

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Government should provide a vocational avenue for students in upper secondary school for those not academically inclined. Let them find vocational training and work at the age of 16 rather than forcing them to continue in the academic stream which is not their interest or their strength. They will thus be happier and be able to better contribute to society. Should they wish to take up academic studies in future, they can do so with the Open University and night school.

Regarding encouraging people to have children, I have heard that financial/monetary benefits will have an immediate and direct positive impact. In the UK, mothers are given child benefit of about \$400 per week or about \$1600 per month. That would assist with buying baby milkpowder and nappies. Though it should be limited to say 2 children. The 3rd child would only gain 75% of the benefit and the 4th child 50% to discourage people from having too many children.

While another matter is that many people are put off when they hear about the difficulties of getting a hospital bed, having to fight for limited supply of baby milkpowder and now having to sleep in the streets simply to obtain an application form for kindergarten. If Government can reassure the public, then people will think again about having children.

I do not oppose import of labour if that is necessary. That is similar to the import of domestic maids to do jobs which locals will not do for that level of salary. Furthermore, with the construction projects in Macau, such has attracted workers from Hong Kong leaving vacancies in Hong Kong which need to be filled. Thus, a flexible supply of imported labour which can be reduced or stopped when required should be sufficient to benefit

Hong Kong as a whole.

While if there are crèche facilities, then that would assist mothers to enter the workforce.

As to the elderly, I support the proposal to put back the retirement age yet allowing them to retire at any time after the former retirement age of 65 for men and 60 for women. This is in view of the longer lives and better health of the elderly as compared with the past. Thus, elderly can be allowed to work part time till the age of 70 or even 80 if they feel like it and the employer finds it agreeable. Of course, the usual benefits of employment may have to be adjusted in light of the circumstances.

As to vocational education, maybe we have career talks whereby construction workers, electricians and plumbers enter schools to give career talks or give training. This will make young people more aware of what careers there are other than academic study.

thanks

Mr. KH Chan