

**立法會**  
**Legislative Council**

LC Paper No. CB(2)1037/15-16  
(These minutes have been seen  
by the Administration)

Ref : CB2/PL/MP

**Panel on Manpower**

**Minutes of policy briefing cum meeting  
held on Tuesday, 19 January 2016, at 4:30 pm  
in Conference Room 3 of the Legislative Council Complex**

- Members present** : Hon KWOK Wai-keung (Chairman)  
Dr Hon CHIANG Lai-wan, JP (Deputy Chairman)  
Hon LEE Cheuk-yan  
Hon LEUNG Yiu-chung  
Hon CHAN Kin-por, BBS, JP  
Dr Hon LEUNG Ka-lau  
Hon CHEUNG Kwok-che  
Hon WONG Kwok-kin, SBS  
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 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 Tommy CHEUNG Yu-yan, GBS, JP

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

Ms Lydia LAM Sui-ping  
Principal Assistant Secretary for Labour and Welfare  
(Manpower)

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

Miss Lulu YEUNG  
Clerical Assistant (2) 1

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**I. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting**  
(LC Paper No. CB(2)626/15-16)

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 December 2015 were confirmed.

**II. Information papers issued since the last meeting**  
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)482/15-16(01) and CB(2)647/15-16(01))

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

- (a) joint letter dated 15 December 2015 from Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, Miss CHAN Yuen-han, Mr POON Siu-ping, Dr CHIANG Lai-wan and Mr CHUNG Kwok-pan proposing the Panel to discuss the subject of employment support measures for grassroots women; and
- (b) letter dated 13 January 2016 from Miss CHAN Yuen-han suggesting the Panel to discuss the subject of employment support measures for ethnic minorities ("EMs").

The Chairman advised that the proposal in item (a) above would be considered under agenda item III below.

As regards item (b) above, members agreed that the Administration should first be requested to provide information on the issues of concern raised in Miss CHAN's letter, and that the subject be added to the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion.

**III. Date of next meeting and items for discussion**  
(LC Paper Nos. CB(2)655/15-16(01) and (02))

Regular meeting in February 2016

3. Members agreed that the following items proposed by the Administration be discussed at the next regular meeting at 4:30 pm on 16 February 2016 -

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- (a) Women employment; and
- (b) The Construction Industry Recruitment Centre.

4. Members further agreed that deputations would be invited to give views on item (a) above. Noting that the Steering Committee on Population Policy chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration had been monitoring the implementation of population policy initiatives, the Administration should be requested to provide an update on the implementation of the initiatives relating to unleashing the potential of women labour force under this discussion item.

*(Post-meeting note: With the concurrence of the Panel Chairman, members of the Panel on Welfare Services were invited to join the discussion of item (a) and that the meeting was extended to 7:00 pm to allow sufficient time for discussion.)*

Items for discussion at future meetings

*Government policy relating to the outsourcing of service contracts*

5. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan suggested that the Panel should discuss the Government policy relating to the outsourcing of service contracts as soon as practicable. Apart from the Labour and Welfare Bureau ("LWB") and the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, representatives of the four major procuring departments, viz. the Leisure and Cultural Services Department, Food and Environmental Hygiene Department, Housing Department and Government Property Agency should also be invited to attend the meeting. Mr TANG Ka-piu expressed his support. The Chairman advised that the subject had been included in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion.

*Scope of application of Section 43C of the Employment Ordinance ("EO")*

6. Mr TANG Ka-piu was of the view that the Panel should follow up with the Administration on the suggestion of expanding the scope of application of Section 43C of EO concerning the liability of a principal contractor and superior sub-contractor(s) to pay wages of employees of sub-contractors, which was currently included in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion.

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*Review of the implementation of statutory paternity leave ("PL")*

7. Mr TANG Ka-piu suggested that the Administration be requested to revert to the Panel at the March meeting on the review findings of the provision of statutory PL one year after its implementation from February 2015.

