

**Replies to initial written questions raised by Finance Committee Members in
examining the Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10**

**Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Session No. : 17**

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**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

LWB(L)001

0285

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

It is expected that there will be more pay reductions and layoffs due to the economic downturn. Has the Department allocated more resources and made relevant contingency plans to handle the cases of labour disputes thus arising? If yes, what are the details of the plans as well as the manpower and resources involved?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

The Labour Department (LD) has been monitoring closely the impact of the economic downturn on the labour relations scene. To this end, we have taken more proactive measures to handle cases of pay reductions and layoffs during the economic downturn. LD keeps selected sectors and establishments under close vigilance and intervene early should it be aware of cases of wage arrears, underpayment of wages or likely cases of retrenchment. We also provide timely assistance in resolving labour disputes.

On the promotion front, LD has stepped up efforts to advise employers that wage reduction or retrenchment is not the only way to save costs in times of economic adversities and that they should go for retrenchment as the last resort. We also encourage employers to adopt good people management practices and remind them of the particular importance of effective communication with staff who should be consulted on matters relating to wage reduction, retrenchment and other measures which affect employees' conditions of service.

In undertaking the above tasks, we keep our manpower resources under constant review and will arrange for re-deployment of resources, if necessary, to ensure the provision of effective and timely services to our clients.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

In face of the series of redundancies triggered by the economic recession, does the Administration have any contingency plans and additional resources to cope with the consequential increase in the need for employment assistance and guidance services? If yes, what are the details of these plans, and the manpower and resources involved?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

The Labour Department will adopt a more proactive approach to providing employment assistance to employees who lost their jobs in redundancy and closure exercises amidst the financial crisis. We will contact the concerned employees and provide them with priority referral and job matching services with a view to helping them find suitable jobs as soon as possible. We will organise thematic job fairs targeted at industries hard hit by the economic downturn, as well as district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls to reach out to job seekers for the dissemination of vacancy and employment information.

Funding of \$13 million has been earmarked for the implementation of the above enhancement measures in the next two years. Sixteen Contract Programme Officer positions will be created for this purpose.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

With regard to the various relaxation measures introduced in July 2008 under the pilot “Transport Support Scheme (TSS)”, will the Administration consider enhancing its support to the unemployed and the low-income group by further relaxing the Scheme to cover people living in districts of the whole territory? If yes, what is the expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply:

TSS was launched on a pilot basis in June 2007 to provide time-limited transport subsidy to needy job seekers and low-income employees in the four designated remote districts (i.e. Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, North and Islands) with a view to encouraging them to look for jobs and stay in employment. After reviewing the effectiveness of the pilot scheme, the Labour Department implemented in July 2008 a range of relaxation measures which included relaxing the income threshold and extending the subsidy period. Eligible persons living and working in the same designated remote district could also apply to join TSS.

The four designated remote districts covered by TSS are more remote and with fewer job opportunities. Should TSS be extended to all other districts, this would in effect turn the subsidy into another form of income supplement, additional to the low-income Comprehensive Social Security Assistance for eligible low-income employees. This would depart from the policy intention of TSS.

We will continue to monitor the implementation of the relaxed scheme. As indicated when the relaxations were announced, we shall conduct a review of TSS after the relaxation measures have been implemented for at least one year.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

LWB(L)004

0288

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

It is stated in the Brief Description that “The Labour Department (LD) is responsible for processing applications under the Supplementary Labour Scheme (SLS) and ensures priority of employment for local workers.” As it is expected that a number of major and minor infrastructure projects will commence in the coming year, there may be an increase in the demand for the relevant professionals and non-professional grass-root workers. What measures does the Administration have to ensure priority of employment for local workers?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

SLS, administered by LD and monitored by the Labour Advisory Board, is a labour importation scheme which allows employers with genuine difficulties in finding suitable staff locally to import workers at technician level or below to fill available vacancies. There are no industry-specific quotas under SLS. To ensure priority of employment to local workers, each applicant has to go through a four-week local recruitment exercise, including advertising the vacancies in newspapers, interviewing local job-seekers referred by LD and trade unions, and, if necessary, organising retraining courses with the assistance of the Employees Retraining Board.

As for the professionals, applications for entry to Hong Kong to take up employment by overseas and Mainland professionals are processed by the Immigration Department. To protect the local work-force, only those who possess special skills, knowledge or experience of value to and not readily available in Hong Kong will be considered.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	17.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the numbers of able-bodied job-seekers registered and placements under the Indicators, will the Administration inform this Council of the method of estimation for the estimated number of registrants in 2009? Have factors such as a high unemployment rate arising from the economic downturn been taken into account? And what measures will the Administration take to raise the number of placements as far as possible?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

Notwithstanding the absence of data to facilitate an informed analysis, we have attempted to factor into account the impact of the financial tsunami in estimating the number of able-bodied job seekers registered for the employment services of the Labour Department (LD) in 2009. We assess that the number may reach 180 000, representing a 7% increase over the corresponding figure of 2008.

LD will strengthen its employment services for job seekers affected by the economic downturn with a view to helping them re-enter the labour market as soon as possible. We will offer intensive and personalised counselling services to the retrenched employees, provide them with priority job matching and referral services, canvass suitable vacancies from employers, and organise thematic job fairs targeted at hard-hit industries and district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls for the dissemination of vacancy and employment information. Where appropriate, they will also be referred to attend suitable training courses to enhance their employability.

LD will also enhance the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM) to improve the placement opportunities for middle-aged job seekers. The eligibility of job seekers in respect of the period of unemployment will be relaxed from “three months or more” to “one month or more”. Job seekers with different educational background and skills levels will be admitted into EPM on a flexible basis. To increase the incentives for employers to engage middle-aged job seekers, on-the-job training allowance payable to eligible employers under EPM will be increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000 per employee per month and the subsidy period for deserving cases will be extended by three months to a maximum of six months.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the “preparation for the introduction of statutory minimum wage (SMW)” as stated in the matters requiring special attention in 2009-10, would the Administration inform this Council of the latest progress of the work, as well as the timetable for the overall legislative work and final implementation of minimum wage?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

Preparation for the introduction of a SMW is in good progress. We have been working closely with the Department of Justice and relevant bureaux/departments in preparing for the draft bill on statutory minimum wage. In parallel, consultations with relevant stakeholder groups are ongoing.

The Provisional Minimum Wage Commission (MWC), whose main task is to advise the Government on the appropriate level of the initial SMW rate, was established in February 2009. Separately, we are working closely with relevant government departments to enhance the wage and other data collection in order to provide the necessary data to facilitate an informed deliberation by the Commission.

Our plan is to introduce the Minimum Wage Bill into the Legislative Council (LegCo) before its summer recess this year. The first set of statistical data to support the setting of the initial SMW rate will be available by early 2010. Allowing time for LegCo’s scrutiny of the draft Bill, the Provisional MWC’s deliberation on the SMW rate and the enactment of the recommended SMW rate, we envisage that the legal and regulatory framework for implementing SMW could be ready in mid-2010, at the earliest. In line with established practice and overseas experience, about six months’ time should be allowed for the business sector to gear up for the implementation of the SMW. Therefore, the initial SMW rate could come into effect in end-2010 or early 2011 at the earliest.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the plan to improve “the statutory compensation for persons with occupational deafness under the Occupational Deafness (Compensation) Ordinance (ODCO)” (Cap.469) as mentioned in the matters requiring special attention in 2009-10, would the Administration inform this council of details of the work, and the manpower and expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

In 2009-10, we plan to improve the statutory benefits provided for persons with occupational deafness under ODCO as follows: -

- (i) employees suffering from monaural hearing loss will also be entitled to compensation;
- (ii) the maximum reimbursable amount for the expenses incurred in purchasing, repairing and replacing hearing assistive devices will be increased; and
- (iii) employees who have already received compensation under ODCO will be entitled to further compensation in respect of additional hearing loss sustained as a result of continued employment in noisy occupations.

An amendment Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council shortly to effect the above changes. To implement these improvements, the Occupational Deafness Compensation Board, supported by levies imposed on employees' compensation insurance policies will incur an additional expenditure of around \$13 million a year. There will not be any manpower implications on the Government.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	17.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

000 Operational expenses

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Has any study been conducted on labour policies and issues by the Administration over the past three years? If yes, please provide the name, purpose and amount involved for each study, as well as the studies planned for the next two years and the amount reserved for that purpose.

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

The Labour Department (LD) conducted three studies on labour policies and issues over the past three financial years. Details of the studies are as follows:

Year	Name	Purpose	Expenditure (\$ million)
2007-08	Survey on the development of the trainees of the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) subsequent to their participation in the scheme.	To collect data for the evaluation of the effectiveness of YWETS.	0.2
2008-09	Survey on cleansing and guarding services in private residential buildings	In the context of the voluntary Wage Protection Movement, to collect data on the employment of cleaning workers and security guards	0.98
2008-09	Survey on age discrimination in employment	To collect information on possible areas of concern regarding age discrimination in employment.	1.4

At the moment, LD does not have concrete plans for other studies on labour policies and issues in the next two financial years. Nevertheless, keeping in view the possible need for studies is an integral part of LD's day-to-day policy work on labour issues.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)009

Question Serial No.

0293

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Financial Secretary stated in paragraph 27 of the Budget Speech moving the Appropriation Bill that the Government “will earmark \$400 million non-recurrent funding for the Labour Department (LD) to enhance and integrate its various employment programmes to provide training and employment opportunities. We will raise the levels of subsidy to employers as an incentive for them to hire middle-aged people and disabled persons, and extend the subsidy period. It is estimated that these measures will benefit 44 000 people in the next two years.” Would the Administration inform this Council of the following:

- (a) The details of enhancing and integrating the various employment programmes implemented by the LD; and
- (b) How does the Administration come up with the estimation that 44 000 people will benefit from these programmes in the next two years?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

- (a) LD will enhance and integrate its various employment programmes to provide training and employment opportunities.

The Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) administered by LD will (a) adopt year-round enrolment of trainees in place of the current two phases of recruitment per annum; (b) extend the provision of personalised career guidance and counselling services by registered social workers for an additional 12 months for trainees who have secured employment; and (c) organise more tailor-made and value-adding training-cum-employment projects in collaboration with employers and training bodies.

LD will strengthen the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM) to assist middle-aged job seekers in re-entering the labour market as early as possible. The eligibility criteria of job seekers in respect of the period of unemployment will be relaxed from “three months or more” to “one month or more”. Job seekers with different educational background and skills levels will be admitted into EPM on a flexible basis. Moreover, on-the-job training allowance payable to eligible employers will be increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000 per employee per month and the subsidy period for deserving cases will be extended by three months to a maximum of six months.

LD will also enhance the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS) to provide employment support and training opportunities for people with disabilities (PWDs). PWDs who attend the pre-employment training programme under WOPS will be eligible for a training allowance of \$60 per day. The monthly allowance payable to eligible employers will be increased from 1/2 to 2/3 of the actual monthly wages of the disabled employee during the work trial period, subject to an enhanced ceiling of \$4,000 per employee per month. The subsidy period for deserving cases will be extended by three months to a maximum of six months.

- (b) Our employment services are essentially demand-led. The provision sought is based on an estimate of 35 000 users of the revamped YPTP and YWETS, 8 000 middle-aged job seekers for EPM and 800 PWDs for WOPS. These make a total of 43 800, or say 44 000, in the next two years.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)010

Question Serial No.

0294

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Financial Secretary stated in paragraph 27 of the Budget Speech moving the Appropriation Bill that the Government would “provide \$13 million additional funding for the Labour Department (LD) to adopt a more proactive approach in providing employment assistance to those made redundant during the financial crisis. This assistance will include contacting the affected employees and providing them with priority referral and job matching services so that they can find suitable jobs as soon as possible.” Will the Administration inform this Council of details of the above arrangement and the manpower involved?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

LD will adopt a more proactive approach to providing employment assistance to employees who lost their jobs in redundancy and closure exercises amidst the financial crisis. We will provide our Job Centres with additional manpower to strengthen the collection of intelligence of redundancy and closure exercises and reach out to the retrenched employees to render our support services. We will offer intensive and personalised counselling services to the retrenched employees, provide them with priority job matching and referral services, canvass suitable vacancies from employers, and organise thematic job fairs targeted at hard-hit industries and district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls for the dissemination of vacancy and employment information. They will also be referred to attend suitable training courses where necessary to enhance their employability.

Sixteen Contract Programme Officer positions will be created in the next two years for the implementation of the above measures, 12 of which will be assigned to LD’s 12 Job Centres.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)011

Question Serial No.

0295

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

It is mentioned in the Brief Description that assistance will be provided to employers and employees to settle their disputes and claims. Will the Administration inform this Council of the resources and manpower involved in this task? What is the estimated increase in labour disputes and claims in 2009-10 amidst the economic downturn? Will the Administration consider increasing the relevant resources and manpower to cope with the demand?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

The Labour Relations Division (LRD) of Labour Department provides, among others, conciliation service to assist employers and employees to resolve labour disputes and claims. In 2008-09, one Chief Labour Officer, two Senior Labour Officers, ten Labour Officers and 36 Assistant Labour Officers I of LRD were engaged in the provision of conciliation service. The estimated expenditure of LRD, which includes the financial provision of all labour relations functions of the division, is about \$55 million. There is no breakdown of the expenditure for conciliation service.

Experience suggests that the number of labour disputes and claims will tend to rise during an economic downturn, though the size of the increase is difficult to predict with accuracy. No change to the establishment is anticipated in 2009-10. Nevertheless, we shall closely monitor the labour relations scene as well as our workload and arrange internal redeployment of manpower and related resources as necessary to ensure effective and timely delivery of conciliation service to the public.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)012

Question Serial No.

0296

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

In view of the economic downturn, it is expected that the need for conciliation service for claims in 2009-10 may increase. Will the Administration consider revising the related service indicators, such as shortening the waiting time for conciliation meetings for claims and the waiting time for claims to be adjudicated after filing with the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board (MECAB)?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

The Labour Department is committed to providing timely conciliation and adjudication services to the public. While our target is to ensure that the waiting time for conciliation meetings and hearings for employment claims does not exceed 5 weeks, in 2008 the actual average waiting time was 2.5 weeks for arranging conciliation meetings and about 4 to 5 weeks for claims to be adjudicated after filing with MECAB.

We will keep our performance targets under regular review.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)013

Question Serial No.

0297

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the promotion of family-friendly employment practices by the Labour Department (LD), has the Administration assessed the effectiveness of LD's work in 2008-2009 and the response of employers to the implementation of the practices? Has any survey been conducted on the number of employers genuinely willing to implement family-friendly employment practices (FFEP)? If yes, what are the relevant statistics? If no, will LD consider conducting relevant assessments and surveys?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

As with other promotional activities, officers of LD collect from time to time views from various stakeholders to help assess the effectiveness of its work. As far as the promotion of FFEP is concerned, feedback so collected shows that employers in general are becoming more receptive to the idea of implementing FFEP. For example, in 2008-09, more than 1 400 companies which took part in the Caring Company Scheme organised by the Hong Kong Council of Social Service reported that they had adopted family-friendly measures to employees, compared with about 1 200 such companies in 2007-08.

