

Employment Symposium calls for fair job opportunities for rehabilitated offenders

Around 200 representatives from over 70 business organisations, social enterprises, statutory bodies and social sectors attended the "Unleashing Rehabilitated Offenders' Potential" Employment Symposium today (June 29) to discuss how to assist rehabilitated offenders to reintegrate into the community through employment.

The Symposium, which was the ninth of its kind, was jointly held by the Correctional Services Department (CSD) and the Centre for Criminology of the University of Hong Kong (HKU), providing an academic platform for discussion of employment issues relating to rehabilitated offenders. The Symposium also included employers who had hired rehabilitated offenders sharing details of their experiences as well as rehabilitated persons talking about their reintegration into the community. In addition, the event called on the public and employers to offer fair job opportunities and treatment to rehabilitated offenders to help them reintegrate into society.

The theme of the Symposium was "Unleashing Rehabilitated Offenders' Potential". The event was officiated by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, as well as the Commissioner of Correctional Services, Mr Lam Kwok-leung; the Acting Director of the Centre for Criminology of HKU, Professor Maggy Lee, and the Chairman of the Committee on Community Support for Rehabilitated Offenders, Mr Siu Chor-kee. The Symposium was launched with the planting of a tree, with the growth of the tree symbolising the success of concerted efforts by all sectors of the community in helping offenders to reintegrate. With constant support from all stakeholders, it is expected that rehabilitated offenders will be able to unleash their potential and contribute towards making a better society.

At the Symposium, academics, business people and employers from various fields exchanged views on the importance of job opportunities for rehabilitated offenders, their experiences in hiring them and the function of CSD supervision staff in job-matching between rehabilitated offenders and employers. Arrangements were also made for rehabilitated offenders under statutory supervision to talk about their path towards rehabilitation, including their career development and social recognition through hard work.

Dr Law and Mr Lam presented awards to companies which had offered jobs to rehabilitated offenders, in recognition of their support for offender rehabilitation.