*Issues relating to the Employees' Compensation Ordinance ("ECO")*

8. Mr TANG Ka-piu further suggested that various items in the Panel's list of outstanding items for discussion which were related to ECO could be consolidated for discussion at a future meeting.

*Manpower requirement projection*

9. The Deputy Chairman pointed out that as stated in the Chief Executive ("CE")'s 2016 Policy Address, the Government would play an active role to facilitate the implementation of the Belt and Road Initiative. In light of the potential business and job opportunities to be created, the Administration should conduct projection for manpower supply and requirements in respect of specific trades and industries in the coming years, so as to facilitate the youngsters' career planning.

10. The Chairman advised that he would discuss with the Administration in respect of members' views and suggestions.

**IV. Briefing by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare on the Chief Executive's 2016 Policy Address**

(LC Paper No. CB(2)655/15-16(03), The 2016 Policy Address booklet and The 2016 Policy Agenda booklet)

11. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Labour and Welfare ("SLW") briefed members on the major new and on-going initiatives pertaining to the labour and manpower portfolio undertaken by LWB and the Labour Department ("LD"), as set out in CE's 2016 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)704/15-16 on 20 January 2016.)*

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Employees' rights and benefits

12. Miss CHAN Yuen-han said that the labour sector was gravely disappointed about a lack of specific policy initiatives on enhancing employees' rights and benefits in the 2016 Policy Address. Specifically, Miss CHAN expressed concern that there was no significant progress in a number of labour-related issues, including legislating for standard working hours ("SWH"), abolition of the arrangement of offsetting severance payments ("SP") and long service payments ("LSP") against the Mandatory Provident Funds ("MPF") accrued benefits ("the offsetting arrangement") and the alignment of statutory holidays with general holidays. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung, Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung, Mr TANG Ka-piu and the Chairman shared similar views and concerns. Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung and Mr TANG were particularly concerned about the Administration's lack of stance over these labour-related issues. Mr LEUNG Kwok-hung was of the view that the current-term Government failed to honour the pledges made by CE in his election manifesto over a number of labour issues.

13. SLW responded that the Administration fully understood the expectation of the labour sector. He pointed out that the 2016 Policy Address set out the major new initiatives, including provision of training and employment support measures, and labour policy pertaining to the labour and manpower portfolio to be undertaken by LWB and LD. As a matter of fact, the provision of three-day statutory PL had come into force from February 2015 while the Administration was still discussing with various stakeholders on the several labour-related issues which were highly complex and controversial. SLW stressed that the Government would do its best to promote mutual understanding among relevant stakeholders, with a view to reaching consensus on these issues by the community at large in 2016.

*Standard working hours*

14. Miss CHAN Yuen-han was gravely concerned that the six employee representatives of the Labour Advisory Board (LAB), who were ex-officio members of the Standard Working Hours Committee ("SWHC"), had walked out of the SWHC meeting on 27 November 2015 because of their strong dissatisfaction with the fact that employer representatives backtracked on the understanding of conducting future discussion on the basis of legislating for standard working hours of employees as agreed at the SWHC meeting on 18 March 2015. Miss CHAN enquired how the Administration would address the

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dissatisfaction of the labour sector. Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned how the Administration could take forward the subject in the absence of the employee members on SWHC.

15. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan held the view that the employee members on LAB would be willing to participate in the work of SWHC again if the deliberation of the subject was based on legislating for SWH. Mr LEE sought clarification about the Administration's stance in this regard.

16. The Deputy Chairman said that to her understanding, working hours and the overtime pay rates of 30% to 40% of employees had not been expressly stipulated in their employment contracts. The Deputy Chairman was of the view that the Administration should address such situation in the first place so as to safeguard the interests of employees while SWHC could continue its deliberation on the subject of legislating for SWH.

17. The Chairman said that the employee members on LAB had indicated that they would not participate in the work of SWHC again if the discussion was conducted under the "contractual working hours" approach (i.e. the "big frame" under exploration). The Chairman expressed disappointment that SWHC had come up with the current approach after having deliberated on the subject for an extended period of time. In his view, there was no need to legislate for "contractual working hours" which was a matter of enforcement action by LD. The Chairman enquired about the work direction of SWHC.