Officers of LD have been collecting information on FFEP adopted in different establishments through their regular contacts with employers and human resources practitioners, and empirical information has facilitated the drawing up of suitable promotional programmes. We have at present no plan to conduct a formal survey on FFEP in Hong Kong.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)014

Question Serial No.

0298

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the working days lost due to labour disputes known as shown in the indicators, will the Administration inform this Council of the detailed calculation method for the relevant figure? Does the figure include working time lost due to work to rule by employees? If no, will the Administration consider including the relevant statistics in 2009-10 to reflect more accurately the working time lost due to labour disputes?

Asked by : Hon. FUNG Kin-kee, Frederick

Reply :

Working days lost due to labour disputes known refers to the number of working days lost due to work stoppages. It is measured as the product of the number of workers involved in a strike and the length of the strike and does not include incidents of work to rule where workers continue to render work and no work stoppages are involved. This approach is in line with international practice.

It is noteworthy that work to rule is a more subtle form of industrial action. It does not involve stoppages of work and its impact (e.g. on productivity) does not easily lend itself to direct measurement.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)015

Question Serial No.

0301

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

What are the respective numbers of labour disputes and claims where conciliation service had not been rendered because the employers concerned were insolvent or could not be reached for conciliation in 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

Reply :

The numbers of labour disputes and claims where conciliation service had not been rendered because the employers concerned were insolvent or could not be reached for conciliation are as follows:

	Number of labour disputes and claims where conciliation service has not been rendered	
	For reason that the employers concerned were insolvent	For reason that the employers could not be reached for conciliation
Year	No. of cases	No. of cases
2005	471	891
2006	290	914
2007	169	772
2008	150	812

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)016

Question Serial No.

0302

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the preparation for legislative amendments to enhance the enforcement of Labour Tribunal awards as mentioned in the matters requiring special attention in 2009-10, what is the progress of the work as well as the manpower and expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

Reply :

We have been working closely with the Department of Justice and the Judiciary in preparing for the legislative amendments to enhance the enforcement of Labour Tribunal awards. We also consulted the Labour Advisory Board and the Legislative Council Panel on Manpower in December 2008. Our aim is to introduce a bill to the Legislative Council in the 2008/09 session.

The work of preparing legislative amendments is handled by existing manpower and no breakdown of the expenditure involved is available.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)017

Question Serial No.

0303

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

What are the reasons for a decrease in the number of cases referred to the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board (MECAB) in 2008 as compared with 2007?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

Reply :

Compared with 2007, there was a decrease in the number of labour claims handled by the Labour Department in 2008. We attribute this to the favourable economic situation in the first three quarters of 2008, leading to fewer claims referred to MECAB in 2008.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)018

Question Serial No.

0856

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

It is stated in paragraph 27 of the Budget Speech that the Administration “will provide \$13 million additional funding for the Labour Department (LD) to adopt a more proactive approach in providing employment assistance to those made redundant during the financial crisis”. What projects will be funded by the \$13 million? What are the budget and details of each project?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

Reply :

LD will adopt a more proactive approach in providing employment assistance to employees who lost their jobs in redundancy and closure exercises amidst the financial crisis. We will provide our Job Centres with additional manpower to strengthen the collection of intelligence of redundancy and closure exercises and reach out to the retrenched employees to render our support services. We will offer the retrenched employees priority job matching and referral services, canvass suitable vacancies from employers, and organise thematic job fairs targeted at hard-hit industries and district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls to enhance the dissemination of vacancy and employment information. As appropriate, they will also be referred to attend suitable training courses to enhance their employability.

A funding of \$13 million has been earmarked for the implementation of the above enhancement measures in the next two years. Sixteen Contract Programme Officer positions will be created for the purpose, twelve of whom will be assigned to our Job Centres. The additional staff cost is about \$10 million. The remaining \$3 million will be used for the organisation of job fairs and related publicity activities in the next two years.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)019

Question Serial No.

1408

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the matters requiring special attention in 2008-09, will the Administration advise on details of the promotion of enlightened employment practices? Has any review been conducted on their effectiveness? If yes, what are the findings of the review? If no, will any review be conducted in the coming year?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

Reply :

In 2008-09, the Labour Department (LD) promoted enlightened employment practices through different publicity activities and channels.

Six roving exhibitions were held to promote public understanding of major provisions of the Employment Ordinance (EO) and good people management practices at various locations throughout the territory. The exhibitions were well received and attracted a total of 18 800 visitors. We have assessed the effectiveness of the exhibitions by means of a quiz designed to test the visitors' understanding of EO. Altogether 2 200 visitors participated in the quiz and the results illustrated that most visitors could complete the quiz with satisfactory scores after browsing through the exhibited materials.

Between July and November 2008, LD published on a weekly basis 20 supplements in a newspaper to showcase exemplary examples in the implementation of family-friendly employment practices as well as other good people management measures, with a view to enhancing public awareness and encouraging the wider adoption of such practices. In addition to readers of the newspaper, which has a daily circulation of over 94 700 copies, we have uploaded an electronic version of the supplements onto LD's website to facilitate public viewing and consolidated the supplements into a booklet for distribution in February 2009. As such, the supplements and the booklet have effectively reached a large section of the general public.

LD also promotes enlightened employment practices through our network of nine industry-based Tripartite Committees (TCs) and 18 Human Resources Managers Clubs (HRMCs) formed in various trades and industries. Feedback received from participants of TCs and HRMCs has been positive and favourable.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)020

Question Serial No.

2607

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

One of the aims under this Programme is to ensure that risks to the safety and health of people at work are properly managed by legislation. Please advise if any provision has been made in 2009-10 for conducting studies on new legislation, including new legislative proposals for the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders among supermarket cashiers?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

Reply :

Apart from regulating specific workplaces and processes which are more risky in nature, the existing occupational safety and health legislation is also designed to have flexibility for application to different work activities and environment for the protection of the safety and health of workers in different work situations. There is no plan therefore to introduce specific legislation for the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders among supermarket cashiers, and there is no provision in 2009-10 for conducting studies on new occupational safety and health legislation. The legislation and the possible need for research studies are, however, under constant review to ensure that risks to the safety and health of people at work are properly managed.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)021

Question Serial No.

0304

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

What are the details of the “tailor-made services for vulnerable groups” mentioned in the matters requiring special attention in 2009-10? What are the manpower and expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. PAN Pey-chyou

Reply :

The Labour Department (LD) will enhance and integrate its various employment programmes, including the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme, the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme, the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged and the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme to strengthen the training and employment support for the vulnerable groups of youth, the middle-aged and people with disabilities. These include more demand-led and flexible mode of operation, enhanced training subsidies and post-placement support, where appropriate. Non-recurrent funding of \$400 million has been earmarked for the implementation of the above initiative in the next two years. Nine Contract Programme Officer positions and six Contract Clerk positions will be created for this purpose.

LD will also adopt a more proactive approach in providing employment assistance to employees who lost their jobs in large-scale redundancy and closure exercises amidst the financial crisis. We will contact the retrenched employees and provide them with priority referral and job matching services at all Job Centres with a view to helping them find suitable jobs as soon as possible. We will organise thematic job fairs targeted at hard-hit industries and district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls to reach out to job seekers to enhance the dissemination of vacancy and employment information. Funding of \$13 million has been earmarked for LD in the next two years and 16 Contract Programme Officer positions will be created for this purpose.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)022

Question Serial No.

1340

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the pre-employment training for young people, the Secretary said that there would be an actual increase of 15 000 training places under the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) and Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP), which were also suitable for students with associate degrees. In this regard, would the Administration inform this Committee of the following :

- (a) the respective increase in the number of training places under YWETS and YPTP in 2009-10;
- (b) whether the 15 000 additional training places mentioned above are included in the approximately 62 000 jobs and internship opportunities to be created in the next three years as stated in paragraph 28 of the Budget Speech;
- (c) whether the original 10 000 training places under YWETS and YPTP are included in the approximately 62 000 jobs and internship opportunities to be created in the next three years as stated in paragraph 28 of the Budget Speech; and
- (d) the number of young people with associate degrees who have received training under YWETS between 2006-07 and 2008-09.

Asked by : Hon. PAN Pey-chyou

Reply :

- (a) The 2009-10 Programme of YPTP and YWETS will commence in September 2009. While both programmes will flexibly admit all eligible young people, an overall training estimate of 35 000 for the two youth programmes in the next two years has been adopted for budgeting purpose. Of the 35 000 training places, 12 000 will involve pre-employment training under YPTP and 23 000 will involve on-the-job training under YWETS.

Under the 2008-09 Programmes of YPTP and YWETS, enrolment of trainees are accepted in two phases respectively in August 2008 and February 2009. A total of 7 900 trainees (3 600 for YPTP and 4 300 for YWETS) were enrolled in the first phase. From our past experience, the number of trainees enrolled in the second phase will be significantly less than that in the first phase. Hence, the number of training places for the 2009-10 and 2010-11 Programmes of YPTP and YWETS is expected to increase substantially over the 2008-09 Programme.

- (b) The 62 000 jobs and internship opportunities to be created in the next three years as announced in the Budget Speech have covered the training capacity of 35 000 for the two youth programmes in the next two years.
- (c) By design, the two youth programmes operate in a demand-led mode and flexibly admit all eligible young people. In estimating the demand for the coming two years, we have drawn reference to past experience including the tendency for the demand to fluctuate inversely with the economic situation. In other words, the demand for training and employment support of YPTP and YWETS is expected to rise as a result of the adverse impact of the financial tsunami on the employment opportunities of young people as well as the various measures to be implemented to enhance the effectiveness of YPTP and YWETS.
- (d) YWETS operates on the basis of Programme Year and the 2008-09 Programme will only end in August 2009. Hence the figure on trainees of the 2008-09 Programme is not yet available. In the 2006-07 and 2007-08 Programmes, respectively 1 022 and 703 young people of educational level at sub-degree, diploma or higher diploma enrolled in YWETS.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)023

Question Serial No.

1967

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The increase in warnings issued under the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Ordinance (BPVO) in 2008 was due to the detection of more irregularities. What are the reasons for the increase in irregularities?

Asked by : Hon. PAN Pey-chyou

Reply :

The increase in the number of warnings issued under BPVO was mainly due to the detection of more pressure equipment with expired certificates of fitness, from 1 809 in 2007 to 2 156 in 2008. Follow-up inspections revealed that most of the equipment had not been put into use.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)024

Question Serial No.

0334

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Under the matters requiring special attention in 2009-10, it is mentioned that the Administration would “undertake if necessary a review one year after implementation” of the Transport Support Scheme (TSS). Please inform this Council:

- (a) What are the numbers of approved cases and the commitments in respect of the four remote districts so far?
- (b) Under what circumstances would it be considered “necessary”?
- (c) Would an early review be considered? If not, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply :

- (a) Up to 28 February 2009, a total of 28 122 applicants have been admitted under TSS. The financial commitment in respect of these applicants is \$219.35 million. A breakdown of the approved cases by districts and the relevant financial commitments are as follows:

District	Number of applicants admitted	Financial commitment (\$ million)
Yuen Long	11 686	\$91.15
Tuen Mun	11 018	\$85.94
North	3 582	\$27.94
Islands	1 836	\$14.32
Total :	28 122	\$219.35

- (b) TSS was first launched on a pilot basis in June 2007. In July 2008, the Labour Department (LD) implemented a range of relaxation measures which included relaxing the income threshold and extending the subsidy period. Eligible persons living and working in the same designated remote district could also apply to join TSS. LD will closely monitor the implementation of the relaxation measures, including the number of applications, the characteristics of applicants and the financial position of TSS. We will take all relevant factors into consideration when we consider the way forward for the review of TSS.

(c) The relaxation measures have only been implemented for eight months. As indicated when the relaxations were announced, we shall conduct a review of TSS after the relaxations have been implemented for at least one year, when detailed work statistics are available for an informed analysis. We do not consider it appropriate to undertake a review before then.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)025

Question Serial No.

0335

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Administration stated that “weekly newspaper supplements were published by the Labour Department (LD) between July and November 2008 to showcase exemplary examples on the adoption of family-friendly employment practices (FFEP) as well as other good people management measures. The supplements were consolidated into a booklet for distribution in February 2009.” Please advise on the following:

- (a) What are the details and expenditure involved in publishing the newspaper supplements? Has its effectiveness been assessed? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
- (b) What are the number of booklets published and the expenditure involved?
- (c) What are the details of the specific work and expenditure involved in promoting FFEP in the first half of 2008?
- (d) Apart from running roving exhibitions, what are the specific plans to continue promoting enlightened employment practices in 2009-10? What is the expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply :

- (a) Between July and November 2008, LD published on a weekly basis 20 supplements in a newspaper to showcase successful examples in the implementation of FFEP as well as other good people management practices, with a view to enhancing public awareness and encouraging the wider adoption of such practices. The related expenditure was \$344,000. In addition to readers of the newspaper, which has a daily circulation of over 94 700 copies, we have uploaded an electronic version of the supplements onto LD’s website to facilitate public viewing. As such, the newspaper supplements and its web version have effectively reached a large number of the general public.
- (b) A total of 10 000 copies of the booklet were produced. The related production cost was \$143,000.

- (c) In the first half of 2008, LD promoted FFEP through various activities and channels such as staging roving exhibitions, our network of nine industry-based Tripartite Committees and 18 Human Resources Managers Clubs formed in various trades and industries. As the promotional activities form part of our on-going tasks, we do not have a separate breakdown of the expenditures involved.
- (d) In 2009-10, LD will continue to promote good people management practices through different publicity activities. In addition to our regular initiatives, we plan to produce a video on FFEP to deepen public understanding on the subject and encourage the wider adoption of such practices. The estimated expenditure is \$350,000.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)026

Question Serial No.

0743

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

What are the numbers, dates and venues of the job fairs planned to be held in 2009-10? How many job vacancies are expected to be on offer and what is the expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply :

In 2009-10, the Labour Department (LD) plans to organise about 20 large-scale job fairs in strategic locations and about 30 district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls in various districts. The estimated expenditure for staging these job fairs is \$2.24 million.

LD also plans to organise around 200 mini-job fairs at its 12 Job Centres all over the territory in 2009-10. The expenditure involved in staging these job fairs will be subsumed under the total operating expenditure of the Job Centres.

