

**Meeting of the Ethnic Minorities Forum**  
**14 June 2019 at 3:00 p.m.**  
**30/F Conference Room, Southorn Centre, Wan Chai**

**Present**

**Government representatives**

Assistant Director of Home Affairs (3)	Mr Howard Yam (Chairperson)
Chief Executive Officer (3), Home Affairs Department	Mr KY Cheng

**Representatives of public bodies**

Senior Equal Opportunities Officer, Equal Opportunities Commission	Mr Raymond Ho
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**Representatives of non-government organisations**

Caritas – Hong Kong	Mr Bill Lay
Christian Action	Ms Carol Lee
Federation of Muslim Association in Hong Kong	Mr Khan Muhammad Malik
Global Social Service Ltd.	Mr Qaim Khani Shakeel Ahmed
Hong Kong Christian Service	Ms Maggie Poon
Hong Kong Integrated Nepalese Society Limited	Mr Dhungana Seetaram
Hong Kong Nepalese Federation	Ms Rita Gurung
Hong Kong SKH Lady MacLehose Centre	Mr Jonathan Chan
Human Welfare Services	Mr Rashid Yousef Zeb
India Association Hong Kong	Mr Mohan Chugani
International Social Service Hong Kong Branch	Mr Deepen Thapa
Jammu Kashmir Association (HKSAR)	Mr Rehan Gulfareed
Muslim Youth Association	Mr Muhammad Din Malik
Nepali Social Service Hong Kong	Mr MB Thapa
New Home Association	Mr YF Chan
Nigerian Community Hong Kong	Mr PC Clement
The Hong Kong Council of Social Service	Ms Lynn Law

The Incorporated Trustees of the Islamic Community Fund of Hong Kong	Mr Qamar Zaman Minhas
The Lok Sin Tong Benevolent Society, Kowloon	Ms Alice Lau
The Zubin Foundation	Mr Matthew Yu
United Muslim Association of Hong Kong	Mr Raghbi Shoab
Yang Memorial Methodist Social Service	Mr CM Lam

**Other attendees**

*For Agenda Item 1*

Senior Labour Officer (Employment Services) (Policy), Labour Department	Ms Catherine Law
Acting Labour Officer (Employment Services) (Special Duties), Labour Department	Ms Winnie Yung
Employment Assistant (Employment Services) (Kowloon West), Labour Department	Ms Babar Ashi

*For Agenda Item 2*

Chairperson, Task Force on Ethnic Minorities in Construction, Construction Industry Council	Mr Ivan Fu
Assistant Director - Training, Hong Kong Institute of Construction	Mr YL Chu
Senior Manager – Corporate Secretariat, Construction Industry Council	Ms Miranda Yeap
Senior Manager – Trade Testing, Construction Industry Council	Mr Ivan Ko
Senior Officer – Corporate Secretariat, Construction Industry Council	Mr Patrick Lin

**Secretary**

Senior Executive Officer (RRU), Home Affairs Department	Mr Alfred Shum
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# **1 Introduction**

1.1 The Chairperson welcomed attendees to the meeting.

## **2 Labour Department's support measures to help ethnic minority job seekers**

2.1 At the invitation of the Chairperson, Ms Catherine Law of the Labour Department (LD) briefed attendees on the LD's employment support measures to help ethnic minority job seekers, followed by a sharing from Ms Babar Ashi on her work as an Employment Assistant in the LD's job centre.

2.2 Issues raised by attendees and the discussions were summarised below:

2.2.1 An attendee asked if there was any data showing the number of ethnic minorities being employed by the public and / or the private sectors. Ms Law said that the number of ethnic minority job seekers registered with the LD was 1 036 in 2017 and 1 173 in 2018, whereas the numbers of job vacancies which were posted by employers welcoming ethnic minority job seekers were 192 925 in 2017 and 238 270 in 2018, comprising around 15% of the total number of vacancies registered with the LD.

2.2.2 An attendee expressed that there was a labour shortage in Hong Kong. He commented that many ethnic minorities in Hong Kong were confined to manual jobs as they had not received formal education and could not able to speak Cantonese nor English. He believed that if they were given proper training, e.g. in electrical works or scaffolding, they would be as competitive as Chinese workers. Ms Law thanked for the comments and explained that training in the construction industry was not provided by the LD and the subject would be covered in the following agenda.

2.2.3 With regard to the LD's plan to launch a pilot programme in conjunction with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to provide employment services for ethnic minority job seekers through a case management approach, an attendee expressed concern on the service quality if the selection criteria of a contractor was solely focused

onprice. She suggested that LD could make reference to the practice adopted by Social Welfare Department, where factors like service content, staffing, output standard, etc. had been taken into account in the selection process. Ms Law replied that as announced in the 2018 Policy Address, the Government had introduced a new pro-innovation procurement policy in 2019, under which the technical weighting in tender assessment was raised.

2.2.4 An attendee commented that the number of Employment Assistants who were proficient in ethnic minority languages appeared to be inadequate. Ms Law said that in addition to two Employment Assistants, the LD also implemented the Employment Services Ambassador (ESA) Programme for Ethnic Minorities, under which trainees of the Youth Employment and Training Programme who could communicate in ethnic minority languages were engaged as ESAs to provide services for ethnic minority job seekers.

