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**International Business Committee**

**Global Talent Admission**

**Purpose**

 This paper briefs Members on the Government’s latest major initiatives to proactively attract and retain global talents.

**Background**

1. In view of the shortage of labour force in Hong Kong, the Government has implemented a package of measures to proactively trawl for outside talents since late 2022, including the launch of new Top Talent Pass Scheme (TTPS) and enhancement of existing talent admission schemes, to facilitate more quality talents to come to Hong Kong. The measures have received positive responses since their implementation. As at late October 2023, we received over 180 000 applications under various talent admission schemes and approved over 110 000. In addition, around 70 000 talents with visas approved have arrived in Hong Kong this year, which has far exceeded our annual target of admitting at least 35 000 talents with an intended duration of stay of at least 12 months.

**Attract and Retain Talents**

1. As the global competition for talents remains fierce, Hong Kong needs to recruit talents proactively to alleviate the tight local labour market situation and replenish the local talent pool. As announced in the 2023 Policy Address, the Government will continue to proactively trawl for and retain talents with the following measures.

Establish the physical office of the Hong Kong Talent Engage

1. Further to the launch of the Hong Kong Talent Engage (HKTE) online platform in last December, the physical office of HKTE formally commenced operation in October 2023.  With the objective to facilitate incoming talents to stay for long-term development in Hong Kong, HKTE formulates attraction and promotion strategies for different talent clusters.  HKTE will cooperate with Dedicated Teams for Attracting Businesses and Talents in the Mainland Offices and the Economic and Trade Offices around the world to proactively attract more talents to come to Hong Kong for development.  In addition, HKTE will actively expand its network of working partners to jointly organise a variety of online and offline activities to assist talents and their families who intend to come to Hong Kong and those who have just arrived to obtain necessary information on the living and employment, and expand their social network to make it easier for them to adapt to and integrate into the new life as early as possible and hence settle in Hong Kong in the long run.  HKTE will also maintain liaison with incoming talents to keep track of their development and needs in Hong Kong, and make adjustments to the services provided as and when needed.

Expand the coverage of universities under the Top Talent Pass Scheme

1. The Government has implemented a package of measures to proactively trawl for outside talents after the announcement of last year’s Policy Address, including the launch of new TTPS which targets high-income talents (annual salary reaching HK$2.5 million or above) and graduates from world top 100 universities, and enhancement of existing talent admission schemes. TTPS received an enthusiastic response. As at October this year, we received around 55 000 new applications of which over 43 000 were approved.
2. To further expand the network for attracting global talents, the Government, with effect from 1 November this year, expanded the list of eligible universities under the TTPS which now covers 184 institutions. The eight Mainland and overseas top-notch institutions overseas added to the list are:
3. the top five universities/institutions providing specialised hotel programmes on the QS World University Rankings in the discipline of "hospitality and leisure management" in the past five years, namely EHL Hospitality Business School, Swiss Hotel Management School, Les Roches Global Hospitality Management Education, Glion Institute of Higher Education, and Hotelschool The Hague; and
4. the top 10 Mainland universities under the Shanghai Jiao Tong University Best Chinese Universities Ranking in the past five years yet to be included in the earlier list of eligible universities, namely Wuhan University, Xi'an Jiaotong University, and Harbin Institute of Technology.
5. The five newly added universities/institutions providing specialised hotel programmes will help attract more outside talents who are professionally trained to join the local hotel industry and further promote Hong Kong's status as an international tourism hub. The addition of three new Mainland universities are outstanding institutions in the Mainland, which will help attract and facilitate more graduates with good academic qualifications to come to Hong Kong and enrich the talent pool in Hong Kong.

Vocational Professionals Admission Scheme

1. To alleviate the manpower shortage in skilled trades, the Government will implement the pilot Vocational Professionals Admission Scheme (VPAS) for a period of two years. Starting from the 2024/25 admission cohort, non-local students of designated full-time professional Higher Diploma (HD) programmes of the VTC will be allowed to stay in Hong Kong for one year after graduation to seek jobs relevant to their disciplines.
2. Designated programmes under the VPAS have to fulfil the following criteria:
3. the trades related to the programmes should be ones which are essential for sustainable development of Hong Kong, but with acute local manpower shortage and such job vacancies to be filled only by properly trained/licensed technicians in the relevant areas; and
4. the designated programmes should be ones with difficulties in local enrolment and not being able to produce sufficient local graduates to meet the manpower demand in the relevant trades.
5. After reviewing the VTC’s proposals against the above criteria, relevant government bureaux have approved 27 full-time HD programmes offered by the VTC for inclusion under the VPAS. The approved designated programmes fall under five skilled trades, which are Innovation and Technology, Electrical and Mechanical Services; Building, Civil Engineering, and Built Environment; Aviation, Transport and Logistics; and Maritime.
6. Students of designated programmes may apply to stay in Hong Kong for one year after graduation to seek employment. Graduates who have successfully secured full-time employment relevant to their programmes of study in Hong Kong could apply for a visa to stay and work in Hong Kong. During the validity period of the first two renewed visas (i.e. the first four years), the graduates must be employed in a position related to their field of study. They may apply to become Hong Kong permanent residents after staying in Hong Kong for seven consecutive years. The VTC will monitor the work and employment status of the visa holders and assist the Immigration Department (ImmD) in ensuring that the relevant visa conditions are met. The VTC and the ImmD will finalise the details of the scheme and make announcement in due course.

Enhance learning and enrichment opportunities for international students

1. In the past, eligible students approved to come to Hong Kong to study in full-time locally accredited local programmes at the postgraduate level were issued the “No Objection Letters” (NOLs) by the ImmD, allowing them to take up part-time employment on campus for not more than 20 hours per week, curriculum-related internships during semesters or summer jobs. Since 1 November this year, the Government has temporarily exempted full-time non-local postgraduate students from the restrictions on taking up part-time jobs, with a view to facilitating them to gain experience and understanding of working in Hong Kong, and thereby increasing their incentive to stay for development after graduation. The arrangement will be implemented on a trial basis for two years. More than 35 000 students are expected to benefit.
2. The ImmD has briefed the relevant institutions on the arrangement, and has been issuing new NOLs setting out the suspension to eligible students through their institutions. Students are hence not required to submit applications in order to be eligible for the temporary exemption. Eligible students issued with visas/entry permits on or after 1 November this year would receive the updated NOLs.

Organise a “Global Talent Summit cum Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area High-quality Talent Development Conference”

1. The Government will organise a “Global Talent Summit cum Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area High-quality Talent Development Conference” in the second quarter of 2024, to congregate political, academic and business leaders worldwide to explore the global trends of talent development, drive regional exchange and cooperation in talent attraction, and promote Hong Kong’s dual roles as an international talent hub and national talent portal and our advantages. We will take this opportunity to showcase Hong Kong’s distinctive edge of enjoying strong support of the Motherland and being closely connected to the world under the “One Country, Two Systems”, which attract talents as well as facilitates talent exchanges and cooperation in the Greater Bay Area.

**Way Forward**

1. The Government will monitor the implementation progress of the talent attraction initiatives, and conduct review for timely enhancements as appropriate. Members are invited to note the above developments.

**Labour and Welfare Bureau**

**November 2023**