The dates and venues of the job fairs will be decided at a later stage having regard to the supply and demand of job vacancies in different industries and geographical locations, and the availability of suitable venues. The number of vacancies that may be available for application by job seekers in the job fairs cannot be ascertained in advance, as it will depend on the prevailing economic situation and the labour market conditions.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) which provides career counselling and pre-employment and on-the-job training for young school leavers aged between 15 and 19, please provide the following information:

- (a) Please set out in a table the number of trainees and employers who participated in YPTP, the number of attachment places offered each year, and the number of trainees who were offered employment by the participating companies after the attachment in 2006-07, 2007-08 and 2008-09.
- (b) Did the Administration review the reasons for the annual decrease in the number of participating trainees and employers, as well as the attachment places offered in 2005-06 and 2006-07? Has any assessment been made on the effectiveness of YPTP? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
- (c) What is the estimated number of training places in 2009-10? What is the estimated number of trainees who are offered employment by the participating companies after the attachment?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply :

- (a) YPTP operates on the basis of Programme Year and the 2008-09 Programme will only end in August 2009. Hence, the figures on trainees, participating organisations and workplace attachment training of the 2008-09 Programme are not yet available. Figures for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 Programmes are as follows:

Programme Year of YPTP	Number of Trainees	Number of Participating Organisations	Number of Workplace Attachment Training Offered
2006-07	6 484	758	4 717
2007-08	5 103	557	3 337

We do not maintain statistics on employment offered by the participating organisations to trainees on completion of workplace attachment training.

- (b) The decrease in the number of trainees, participating organisations and workplace attachment training offered under the 2005-06 and 2006-07 Programmes of YPTP was mainly attributable to the favourable economic situation and the availability of education, training and employment opportunities in the market. Workplace attachment training is arranged on an on-going basis. Hence, the number of workplace attachment training places offered and the number of trainees requiring the attachment are interactive. With a decline in the number of young people enrolled in YPTP, the number of organisations that offered workplace attachment training to trainees of YPTP also decreased.

The Labour Department conducts annual placement surveys on trainees who have completed pre-employment training under YPTP. For the 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 Programmes, other than trainees who decided to pursue further studies on completion of pre-employment training under YPTP, around 70% of the trainees surveyed had already found work.

- (c) The 2009-10 Programme of YPTP will commence in September 2009. While YPTP will flexibly admit all eligible young people, an overall training estimate of 35 000 for the two youth programmes i.e. YPTP and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme in the next two years has been adopted for budgeting purpose. We are unable to estimate the number of trainees who will be offered employment by the participating organisations on completion of workplace attachment training as it depends on a variety of factors, including the overall situation of the economy as well as the labour market then.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)028

Question Serial No.

0752

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Please provide the following information on the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS):

- (a) What are the enrolment figures for YWETS in 2007-08 and 2008-09 and the respective expenditures involved?
- (b) How many employers participated in YWETS and how many training vacancies were available in 2007-08?
- (c) Did the Administration evaluate the reasons for the decrease in the number of participating employers and the number of on-the-job training vacancies available in 2005-06 and 2006-07? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply :

- (a) A total of 8 211 young people enrolled in the 2007-08 Programme of YWETS, involving a total expenditure of \$70.22 million. The 2008-09 Programme of YWETS will only end in August 2009. Hence, the number of trainees and total expenditure involved for the 2008-09 Programme is not yet available.
- (b) For the 2007-08 Programme of YWETS, 3 561 employers participated by offering a total of 12 141 training vacancies.
- (c) The decrease in the number of participating employers and training vacancies offered under the 2005-06 and 2006-07 Programmes of YWETS was mainly attributable to the favourable economic situation and the availability of education, training and employment opportunities in the market. With a decline in the number of young people enrolled, the incentives on the part of employers to make use of the recruitment assistance of YWETS also decreased.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)029

Question Serial No.

0753

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Please provide the following information on the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS):

- (a) Did the Administration evaluate the reasons for the decrease in the number of YWETS trainees who secured placement in 2005-06 and 2006-07? If yes, what are the details? If no, what are the reasons?
- (b) How many trainees were employed after completing YWETS in 2007-08 and 2008-09? How many trainees were offered employment by the companies after the attachment training?
- (c) What is the estimated number of training places in 2009-10? What is the estimated number of trainees who will be employed after completing YWETS? What is the estimated number of trainees who will be offered employment by the companies after the attachment training?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply :

- (a) The decrease in the number of trainees placed into training vacancies under YWETS in 2005-06 and 2006-07 was mainly attributable to the favourable economic situation and the availability of education, training and employment opportunities in the market.
- (b) YWETS operates on the basis of Programme Year and the 2008-09 Programme will only end in August 2009. Hence, the placement status of trainees of the 2008-09 Programme is not yet available. Figures for the 2007-08 Programme are as follows:

	2007-08 Programme of YWETS
Number of trainees placed into training vacancies under YWETS	4 368
Number of trainees placed into other jobs	1 352
Total number of placements	5 720

Of the 4 368 trainees placed into training vacancies under the 2007-08 Programme, 1 772 completed on-the-job training, and 1 200 of them were offered continued employment by their employers afterwards.

(c) The 2009-10 Programme of YWETS will commence in September 2009. While YWETS will flexibly admit all eligible young people, an overall training estimate of 35 000 for the two youth programmes i.e. YWETS and the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme in the next two years has been adopted for budgeting purpose. We are unable to estimate the number of trainees who will be placed into employment under the 2009-10 Programme of YWETS as it depends on a variety of factors including the overall situation of the economy as well as the labour market.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)030

Question Serial No.

0769

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the Pilot Transport Support Scheme (TSS), Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM), Work Trial Scheme (WTS), Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) and Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP), please provide details on the following:

- (a) The quantity of publicity materials produced for these employment programmes in 2008-09 and the expenditure involved.
- (b) The quantity of publicity materials planned to be produced for these programmes in 2009-10 and the estimated expenditure.

Asked by : Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply :

- (a) In 2008-09, the Labour Department (LD) produced a wide range of publicity materials to promote TSS, EPM, WTS, YWETS and YPTP. They included handbooks, posters, leaflets, roadside and wall banners, and souvenirs. A breakdown of these publicity materials by quantity and expenditure involved is as follows:

Programme	Quantity	Expenditure involved
TSS	253 400	\$353,400
EPM	90 024	\$22,273
WTS	110 000	\$40,000
YWETS	343 766	\$363,315
YPTP	311 730	\$370,355

- (b) In 2009-10, LD will continue to produce publicity materials to publicise the above programmes. A breakdown of the publicity materials to be produced by quantity and expenditure involved is as follows:

Programme	Estimated quantity	Estimated expenditure involved
TSS	304 080	\$424,080
EPM	26 500	\$54,000
WTS	40 000	\$14,000
YWETS	378 000	\$400,000
YPTP	343 000	\$408,000

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the plan to launch publicity programmes to raise employers' and employees' awareness of the prevention of occupational diseases in 2009-2010, would the Administration advise on the following:

- (a) What are the details of the plan and the estimated expenditure involved?
- (b) What publicity programmes on prevention of occupational diseases were organised over the past three years, i.e. from 2006 to 2008? What was the expenditure involved? Has assessment been made on the effectiveness of the programmes? If yes, what are the details?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply :

The Labour Department (LD) adopts a multifarious approach to enhance employers' and employees' awareness of occupational safety and health, including the prevention of occupational diseases, through health talks and seminars, distributing publications, broadcasting Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio, and showing educational videos on mobile advertising media. In the years 2006 to 2008, LD's publicity programmes focused on the prevention of musculoskeletal disorders for office workers and workers in the catering industry, and prevention of gas poisoning for drainage workers. In addition, we also developed an educational kit on measures to prevent different occupational diseases. The effectiveness of health talks and seminars was assessed through evaluation completed by participants. The feedback was generally positive.

In 2009-10, LD will launch publicity programmes to promote employers' and employees' awareness of the strategies that may be used in different situations for occupational disease prevention. The educational kit developed in 2008-09 provides the basis for this campaign. Apart from organising health talks and seminars and distributing publications, LD will distribute the kit in major occupational safety and health events, develop a new educational video to be shown on mobile advertising media, and produce a new poster for display at workplaces. The support and assistance of relevant stakeholders such as the Occupational Safety and Health Council, employers' associations and trade unions will be enlisted in the exercise.

Publicity and promotion to help prevent occupational diseases is an integral part of LD's occupational safety and health promotion strategy and we do not maintain separate breakdown of expenditure on the promotion of occupational safety and promotion for the prevention of occupational diseases.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)032

Question Serial No.

2060

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Administration states that it will create about 62 000 jobs and internship opportunities in the next three years, i.e. 2009-2011. Please set out in tables the following information :

- (a) the number of internship opportunities and the estimated expenditure involved;
- (b) the number of training opportunities and the estimated expenditure involved;
- (c) the number of non-internship and non-training opportunities and the estimated expenditure involved;
- (d) the number of non-internship and non-training opportunities the employment period of which last for over 12 months and the estimated expenditure involved;
- (e) the number of newly created posts and the estimated expenditure involved; and
- (f) the number of newly created posts the employment period of which last for over 12 months and the estimated expenditure involved.

Asked by : Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply :

(a) to (f)

Details of the some 62 000 employment and internship opportunities as announced in the Budget are as follows :

Initiatives	Total amount involved (\$ million)	No. of employment/internship opportunities
Jobs		
"Operation Building Bright" campaign for maintenance of 1000 dilapidated buildings	700	10 000
Mega Events	100	2 800
To promote and organise community involvement activities under the theme of "Green, Cultural, Dynamic Games" and publicise the 2009 East Asian Games and celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China.	78	260
One-year education campaign to promote safe and healthy use of the Internet	63	500
Energy efficiency and saving projects for government buildings and public facilities	130	200

Initiatives	Total amount involved (\$ million)	No. of employment/internship opportunities
Employment and training opportunities		
To enhance and integrate the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme	326.2	35 000
To enhance the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged	60.6	8 000
To enhance the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme	11.8	800
Internship opportunities		
Internship Programme for University Graduates	140	4 000
Total	1609.6 (say \$1.6 billion)	61 560 (say 62 000)

These employment opportunities and internship places will span various academic requirements, professions and job categories in order to provide employment opportunities for different job seekers. Their durations vary according to their respective nature and requirements.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the Administration's plan to enhance publicity and enforcement efforts to ensure adequate protection of workers from heat stroke at work in 2009-10, please provide the following information :

- (a) The publicity plan and the estimated expenditure involved.
- (b) Have any publicity programmes been organised for the protection of workers from heat stroke in 2008-09? What are the details and expenditure involved?
- (c) Have any suspension notices been issued to the responsible persons of workplaces regarding the risk of workers suffering from heat stroke in 2007-08 and 2008-09? If yes, what are the numbers?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply :

- (a) In 2009-10, Labour Department (LD) will continue to enhance publicity to promote awareness of heat stroke prevention at work. Apart from on-going promotional activities, LD will develop and publicize a checklist to provide guidance for employers and employees in assessing the risk of heat stroke at their workplaces. LD will also enlist the support and assistance of relevant stakeholders such as the Construction Industry Council, Occupational Safety and Health Council, employers' associations and trade unions in the exercise. As regards the expenditure involved, LD does not have separate breakdown for individual items of occupational safety and health promotion and publicity programmes.
- (b) LD adopts a multifarious approach to enhance employers' and employees' awareness of occupational safety and health, including the prevention of heat stroke. In 2008-09, LD organised health talks and seminars, distributed promotional materials such as publications, posters and card-holders with punchy health messages, and showed educational videos on mobile advertising media to achieve this objective. LD does not maintain separate breakdown of expenditure on individual items of publicity programmes launched.

(c) On the enforcement front, LD conducts inspections to workplaces to ensure that adequate and effective measures are in place at workplaces. These include enforcement targeting outdoor and indoor workplaces with a higher risk of heat stroke, such as construction sites, outdoor cleansing workplaces, restaurant kitchens, food factories and laundries. Occupational hygienists of the department will, where appropriate, take enforcement actions, e.g. issuing warning letters, improvement notices and suspension notices, and taking out prosecutions will ensue. LD does not have separate breakdown of the enforcement statistics for 2007-08 and 2008-09 in relation to heat stroke prevention.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Would the Administration please explain the utilisation of the estimated provision of \$424.3 m for the 2009-10 financial year to further enhance the effectiveness of the Labour Department's employment services, with a view to identifying possible measures for vulnerable groups? How many of these measures are tailor-made for the white-collars and management staff who have lost their jobs in the financial tsunami?

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Kwan-yuen, Andrew

Reply :

The estimated provision of \$424.3 million for the Employment Services Programme of the Labour Department (LD) will mainly be utilised for the provision of a wide range of free employment services and special employment programmes to help job seekers of different background find jobs and employers fill their vacancies. On top of this, additional provision has been earmarked to enhance LD's employment services as announced in the 2009-10 budget speech in the face of the deepening financial tsunami.

In response to rising unemployment triggered by the financial tsunami, LD will adopt a more proactive approach to provide employment assistance to employees who have lost their jobs in redundancy and closure exercises. We will strengthen the collection of intelligence of redundancy and closure exercises and reach out to the retrenched employees to render our support services. We will offer them with priority job matching and referral services, canvass suitable vacancies from employers, and organise thematic job fairs targeted at hard-hit industries as well as district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls for the dissemination of vacancy and employment information. As appropriate, they will also be referred to suitable training courses to enhance their employability.

To improve the placement opportunities for middle-aged job seekers, LD will strengthen the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM). Job seekers with different educational background and skills levels will be admitted into EPM on a flexible basis. The incentives for employers to engage middle-aged job seekers will also be enhanced by increasing the amount of on-the-job training allowance payable to eligible employers and extending the length of subsidy period for deserving cases.

The employment services of LD are open to all job seekers, including white-collar and managerial employees. To specifically address the influx of university graduates into the labour market in the middle of the year, LD will launch an “Internship Programme for University Graduates” to provide interested graduates with opportunities to work as interns in local or Mainland enterprises for six to 12 months. It will broaden the horizon of the graduates and help them gain experience, as well as nurture talent for the private sector. It is expected that the Programme will benefit about 4 000 graduates.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)035

Question Serial No.

0434

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

It is stated in the matters requiring special attention in 2009-10 that the Administration will “enhance publicity and enforcement efforts to ensure adequate protection of workers from heat stroke at work”. Would the Administration provide details of the enforcement efforts as well as the expenditure and manpower involved?

Asked by : Hon. IP Wai-ming

Reply :

In 2009-10, the Labour Department will enhance publicity and enforcement efforts to ensure adequate protection of workers from heat stroke at work. On the enforcement front, occupational hygienists of the department will conduct a special campaign from April to September 2009 to outdoor and indoor workplaces with a higher risk of heat stroke, such as construction sites, outdoor cleansing workplaces, restaurant kitchens, food factories and laundries. Inspections will focus on the adequacy and effectiveness of preventive measures, including the provision of drinking water, rest break arrangements, the provision of sheltered work and rest areas, ventilation facilities, and the provision of appropriate information, instruction and training for workers. Apart from taking appropriate enforcement actions, e.g. issuing warning letters, improvement notices and suspension notices and taking out prosecutions, the occupational hygienists will also distribute relevant promotional materials such as publications and posters to enhance the awareness of employers and employees. Training courses and seminars will also be organised from time to time.