18. Responding to members' views and concerns, SLW made the following points -

- (a) SWHC, set up to follow up on the Government's policy study on SWH, would report to CE and advise on the working hours situation in Hong Kong, including whether a statutory SWH regime or any other alternatives should be considered, upon completion of its term;
- (b) SWHC had since its establishment worked at full steam to complete an enormous amount of work to explore working hours policy directions. The Administration would strive to secure the participation of the six employee representatives in the work of SWHC again. SWHC planned to launch the second-stage consultation as soon as possible to facilitate further discussion on working hours policy directions and

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collect public views for SWHC's reference in preparing its report; and

- (c) the Deputy Chairman's suggestion would be relayed to SWHC for consideration.

19. Commissioner for Labour ("C for L") added that SWHC was working on the draft framework of the second-stage consultation and would discuss the content of the draft consultation document at forthcoming meetings.

*The offsetting arrangement*

20. Mr WONG Kwok-hing was concerned about whether the Administration could honour the CE's pledge in his election manifesto in respect of progressively reducing the proportion of accrued benefits attributed to employers' contribution in the MPF account that could be used by employers to offset LSP or SP. Sharing a similar view, Mr LEE Cheuk-yan was concerned that the Administration would be under a very tight legislative timetable for completing the relevant legislative process within the tenure of the current Government. Mr TANG Ka-piu was disappointed that the Administration did not have a stance on the matter.

21. SLW responded that the Administration was consulting different sectors on the offsetting arrangement in the context of the public consultation on retirement protection. It would conduct thorough and in-depth discussion on the impact of feasible options to address the offsetting issue on employers and employees as well as the role of the Government. The Administration would strive to find an option that was acceptable to both employers and employees so as to protect the interests of low-income employees and further strengthen the MPF pillar and retirement protection system as a whole.

22. In response to Mr TANG Ka-piu's enquiry about the preparatory work to be undertaken by the Administration for taking forward the offsetting issue after the six-month consultation period on retirement protection, SLW said that the Government understood that employers and employees had diverse views on the issue and would continue to listen to the views from both sides. Upon completion of the public consultation which would end in late June 2016, the Government would analyse and study in detail the views collected and examine the issue holistically. It was hoped that employees and employers could through informed and



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rational discussion build consensus and forge the greatest possible mutual understanding in tackling the issue. It was expected that the direction for way forward for the offsetting issue would be set out in the CE's 2017 Policy Address.

Manpower development and employment support services

23. In anticipation of an economic downturn, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung was concerned about aggravation of unemployment and how the Administration would address the situation. Echoing a similar view, Mr IP Kwok-him envisaged an imminent crisis of having an economic slide. Mr IP considered it imperative to have diversified economic development and to encourage the younger generation to equip themselves before entering into different industries.

24. Noting the Administration's plan of setting up a dedicated employment information e-platform for job seekers with higher education, Mr SIN Chung-kai enquired how it would differentiate from those employment and recruitment websites targeting similar job seekers and whether job matching service would be provided.

25. Having regard to the better health conditions among the current and future elderly generations and the projected decline in labour force in the forthcoming years, Mr SIN Chung-kai was of the view that the Administration should allocate more resources for the long-term planning and creation of more part-time employment opportunities for the elderly with a view to replenishing the workforce.

26. The Deputy Chairman was concerned about the difficulties encountered by some female homemakers, who were prepared to take up part-time jobs, to attend full-day training courses offered by the Employees Retraining Board ("ERB"). On the other hand, some female part-time employees found it difficult to balance their work and family commitments as they had been required to work during the weekends. The Deputy Chairman asked about the measures to be taken by the Administration to address the problems.

