

Press Releases

LCQ10:Employment of ethnic minorities

Following is the question by the Hon Leung Yiu-chung and a written reply by the Secretary for Economic Development and Labour, Mr Stephen Ip, in the Legislative Council today (October 19):

Question:

Regarding the ethnic minorities (i.e. non-Chinese in ethnicity) who are Hong Kong permanent residents, will the Government inform this Council whether, in the past three years:

(a) it has surveyed their employment situation; if so, of the size of the working population among the ethnic minorities, their unemployment and under-employment rates; if not, the reasons for that, and whether it will expeditiously conduct such surveys; and

(b) the Employees Retraining Board has conducted retraining courses specially catering for the needs of the ethnic minorities; if so, of the information on such courses (including their contents, enrolment capacity, etc); if not, the reasons for that; whether it has assessed if not conducting such courses constitutes direct or indirect racial discrimination and whether it will conduct such courses in the near future?

Reply:

Madam President,

(a) During the past three years, the Administration has not conducted any special survey on the employment situation of ethnic minorities (i.e. non-Chinese in ethnicity) who are Hong Kong permanent residents. Although the General Household Survey (GHS) conducted regularly by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) covers a wide range of information items on employment, "ethnicity" is not included. It is, therefore, not possible to compile employment statistics for this group of people.

Data on ethnicity is not collected in the GHS as the ethnic minorities only account for a very small proportion of Hong Kong's population. According to the results of the 2001 Population Census, the number of ethnic minorities (excluding foreign domestic helpers) only accounted for about 2.4 % of Hong Kong's population. It follows that the number of ethnic minorities found in the sample of the GHS will be too small for compiling the relevant statistics. If we were to enlarge the sample size of the GHS to make it more representative of the ethnic minorities, the additional resources required would be quite substantial. At present, C&SD has no plan to enlarge the sample size of the GHS for compiling statistics on the ethnic minorities.

The Population Census conducted by the C&SD in 2001 provided the following statistics on the employment situation of ethnic minorities:

- (a) labour force participation rate
- (b) working population by occupation
- (c) working population by industry
- (d) median monthly income from main employment

A table showing such information is annexed. The C&SD will conduct a population by-census in 2006 which will provide up-dated statistics.

(b) The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) provides courses for all eligible employees, irrespective of their ethnic origin, especially the unemployed who are aged 30 or above and with no more than junior secondary education. The ERB does not discriminate against any racial groups. It does not currently offer courses specifically for the ethnic minorities. Nonetheless, subject to demand, availability of resources and placement prospect, it could develop programmes to cater for the different needs of its prescribed clientele.

Ends/Wednesday, October 19, 2005
Issued at HKT 12:43

NNNN