The special enforcement campaign will be undertaken by serving occupational hygienists and will not require additional manpower and expenditure.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)036

Question Serial No.

0897

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

What are the respective numbers of public enquiries made in person and labour disputes and claims registered by the branch offices of the Labour Relations Division (LRD) on Saturdays in the two years before the introduction of five-day week (i.e. 2004-05 and 2005-06)?

Asked by : Hon. IP Wai-ming

Reply :

Since statistics kept by LRD are compiled on a monthly basis, we do not have statistics on the number of consultations in person, labour disputes and claims received by branch offices of LRD on Saturdays for the years 2004-05 and 2005-06.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)037

Question Serial No.

0898

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Will the Administration introduce the arrangement of shift duty on Saturdays in the branch offices of the Labour Relations Division (LRD) to facilitate the public in making enquiries in person and registration of labour disputes and claims? Will this arrangement incur additional expenditure and what is the amount involved?

Asked by : Hon. IP Wai-ming

Reply :

Regarding the registration of claims, experience shows that most of the claimants have left their employment when they approach LRD for assistance. Despite the introduction of a 5-day week since July 2006, officers of LRD continue to be on call on weekends and holidays to provide urgent conciliation service for labour disputes which require immediate attention.

At present, the public can make enquiries relating to the Employment Ordinance and related labour matters round-the-clock by making use of the 24-hour telephone enquiry service (1823 or 2717 1771) without the need to visit LRD branch offices. Alternatively, they can visit the Labour Department's website at their convenience.

We have no plan to introduce the arrangement of shift duty on Saturdays in the branch offices of LRD. The arrangement, if it is to be implemented, would have manpower and resource implications with estimated additional expenditure of about \$3.6 million.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)038

Question Serial No.

1480

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question:

Apart from the preparation for making legislative amendments to enhance the enforcement of Labour Tribunal awards, will other legislative amendment work underway be included in this Programme? If yes, what are the amendment details? Will the Employment (Amendment) Bill covering reinstatement and re-employment issues be included? What are the reasons for failing to submit the Bill to the Legislative Council in the 2008-09 legislative year?

Asked by : Hon. IP Wai-ming

Reply :

Apart from the legislative amendments to enhance enforcement of Labour Tribunal awards, we are also working on the Employment (Amendment) Bill (the Bill) which seeks to remove the requirement for an employer's agreement to the making of an order for reinstatement or re-engagement of an employee who has been dismissed unreasonably and unlawfully, and to require the employer to pay a further sum to the employee for failing to comply with such an order.

We originally planned to introduce the Bill into the Legislative Council in the 2008-09 legislative session. However, we have to defer this item to the 2009-10 session for two reasons:

- (a) the unforeseen drastic increase in labour disputes and redundancy/winding up cases arising from the global financial tsunami, and the resultant need for prompt and effective response from the Labour Department (LD), has exerted an immense pressure on the resources and top management of LD, resulting in the need for LD to reprioritise its existing commitments; and
- (b) deferring the Bill would enable us to focus on, and accord priority to, introducing within the 2008-09 legislative session the complex and major draft bills on putting in place a statutory minimum wage and enhancing the enforcement of Labour Tribunal awards.

We will endeavour to introduce the Bill as soon as possible in the 2009-10 session.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)039

Question Serial No.

2666

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Please provide a breakdown of the number of applicants under the Transport Support Scheme (TSS) by District Council district.

Asked by : Hon. IP Wai-ming

Reply :

From June 2007 to February 2009, a total of 29 027 persons have applied to join TSS. A breakdown of the number of applicants by districts is as follows:

District	Number of applicants
Yuen Long	12 156
Tuen Mun	11 262
North	3 707
Islands	1 902
Total	29 027

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

LWB(L)040

0756

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Government expressed that preserving jobs was a top objective in preparing this year's Budget. It also stated that the public spending in the next year would exceed \$300 billion to boost domestic demand and increase employment opportunities. Targeted measures would be introduced to provide various types of job and internship opportunities. However, the Budget did not mention any earmarked funding to assist local ethnic minorities in securing employment. Will the Administration inform this Committee:

- (a) Has the Government earmarked a portion of expenses in the estimated expenditure of over \$300 billion to assist ethnic minorities in securing employment?
- (b) If yes, what is the expenditure involved? If no, does the Administration have any special measures to cater for the specific employment needs of ethnic minorities?

Asked by : Hon. HO Sau-lan, Cyd

Reply :

- (a) The employment services provided by the Labour Department (LD) are open to all job seekers irrespective of their races. We do not have a separate breakdown of the expenditure for providing employment services to the ethnic minorities.
- (b) To facilitate ethnic minority job seekers in using our employment services, we have produced a leaflet on "Easy-to-use Employment Services of the Labour Department" in various languages of the ethnic minorities. Special counters have been set up at our 12 Job Centres all over the territory to provide ethnic minority job seekers with readily accessible services. Employment briefings tailor-made for the ethnic minorities are organised by our Job Centres from time to time. As necessary, interpretation service will be arranged by appointment for job seekers in need. For ethnic minority job seekers who require more intensive and personalised services, we will invite them to join the Job Matching Programme under which our placement officers will help match their academic qualifications, job skills and work experience with the requirements of the employment market, and assist them to look for suitable jobs. As appropriate, they will also be referred to attend suitable training courses to enhance their employability.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)041

Question Serial No.

0779

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

What are the details and timetable regarding the preparation for legislative amendments to enhance the enforcement of Labour Tribunal awards?

Asked by : Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply :

Regarding the legislative amendments to enhance the enforcement of Labour Tribunal awards, we last consulted the Labour Advisory Board and the Legislative Council Panel on Manpower in December 2008. We are working closely with the Department of Justice and consulting the Judiciary on various legal and implementation details. The preparatory work is now in full swing. Our aim is to introduce a bill into the Legislative Council in the 2008/09 session.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)042

Question Serial No.

0780

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

What are the estimated expenditure and manpower involved in promoting enlightened employment practices?

Asked by : Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply :

In 2009-10, the estimated expenditure involved in promoting enlightened employment practices is \$500,000. We do not have a separate breakdown of the manpower requirement as these activities form part of the on-going tasks of the Labour Department.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)043

Question Serial No.

1730

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Please provide the following information on employee rights and benefits:

- (a) A breakdown by rank and mode of employment in respect of the manpower deployed for intelligence collection and analysis.
- (b) A breakdown by rank, function and mode of employment in respect of the former police officers employed, together with the establishment, strength and the total expenditure involved.

Asked by : Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply :

- (a) Various ranks of labour officers and labour inspectors working in the Employment Claims Investigation Division and the Labour Inspection Division of the Labour Department (LD) are involved in collecting and analysing intelligence on wage offences and/or illegal employment activities. They are all employed on civil service terms and conditions. As these officers also undertake other enforcement duties, we do not have a breakdown on the manpower involved in this particular area of work.

Apart from these officers, LD also employs seven former veteran police officers on non-civil service contract terms whose duties include the collection of intelligence on wage offences.

- (b) Since 2005, LD has employed seven former veteran police officers to assist in offence investigation work. Six officers have been employed as Contract Investigation Officers, whose duties are to conduct proactive on-site investigation to gather intelligence and evidence for combating wage offences and suspected abuses of the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund. One officer has been employed as Contract Investigation Adviser to advise on investigation strategies, to provide training on offence investigation, and to assess whether the cases under investigation involve suspected crimes which warrant referrals to other law enforcement authorities for action. All the contract posts have been filled and there are no vacancies at present.

The total expenditure for employing these former police officers in 2008-09 is around \$1.9 million.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)044

Question Serial No.

1731

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the combat against illegal employment, would the Administration set out in detail the specific measures of the joint targeted actions with the Police and the Immigration Department and the total expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply :

The Labour Department actively collects intelligence on illegal employment activities. Based on the intelligence collected, we mount enforcement operations with the Police and the Immigration Department to raid the establishments suspected to be involved in illegal employment. The illegal workers detected during the joint operations are apprehended on-the-spot by the police or the immigration officers, where appropriate. In 2008, 186 such operations were mounted. As the officers responsible for collecting and analysing intelligence and conducting the joint operations also undertake other enforcement duties, we do not have a separate breakdown of the estimated expenditure on combating illegal employment.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)045

Question Serial No.

0812

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Under Programme (2), the number of able-bodied job seekers registered was 168 740 and the number of actual placements was 146 308 in 2008. Would the Administration inform this Committee, among the number of able-bodied job seekers registered and the number of actual placements, how many persons are ethnic minorities?

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply :

In 2008, a total of 168 740 able-bodied job seekers registered for the employment services of the Labour Department (LD). Of these, 2 191 were ethnic minorities.

In the same year, LD secured 146 308 placements for able-bodied job seekers. Job seekers may be placed into employment either through the referral services of LD or by direct application to employers who advertise their vacancies in LD and job seekers who secure employment through direct applications are not required to report their placement positions to LD. Therefore, we do not maintain detailed statistical breakdowns of all the placements and we do not have a breakdown of the number of ethnic minority job seekers placed into employment out of those 2 191 registered for our employment services.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)046

Question Serial No.

0813

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

In Programme (2), the Administration states that labour market information is provided to ethnic minorities. Would the Administration inform this Committee of the expenditure of such measures in 2008-09 and the estimated expenditure in 2009-10? Have any indicators been set for this policy and what is its effectiveness in 2008-09?

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply :

The employment services provided by the Labour Department (LD) are open to all job seekers irrespective of their races. We do not have a separate breakdown of the expenditure for providing employment services to the ethnic minorities.

To facilitate ethnic minority job seekers in using our employment services, we have produced a leaflet on “Easy-to-use Employment Services of the Labour Department” in various languages of the ethnic minorities. Special counters have been set up at our 12 Job Centres all over the territory to provide ethnic minority job seekers with readily accessible services. Employment briefings tailor-made for the ethnic minorities are organised by our Job Centres from time to time. As necessary, interpretation service will be arranged by appointment for job seekers in need. For ethnic minority job seekers who require more intensive and personalised services, we will invite them to join the Job Matching Programme under which our placement officers will help match their academic qualifications, job skills and work experience with the requirements of the employment market, and assist them to look for suitable jobs. As appropriate, they will also be referred to attend suitable training courses to enhance their employability.

In 2008, a total of 2 191 ethnic minority job seekers registered for the employment services of LD. Job seekers may be placed into employment either through the referral services of LD or by direct application to employers who advertise their vacancies in LD and job seekers who secure employment through direct applications are not required to report their placement positions to LD. Therefore, we do not have a separate breakdown on the number of ethnic minority job seekers placed into employment out of those 2 191 registered for our employment services.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Under Programme (1), the Administration estimates that the number of labour disputes and claims handled in 2009 is 21 000, which is similar to the actual figure of 2007, while the estimated expenditure for handling labour relations is only 2.9% higher than the estimate for 2008. In light of the rapid economic downturn and the huge number of companies resorting to retrenchment and pay reductions, would the Administration inform this Council of the reasons why it believes that the number of labour disputes handled will be similar to that of 2007, during which the economy was better? In the absence of any substantial increase in the resources for handling labour disputes, how will the Administration handle the expected upsurge in labour dispute cases?

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply :

While experience suggests that the number of labour disputes and claims will tend to rise during an economic downturn, it is difficult to estimate precisely the size of the increase. We shall closely monitor the labour relations scene as well as the workload situation and arrange internal redeployment of manpower and related resources as necessary to ensure effective and timely delivery of conciliation services to the public.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)048

Question Serial No.

2122

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Administration stated in Programme 2 that as at the end of 2008, the total number of applicants admitted under the pilot Transport Support Scheme (TSS) was 26 084. Would the Administration inform this Committee of the numbers of applicants and applicants admitted under TSS in various districts?

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Wai-yip, Albert

Reply :

By the end of 2008, of the 26 980 persons who applied to join TSS, 26 084 have been admitted. A breakdown of the number of applicants and the number of applicants admitted under TSS by district is as follows:

District	Number of applicants	Number of applicants admitted
Yuen Long	11 309	10 840
Tuen Mun	10 439	10 231
North	3 468	3 307
Islands	1 764	1 706
Total :	26 980	26 084

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)049

Question Serial No.

0857

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

It is stated in the matters requiring special attention in 2009-10 that publicity programmes will be launched to raise employers' and employees' awareness of the prevention of occupational diseases. Please advise if any provision has been made in 2009-10 for conducting a study on new types of occupational diseases such as mental illness caused by excessive work pressure and cancers due to overnight work. What is the expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

The Labour Department (LD) has not earmarked provisions in 2009-10 to commission studies on new types of occupational diseases.

According to the International Labour Organization, an occupational disease is a disease having a specific or strong relationship with exposure to physical, chemical, biological or psychosocial factors in the workplace, and these factors in the work environment are predominant and essential in causing the disease. Therefore, a disease is regarded as an occupational disease only if large-scale studies conducted by multiple reputable research centres reveal conclusive medical evidence that the disease has a causal relationship with a particular occupation. For example, the list of prescribed occupational diseases in the Employees' Compensation Ordinance (Cap. 282) was amended in 2005 to cover Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome and Avian Influenza A having regard to relevant local and overseas research findings. LD will continue to review local and overseas studies from time to time to examine if there is a firm basis to support the designation of new types of occupational diseases.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Under the matters requiring special attention in 2009-10, would the Administration advise on the following :

- (a) On the Transport Support Scheme (TSS), the Government stated that it would undertake, if necessary, a review one year after implementation of the relaxation measures. Please explain what is meant by “if necessary”.
- (b) If a review is undertaken, will the scope of review include the impact on the recipients' employment opportunities should TSS be cancelled?
- (c) Did the Administration assess the feasibility of extending TSS to the entire territory? If yes, what is the expenditure involved in extending the scheme?
- (d) If TSS is extended by a year, what will be the additional expenditure incurred?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

- (a) As agreed by the previous Commission on Poverty, TSS was first launched on a pilot basis in June 2007 with a view to providing time-limited incentives to residents of four designated remote districts (i.e. Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, North and Islands) to look for and stay in employment. In July 2008, the Labour Department (LD) implemented a range of relaxation measures which included relaxing the income threshold and extending the subsidy period. Eligible persons living and working in the same designated remote district could also apply to join TSS. LD will closely monitor the implementation of the relaxation measures, including the number of applications, the characteristics of applicants and the financial position of TSS. Bearing in mind the policy objective of TSS, we will take all relevant factors into consideration in considering the way forward for the review of TSS.
- (b) If a review is to be undertaken, we will consider carefully its scope. The objective of TSS is to encourage, through the provision of time-limited transport subsidy, needy job seekers and low-income employees in the four designated remote districts to look for jobs and stay in employment. A review, if undertaken, will most likely look into, among other things, whether TSS has been able to achieve its objective.