27. In response to members' views and concerns, SLW made the following points -

- (a) the labour market remained largely stable in October to December 2015. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate stayed at 3.3% for the sixth consecutive period. Yet,

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given the high degree of external orientation of the economy in Hong Kong and thereby subject to external shocks, coupled with the reduction of inbound tourism in the past months and the unpromising economic forecast in Hong Kong, the Administration would stay vigilant and closely monitor the labour market;

- (b) ERB would respond promptly to the demand from training bodies for increasing or redeploying the training places should there be significant changes in the economy and the labour market. As in the case of 2014-2015, ERB planned to offer 130 000 training places;
- (c) in 2016-2017, ERB would continue to conduct training courses for mature persons and on a pilot basis, to continue training courses in the support centres for EMs and extend the "Modular Certificates Accumulation System" to cover other in-demand programmes to allow trainees (in particular female trainees) who were unable to pursue full-time courses owing to work or family commitments to make flexible arrangements for further studies and acquire recognised qualifications;
- (d) ERB would also, as a pilot project, set up a part-time job referral platform entitled "Smart Starter", one each in Kowloon East and Kowloon West in 2016-2017 to provide registration, vacancy referral and follow-up services for new arrivals who had completed the relevant ERB courses. It was expected that under the pilot project a total of 2 000 trainees could be successfully placed into part-time jobs in the first year;
- (e) LD would continue with the implementation of various measures to help unleash potential workforce. Employers were encouraged to provide their employees with flexible and varied work arrangements, including work from home. In addition, to assist women in fulfilling their family responsibilities while staying in employment, the Administration would continue to strengthen the provision of subsidised child care services in the community, including extension of service hours during weekdays, weekends and public holidays, with a view to removing the barriers which hindered women from taking up employment; and

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- (f) LD would continue to provide a wide range of employment support services to meet the various needs of job seekers, including the following -
- (i) to strengthen employment support for persons with higher education, in particular the second generation of Hong Kong emigrants who were interested in working in Hong Kong, LD would set up a dedicated employment information e-platform incorporating an on-line interactive forum around the fourth quarter of 2016. The e-platform aimed to enhance their understanding of the Hong Kong labour market as well as facilitating them to search and apply for suitable job openings through the new webpage;
  - (ii) LD had extended the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged to cover part-time jobs in the second half of 2015 to encourage employers to provide more suitable part-time employment opportunities to persons aged 40 or above, including female homemakers and early retirees;
  - (iii) LD would continue to implement the pilot "Employment Services Ambassador Programme for EMs", under which trainees of the Youth Employment and Training Programme who could communicate in EM languages were employed as employment services ambassadors ("ESAs") to work in LD's job centres, recruitment centres and job fairs. These ESAs could assist LD officers in providing employment services to job seekers, especially EMs; and
  - (iv) to strengthen the employment support for job seekers with disabilities, LD would engage a non-governmental organisation under a pilot scheme to provide job seekers in need with in-depth psychological/emotional counselling service.

28. Given that the provision of retraining allowance of \$153.8 per day for trainees aged 30 or above and with education attainment of Secondary Three or below when attending courses of Levels 1 and 2 under the Qualifications Framework ("QF") offered by ERB had not been adjusted

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for about 20 years, Mr WONG Kwok-hing enquired whether the Administration would consider conducting a review on the level of retraining allowance.

29. SLW said that having regard to the limited public resources and ERB's pivotal role in enhancing the employability of local employees by raising their skills through offering a great variety of training and retraining courses and related placement services, there was no plan to increase the retraining allowance which sought to provide travel subsidy to the trainees. Mr WONG Kwok-hing, however, maintained the view that the Administration should consider conducting a review on the level of retraining allowance.

Labour supply in the construction industry

30. In the light of strong opposition from the labour sector, Mr WONG Kwok-hing asked about the progress of importing workers in the construction industry under the enhancement measures and flexibility enhancement measures, which were introduced in April 2014 and May 2015 respectively. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan sought more information in respect of the new measures to be introduced in 2016 in this regard. Expressing concern that the importation of labour would undermine the bargaining power of local workers, Mr LEUNG Yiu-chung enquired whether the importation of labour would be expanded to other industries in addition to the construction industry.

