, to part-time jobs in September 2015 so as to give employers financial incentive to engage persons aged 40 or above, including female homemakers and early retirees who might prefer part-time jobs.

39. The Chairman held the view that the Government should formulate a comprehensive policy for the promotion of FFEP as the subject straddled various bureaux and departments. In response, DC for L (LA) said that the Administration attached great importance to the promotion of FFEP. Notably, the Family Council and the Women's Commission were committed to taking forward the subject in recent years.

40. While appreciating LD's efforts in fostering harmonious employer-employee relationship and promoting FFEP, Mr WONG Kwok-hing called on the Administration to play a more proactive role in introducing relevant labour legislation for family-friendly initiatives, including the alignment of SHs with GHs, standard working hours

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("SWH") and review on the number of statutory PL days. Mr POON Siu-ping and Mr KWOK Wai-keung echoed similar views. Mr KWOK was concerned that there was little progress in adopting FFEP by employers, albeit the Administration's promotional efforts since 2006 and the publication of a booklet "Good People Management and Family-friendly Employment Practices" by LD in 2009.

41. Casting doubt about the effectiveness of the Administration's promotional efforts in encouraging employers to adopt good people management measures, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan held a strong view that FEEP could only be cultivated through legislative means.

42. Responding to members' views and concerns, DC for L (LA) said that the Administration had stressed the importance of discussing employment conditions and work arrangements between employers and employees through direct and candid communication when promoting good people management practices in the past few years. To this end, seminars and talks were organised from time to time for employers, employees and human resources practitioners to understand the merits of enlightened attitude towards labour-management communication. DC for L (LA) further said that the Administration had all along been adopting multi-pronged strategy to foster a family-friendly culture, including public education, publicity measures and promotion of effective FFEP measures, and it would not rule out the possibility of implementing such measures through legislative means if so warranted. It was the Government's policy to gradually improve employees' benefits and protection in a way commensurate with the pace of Hong Kong's socio-economic development.

43. Noting that the Administration would enhance labour rights and benefits in a progressive manner, Mr TANG Ka-piu expressed concern about whether the Administration would take forward FFEP measures through legislative means. DC for L (LA) stressed that the Administration would endeavour to strike a reasonable balance between employees' interests and employers' affordability in the formulation of family-friendly labour policies. As a matter of fact, LD had been working in collaboration with the Labour Advisory Board ("LAB") in enhancing labour rights and benefits in a progressive manner. For instance, the Government introduced the Employment (Amendment) Bill 2014 to legislate for three days of PL for eligible male employees based on LAB consensus and would conduct a review one year after implementation. In addition, the compensation levels of a total of 18 compensation items under ECO, ODCO and PMCO were adjusted in

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line with the review findings with reference to the changes in the wage and price levels and other relevant factors over the biennial review period.

Enhancing employees' entitlements

44. The Deputy Chairman considered it essential to align the leave entitlement of all employees in a bid to promote a family-friendly culture in employment. The Deputy Chairman enquired about the progress of the LAB's discussion on the alignment of SHs with GHs. Acknowledging the diverse views over the subject between employers and the labour sector, Mr IP Kwok-him said that the Democratic Alliance for the Betterment and Progress of Hong Kong was in support of progressively enhancing employees' SH entitlements through legislative means.

45. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan remarked that it was incumbent upon the Administration to seriously consider legislating for SWH and increasing the number of SHs to 17 days in a year to align with that of GHs so as to enhance holiday entitlement of close to 1 000 000 employees who were not taking GHs. Mr LEE expressed strong dissatisfaction that the Administration had employed a delay tactic in addressing both issues. In connection with SWH, Mr LEE expressed concern that the driver concerned in a recent fatal traffic accident happened on Tsing Ma Bridge had reportedly worked for prolonged hours without sufficient rest breaks immediately before the accident, and asked about the progress of the investigation. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung raised a similar concern.

46. DC for L (LA) said that LD had commissioned the Census & Statistics Department to collect statistics on the characteristics of employees taking SHs and GHs in Hong Kong. LAB had been briefed on the findings of the survey in early 2015, and was still deliberating on the issue of increasing the number of SHs to align with GHs. While there were divergent views between employer and employee representatives on the matter, LD would continue to facilitate LAB's further deliberation on the subject. The Administration would revert to the Panel on the subject in due course. As regards the fatal traffic accident, DC for L (LA) said that he was not in a position to comment on the case as the relevant investigation was underway.

47. The Chairman and Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung considered that the Administration's stance on the alignment of SHs with GHs was of critical importance. The Deputy Chairman further called on the Administration to initiate discussion at LAB meetings on legislating for family leave, including marriage leave, parental leave and compassionate leave. The Chairman expressed support.

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48. Mr KWOK Wai-keung pointed out that the Task Force on Manpower Development of the Retail Industry ("the Task Force"), which was appointed by the Government in March 2013 to review the manpower needs of the retail sector, had not squarely addressed issues on improving employees' working conditions or holiday benefits. He asked about LD's role in the Task Force.

49. DC for L (LA) said that the Task Force, which comprised members from the labour and business sectors and the Government, studied issues relating to nurturing the necessary manpower in view of the manpower shortage problem in the retail industry. Representatives from LD had also attended its meetings. The Task Force had released its report upon completion of work. LD had also implemented relevant measures in employment services such as organisation of thematic job fairs with a view to attracting young entrants to the industry.

50. While expressing support for the Administration's promotional efforts in fostering a pro-family culture in workplaces, the Chairman requested the Administration to take heed of members' views on cultivating FFEP by way of legislation.

51. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:31 pm.