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

In the past two years, i.e. 2007-08 and 2008-09, how many cases of work injuries and occupational diseases were recorded in Tung Chung and the airport respectively? How many days of sick leave were incurred? What was the amount of statutory compensation involved?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

We do not keep breakdown of cases of work injuries or occupational diseases by geographical districts.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)052

Question Serial No.

2034

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

In the past two years, i.e. 2007-08 and 2008-09, how many cases of labour disputes were recorded in Tung Chung and the airport respectively? What were the number of employees and amount of money involved? How many cases were resolved through conciliation of the Labour Department (LD)? How many claims were adjudicated by the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board (MECAB)?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

The Labour Relations Division (LRD) of LD provides conciliation service and handles labour disputes through ten branch offices located in different districts of Hong Kong. Relevant statistics are thus kept on the basis of the ten branch offices. Labour disputes occurring in Tung Chung and the Hong Kong International Airport are handled by the Tsuen Wan and Kwai Chung offices of LRD respectively. Both LRD and MECAB do not have breakdown by such specific locations as raised in the question.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) What are the respective numbers of able-bodied job seekers and disabled job seekers on outlying islands? What is the number of placements secured through the employment services of the Labour Department (LD)?
- (b) Will LD consider setting up employment service centres or interactive vacancy search terminals in remote areas like Tung Chung and Tin Shui Wai where unemployment is more serious?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-hing

Reply :

- (a) Able-bodied job seekers are free to register at any one of the 12 Job Centres of LD or through the Interactive Employment Service (iES) website to make use of the employment services of LD. As regards disabled job seekers, those who reside on outlying islands can approach the Hong Kong Office or the New Territories Office of the Selective Placement Division (SPD) of LD for employment assistance. They can also make use of the services rendered by the Interactive Selective Placement Service website. There is no requirement for a job seeker, irrespective of whether he/she is able-bodied or disabled, to register at the Job Centre or SPD office nearest to his/her place of residence. Therefore, we do not maintain statistics on the place of residence of job seekers.
- (b) LD does not have any plan to set up a Job Centre in Tung Chung. Job seekers residing in Tung Chung may seek employment services at our Job Centres in Tsuen Wan, Tuen Mun or other districts of their choice. They may also register for employment services online, browse the latest vacancy information and conduct job matching through the iES website. Registered job seekers may also call the Telephone Employment Service Hotline for referral arrangements.

As for Tin Shui Wai, LD has set up a Job Centre in Yuen Long in September 2006 to provide a full range of employment services for job seekers residing in Yuen Long and Tin Shui Wai.

To provide residents of Tung Chung with convenient access to the job vacancy database of LD, Vacancy Search Terminals (VSTs) have been installed at the Tung Chung (Islands) Public Enquiry Service Centre of the Home Affairs Department (HAD) and the Social Security Field Unit (SSFU) of Central and Western / Islands (Tung Chung Sub-office) of the Social Welfare Department (SWD). As for Tin Shui Wai, VSTs have been installed at the Tin Shui Community Centre and Tin Ching Community Hall of HAD, as well as SSFUs of Tin Shui Wai (North) and Tin Shui Wai (South) of SWD.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

It is mentioned in the Indicators that the number of placements for the disabled job seekers in 2009 is estimated at 2 450, which is 40 less than the actual number of placements secured in 2008. Please inform this Committee of whether there are any measures to be taken to assist the disabled job seekers in coping with the acute competitiveness among the job seekers during the economic downturn?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply :

To enhance the employability of people with disabilities (PWDs) in the wake of economic downturn, the Labour Department (LD) will strengthen the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS) to provide employment support and training opportunities for PWDs. PWDs who attend the pre-employment training programme under WOPS will be eligible for a training allowance of \$60 per day. The monthly allowance payable to eligible employers will be increased from 1/2 to 2/3 of the actual monthly wages of the disabled employee during the work trial period, subject to an enhanced ceiling of \$4,000 per employee per month. The subsidy period for deserving cases will be extended by three months to a maximum of six months.

LD will also organise a wide range of public education and publicity activities to encourage employers to offer employment opportunities to PWDs. They will include television and radio programmes, seminars and workshops, and advertisements in media and public buses.

With the vigorous efforts of LD, it is anticipated that the number of placements for PWDs in 2009 will be maintained at around 2 450.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)055

Question Serial No.

0896

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The two Youth Employment Resource Centres (YERCs) have been in operation since March 2008 to provide one-stop advisory and support services on employment and self-employment to youngsters aged between 15 and 29. Would the Administration advise on the number of recruitment days planned to be organised by YERCs in 2009-10 and the details? Please also provide a breakdown by job nature, industry and starting salary of the information and figures of the expected positions on offer.

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Mo-po, Paul

Reply :

In 2008, the two YERCs of the Labour Department organised a total of 58 recruitment days to keep young people aged between 15 and 29 abreast of the latest developments in the labour market and assist them to look for suitable jobs. Activities such as recruitment days are essentially demand-led, and the number of activities that can be organised will depend on the recruitment needs of employers and the aspirations and interests of the job-seeking young people. While we do not have any specific target on the number of recruitment days to be organised in 2009, we will flexibly deploy our resources for the best interest of the young people.

As YERCs have yet to decide on the number and industry coverage of the recruitment days to be organised in 2009-10, we are unable to provide further information on the nature and salary level of the vacancies that may be offered in the recruitment days.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)056

Question Serial No.

0975

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Under Programme (1) Labour Relations, please provide the following information:

- (a) A breakdown of the figures by industry and cause in respect of the labour disputes handled in 2008.
- (b) A breakdown of the figures by cause in respect of the claims handled in 2008.

Asked by : Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

- (a) Statistics on labour disputes (involving over 20 employee-claimants) handled by the Labour Relations Division (LRD) of the Labour Department (LD) in 2008 are as follows:

Breakdown by industry

Industry	No. of labour disputes
Construction	39
Manufacturing	31
Restaurants & hotels	20
Transport, storage and communication	14
Community, social and personal services	6
Financing, insurance, real estate & business services	5
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades	5
Total	120

Breakdown by cause

Cause	No. of labour disputes
Disputes involving principal contractor and subcontractor	37
Cessation of business	31
Insolvency	20
Variation of terms of employment contract	7
Non-payment of wages	6
Retrenchment	3
Dismissal	2
Others	14
Total	120

(b) Breakdown of labour claims handled by LRD of LD in 2008 by cause is as follows:

Cause	No. of labour claims
Termination of contract	9 059
Non-payment of wages	6 976
Non-payment of holiday pay/ annual leave pay/ rest day pay/ sickness allowance	2 215
Cessation of business	538
Retrenchment	84
Insolvency	70
Variation of terms of employment contract	48
Lay-off	36
Others	1 597
Total	20 623

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)057

Question Serial No.

0976

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Under Programme (2) on Employment Services, would the Administration provide the following:

- (a) A breakdown of the figures by sex, age, industry, occupation and earnings in respect of the placements secured through the employment services of the Labour Department (LD) for the able-bodied job seekers in 2008.
- (b) Among the breakdown figures in (a), what are the respective numbers of part-time, temporary and full-time jobs with monthly earnings less than \$4,000?

Asked by : Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

- (a) In 2008, LD secured 146 308 placements for able-bodied job seekers. Of these, 21 698 placements were achieved through the referral services of LD while 124 610 placements were the outcomes of direct applications by job seekers to employers who advertised their vacancies in LD. As job seekers who secure employment through direct applications are not required to report their placement positions to LD, we do not have detailed statistics on such placements. Breakdowns of the placements achieved through the referral services of LD by sex, age, industry, occupation and earnings are as follows:

By sex and age

Age group	Male	Female	No. of placements
15-19	810	1 080	1 890
20-29	3 745	3 369	7 114
30-39	1 311	1 973	3 284
40-49	1 738	3 766	5 504
50-59	1 339	2 087	3 426
60 or above	285	195	480
Total	9 228	12 470	21 698

By industry

Industry	No. of placements
Manufacturing	2 205
Construction	609
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	5 698
Transport, storage and communication	1 208
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	3 216
Community, social and personal services	4 668
Others (including government sector)	4 094
Total	21 698

By occupation

Occupational group	No. of placements
Managers and administrators	242
Professionals	123
Associate professionals	1 924
Clerks	6 850
Service workers	1 916
Shop sales workers	1 915
Agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry workers and fishermen	85
Craft and related workers	642
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	693
Elementary occupations	7 192
Others	116
Total	21 698

By earnings

Monthly earnings	No. of placements
Below \$4,000	4 178
\$4,000 - \$4,999	908
\$5,000 - \$5,999	3 474
\$6,000 - \$6,999	4 434
\$7,000 - \$7,999	4 122
\$8,000 - \$8,999	1 892
\$9,000 - \$9,999	1 019
\$10,000 or above	1 671
Total	21 698

- (b) Of the 4 178 placements with monthly earnings below \$4,000, 3 968 (95%) were part-time or temporary jobs while 210 (5%) were full-time jobs.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Under Programme (2) on Employment Services, would the Administration provide the following :

- (a) A breakdown of the figures, by sex, age, industry, occupation and earnings, of disabled job-seekers who secured placements through the employment services of the Labour Department (LD) in 2008.
- (b) Among the breakdown figures in (a), what are the respective numbers of part-time and full-time jobs with monthly earnings less than \$3,000?

Asked by : Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

- (a) In 2008, LD secured 2 490 placements for disabled job seekers. Breakdowns of the placements by sex, age, industry, occupation and earnings are as follows:

By sex and age

Age group	Male	Female	No. of placements
15-19	50	48	98
20-29	511	507	1 018
30-39	388	352	740
40-49	201	218	419
50-59	106	87	193
60 or above	17	5	22
Total	1 273	1 217	2 490

By industry

Industry	No. of placements
Manufacturing	368
Construction	36
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	974
Transport, storage and communication	86
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	323
Community, social and personal services	416
Others (including government sector)	287
Total	2 490

By occupation

Occupational group	No. of placements
Professional, technical and related workers	51
Administrative and managerial workers	19
Clerical and related workers	546
Sales workers	495
Service workers	566
Agricultural, animal husbandry, forestry workers and fishermen	2
Production workers, transport equipment operators and labourers	811
Total	2 490

By earnings

Monthly earnings	No. of placements
Below \$3,000	781
\$3,000 - \$3,999	311
\$4,000 - \$4,999	367
\$5,000 - \$5,999	461
\$6,000 - \$6,999	319
\$7,000 - \$7,999	157
\$8,000 - \$8,999	51
\$9,000 or above	43
Total	2 490

- (b) For the 781 placements with monthly earnings below \$3,000, 527 (67%) involved part-time jobs and 254 (33%) involved full-time jobs.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Please provide the following information under Programme (2) Employment Services:

- (a) A breakdown of the figures by sex, age, industry, occupation and earnings in respect of the trainees placed into training vacancies through the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) in 2007 and 2008.
- (b) What is the estimated expenditure for Item 532 – YWETS in 2009-10? What is the estimated number of beneficiaries?

Asked by : Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

- (a) YWETS operates on the basis of Programme Year and the 2008-09 Programme will only end in August 2009. Hence, the placement status of trainees of the 2008-09 Programme is not yet available. For the 2007-08 Programme, 4 368 trainees were placed into training vacancies under YWETS. Breakdowns of the placements by sex, age, industry, occupation and earnings are as follows:

By sex and age

Age group	Male	Female	Total
15-19	1 263	674	1 937
20 or above	1 302	1 129	2 431
Total	2 565	1 803	4 368

By industry

Industry	No. of placements
Community, social and personal service	1 289
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	993
Construction	589
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	366
Government sector	265
Manufacturing	191
Transport, storage and communications	129
Others	546
Total	4 368

By occupation

Occupational group	No. of placements
Clerks	1 074
Professional and associate professionals	908
Craft and related workers	787
Sales workers	644
Elementary occupations	358
Service workers	354
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	54
Managers and administrators	2
Others	187
Total	4 368

By earnings

Monthly earnings	No. of placements
\$4,000 - \$4,999	887
\$5,000 - \$5,999	2 154
\$6,000 or above	1 327
Total	4 368

- (b) The 2009-10 Programme of YWETS will commence in September 2009. While YWETS will flexibly admit all eligible young people, an overall training estimate of 35 000 for the two youth programmes i.e. YWETS and the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme in the next two years has been adopted for budgeting purpose. The total estimated expenditure for the two youth programmes in the next two years is \$326.2 million.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)060

Question Serial No.

0979

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) Regarding the placements secured through the Re-employment Training Programme for the Middle-aged, please provide a breakdown of the figures by sex, age, industry, occupation and earnings in 2007 and 2008.
- (b) What is the estimated expenditure in 2009-10 for item 534 – “Re-employment training programme for the middle-aged”? How many people are expected to be benefited?

Asked by : Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

- (a) In 2007 and 2008, the Labour Department (LD) secured respectively 8 482 and 6 255 placements for middle-aged job seekers under the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM). Breakdown of the placements by sex, age, industry, occupation and earnings are as follows:

By sex

Sex	Number of placements	
	2007	2008
Male	3 409	2 517
Female	5 073	3 738
Total	8 482	6 255

By age

Age	Number of placements	
	2007	2008
40 to 50	4 850	3 661
51 to 60	3 156	2 316
61 or above	476	278
Total	8 482	6 255

By industry

Industry	Number of placements	
	2007	2008
Community and social services	1 849	1 063
Business services	955	778
Real estate	947	605
Wholesale and retail trades	701	557
Manufacturing	717	478
Others (e.g. import/export trades, restaurants, construction and transport)	3 313	2 774
Total	8 482	6 255

By occupation

Occupation	Number of placements	
	2007	2008
Security guards, car park assistants	1 134	982
Clerks, office assistants	944	834
Labourers, delivery workers	987	822
Cleaners	1 833	782
Stock keepers, packers	579	461
Others (e.g. shop assistants, drivers, care home attendants and production workers)	3 005	2 374
Total	8 482	6 255

By earnings

Monthly earnings	Number of placements	
	2007	2008
\$4,000 to \$ 4,999	1 413	387
\$5,000 to \$ 6,999	4 476	3 231
\$7,000 or above	2 593	2 637
Total	8 482	6 255

(b) An amount of \$400 million has been earmarked for LD to enhance and integrate its various employment programmes, including EPM. The enhanced EPM is expected to benefit 8 000 middle-aged job seekers and incur an expenditure of \$60.6 million in the next two years.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) Among those people who sought consultation service at the occupational health clinics of the Labour Department (LD) in 2008, would the Administration please provide the numbers of people suffering from diseases or injuries caused by work, related to work or aggravated by work? How many of them had diseases or injuries unrelated to work?
- (b) Would the Administration please provide a breakdown, by sex, age, industry, occupation and type of disease, on the number of these two groups of patients?

Asked by : Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

In 2008, a total of 2 796 patients sought consultation at LD's occupational health clinics. Of these, 2 384 (85.3%) suffered from diseases or injuries caused by work, related to work or aggravated by work, and 412 (14.7%) had diseases or injuries unrelated to work.