31. SLW clarified that the Supplementary Labour Scheme ("SLS") had been operating since 1996 to allow employers of different industries facing genuine manpower shortage to import workers at technician level or below. In the light of the tight manpower situation, since 2010, the Administration had sought funding approval of \$420 million to support the Construction Industry Council ("CIC") in strengthening the training for local construction personnel and attracting more new entrants, particularly young people, to join the construction industry. Between 2009 and 2015, CIC had trained more than 18 000 semi-skilled workers. Notwithstanding the above, the shortage problem of skilled workers had yet to be fully resolved. According to CIC's latest forecast in end-2015, the shortage of skilled workers in the construction industry would continue in the coming few years. There was still a genuine need to import workers to cater for the development needs, on the premise of according priority to local workers in employment and safeguarding their wage levels. SLW stressed that the enhancement measures aimed to expedite the processing of SLS applications in the construction industry

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involving public sector works contracts. The Administration and CIC had all along closely monitored the manpower situation of the construction industry.

32. Mr LEE Cheuk-yan cautioned that approving applications for importation of labour should under no circumstances circumvent the existing mechanism under SLS.

Safety of workers conducting work-at-height

33. On specific measures to enhance the occupational safety of construction workers, Mr POON Siu-ping sought information on the concrete measures to be adopted. Deputy Commissioner for Labour (Occupational Safety and Health) advised that in 2016, LD would further promote safety measures on working at height to contractors and workers through collaboration with trade associations, workers' unions, professional bodies, related organisations and government departments concerned. These measures included promoting the use of standard-conforming working platforms for work above ground and the use of safety helmets with chin straps. LD would work with different stakeholders, including the Occupational Safety and Health Council and the relevant task groups formed under CIC to enhance the promotion of work-at-height safety and discuss measures to eliminate the hazards of work-at-height and foster a safe working culture.

Improving work injury protection for employees in high-risk industries

34. Mr POON Siu-ping and the Chairman expressed concern about the progress of setting up a special task force to undertake a study on improving protection for workers in high-risk occupations in relation to insurance, compensation for work injuries, therapy and rehabilitation, which had been stated in CE's election manifesto. SLW and Deputy Commissioner for Labour (Labour Administration) advised that an inter-departmental working group, convened by LD, had completed an internal study on the existing protection afforded to injured employees. A task force comprising representatives of relevant bureaux/departments and public bodies would be set up to explore the proposals put forward by the working group, consult stakeholders about relevant issues in a timely manner, and implement the agreed measures one by one once they were ready so as to improve protection for injured employees in high-risk industries in relation to insurance, compensation for work injuries and therapy/rehabilitation services. The Chairman called on the Administration to expedite the relevant work.

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35. Referring to the positive outcomes of the Multidisciplinary Orthopedics Rehabilitation Empowerment Programme run by the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Mr CHAN Kin-por enquired whether the Administration would consider adopting it as a rehabilitation model in Hong Kong to injured workers for an effective and timely work rehabilitation programme so as to facilitate their early return to work.

36. SLW shared the concept of rehabilitation and early return to work and agreed that there was room for improvement of the existing medical assessment arrangements through the concerted efforts of the parties concerned. As a matter of fact, LD, in collaboration with the insurance industry, had launched the Voluntary Rehabilitation Programme since 2003 to provide injured employees with an additional channel to receive free and timely medical and rehabilitation services through the insurers' arrangements to facilitate their speedy recovery and early return to work under safe circumstances. Rehabilitation was indeed one of the areas of study of the above-mentioned task force.

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

37. Citing the experience of Singaporean Government in promoting work-life balance by providing financial incentive to encourage employers to implement FFEP, Mr CHAN Kin-por called on the Administration to put in place similar proactive measures to promote work-life balance so as to mitigate the intense labour relation arising from the deliberation on the subject of SWH.

38. The Chairman was concerned that there was little progress in adopting FFEP by employers, albeit the Administration's promotional efforts since 2006. The Chairman called on the Administration to step up its efforts with a view to securing participation of more employers in adopting FFEP.

