



Labour Department (Headquarters)

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7 February 2017

Ms Joanne MAK
Clerk to Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities
Legislative Council
Legislative Council Complex
1 Legislative Council Road
Central, Hong Kong

Dear Ms MAK,

Legislative Council Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities

Thank you for your letter of 10 January 2017 to the Secretary for Labour and Welfare concerning the captioned Subcommittee. The Labour Department is authorised to reply. At the Subcommittee's request, we enclose herewith a consolidated response on the related issues raised at the meeting on 9 January 2017 (Annex).

Yours sincerely,

(Charles Hui)

for Commissioner for Labour

c.c. Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs
(Attn: Mr Michael Yau)

Secretary for Education
(Attn: Mr Ronald Ling)

Secretary for Labour and Welfare
(Attn: Ms Crystal Hui)

Secretary for the Civil Service
(Attn: Mr Brian Mok)

**Consolidated response on related issues raised at the meeting of
Legislative Council Subcommittee on Rights of Ethnic Minorities
held on 9 January 2017**

Unemployment rate of ethnic minorities (EMs)

The findings of the Survey on Households with School Children of South Asian Ethnicities cited in the *Hong Kong Poverty Situation Report on Ethnic Minorities 2014* indicated that in 2014, the population of South Asian households with children had an unemployment rate of 4.9%. Of these South Asian households, the unemployment rates of Indians, Nepalese and Pakistanis were 3.2%, 3.4% and 8.3% respectively.

Employment services by Labour Department (LD)

(a) Providing dedicated employment services for ethnic minority (EM) job seekers

2. LD's job centres provide a wide range of dedicated employment services for EM job seekers through special counters, resource corners, employment briefings, etc. In 2016, job centres held 12 tailor-made employment briefings for EM job seekers with a view to helping them better understand the latest local labour market situation and improve their job search skills. Special counters and resource corners have been set up at job centres to provide EM job seekers with job referral services and employment information. EMs in need are also provided with personalised employment advisory service, including job matching service. In 2016, employment officers provided employment advisory service to 296 EM job seekers.

3. Employment officer posts of the job centres are filled by civil servants. Appointments to the civil service are based on the principle of open and fair competition. The vacancies are filled by selection from among eligible candidates through a competitive process on the basis of merits. Race is not a relevant consideration in the process. LD does not have information on the

ethnicity of these officers. On the other hand, since September 2014, LD has implemented the Employment Services Ambassador Programme for Ethnic Minorities to employ trainees of the Youth Employment and Training Programme who can communicate in EM language for six months as Employment Services Ambassadors (ESAs) to provide support to LD staff in offering employment services to EM job seekers at job centres, industry-based recruitment centres and job fairs. LD has so far employed 78 ESAs. In 2017, LD will, on a pilot basis, engage two staff proficient in EM languages to partner with employment officers at its selected job centres to serve EM job seekers.

4. LD has made arrangements with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide interpretation services for EM job seekers who speak neither Chinese nor English. Staff of job/ recruitment centres have been actively introducing the relevant services to EM job seekers and displaying posters in major EM languages at conspicuous locations to publicise the interpretation services provided by the Centre for Harmony and Enhancement of Ethnic Minority Residents (CHEER). LD has also produced forms in seven EM languages for distribution to EM visitors to the job/ recruitment centres to ascertain their individual needs for interpretation services. In 2016, staff of job/ recruitment centres introduced interpretation services to 2 601 EM job seekers, and in light of their needs, arranged interpretation services on 23 occasions on the spot.

5. In 2016, 1 043 EM job seekers registered for LD's employment services, and among them, 82 placements were secured through LD's referral services. Job seekers (including EMs) may be placed into employment either through the referral services of LD or by direct application to employers. At present, an overwhelming majority of the vacancies advertised through LD are open for direct application by job seekers. Job seekers (including EMs) who have found work through direct application are not required to report their employment status to LD. Therefore, LD does not have placement rate of EM job seekers.