The following tables present a breakdown of the two groups of patients by sex, age, industry, occupation and nature of disease -

By sex

Sex	Disease/injury	
	Caused by, related to or aggravated by work	Unrelated to work
Male	837 (35.1%)	175 (42.5%)
Female	1 547 (64.9%)	237 (57.5%)
Total	2 384 (100%)	412 (100%)

By age

Age group	Disease/injury	
	Caused by, related to or aggravated by work	Unrelated to work
<= 20	4 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)
21-40	732 (30.7%)	87 (21.1%)
41-60	1 619 (67.9%)	306 (74.3%)
>60	29 (1.2%)	18 (4.4%)
Total	2 384 (100%)	412 (100%)

By industry

Industry	Disease/injury	
	Caused by, related to or aggravated by work	Unrelated to work
Community, social and personal services	1 169 (49.0%)	160 (38.8%)
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	522 (21.9%)	100 (24.3%)
Manufacturing	219 (9.2%)	35 (8.5%)
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	185 (7.8%)	29 (7.0%)
Transport, storage and communications	156 (6.5%)	20 (4.9%)
Others	133 (5.6%)	68 (16.5%)
Total	2 384 (100%)	412 (100%)

By occupation

Occupation	Disease/injury	
	Caused by, related to or aggravated by work	Unrelated to work
Service personnel	786 (33.0%)	95 (23.1%)
Clerical and related personnel	598 (25.1%)	99 (24.0%)
Production and related personnel, transport equipment operators and labourers	470 (19.7%)	94 (22.8%)
Professionals and technicians	284 (11.9%)	49 (11.9%)
Others	246 (10.3%)	75 (18.2%)
Total	2 384 (100%)	412 (100%)

By nature of disease

Nature of disease	Caused by, related to or aggravated by work	Unrelated to work
Musculoskeletal	2 242 (94.0%)	252 (61.2%)
Auditory	18 (0.8%)	13 (3.1%)
Skin	15 (0.6%)	18 (4.4%)
Respiratory	13 (0.6%)	4 (1.0%)
Visual	7 (0.3%)	2 (0.5%)
Neurological	3 (0.1%)	13 (3.1%)
Others	86 (3.6%)	110 (26.7%)
Total	2 384 (100%)	412 (100%)

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	17.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

LWB(L)062

0981

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Would the Administration please provide a breakdown of cases on the basis of time required to effect payment in respect of applications to the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund (PWIF) in 2008?

Asked by : Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

The time required to effect payment from PWIF in respect of applications processed in 2008 is as follows:

Payment Time	Number of Applications
4 weeks or less	4 295
More than 4 weeks to 6 weeks	460
More than 6 weeks to 8 weeks	139
More than 8 weeks to 10 weeks	17
Total	4 911

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) Regarding the employees' compensation claims processed in 2008, would the Administration provide a breakdown of the figures by industry? As at the end of 2008, how many cases had been resolved? How much compensation was involved?
- (b) Would the Administration provide a breakdown of the number of employees' compensation cases received by the branch offices of the Employees' Compensation Division (ECD) in 2008?

Asked by : Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

- (a) In 2008, the Labour Department (LD) processed 59 867 employees' compensation claims reported under the Employees' Compensation Ordinance. Of these, 15 826 were minor cases which did not incapacitate the employees for more than 3 days and did not result in permanent incapacity. As the employers made direct payment of compensation to the employees in these minor cases, LD does not have separate breakdown of statistics by industries. Of the remaining 44 041 cases, a breakdown by industries is as follows:

Industry	Number of Cases
Community, Social and Personal Services	11 700
Catering	8 572
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	5 689
Transport, Storage and Communication	5 365
Wholesale/Retail, Import/Export and Hotel	4 435
Manufacturing	3 647
Construction	3 125
Others	1 508
Total	44 041

Of all the 59 867 reported cases, 45 361 cases were resolved as at the end of 2008. The amount of employees' compensation involved is \$223.3 million. The rest are pending expiry of sick leaves, assessment of permanent incapacity or determination by the court.

- (b) The breakdown of employees' compensation cases reported to different branch offices of ECD is as follows:

Branch Office	Number of Reported Cases
Hong Kong East Office	6 221
Hong Kong West Office	9 678
Kowloon East Office	6 978
Kowloon West Office	5 128
Kwun Tong Office	7 130
Government Servants and Seamen Office	6 877
Kwai Chung Office	5 310
Tsuen Wan Office	5 426
Shatin Office	6 923
Fatal Cases Office	196
Total	59 867

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding Programme (4) Employee Rights and Benefits, would the Administration please provide the following:

- (a) A breakdown by industry and reason(s) for prosecutions regarding the prosecutions taken out by the Labour Department (LD) under this Programme in 2008.
- (b) The details on convictions and penalties.

Asked by : Hon. LEE Cheuk-yan

Reply :

In 2008, the number of prosecutions taken out by LD under the Employee Rights and Benefits Programme by industries and results are as follows:

Industry	2008	
	Prosecutions Taken	Convictions
Catering	667	561
Manufacturing	226	197
Construction	276	227
Import/Export	241	216
Wholesale/Retail	510	474
Transport, Storage and Communication	181	149
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	259	249
Community, Social and Personal Services	478	429
Others	219	179
Total	3 057	2 681

Major offences prosecuted are wage offence, holiday offence and failure to take out employees' compensation insurance. In 2008, the corresponding number of these prosecutions were 1 088, 574 and 1 130, resulting in 958, 442, and 1 089 convictions respectively.

In the same year, the highest fine imposed in a case involving wage offence, holiday offence and failure to take out employees' compensation insurance was \$95,000, \$15,000 and \$10,000 respectively. The highest custodial sentence imposed was 4 months' imprisonment. The court imposed community service orders on employers in 3 convicted wage offence cases.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)065

Question Serial No.

1376

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

000 Operational
expenses

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the item Allowances under Personal Emoluments, the estimate for 2009-10 has dropped by 57.9% compared with the revised estimate for 2008-09. Please give the reason for this.

Asked by : Hon. IP LAU Suk-yea, Regina

Reply :

The main reason for the reduction of the estimate on allowances in 2009-10 is that there will be a substantial decrease in the estimated requirement for acting allowance in 2009-10 subsequent to the filling of existing vacancies.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)066

Question Serial No.

1612

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Amid the economic downturn, it is anticipated that the number of applications under the Supplementary Labour Scheme (SLS) processed in 2009 will slightly increase as compared with that of 2008. Please explain the reasons in details.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

It is estimated that 670 applications under SLS will be processed in 2009. It is a rounding-up projection, assuming that the number of applications processed will be close to that of 2008 (662 applications processed).

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)067

Question Serial No.

1613

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

There is a decrease in the expected numbers of occupational safety and health inspections in 2009-10 as compared with those of 2008-09. Please explain the reasons in details.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

The planned number of inspections under the Factories and Industrial Undertakings Ordinance (FIUO) and the Occupational Safety and Health Ordinance (OSHO), and the planned number of inspections under the Boilers and Pressure Vessels Ordinance (BPVO) are only planning targets, not a ceiling on the number of inspections to be conducted.

In addition to work programmes which have already been planned, the actual number of inspections in any year will depend on the result of special enforcement campaigns launched, taking into account the situation of accidents in the year. In 2008, we launched a number of special enforcement campaigns, e.g. safety campaigns on repair, maintenance, alteration and addition works, and on tower crane safety. These had resulted in an increase in the actual number of inspections, in excess of the planned target.

In 2009, the target number of 103 050 inspections under FIUO and OSHO is higher than the target set for 2008. This is due to an increase in the number of officers who can be deployed to carry out such duties after the completion of a recruitment exercise in late 2008. The target for inspections under BPVO is 4 630, same as in 2008.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the creation of five posts in preparation for the introduction of statutory minimum wage (SMW), please set out in detail the post titles and job duties.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

The five posts to be created in 2009-10 for the introduction of SMW are: one Senior Labour Officer, two Labour Officers, one Assistant Labour Officer I and one Assistant Labour Officer II.

The posts will be created to assist in taking forward the legislative exercise on SMW. They will work closely with other divisions within Labour Department as well as other departments to deal with a range of policy issues relating to the legislative exercise including the design of an SMW scheme, commissioning surveys to collect data to support the implementation of SMW and research on relevant overseas experience. They will help solicit and analyse views from key stakeholders in the formulation of legislative proposals. They will also provide support to the work of the Provisional Minimum Wage Commission.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

17.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)069

Question Serial No.

1615

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

000 Operational
expenses

Programme :

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) There is an increase in the “Personal Emoluments” and “Personnel Related Expenses” in 2009-10. Is this related to the creation of seven posts by the Labour Department? Please explain.
- (b) What are the reasons for an increase in the “General departmental expenses” from \$153 million in the previous year to \$165 million in 2009-10?

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

- (a) The increase in personal emoluments and personnel related expenses in 2009-10 is mainly due to salary increments for staff and filling of vacancies. The creation of the seven posts contributes to a relatively small proportion of the increase in such expenses.
- (b) The increase in general departmental expenses in 2009-10 is mainly due to the increased requirement for providing pre-employment training to young people amid the prevailing economic climate and the preparatory work for the introduction of statutory minimum wage.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the minor employment claims handled by the Labour Department (LD) in 2008, please provide a breakdown of the figures by cause.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

In 2008, the Minor Employment Claims Adjudication Board (MECAB) of LD handled a total of 3 565 claimed items*. A breakdown of the claimed items by nature is as follows :

Nature of claim	Number of claimed items
Arrears of wages	1 315
Wages in lieu of notice	950
Annual leave pay	354
Rest day pay	152
Statutory holiday pay	145
Annual bonus	44
Sickness allowance	24
Long service payment	6
Severance payment	4
Others	571
Total	3 565

(*A claim may involve more than one claimed item. Hence the total number of claimed items handled will be higher than the total number of claims handled by MECAB.)

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Among the people attending the occupational health clinics of the Labour Department (LD) for consultation service in 2008, please provide the number and ratio of those suffering from diseases or injuries related and unrelated to work by sex, age, industry, occupation and type of disease.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

In 2008, a total of 2 796 patients sought consultation at LD's occupational health clinics. Of these, 2 384 (85.3%) suffered from diseases or injuries caused by work, related to work or aggravated by work, and 412 (14.7%) had diseases or injuries unrelated to work.

The following tables present a breakdown of the two groups of patients by sex, age, industry, occupation and nature of disease -

By sex

Sex	Disease/injury	
	Caused by, related to or aggravated by work	Unrelated to work
Male	837 (35.1%)	175 (42.5%)
Female	1 547 (64.9%)	237 (57.5%)
Total	2 384 (100%)	412 (100%)

By age

Age group	Disease/injury	
	Caused by, related to or aggravated by work	Unrelated to work
< = 20	4 (0.2%)	1 (0.2%)
21-40	732 (30.7%)	87 (21.1%)
41-60	1 619 (67.9%)	306 (74.3%)
>60	29 (1.2%)	18 (4.4%)
Total	2 384 (100%)	412 (100%)

By industry

Industry	Disease/injury	
	Caused by, related to or aggravated by work	Unrelated to work
Community, social and personal services	1 169 (49.0%)	160 (38.8%)
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	522 (21.9%)	100 (24.3%)
Manufacturing	219 (9.2%)	35 (8.5%)
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	185 (7.8%)	29 (7.0%)
Transport, storage and communications	156 (6.5%)	20 (4.9%)
Others	133 (5.6%)	68 (16.5%)
Total	2 384 (100%)	412 (100%)

By occupation

Occupation	Disease/injury	
	Caused by, related to or aggravated by work	Unrelated to work
Service personnel	786 (33.0%)	95 (23.1%)
Clerical and related personnel	598 (25.1%)	99 (24.0%)
Production and related personnel, transport equipment operators and labourers	470 (19.7%)	94 (22.8%)
Professionals and technicians	284 (11.9%)	49 (11.9%)
Others	246 (10.3%)	75 (18.2%)
Total	2 384 (100%)	412 (100%)

By nature of disease

Nature of disease	Caused by, related to or aggravated by work	Unrelated to work
Musculoskeletal	2 242 (94.0%)	252 (61.2%)
Auditory	18 (0.8%)	13 (3.1%)
Skin	15 (0.6%)	18 (4.4%)
Respiratory	13 (0.6%)	4 (1.0%)
Visual	7 (0.3%)	2 (0.5%)
Neurological	3 (0.1%)	13 (3.1%)
Others	86 (3.6%)	110 (26.7%)
Total	2 384 (100%)	412 (100%)

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	17.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) Please provide a breakdown of cases on the basis of the time required to effect payment in respect of applications to the Protection of Wages on Insolvency Fund (PWIF) in 2008.
- (b) Please provide a breakdown of cases and the amount involved on the basis of industry in respect of applications to PWIF in the past 3 years, namely 2006-08.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

- (a) The time required to effect payment from PWIF in respect of applications processed in 2008 is as follows:

Payment Time	Number of Applications
4 weeks or less	4 295
More than 4 weeks to 6 weeks	460
More than 6 weeks to 8 weeks	139
More than 8 weeks to 10 weeks	17
Total	4 911

(b) The information requested is provided below:

Number of applications received and amount claimed by industry under PWIF
for the past three years

Year	Industry	No. of applications received	Amount claimed (\$ million)
2006	Construction	2 371	72.5
	Restaurants	1 761	30.8
	Import/Export	600	41.5
	Land Freight Transport	473	21.5
	Business Services	403	28.6
	Retail	229	6.9
	Others	1 695	116.0
	Total	7 532	317.8
2007	Construction	1 181	30.6
	Restaurants	1 098	16.9
	Import/Export	616	37.7
	Land Freight Transport	245	17.3
	Food	211	7.5
	Business services	210	11.7
	Others	1 275	63.4
	Total	4 836	185.1
2008	Restaurants	1 217	19.4
	Retail	1 001	74.8
	Construction	760	18.7
	Air transport	693	79.4
	Import/Export	497	39.8
	Business services	450	31.9
	Others	1 830	144.9
	Total	6 448	408.9

Signature	
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	17.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) Regarding the placements secured through the employment services of the Labour Department (LD) for able-bodied job seekers in 2008, please provide a breakdown of the figures by age, sex, industry, occupation and monthly earnings. Among them, what were the respective numbers of part-time, temporary and full-time jobs with monthly earnings less than \$4,000?
- (b) Regarding the placements secured through the employment services of LD for disabled job seekers in 2008, please provide a breakdown of the figures by age, sex, industry, occupation and monthly earnings. Among them, what were the respective numbers of part-time, temporary and full-time jobs with monthly earnings less than \$3,000?