39. In response, SLW said that there were difficulties in implementing the proposal of providing subsidy to employers as it would involve prudent use of public resources. Employers, instead, were encouraged to adopt relevant practices in a flexible manner that best suit the interests of the employees and the enterprises. In addition, due regard should be given to the local circumstances when formulating the family-friendly labour policies. C for L supplemented that a working group had devised a set of industry-based practical guidelines for employers in the catering industry to design their family-friendly working environment with a view to attracting more people to join the industry.

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**V. Briefing by the Secretary for Education on the Chief Executive's 2016 Policy Address**

(LC Paper No. CB(2)655/15-16(04), The 2016 Policy Address booklet and The 2016 Policy Agenda booklet)

40. At the invitation of the Chairman, the Secretary for Education ("SED") briefed members on the on-going initiatives of the Education Bureau ("EDB"), in particular the major development of Qualifications Framework ("QF") in 2015, 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)704/15-16 on 20 January 2016.)*

Development of QF

41. Referring to Annex A to the Administration's paper, Mr SIN Chung-kai sought more information on the operation of the Recognition of Prior Learning ("RPL") mechanism under QF. Mr POON Siu-ping sought explanation for the comparatively lower success rate of the applications for RPL assessment in respect of the Beauty industry.

42. Principal Assistant Secretary (Further Education) of EDB ("PAS(FE)") responded that the RPL mechanism enabled practitioners of various backgrounds to obtain formal recognition of the knowledge, skills and experience that they had acquired in specific industries. At present, the RPL mechanism had been implemented in 14 industries. Practitioners in these industries could apply for a RPL qualification for a number of clusters of related competencies. As such, each RPL application might involve more than one cluster of competencies and this explained why the number of applications processed/being processed was smaller than the corresponding number of clusters of competencies. Also, each practitioner might make more than one application and the number of applications processed/being processed also included the number of unsuccessful applications. The number of RPL applications comprised those which had already been processed and with the RPL assessment completed (if applicable) as well as those that were being processed. For those industries which had only implemented their RPL mechanism lately, the applications were still being processed.

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43. SED pointed out that the RPL mechanism would be implemented in specific industries after their respective specification of competency standards ("SCS") had been drawn up. Deputy Secretary for Education ("DS(Ed)") added that the RPL mechanism facilitated practitioners with learning aspirations to identify the competencies they had acquired through experience or previous training in the industries so as to reduce duplication in training for the same skills.

44. Pointing out that QF had been launched since 2008, Mr SIN Chung-kai expressed concern that there were only 15 617 RPL applications as at 30 November 2015 and that a vast number of industries had yet to set up their Industry Training Advisory Committees ("ITACs"). Mr SIN asked about the difficulties encountered in promoting QF. The Chairman and the Deputy Chairman echoed similar concerns. The Chairman enquired about the specific measures to be taken by the Administration to enhance the understanding of both employers and employees on the functions of QF so as to facilitate its further development. Expressing concern about employers' limited understanding of QF, the Deputy Chairman was of the view that the Administration should be proactive and take the lead by recognising QF in its recruitment policy for the civil service, so as to encourage the acceptance and recognition of QF in different industries.

45. In response to members' concerns and views, SED made the following points -

- (a) the establishment of the QF Fund from September 2014 provided a steady source of income to support the sustainable development and implementation of QF. Notably, through the setting-up of 20 ITACs for 21 industries/sectors under QF, the coverage of the workforce had expanded to 53%. A new ITAC for the fashion industry was established on 1 July 2015 and it was expected that more industries would have ITACs set up in future. The Administration would make continuous efforts to reach out to the stakeholders of other industries to explore the need and feasibility of setting up new ITACs;
- (b) recognising the need to step up efforts in promoting QF to the community at large, the Administration would formulate a detailed brand strategy with a view to enhancing the public image and recognition of QF by various stakeholders in the coming years. The Administration would step up promotion



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and publicity of QF for its wider acceptance among all sectors, including the school sector, industry sector and the community at large;

- (c) more and more QF-recognised courses/programmes had been developed, which indicated the wider acceptance and recognition of QF; and
- (d) the Administration would follow up on members' views and suggestion on making reference to QF in the Government's recruitment policy. For the non-governmental sector, it was noteworthy that SCSs which were drawn up by the relevant ITACs and included the skills, knowledge and outcome standards required of employees in different functional areas of the respective sectors, could serve as useful guides for human resources management, such as staff recruitment.