(b) Enhancing the multi-cultural sensitivity of front-line staff

6. To raise the multi-cultural sensitivity of its frontline staff (including ESAs), LD invites NGOs serving EMs to deliver talks from time to time on different cultural and religious customs as well as skills in communicating with

EMs. Moreover, LD has strengthened collaboration with the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) for the latter to provide training on equal opportunities and multi-culture for staff of job/ recruitment centres. The training straddles the situation of EM groups in Hong Kong (including religions, diets, gender roles, attire, etc.), as well as laws and guidelines relevant to anti-racial discrimination. The training also aims to raise participants' sensitivity to EM cultures and quality of service through case studies. EOC will organise a total of eight training sessions for LD to ensure that all the front-line staff of job/ recruitment centres (including ESAs) can attend. The first training session was conducted in December 2016.

(c) Organising inclusive job fairs

7. LD organises large-scale and district-based inclusive job fairs to enhance the employment opportunities of EMs. In 2016, LD organised two large-scale inclusive job fairs, in which 80 establishments participated and offered 7 042 job vacancies. A total of 1 810 job seekers (including 143 EMs) attended the events. Among the 55 EM job seekers who were offered employment, 23 accepted the offers eventually.

8. In 2016, LD organised 12 district-based inclusive job fairs, in which 43 establishments participated and offered 2 754 job vacancies. Altogether 914 job seekers (including 442 EMs) attended. Among the 35 EM job seekers who were offered employment so far, 23 accepted the offers.

9. LD will continue to monitor the various usage figures on its employment services by EMs as mentioned in the foregoing, and will review the needs of the users from time to time with a view to providing suitable services.

Dedicated vocational and professional education and training (VPET) Programmes for non-Chinese speaking (NCS) students by Vocational Training Council (VTC)

10. VTC offers a wide range of VPET programmes. All applicants, irrespective of their race or ethnic origin, who are able to meet the admission requirements, may be enrolled into such programmes. VTC offers dedicated VPET programmes to NCS youth and adults to meet their multifarious training

needs. These programmes include diploma courses in business, design, and hotel and tourism for secondary school leavers, Applied Learning courses for senior secondary students, Vocational Development Programmes for non-engaged youth, short courses on basic vocational Chinese and other trades. Please refer to the Appendix for the enrolment statistics of these dedicated programmes.

Handling wages claims/ complaints involving EMs

11. The Labour Relations Division of LD operates through a network of ten branch offices to provide consultation service to employers and employees on the Employment Ordinance (Cap. 57), the Minimum Wage Ordinance (Cap. 608) and employment contracts. It also offers free and voluntary conciliation service to assist employers and employees in establishments outside the government sector to resolve their employment disputes and claims. Employers and employees, irrespective of their ethnicity, have equal access to LD's free consultation and conciliation services. If no settlement could be reached by conciliation, the claimants, depending on the claim amount involved, may seek the adjudication with the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board or the Labour Tribunal. LD does not keep any breakdown of wage claims/ complaints by the ethnicity of the claimant/ complainant.

12. Furthermore, LD is committed to enhancing the understanding of employers and the general public about labour legislation and employees' rights and benefits through a wide range of publicity channels and various educational and promotional activities. To facilitate EMs in understanding their statutory rights and benefits, LD produces publications in major EM languages to promote major provisions of the Employment Ordinance and employees' statutory rights and protection. In addition to disseminating the publications through various channels, the e-versions of these publications have also been uploaded to the Multi-Language Platform of the Gov.HK website, LD's homepage and the dedicated webpage for EM job seekers on LD's Interactive Employment Service website to facilitate members of the public (including EMs) to browse the information.

Dedicated VPET Programmes for NCS Students by VTC

Programme Type	Mode of Study	Target Group	Major Discipline/ Subject Area	Academic Year 2015/16		
				No. of programmes offered	Planned Places	Enrolment
Diploma of Foundation Studies and Diploma of Vocational Education	Full-time	Secondary 3 / 6 school leavers	Business, Design, Hospitality	4	140	187
Vocational Development Programme	Full-time	Non-engaged youths	Office Operations, Computer Network Installation	1	20	14
Applied Learning Course and Other Learning Experience Programme	Part-time	Senior secondary students	Hotel Operations, Western Cuisine	3	190	199
Vocational Chinese Short Courses	Part-time	Working adults	Chinese Communication	8	340	362
Skills Training Courses / Preparatory Courses for Trade Tests	Part-time	Working adults	Electrical, Welding	5	60	45
Total				21	750	807