

Transcript of remarks by DFS and SLW at media session

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Deputy Financial Secretary, Mr Michael Wong, and the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Chris Sun, at a media session on importation of labour after attending a radio programme today (June 14):

Reporter: Secretary, some said the scheme is stripping the Labour Advisory Board of its vetting power, and that there wasn't enough consultation beforehand. How would you respond to that? And about the lifting of an import ban of 26 low-skilled job types, does it actually reflect where shortages are most pressing? And also, what measures will be in place to ensure that imported minibus drivers will be familiar with Hong Kong roads?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: I think throughout the time the Labour Advisory Board (LAB) plays a very important role when it comes to the importation of labour. Even for the sector-specific schemes, we have a regular arrangement under which we are going to report back to the LAB regularly. Right now, our plan is to report around every six months, so in this way we are going to keep the LAB informed of the latest development. This also allows us to listen to views and suggestions from members of the LAB.

As for the enhancement we are going to make to the Supplementary Labour Scheme, what we are proposing right now is to relax for two years the restrictions on 26 job categories. They are mainly low-skilled jobs. What we are allowing employers is to make an application, but for each and every application, they have to first of all prove that there is a shortage in recruiting locally. So, it is not for sure that their applications will be processed. What we are allowing them now is, for these 26 categories of jobs, at least they can make an application, but the prerequisite is they have to prove there is a local shortage.

Deputy Financial Secretary: For the drivers, all imported drivers will need to take and pass relevant licensing examinations. They will also have to attend courses which focus on politeness and also driving attitude. So there will be adequacy of guard in terms of safety.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)