46. DS(Ed) added that QF was a seven-level hierarchy system, which had established an accessible articulation pathway to enable individuals to pursue different levels of academic and training attainment according to their own roadmaps. Since the implementation of QF in 2008, the Government had been striving to assist in the setting up of ITACs which were industry-led and promote the understanding of the benefits of QF. Continuous efforts would be made in this regard.

47. The Chairman, however, remained concerned about the development of QF and its limited acceptance among different industries. Pointing out that the number of RPL applications in the Property Management industry outnumbered those of other industries, the Chairman said that to his understanding, practitioners could enjoy wage increase upon acquiring RPL qualifications. He called on the Administration to consider making reference to such arrangement when promoting QF.

Co-operation with other places on QF

48. With reference to paragraph 10 of the Administration's paper on co-operation with other places on QF, Mr POON Siu-ping enquired whether holders of QF-recognised qualifications had secured employment in other places based on their qualifications. Acknowledging the importance of continuing education and lifelong learning so as to increase the competitiveness of the workforce in the long run, SED responded that as Hong Kong was an international city, it was imperative to enhance

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collaboration and facilitate exchange and experience sharing on QF with other places. The Administration was working towards such direction and would explore opportunities to further enhance collaboration with other areas and places so as to foster learners' mobility and articulation.

49. In light of the signing of the "Letter of Intent on Enhancing the Exchange on and Transferability of Vocational Standards and Qualifications Recognition between Hong Kong and Guangdong" between the QF Secretariat and the Guangdong Occupational Skill Testing Authority in May 2011, the Deputy Chairman sought information on how far it could help promote the mutual recognition of learners' qualifications as well as their mobility and progression in the two places.

50. PAS(FE) responded that subsequent to the signing of the Letter of Intent, considerable work had commenced, including comparability study on SCSs for some specific industries. In addition, based on the Letter of Intent and building on the vocational assessment ("VA") offered by the Vocational Training Council, multipartite negotiation and collaborations were arranged to further develop "One Examination, Multiple Certification" system in order to achieve national and international recognitions. At the moment, VA for the Beauty Care and Hairdressing industries had been benchmarked against the standards for National Vocational Qualifications of Mainland and International Professional Standards Network.

Provision of support

51. Mr POON Siu-ping considered that employees should be provided with support to pursue further education and training. To tie in with the development of QF, Mr POON was concerned about the Administration's long-term plan in this regard and whether it would consider legislating for the provision of study leave.

*[The Chairman advised that the meeting would be extended by 15 minutes.]*

Other issues

52. While expressing support for launching the new initiative of introducing the QF Award Scheme for Learning Experiences for outstanding practitioners to engage in learning activities in different places around the world, the Deputy Chairman asked whether the Administration would consider setting up a platform to facilitate secondary students to obtain field experience in workplace.

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53. Acknowledging that vocational education as one of the highlights in the 2016 Policy Address, Mr POON Siu-ping was concerned about the competition for students between vocational education and associate degree education.

54. SED advised that the Administration fully understood the need of field experience in secondary education as well as in vocational and professional education and training. As stated in the 2016 Policy Address, the Government had accepted all the recommendations of the Task Force on Promotion of Vocational Education and would actively consider how to implement them. To this end, vocational education and training in Hong Kong would be rebranded as "vocational and professional education and training" covering relevant programmes up to degree level.

55. In concluding the discussion, the Chairman expressed the view that the Administration should consider formulating proactive measures to promote the implementation of QF among different sectors. Specifically, the Chairman requested EDB to relay the suggestion of providing study leave to employees to the relevant Government bureau or department for consideration.

56. There being no other business, the meeting ended at 6:45 pm.

Council Business Division 2  
Legislative Council Secretariat  
14 March 2016