2.2.5 In response to an attendee's observation that most of the job vacancies advertised through LD required job seekers' ability to speak Cantonese, Ms Law said that the LD had been proactively reminding employers using its recruitment service to consider the genuine occupational qualifications of the posts when specifying the Chinese language requirements and encouraging them to relax the requirement as far as possible.

2.2.6 An attendee said apart from South East Asians, there were job seekers of other ethnic origins and suggested that the LD should consider employing Employment Assistants of more diverse ethnicities.

2.2.7 An attendee commented that ethnic minority job seekers who possessed higher qualifications, such as bachelor's degrees, would look for more senior level positions which were rare in the job market. Ms Law said that staff of job centres would provide employment advisory service to job seekers looking for different types of jobs and appeal to employers to offer more vacancies at various levels.

2.2.8 An attendee asked about the preference of ethnic minority job seekers. Ms Ashi replied that male job seekers often looked for jobs in the

construction industry and the security industry while female job seekers often looked for clerical and teaching jobs.

- 2.2.9 An attendee asked if LD had any strategy to increase ethnic minorities' social mobility, especially those who had obtained higher qualifications in their home countries. She suggested that more should be done to enhance acceptability of overseas qualifications by employers. In this connection, another attendee commented that the accreditation fee charged by Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications was high. Ms Law replied that persons with financial needs might apply for subsidy from the Community Care Fund for conducting qualifications assessment.
- 2.2.10 An attendee appealed to the attendees for providing more job shadow opportunities for ethnic minority students under the "Business-School Partnership Programme" organised by the Education Bureau. Another attendee said the Airport Authority Hong Kong provided various job opportunities to ethnic minorities coupled with on-the-job training in Chinese. Mr Raymond Ho of the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) added that the EOC was appealing to local employers to sign a charter for improving racial diversity and inclusion in the workplace.
- 2.2.11 An attendee asked whether there was any dedicated job centre for ethnic minorities. Ms Law said that while employment assistants proficient in ethnic minority languages were engaged to work in the job centres in Tin Shui Wai and Sham Shui Po, ethnic minority job seekers were welcome to use any other job centres as well.

### **3 Services and training courses of the Construction Industry Council for ethnic minorities**

- 3.1 Mr. Ivan Fu, Chairperson of the Task Force on Ethnic Minorities of the Construction Industry Council (CIC), together with CIC representatives, Mr. Chu Yin Lin, Mr. Ivan Ko and Ms. Miranda Yeap attended the meeting to present CIC's training and trade test services, explain the purpose of the Task Force and exchange views with Members of the Forum on the provision of services to ethnic minorities in the construction industry.

- 3.2 Issues raised by attendees and the discussions were summarised below. Comments were well noted by representatives of CIC.
- 3.2.1 An attendee appreciated the work of the CIC and suggested that training could be conducted in ethnic minority languages in future. Another attendee suggested that the CIC should consider providing training materials in ethnic minority languages or hiring teaching assistants who could speak ethnic minority languages. Mr Fu replied that CIC's training courses were primarily conducted in Cantonese but action was being taken to support ethnic minority students such as translating training materials into ethnic minority languages.
- 3.2.2 In response to an enquiry on the language spoken in the workplace, Mr Fu said ethnic minority workers usually worked in groups in which their team leader of the same ethnic background could communicate with local workers in English or Cantonese. Nevertheless, the CIC provided basic Cantonese classes of 60 hours to strengthen the Cantonese proficiency of ethnic minority workers.
- 3.2.3 An attendee suggested that upon completion of the training, the CIC should keep an eye on the trainees' employment status and follow up if they remained unemployed.
- 3.2.4 An attendee asked if part-time jobs were available at construction sites. Mr Fu replied that if there was a strong need from the community the CIC was happy to explore the feasibility.
- 3.2.5 In response to a comment on the number of ethnic minorities involved in work-related injuries at construction sites, Mr Fu said that there was no statistics to support that ethnic minority workers were more prone to work-related injury but CIC had been providing more safety trainings for ethnic minorities. An attendee suggested that the authority should investigate thoroughly the key factors leading to fatal injuries. Additionally, the employers and workers should be educated on safety measures and religious practices of ethnic minorities, e.g. Muslims would fast during daylight hours in the month of Ramadan which might affect their physical condition.

- 3.2.6 An attendee suggested that the authority should look into the causes of work-related injuries faced by ethnic minorities, in particular communication barrier for ethnic minorities. He suggested that an ethnic minority supervisor who could act as a contact point in the team's communication should be engaged to oversee ethnic minority workers at construction sites.
- 3.2.7 Another attendee noted that signage at construction sites was displayed in Chinese which could be one of the reasons why fatal accidents at construction sites often involved ethnic minorities. She suggested that universally understandable signage should be developed. Mr Fu agreed to look into this suggestion.
- 3.2.8 On compensation for work injury, Mr Fu said that this was outside the purview of the CIC but a charity fund had been established by the CIC to provide immediate support to injured workers and their families.

#### **4 Any Other Business**

- 4.1 An attendee suggested that the Ethnic Minorities Forum (EMF) should meet more frequently. The Chairperson took note of her suggestion and replied that in addition to formal meetings, there could be other occasions on which attendees of the EMF could meet and exchange views on subjects relating to ethnic minorities, e.g. visits to various organisation providing support services for ethnic minorities.
- 4.2 For the date of next meeting, attendees would be duly informed nearer the time.

**Home Affairs Department**  
**July 2019**