

LCQ9: Provision of training on innovation and technology for working people

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Chun-ying and a written reply by the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Nicholas W Yang, in the Legislative Council today (May 15):

Question:

It has been reported that some experts have pointed out that the development of artificial intelligence (AI) (including robotics) has made progress in leaps and bounds in recent years, and it is estimated that AI will be competent for performing 50 per cent of the jobs of human beings in 10 years from now. As such, working people need to receive retraining to meet the manpower needs of the new era. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) given that the Human Resources Planning Commission, chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration, has initially examined and discussed the impacts of automation on human resources and the labour market, whether the Government will conduct an in-depth study on the subject and submit a report; if so, of the timetable; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) given that in Singapore, a trades union has, since 2017, partnered with a tertiary institution there to provide classroom and online courses on financial technologies (Fintech) for local professionals, managers and executives, whether the Government will draw reference from such an initiative and help the local banking practitioners keep abreast of the latest Fintech knowledge; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) given that the Government introduced the Reindustrialisation and Technology Training Programme in August last year to encourage enterprises to arrange technology training for their staff, whether applications from the financial industries (including the banking sector) have been received since the Programme was launched; if so, of the number of such applications approved; if not, whether the Government has identified the causes for not receiving any application from such industries; and

(4) as it has been reported that a multinational computer technology enterprise opened an AI school in Paris last year to provide a free-of-charge seven-month technology training course and a one-year internship to enable the local working people to change their career paths, whether the Government will draw reference from such an initiative and invite multinational computer technology enterprises to organise in Hong Kong free training courses on automation, AI or Fintech, etc for local working people; if so, of the

timetable; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President:

Artificial Intelligence (AI) has been made available for over 60 years and experienced numerous ups and downs in history. The development of AI and robotics have gradually brought about changes to the operational modes and job requirements of various industries. However, in every wave of AI, people could always create more and better opportunities and new job positions amid changes. To maintain and enhance competitiveness in the complex and evolving environment in future, the local labour force should continuously absorb and update their knowledge and skills, in order to grasp the opportunities brought by technology development.

Having consulted relevant Government bureaux and departments, our reply to the four parts of Hon Chan's question is as follows:

(1) According to the Human Resources Planning and Poverty Co-ordination Unit, the analysis of the Human Resources Planning Commission aims at examining the impact of automation technologies, including AI, robotics and machine learning, etc, on the human resources and labour market of Hong Kong from a macro perspective. The analysis shows that the impact of automation differs for different industries and sectors depending on the constituent job tasks, operational modes and business needs as well as the pace of adoption and application of technology in different industries or corporations. As the framework of the analysis was broad-based, it could not examine the impact of automation on specific industries. Relevant industries and bureaux/departments would take into account the situation of specific industries and consider looking into the impact of automation on those industries with a view to formulating appropriate business and manpower strategies.

(2) According to the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau, the Government has all along been encouraging and assisting local financial practitioners to enhance their knowledge of Fintech, including co-operating with the industry to provide Fintech-related training courses. Local tertiary institutions, industry associations (such as the Hong Kong Institute of Bankers), and technology training providers (such as the Vocational Training Council) provide full-time or part-time professional training courses in the areas of Fintech and related topics (such as cyber security, anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing) at various levels, which aim to help local financial practitioners grasp the latest Fintech knowledge. The Government and the industry have also offered various training programmes to enhance the digital literacy of practitioners of the financial services industry. For example, under the Pilot Programme to Enhance Talent Training for the Insurance Sector and the Asset and Wealth Management Sector, industry associations can apply for subsidy to conduct training courses to enhance wider adoption of innovative technology among practitioners. In addition, the University of Hong Kong, together with the Cyberport and other industry

players, have launched Asia's first Fintech Massive Open Online Course in 2018 for practitioners of, among others, the financial services industry to enroll. Since 2017, the Institute of Financial Technologists of Asia has also launched a globally recognised certification programme in finance and technology designed for practicing and aspiring financial technologists.

Along with the rapid Fintech development in Hong Kong over the past few years, the number of related courses has been increasing. We will continue to keep abreast of the latest market developments and continue to engage in close dialogue with the finance industry, the Fintech industry, institutions and organisations to promote Fintech talent development in Hong Kong.

(3) Since its launch in August 2018, the Reindustrialisation and Technology Training Programme has approved seven training grant applications submitted by finance-related enterprises, subsidising 29 staff of local enterprises to receive technology training under four public courses and one tailor-made course.

(4) The Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation collaborates with international and Mainland technology enterprises from time to time to organise free seminars and workshops on AI, robotics technology and Fintech for local I&T enterprises with a view to providing further training opportunities to the industry.

In 2018, the Cyberport invited representatives of multi-national technology and finance companies to conduct a number of free workshops and seminars on AI, blockchain and Fintech for start-ups and small-to-medium-sized enterprises. These events were attended by nearly 200 people. A few internationally technology companies which have or will set up offices at the Cyberport under the Easy Landing Scheme will also provide training, exchange and collaboration opportunities for the Cyberport community members.

In addition, the Hong Kong Applied Science and Technology Research Institute, in collaboration with the Hong Kong Institute of Bankers and the Council of Registered Ethical Security Testers International (CREST, a cyber security certification body in the United Kingdom), has been conducting CREST-certified professional cyber security training programmes for the banking sector since 2016.