

Second-term Human Resources Planning Commission convenes first meeting

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung, chaired the first meeting of the second-term Human Resources Planning Commission this afternoon (June 16).

At the meeting, members took note of Hong Kong's latest economic performance and labour market situation. Since the beginning of this year, the pandemic has continued to affect a wide range of economic activities and dampened economic sentiment. As a result, the economic recession deepened in Hong Kong in the first quarter and the labour market also deteriorated sharply. While the local epidemic situation has abated recently, it will take time for local economic activities to return to normal. Meanwhile, the external environment remains difficult as the pandemic continues to weigh on the global economy. Hong Kong's near-term economic outlook is still highly challenging.

Members also noted that the Government had rolled out relief measures at an unprecedented scale, including the two rounds of measures under the Anti-epidemic Fund and the one-off measures in the 2020-21 Budget, totalling \$287.5 billion, in order to provide relief to businesses and members of the public hard hit by the pandemic.

Moreover, members were briefed on the "Job Creation" initiative under the Fund. To ease the worsening unemployment situation arising from the pandemic, the Government has set aside \$6 billion under the Fund with a view to creating around 30 000 time-limited jobs in both the public and private sectors in the coming two years for people of different skill sets and academic qualifications, including positions for fresh graduates. Relevant government bureaux and departments are actively carrying out the preparatory and recruitment work related to the scheme.

Besides time-limited positions, the Government will recruit over 10 000 civil servants in the 2020-21 fiscal year to replace retirees and fill new posts to be created in the Estimates. On the other hand, to allow more young people to understand the operation of the Government and gain working experience, the Government will hire about 5 000 short-term youth interns, which includes inviting public organisations to provide placements, in order to increase the diversity of the internship programmes and students' choices.

Members generally welcomed the Government's "Job Creation" initiative. Considering that fresh graduates may experience relatively more difficulties in job hunting in view of the current economic situation, members also discussed how to better help young people secure a job.