

CE thanks labour sector for their contributions on Labour Day

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, today (May 1), Labour Day, expressed her gratitude to the labour sector for their enduring contributions to Hong Kong's prosperity and stability, pointing out that the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will continue to strive to create and stabilise employment and improve labour welfare to enhance labour protection. She also appealed to members of the public to get vaccinated as soon as possible so that society and the economy can return to normal as soon as possible, thereby providing more job opportunities.

In a [video](#) released on her social media platform, Mrs Lam said that the loyalty, hard work and stamina of Hong Kong's labour force has all along been the cornerstone of the city's success. Pointing out that over the past two years, Hong Kong's economy has been hard hit by the violent riots and the epidemic, putting the labour market under pressure with the latest unemployment rate reaching 6.8 per cent, she said that the HKSAR Government has made every effort to create and stabilise employment through a series of measures. The measures include those worth more than \$300 billion rolled out under several rounds of the Anti-epidemic Fund and the Budget to safeguard jobs and relieve people's financial burden as far as possible.

Mrs Lam said that the Government is also committed to improving labour welfare and has implemented various rights that the labour sector had been fighting for continually for years. The rights include the extension of statutory maternity leave from 10 weeks to 14 weeks since last December and the extension of statutory paternity leave from three days to five days since January 2019. Moreover, the Government submitted a bill last month proposing the progressive increase of the number of statutory holidays from 12 days to 17 days to place it on par with that of general holidays. The Government will also continue to press ahead with the preparatory work in relation to the abolition of the offsetting arrangement under the Mandatory Provident Fund, including formulating relevant legal provisions and enforcement details with a view to submitting a bill to the Legislative Council at the beginning of the next legislative year.

On safeguarding employees' occupational safety and health, Mrs Lam said that the Government has increased the levels of compensation for work injuries and occupational diseases under employees' compensation-related ordinances starting in April this year, and that the Government also proposed legislative amendments to raise the maximum penalty for violating the laws on occupational safety and health in order to enhance the deterrent effect. The legislative amendments are expected to be completed within the current term of the Government.

Noting that controlling the epidemic is still the most important task at present, she appealed to members of the public to get vaccinated as early as

possible to protect oneself and others, and enable society and the economy to return to normal as soon as possible.