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

- (a) In 2008, LD secured 146 308 placements for able-bodied job seekers. Of these, 21 698 were achieved through the referral services of LD while 124 610 were achieved through direct applications by job seekers to employers who advertised their vacancies in LD. Breakdowns of the number of placements achieved through the referral services of LD by age, sex, industry, occupation and earnings are as follows:

By age and sex

Age Group	Male	Female	No. of placements
15-19	810	1 080	1 890
20-29	3 745	3 369	7 114
30-39	1 311	1 973	3 284
40-49	1 738	3 766	5 504
50-59	1 339	2 087	3 426
60 or above	285	195	480
Total	9 228	12 470	21 698

By industry

Industry	No. of placements
Manufacturing	2 205
Construction	609
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	5 698
Transport, storage and communication	1 208
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	3 216
Community, social and personal services	4 668
Others (including government sector)	4 094
Total	21 698

By occupation

Occupational group	No. of placements
Managers and administrators	242
Professionals	123
Associate professionals	1 924
Clerks	6 850
Service workers	1 916
Shop sales workers	1 915
Agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry workers and fishermen	85
Craft and related workers	642
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	693
Elementary occupations	7 192
Others	116
Total	21 698

By earnings

Monthly earnings	No. of placements
Below \$4,000	4 178
\$4,000 - \$4,999	908
\$5,000 - \$5,999	3 474
\$6,000 - \$6,999	4 434
\$7,000 - \$7,999	4 122
\$8,000 - \$8,999	1 892
\$9,000 - \$9,999	1 019
\$10,000 or above	1 671
Total	21 698

Of the 4 178 placements with monthly earnings below \$4,000, 3 968 (95%) involved part-time or temporary jobs while 210 (5%) involved full-time jobs.

- (b) In 2008, LD secured 2 490 placements for job seekers with disabilities. Breakdowns of the number of placements by age, sex, industry, occupation and earnings are as follows :

By age and sex

Age Group	Male	Female	No. of placements
15-19	50	48	98
20-29	511	507	1 018
30-39	388	352	740
40-49	201	218	419
50-59	106	87	193
60 or above	17	5	22
Total	1 273	1 217	2 490

By industry

Industry	No. of placements
Manufacturing	368
Construction	36
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	974
Transport, storage and communication	86
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	323
Community, social and personal services	416
Others (including government sector)	287
Total	2 490

By occupation

Occupational group	No. of placements
Professional, technical and related workers	51
Administrative and managerial workers	19
Clerical and related workers	546
Sales workers	495
Service workers	566
Agricultural, animal husbandry, forestry workers and fishermen	2
Production workers, transport equipment operators and labourers	811
Total	2 490

By earnings

Monthly earnings	No. of placements
Below \$3,000	781
\$3,000 - \$3,999	311
\$4,000 - \$4,999	367
\$5,000 - \$5,999	461
\$6,000 - \$6,999	319
\$7,000 - \$7,999	157
\$8,000 - \$8,999	51
\$9,000 or above	43
Total	2 490

Of the 781 placements with monthly earnings below \$3,000, 527 (67%) involved part-time or temporary jobs while 254 (33%) involved full-time jobs.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)074

Question Serial No.

1624

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) Please state the enrolments for the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) in the past two years, i.e. 2007-08 and 2008-09, provide the estimated enrolments for 2009-10 and explain the reasons for any increase or decrease.
- (b) Please state the number of trainees who were employed after completing YWETS in 2007-08 and their percentage among all YWETS trainees as a whole.
- (c) What was the average wage level of the trainees who secured employment after completion of YWETS in 2007-08? What were the highest and the lowest monthly wage rates in these cases? What were the industries in which the highest and the lowest wages of the posts were recorded?

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

- (a) YWETS operates on the basis of Programme Year and the 2008-09 Programme will only end in August 2009. Hence, the number of trainees of the 2008-09 Programme is not yet available. For the 2007-08 Programme, a total of 8 211 young people enrolled in YWETS.

The 2009-10 Programme of YWETS will commence in September 2009. We are unable to precisely estimate the number of trainees of the 2009-10 Programme as it depends on a variety of factors including the overall situation of the economy as well as the labour market then. YWETS will, however, flexibly admit all eligible young people.

- (b) The Labour Department commissioned the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to conduct a survey on, among other things, the employment status of trainees of YWETS. The survey was completed in April 2008 and its findings revealed that 80% of the trainees interviewed were employed.

- (c) Other than the findings of the consultancy survey, we do not maintain comprehensive statistics on details of the employment of trainees upon their completion of training under YWETS. For trainees of the 2007-08 Programme who were placed into training vacancies under YWETS, their average monthly wages was \$5,440, with a spread of \$4,000 (lowest) to \$10,000 (highest). Training vacancies with the highest monthly wages offered came from the printing and publishing industries, while training vacancies with the lowest monthly wages offered came from the personal services, construction and engineering sectors.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)075

Question Serial No.

1625

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) Please state the enrolments for the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) in the past two years, i.e. 2007-08 and 2008-09, provide the estimated enrolments for 2009-10 and explain the reasons for any increase or decrease.
- (b) Please state the number of trainees who were employed after completing YPTP in 2007-08 and their percentage among all YPTP trainees as a whole.
- (c) What was the average wage level of the trainees who secured employment after completion of YPTP in 2007-08? What were the highest and the lowest monthly wage rates in these cases? What were the industries in which the highest and the lowest wages of the posts were recorded?

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

- (a) YPTP operates on the basis of Programme Year and the 2008-09 Programme will only end in August 2009. Hence, the number of trainees of the 2008-09 Programme is not yet available. For the 2007-08 Programme, a total of 5 103 young people enrolled in YPTP.

The 2009-10 Programme of YPTP will commence in September 2009. We are unable to precisely estimate the number of trainees of the 2009-10 Programme as it depends on a variety of factors, including the overall situation of the economy as well as the labour market then. YPTP will, however, flexibly admit all eligible young people.

- (b) YPTP conducts annual placement surveys on trainees who have completed training under YPTP. For the 2007-08 Programme, other than trainees who decided to pursue further studies on completion of pre-employment training under YPTP, 3 040 trainees surveyed had already found work at the time of the survey. This represented a placement rate of 70.6%.

(c) According to information collected from trainees of the 2007-08 Programme through the placement survey, the average monthly wages of trainees who had secured full-time employment was \$5,790, with a spread of \$3,750 (lowest) to \$20,800 (highest). Among the placements, jobs with the highest monthly wages offered came from the education services sector, while jobs with the lowest monthly wages offered came from the catering industry.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)076

Question Serial No.

1626

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) How many trainees received “workplace attachment training” under the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) in 2007-08? What was their percentage among all YPTP trainees as a whole? What was the amount of workplace attachment (WPA) allowance involved?
- (b) Please state the number of employers who participated in YPTP and the training places offered in 2007-08. What was the rate of increase or decrease compared with 2006-07?
- (c) What is the estimated number of employers participating in YPTP and the training places offered in 2008-09? Please explain the reasons for the increase or decrease.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

- (a) For the 2007-08 Programme of YPTP, 567 trainees undertook the one-month workplace attachment training. This represented 11.1% of the total number of trainees of the 2007-08 Programme. Altogether training allowances of \$928,000 were paid to the trainees who completed workplace attachment training.
- (b) For the 2007-08 Programme of YPTP, 557 organisations participated by offering a total of 3 337 workplace attachment training vacancies. They represented respective decreases of 26.5% and 29.3% when compared with the corresponding figures of the 2006-07 Programme.

With favourable economic situation and the availability of education, training and employment opportunities in the market, the number of young people enrolled in YPTP witnessed a decline in the past few years. The number of organisations that offered workplace attachment training under YPTP also decreased as fewer young people could be referred for their selection.

- (c) The 2008-09 Programme of YPTP will only end in August 2009. We are unable to precisely estimate the number of participating organisations and workplace attachment training offered under the 2008-09 Programme as it depends on a variety of factors including the overall situation of the economy as well as the labour market.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)077

Question Serial No.

1785

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

At the end of 2008, the Government stated that about 60 000 new jobs would be created. Coupled with the 62 000 job and internship opportunities to be created with the provision of \$1.6 billion, as announced in the Budget, over 120 000 job and internship opportunities would be available. Would the Administration please set out in detail the distribution and breakdown of these 120 000 new jobs?

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

After the second meeting of the Task Force on Economic Challenges (TFEC) held in December 2008, the Chief Executive announced the provision of over 60 000 employment opportunities this year. Of these, some 55 000 construction jobs would be provided through accelerating infrastructure and minor works projects. The Government will recruit 7 700 civil servants and provide about 4 000 temporary openings.

After the third meeting of TEFC held in January 2009, the Chief Executive announced a new series of measures to promote employment. For example, the Buildings Department would provide about 170 jobs in face of the serious unemployment situation in the decoration and maintenance sector. Also, the Internship Programme under the Innovation and Technology Fund would be further expanded, providing 600 internship places this year. Tertiary institutions would endeavour to increase places for tutors, research fellows and postgraduate students. Meanwhile, over 20 statutory bodies would recruit some 6 000 employees and provide about 2 000 temporary jobs or internship opportunities this year.

As for the 62 000 jobs and internship opportunities announced in the Budget Speech, their details are as follows :

- the Labour Department will enhance and integrate its various employment programmes, including the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme, the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme, the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged and the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme to provide training and employment opportunities for the youth, the middle-aged and people with disabilities. They are expected to benefit 44 000 people in the next two years;

- to address the influx of university graduates into the labour market, the Government will launch an Internship Programme for University Graduates in the middle of the year. The Programme will provide interested graduates to work as interns and receive training in local or Mainland enterprises for a period of six to 12 months. The Programme is expected to benefit about 4 000 graduates;
- the Government will introduce a two-year "Operation Building Bright" campaign for maintenance of 1 000 dilapidated buildings, including those without owners' corporations. The campaign will create 10 000 jobs in the next two years;
- the Government will host more attractive events in the areas of arts, culture and sports over the next three years to further promote Hong Kong as an events capital of Asia. It is expected that such activities will create some 2 800 jobs;
- the Government will promote and organise community involvement activities under the theme of "Green, Cultural, Dynamic Games", publicise the 2009 East Asian Games and celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. It is expected that these activities will create about 260 jobs in project co-ordination, publicity and promotion;
- to teach Internet users, especially young students, how to use the Internet appropriately and safely, the Government will conduct a one-year education programme. It is expected that this programme will create about 500 jobs; and
- the Government will carry out works to enhance energy efficiency of government buildings and public facilities. It is expected that this measure will create some 200 jobs while helping to improve the quality of public buildings.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Government states that of the 62 000 jobs mentioned in the 2009-10 Budget, over 40 000 are related to the provision of internship opportunities for the youth and the middle-aged, part of which involving enhancing and integrating the current Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) and Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS). Please set out the details and numbers of the internships involving the existing training and re-training programmes for the youth and the middle-aged.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

By design, YPTP, YWETS and the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM) are demand-led without any numerical cap. Hence, the question of the provision for the coming two years going essentially to existing programmes does not arise. In the face of the financial tsunami, the Labour Department (LD) will enhance and integrate its various employment programmes, including YPTP, YWETS and EPM, to strengthen the training and employment support for the vulnerable groups including young people and the middle-aged.

YPTP and YWETS administered by LD will (a) adopt year-round enrolment of trainees in place of the current two phases of recruitment per annum; (b) extend the provision of personalised career guidance and counselling services by registered social workers for an additional 12 months for trainees who have secured employment; and (c) organise more tailor-made and value-adding training-cum-employment projects in collaboration with employers and training bodies. The revamped YPTP and YWETS are expected to provide training and employment opportunities to 35 000 young people in the next two years.

LD will also strengthen EPM to assist middle-aged job seekers in re-entering the labour market as early as possible. The eligibility criteria of job seekers in respect of the period of unemployment will be relaxed from “three months or more” to “one month or more”. Job seekers with different educational background and skills levels will be admitted into EPM on a flexible basis. Moreover, on-the-job training allowance payable to eligible employers will be increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000 per employee per month and the subsidy period for deserving cases will be extended by three months to a maximum of six months. The enhanced EPM is expected to benefit 8 000 middle-aged job seekers in the next two years.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding Programme (4) Employee Rights and Benefits, would the Administration advise on the following:

- (a) The number of reported cases of suspected “illegal workers” and enforcement actions taken by the Labour Department (LD) from 2006-07 to 2008-09.
- (b) Regarding the enforcement actions mentioned in (a), please provide a breakdown of the total number of “illegal workers” detected by the Administration each year, their nationalities, type of travel documents and the industry engaged.

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

- (a) The number of reported cases of suspected illegal employment received by LD in 2006, 2007 and 2008 was 412, 343 and 289 respectively. LD mounted 189, 170 and 186 operations jointly with the Police and the Immigration Department in the respective years to combat illegal employment.
- (b) Suspected illegal workers detected during the joint enforcement operations are arrested by police officers or immigration officers, where appropriate. The number of suspected illegal workers arrested in such operations in 2006, 2007 and 2008 was 502, 350 and 582 respectively. We have not kept statistics on the nationality of the illegal workers arrested and the type of entry documents held by them. As for the breakdown of illegal workers arrested by industry, such statistics have only been kept since 2007 and are provided as follows :

Industry	No. of suspected illegal workers arrested	
	2007	2008
Manufacturing	10	67
Construction	22	36
Wholesale, retail, import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	246	259
Transport, storage and communications	6	49
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	0	35
Community, social and personal services	66	136
Total	350	582

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Under Programme (2) Employment Services, please advise on the following:

- (a) What is the respective number of trainees participating in the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) under the Labour Department (LD) between 2006-07 and 2008-09? What is LD's annual commitment of expenditure for these two programmes respectively?
- (b) What is LD's estimated number of training places and the provision earmarked for the two programmes stated in (a) in 2009-10?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

- (a) YPTP and YWETS operate on the basis of Programme Year and the 2008-09 Programmes will only end in August 2009. Hence, the numbers of trainees of the 2008-09 Programmes of YPTP and YWETS are not yet available. The numbers of trainees of the 2006-07 and 2007-08 Programmes are as follows:

Programme year	Number of trainees	
	YPTP	YWETS
2006-07	6 484	10 578
2007-08	5 103	8 211

The total expenditure of YPTP and YWETS for the 2006-07 and 2007-08 Programmes are as follows:

Programme year	Total expenditure	
	YPTP	YWETS
2006-07	\$48.80 million	\$97.06 million
2007-08	\$38.50 million	\$70.22 million

- (b) The 2009-10 Programmes of YPTP and YWETS will commence in September 2009. While YPTP and YWETS will flexibly admit all eligible young people, an overall training estimate of 35 000 for the two youth programmes in the next two years has been adopted for budgeting purpose. The total estimated expenditure is \$326.2 million in the next two years.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)081

Question Serial No.

