

## LCQ7: Trade unions conducting annual general meetings

Following is a question by the Hon Poon Siu-ping and a written reply by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, in the Legislative Council today (May 5):

Question:

The Trade Unions Ordinance (Cap. 332) stipulates that trade unions shall make rules on the matters specified in Schedule 2. These matters include the method of convening and conducting annual general meetings (AGMs). However, quite a number of representatives of trade unions have relayed that due to the rampant Coronavirus Disease 2019 epidemic, their trade unions have not held AGMs for more than a year to handle the personnel and accounts matters of the trade unions concerned. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the respective numbers and percentages of trade unions which have made enquiries with and sought assistance from the Registry of Trade Unions since the outbreak of the epidemic on matters relating to the conduct of AGMs; and

(2) whether it has formulated guidelines setting out the arrangements for AGMs of trade unions under special circumstances (e.g. an epidemic); if so, of the details; if not, whether it will immediately formulate guidelines and recommend trade unions to make rules specifying the arrangements for handling the personnel and accounts matters of the trade unions concerned in the event that AGMs cannot be conducted; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

In accordance with Schedule 2 to the Trade Unions Ordinance (TUO), each registered trade union must specify in its rules (or called the constitution) the method of convening and conducting annual general meetings (AGMs) and extraordinary general meetings, and the matters to be presented to the members of the trade union at such meetings, including in the case of AGMs the presentation of audited accounts. In this regard, TUO does not provide for any exemption arrangement. With regard to Member's question, my reply is as follows:

(1) During the outbreak of Coronavirus Disease 2019 pandemic, the Registry of Trade Unions (RTU) of the Labour Department has received enquiries from trade unions about the holding of AGMs. RTU has provided advice and suggestions to the trade unions concerned. RTU does not keep statistics on the related enquiries.

(2) Generally speaking, trade unions should hold AGMs in the month(s)

specified in their rules. If trade unions need to convene AGMs in accordance with their rules during the pandemic, they also have to comply with the requirements of the Prevention and Control of Disease (Prohibition on Group Gathering) Regulation (Cap. 599G) and take appropriate anti-epidemic measures. RTU understands that quite a number of trade unions have convened their AGMs as scheduled in accordance with their rules. If individual trade unions need to make special arrangements for convening AGMs, they should explain to their members the relevant situation and consult members' views, so as to ensure members' understanding of the special arrangements.

Trade unions are welcome to contact RTU should they have the related enquiries.