

主旨: Give Views

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Comments:

The Hong Kong SAR government has announced the consultation of ‘Thoughts for Hong Kong: Public Engagement Exercise on Population Policy’. In the consultation document, one of the suggestions proposed by the government is to expand the scale of labor importation of Hong Kong so as to tackle the lack of manpower and human resources. The government believes that such suggestion is able to fill the vacancies in the labor market and maintain economic growth. However, I oppose to this suggestion base on the three reasons: 1. HK already has sufficient human resources and manpower. 2. Labor importation may jeopardize the rights and treatments of the local labor.

First, Hong Kong has more than enough manpower to fill the current vacancies in the work market, which makes the importation of labor not necessary. In the consultation paper, it points out that there are currently 77000 vacancies in the job market. Nevertheless, the unemployment rate in Hong Kong is about 3%, which are roughly 130 thousand labors. There is also an underemployment situation for 57 thousand people, and plus the hidden workforce of women of 0.5 million mentioned in the consultation document. All these unemployed/ underemployed workforce added up together already accounts for over 0.7 million people, which are exceedingly sufficient to fill the 77000thousand vacancies in the job market. Nevertheless, the government is too lazy to publish supporting measures to encourage or assist these citizens to find a job, but rather, choose to go for an easier path of labor importation to ingratiate into the interests of the commercial sector without having any thought! s on how to assist the locals to find a job

Second, the rights and treatments of the local labor may be exploited after the expansion in the labor importation, which may exacerbates the unemployment situation of the local workforce. Labors are commonly imported from developing countries such as China, India... The manpower from these regions always comes with a relatively lower production cost. If Hong Kong expands its labor importation, due to the lower cost, a lot of employers may prefer employing these workforces. When there is an economic downturn, the demand for labor reduces, and then a lot of the local workforce will fall into unemployment. Eventually the opportunities of the local workforces are exploited because of the excessive labor importation. In another words, the ‘labor importation’ solution today becomes a problem tomorrow.

It is no secret that the job market in some areas like construction or catering lacks labor or manpower. However, given the massive hidden unemployed/ underemployed workforce in Hong Kong, I suggest the government to take more proactive measures to assist or encourage these labor units for seek a job. Some sectors like construction lacks manpower or people who are willing to work are due to the unfavorable or unsatisfactory working environment or the work safety risk. The government should try to address these

concerns by implementing more safety regulatory measures or provide more subsidies to improve the working condition of these job sectors. The government should not treat people as only a machine who are a servant for economy and blindly believe that more labor means better economy. In fact, in terms of population policy, apart from the lack of labor, the government should also consider a variety of issues such as the quality of life of the local workforces and working conditions. The government should not be only driven solely by the economic benefits and search for the easiest solution. Rather, as a government, it should search for the most beneficial solution. Thank you.