

LCQ11: Recruiting talents to Hong Kong

Following is a question by the Hon Carmen Kan and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, in the Legislative Council today (December 13):

Question:

Regarding the work on recruiting talents to Hong Kong, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the terms of reference, composition, staffing establishment and estimated operating expenditure of the Hong Kong Talent Engage Office which was established on October 30 this year, and whether the authorities will set performance indicators for the work of the Office; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) of the respective numbers of applications made in respect of the various talent admission schemes which the authorities have received, approved and rejected since January this year; among the approved applications, the number of applicants and their dependants who have entered Hong Kong, with a tabulated breakdown by the talent admission scheme to which the applicants belong (for applicants of the Top Talent Pass Scheme or the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme, by their application category) and the following information: place of origin, gender, age, academic qualification and working experience;

(3) for applicants and their dependants who have been granted visas to come to Hong Kong, whether the authorities will proactively reach out to them to follow up their living and employment situation in Hong Kong, and take such situation as a factor to be considered by the Immigration Department in deciding whether or not to approve their applications for extension of stay in the future; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) for talents from regions with capital control, of the policy initiatives put in place by the authorities to remove red tape for the two-way flow of such persons' capital between Hong Kong and their places of origin?

Reply:

President,

To address the challenges of labour shortage, apart from promoting training and retraining, and providing appropriate employment and other support services, the Government introduced in last year's Policy Address an array of measures to proactively trawl for talent worldwide, and launched the online platform of Hong Kong Talent Engage (HKTE) at the end of last year to provide one-stop electronic services for talent from around the world. The measures have received enthusiastic responses since implementation. This year's Policy Address, under the ongoing strategy of attracting and retaining

talent, announced further measures including expanding the coverage of universities under the Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) and establishing the physical office of HKTE.

Our reply, in consultation with the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau and the Immigration Department (ImmD), to the Member's questions is as follows:

(1) HKTE, established at the end of October this year, aims to assist talent in their long-term development in Hong Kong by providing them with comprehensive one-stop support services, formulate targeted recruitment and publicity strategies for different talent groups, and collaborate with different industry players and stakeholders as well as the Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses and Talents in the Mainland and overseas in carrying out proactive external promotions of Hong Kong, so as to attract more talent to come to Hong Kong to pursue development. HKTE comprises nearly 40 staff members, with an estimated annual expenditure of about \$83 million.

HKTE has commenced its work immediately after establishment. In October this year, HKTE and the Hong Kong Federation of Insurers co-hosted an online live recruitment event to enable Mainland talent who are interested in coming to Hong Kong for development, particularly those from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), to understand further the outlook and opportunities of the insurance industry in Hong Kong. In November and early December this year, HKTE also participated in the exhibition at the 2nd National Conference on the Development of Human Resources Services held in Shenzhen, as well as organised job fairs at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, Shenzhen, and Sun Yat-sen University, to promote Hong Kong's role as the GBA's talent service hub.

This year's Policy Address announced that HKTE would organise a Global Talent Summit cum Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area High-quality Talent Development Conference next year, so as to congregate political, academic and business leaders worldwide to explore the global trends of talent development, drive regional exchange and cooperation in talent attraction, and promote Hong Kong's dual roles as an international talent hub and national talent portal and our advantages. We will take this opportunity to showcase Hong Kong's distinctive edge of enjoying strong support of the motherland and being closely connected to the world under the "one country, two systems", which attracts talent as well as facilitates talent exchanges and cooperation in the GBA. The event is expected to attract at least 800 attendances.

The Director of HKTE is proactively drawing up service commitments and performance indicators for HKTE's major services, which will be announced in the first quarter of next year.

(2) As at end-November this year, we received over 200 000 applications under various talent admission schemes and approved over 120 000, while around 8 600 applications were refused. The statistics are at Annex 1. In particular, the TTPS is the most popular talent admission scheme with over 60 000 applications received. Out of nearly 50 000 approved applications,

more than 40 per cent in Categories B and C are applicants graduating from the top overseas universities.

Besides, in the first 11 months of this year, around 81 000 talents with visas approved under various talent admission schemes have arrived in Hong Kong, which has far exceeded our annual target of admitting at least 35 000 talents. At the same time, about 68 000 dependants have also arrived in Hong Kong. The statistical breakdowns on the number of applications approved by region, gender, age, academic qualification and work experience of applicants are at Annex 2.

(3) As mentioned in part (1) above, HKTE maintains close contact with the incoming talent to keep track of their development and needs in Hong Kong. HKTE actively expands its network of working partners, and organises a variety of online and offline activities as well as services to assist talent who have obtained visas to come to Hong Kong or have newly arrived to obtain necessary information on living and jobs or skills, and provide them with pertinent support on job seeking, accommodation, education, integrated settlement services and networking and community in order to make it easier for them to adapt to and integrate into the new life as early as possible, hence, settle in Hong Kong for development in the long term.

In addition, the electronic matching services launched in the HKTE's online platform since end-July provide talent with matching services through the support network of our working partners from the business sector. More than 920 requests for support services have been referred to working partners so far, mostly concerning job seeking and accommodation. As at end-October this year, the online platform has also processed over 5 800 enquiries.

Talent admitted to Hong Kong under different talent admission schemes are subject to varying eligibility criteria for extension of stay. For example, a person admitted under the TTPS or the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates upon applying for extension is required to have secured an offer of employment, or have established or joined in business in Hong Kong. For a person admitted under the General Employment Policy or the Admission Scheme for Mainland Talents and Professionals, his/her application for extension of stay will be considered only when he/she continues to meet the relevant eligibility criteria. In processing each application, the ImmD will examine whether an applicant meets the relevant eligibility criteria, and will take into account the individual circumstances of each application.

(4) Relevant Government bureaux and departments have been in discussion with relevant financial regulatory authorities on various cross-boundary remittance arrangements, such as how to provide more facilitation arrangements for the convenience and benefit of the public and the business sector while ensuring that the risks are manageable. For cross-boundary remittance arrangements for talent entering Hong Kong under the talent admission schemes, relevant Government bureaux and departments would, taking account of their practical needs, explore facilitation arrangements with the authorities concerned in a timely manner.