1668

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Labour Department (LD) stated in the matters requiring special attention in 2009-10 that it would “further enhance the effectiveness of the Department’s employment services”. How will LD enhance effectiveness in this aspect and what targets have been set to assist the unemployed in securing employment in the coming year 2009-10? Will LD provide tailor-made employment services for the middle class?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

The employment services provided by LD are open to all job seekers, including the middle class. In the face of rising unemployment triggered by the financial tsunami, LD will adopt a more proactive approach to providing employment assistance to employees who have lost their jobs in redundancy and closure exercises. We will strengthen the collection of intelligence of redundancy and closure exercises and reach out to the retrenched employees to render our support services. We will offer them with priority job matching and referral services, canvass suitable vacancies from employers, and organise thematic job fairs targeted at hard-hit industries as well as district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls for the dissemination of vacancy and employment information. As appropriate, they will also be referred to attend suitable training courses to enhance their employability. Funding of \$13 million has been earmarked for LD to implement the above enhancement measures in the next two years.

Moreover, non-recurrent funding of \$400 million has been earmarked for LD to enhance and integrate its various employment programmes, including the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM). Under the enhanced EPM, job seekers with different educational background and skills levels will be admitted on a flexible basis. The eligibility criteria of job seekers in respect of unemployment period will be relaxed from “three months or more” to “one month or more”. The incentives for employers to engage middle-aged job seekers will also be enhanced by increasing the amount of on-the-job training allowance payable to eligible employers and extending the length of subsidy period for deserving cases.

LD’s employment services are rendered to job seekers according to their needs and individual circumstances rather than their economic status. As such we do not have employment services tailor-made for the middle class.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

As mentioned in paragraph 24 of the Budget Speech 2009-10, the Financial Secretary pledged to create more than 60 000 employment opportunities this year. Will the Government provide a breakdown of the nature, duration, salaries, ranks and commencement dates of these posts?

Asked by : Hon. SHEK Lai-him, Abraham

Reply :

After the second meeting of the Task Force on Economic Challenges (TFEC) held in December 2008, the Chief Executive announced the provision of over 60 000 employment opportunities this year. Of these, some 55 000 construction jobs would be provided through accelerating infrastructure and minor works projects. The Government will recruit 7 700 civil servants and provide about 4 000 temporary openings.

After the third meeting of TEFC held in January 2009, the Chief Executive announced a new series of measures to promote employment. For example, the Buildings Department would provide about 170 jobs in face of the serious unemployment situation in the decoration and maintenance sector. Also, the Internship Programme under the Innovation and Technology Fund would be further expanded, providing 600 internship places this year. Tertiary institutions would endeavour to increase places for tutors, research fellows and postgraduate students. Meanwhile, over 20 statutory bodies would recruit some 6 000 employees and provide about 2 000 temporary jobs or internship opportunities this year.

These employment opportunities and internship places will span various academic requirements, professions and job categories in order to provide employment opportunities for different job seekers. Their durations, salaries, ranks and commencement dates vary according to their respective nature and requirements.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)083

Question Serial No.

1937

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

As mentioned in paragraph 27 in the Budget Speech 2009-10, an employment programme targeted at middle-aged people and disabled person will be launched. In this connection, will the Government inform us the details of the program? To what level will the subsidy be raised and how long will the subsidy period be extended?

Asked by : Hon. SHEK Lai-him, Abraham

Reply :

The Labour Department (LD) will strengthen the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM) to assist middle-aged job seekers in re-entering the labour market as early as possible. The eligibility criteria of job seekers in respect of the period of unemployment will be relaxed from “three months or more” to “one month or more”. Job seekers with different educational background and skills levels will be admitted into EPM on a flexible basis. Moreover, on-the-job training allowance payable to eligible employers will be increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000 per employee per month and the subsidy period for deserving cases will be extended by three months to a maximum of six months.

LD will also enhance the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS) to provide employment support and training opportunities for people with disabilities (PWDs). PWDs who attend the pre-employment training programme under WOPS will be eligible for a training allowance of \$60 per day. The monthly allowance payable to eligible employers will be increased from 1/2 to 2/3 of the actual monthly wages of the disabled employee during the work trial period, subject to an enhanced ceiling of \$4,000 per employee per month. The subsidy period for deserving cases will be extended by three months to a maximum of six months.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Government stressed its effort in creating jobs and internship opportunities for university graduates, however, graduates from secondary schools, vocational training institutions and the so-called “double-lost” youngsters were not addressed in the Budget. Will the Government inform this committee will there be any measure to help these youngsters to find jobs and internships? If yes, please provide the details; if not, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon. SHEK Lai-him, Abraham

Reply :

The Labour Department (LD) has all along been providing, through its youth employment programmes, viz. the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS), training and employment support for young people aged 15 to 24 with educational attainment below the degree level, including graduates of secondary schools and vocational training institutions. YPTP aims at enhancing the employability of school leavers through a wide range of modular training courses on leadership, interpersonal, computer and job-specific skills, as well as workplace attachment training of one-month duration. YWETS provides on-the-job training of six to 12 months to young people in the form of employment.

LD will further enhance and integrate its youth employment programmes. Starting from the 2009-10 Programme commencing in September 2009, YPTP and YWETS will (a) adopt year-round enrolment of trainees in place of the current two phases of recruitment per annum; (b) extend the provision of personalised career guidance and counselling services by registered social workers for an additional 12 months for trainees who have secured employment; and (c) organise more tailor-made and value-adding training-cum-employment projects in collaboration with employers and training bodies. The revamped YPTP and YWETS are expected to provide training and employment opportunities to 35 000 young people in the next two years.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) While the Administration mentioned that youth pre-employment training would be enhanced in light of the current economic environment, what courses will be added and how to ensure that they meet the social demand?
- (b) If the Transport Support Scheme (TSS) is to be abolished after review, is there any other option to replace this sort of financial assistance?

Asked by : Hon. TONG Ka-wah, Ronny

Reply :

- (a) The Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) offers a wide range of pre-employment training courses including training on job skills. For the 2008-09 Programme, YPTP has offered over 180 job skills training courses pertaining to different industries and occupations such as tourism, catering, beauty culture, hairdressing and information technology. YPTP will work closely with its training bodies to ensure that the pre-employment training courses are reviewed and enhanced in the light of up-to-date developments in the employment market. The 2009-10 Programme of YPTP will commence in September 2009. We will finalise the list of pre-employment training courses in consultation with the training bodies in the middle of 2009.

Other than pre-employment training courses, YPTP also organises in conjunction with the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) training-cum-employment projects tailor-made for the specific recruitment needs of employers. In the 2009-10 Programme, YPTP and YWETS will organise more tailor-made and value-adding training-cum-employment projects in collaboration with employers and training bodies.

(b) In July 2008, the Labour Department implemented a range of relaxation measures to TSS which included relaxing the income threshold and extending the subsidy period. Eligible persons living and working in the same designated remote district could also apply to join TSS. LD will closely monitor the implementation of the relaxation measures. As indicated when the relaxations were announced, we shall conduct a review of TSS after the relaxations have been implemented for at least one year, when detailed work statistics are available for an informed analysis. Pending a decision in this direction, it is premature to consider whether TSS is to be shelved and whether any replacement arrangement is to be put in place.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Please elaborate on the provision of \$15.5 million for the introduction of statutory minimum wage (SMW):

- (a) How is the estimated provision to be allocated?
- (b) Whether any guideline and timetable is set for the work?

Asked by : Hon. TONG Ka-wah, Ronny

Reply :

- (a) Of the \$15.5 million increase in provision for the Employee Rights and Benefits Programme in 2009-10, \$4.5 million is related to the preparation of the introduction of SMW. The remaining \$11 million is mainly used for salary increments for staff and filling of vacancies under this Programme.

The increase of \$4.5 million in respect of the preparation of the introduction of SMW mainly goes towards the creation of one Chief Labour Officer post in January 2009 and five other posts to be created in 2009-10 for this purpose and related operating expenses including expenses to be incurred for providing support to the work of the Provisional Minimum Wage Commission (MWC).

- (b) We plan to introduce the Minimum Wage Bill into the Legislative Council (LegCo) before its summer recess this year. The first set of statistical data to support the setting of the initial SMW rate will be available by early 2010. Allowing time for LegCo's scrutiny of the draft Bill, the Provisional MWC's deliberation on SMW rate and the enactment of the recommended SMW rate, we envisage that the legal and regulatory framework for implementing SMW could be ready in mid-2010, at the earliest. In line with established practice and overseas experience to allow about six months' time for the business sector to gear up for the implementation of SMW, the initial SMW rate could come into effect the earliest in end 2010 or early 2011.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)087

Question Serial No.

2203

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

As at 31 March 2008, only \$11,940 was spent in respect of the pilot Transport Support Scheme (TSS). What was the expenditure incurred under TSS as at 31 December 2008? If the application eligibility for the cross-district transport allowance is to be relaxed to cover all districts of the whole territory, what is the additional cost? Will the Labour Department (LD) consider relaxing the eligibility for the transport allowance to cover all districts of the whole territory?

Asked by : Hon. TONG Ka-wah, Ronny

Reply :

As at 31 December 2008, the total expenditure incurred under TSS was \$76.046 million. The financial commitment in respect of the 26 084 admitted applicants as at the end of 2008 stood at \$203.46 million.

TSS was launched on a pilot basis in June 2007 to provide time-limited transport subsidy to needy job seekers and low-income employees in the four designated remote districts (i.e. Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, North and Islands) with a view to encouraging them to look for jobs and stay in employment. After reviewing the effectiveness of the pilot scheme, LD implemented in July 2008 a range of relaxation measures which included relaxing the income threshold and extending the subsidy period. Eligible persons living and working in the same designated remote district could also apply to join TSS.

The four designated remote districts covered by TSS are more remote and with fewer job opportunities. Should TSS be extended to all other districts, this would in effect turn the subsidy into another form of income supplement, additional to the low-income Comprehensive Social Security Assistance, for all low-income employees. This would depart from the policy intention of TSS.

We are unable to estimate precisely the additional cost if TSS is to extend to all districts as it depends on a variety of factors, including the economic situation, unemployment rate, wage levels, particularly with respect to lower-end jobs, and personal asset values of residents of different districts. Between the inception of TSS and end-February 2009, a total of 28 122 applicants have been admitted, and the financial commitment in respect of these applicants is \$219.35 million. As TSS now covers unemployed persons and low-income employees of the four designated districts, the financial implications of extension of TSS to cover all the 18 districts of Hong Kong will be very substantial.

We will continue to monitor the implementation of TSS. As indicated when the relaxations were announced, we shall conduct a review of TSS after the relaxation measures have been implemented for at least one year.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Labour Department (LD) states that in 2009-10, it will continue to identify possible measures to further enhance the effectiveness of its employment services, including those tailor-made for vulnerable groups. Would the Government please advise on the following :

- (a) What are the specific policy and expenditure involved?
- (b) Do they include the \$400 million non-recurrent funding earmarked by the Government for LD to enhance and integrate its various employment programmes, as stated by the Financial Secretary in the Budget Speech (paragraph 27)? What are the details?

Asked by : Hon. LAM Tai-fai

Reply :

- (a) In 2009-10, LD will adopt a more proactive approach in providing employment assistance to employees who have lost their jobs in redundancy and closure exercises amidst the financial crisis. We will strengthen the collection of intelligence of redundancy and closure exercises and reach out to the retrenched employees to render our support services. We will offer them with priority job matching and referral services, canvass suitable vacancies from employers, and organise thematic job fairs targeted at hard-hit industries as well as district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls for the dissemination of vacancy and employment information. As appropriate, they will also be referred to attend suitable training courses to enhance their employability. Funding of \$13 million has been earmarked for LD to implement the above measures in the next two years.

Moreover, LD will enhance and integrate its various employment programmes, including the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme, the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme, the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged and the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme to strengthen the training and employment support for the vulnerable groups of youth, the middle-aged and people with disabilities. The improvement measures will include more demand-led and flexible mode of operation, enhanced training subsidies and post-placement support, where appropriate. Funding of \$400 million has been earmarked for this purpose in the next two years.

- (b) The non-recurrent funding of \$400 million earmarked in the Budget Speech represents the provisions for enhancing and integrating the various employment programmes of LD stated in (a) above.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Labour Department (LD) states that in 2009-10, it will continue to identify possible measures to further enhance the effectiveness of its employment services, including those tailor-made for vulnerable groups. Meanwhile, the Financial Secretary mentioned in the Budget Speech (paragraph 27) that the Government will provide \$13 million additional funding for LD to adopt a more proactive approach in providing employment assistance to those made redundant during the financial crisis, which will include providing them with priority referral and job matching services. Would the Government please advise on the following:

- (a) What are the specific measures involved?
- (b) What are the criteria and mechanism to be adopted by LD to evaluate whether the unemployed persons have been made redundant during the financial crisis? What is the timetable for implementation?

Asked by : Hon. LAM Tai-fai

Reply :

- (a) LD will adopt a more proactive approach to providing employment assistance to employees who lost their jobs in redundancy and closure exercises amidst the financial crisis. We will offer intensive and personalised counselling services to the retrenched employees, provide them with priority job matching and referral services, canvass suitable vacancies from employers, and organise thematic job fairs targeted at hard-hit industries as well as district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls for the dissemination of vacancy and employment information. As appropriate, they will also be referred to attend suitable training courses to enhance their employability.
- (b) Job seekers who encounter difficulties in securing employment can join our Job Matching Programme under which our placement officers will understand their background, help match their academic qualifications, job skills and work experience with the requirements of the employment market, and assist them in looking for suitable jobs. The employment support services of our Job Centres are rendered on a need basis according to the circumstances of the job seekers. In 2009-10 and 2010-11, in face of the financial tsunami, as explained in (a) above, LD will provide the Job Centres with additional manpower to strengthen the collection of intelligence of redundancy and closure exercises and to reach out to the retrenched employees to render our employment support services.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Financial Secretary states in the Budget Speech (paragraph 27) that about \$140 million will be earmarked for launching an “Internship Programme for University Graduates” in the middle of the year, under which 4 000 graduates will be arranged to work as interns in local or Mainland enterprises. Please provide the relevant details. What percentage will the Hong Kong and Mainland internships account for respectively? What kinds of enterprises will be involved? How will its effectiveness be assessed?

Asked by : Hon. LAM Tai-fai

Reply :

In anticipation of a marked reduction of job opportunities for university graduates, the Government will launch an Internship Programme for University Graduates in the middle of the year. The Programme will provide 4 000 places for interested graduates to work as interns and receive training in local or Mainland enterprises for a period of six to 12 months. Of the 4 000 places, not more than 1 000 will be earmarked for internship opportunities in the Mainland.

The objectives of the Programme are to broaden the horizon of the graduates and help them gain experience, as well as to nurture talent for the industrial and business sectors of Hong Kong. The Government will pay a training subsidy to employers taking on interns in Hong Kong and an allowance to interns pursuing internships in the Mainland.

The degree-awarding tertiary institutions in Hong Kong will provide job-matching and follow-up services to their graduates joining the Programme. Graduates of universities outside Hong Kong who are Hong Kong citizens may join the Programme through the Labour Department (LD).

LD is working out the parameters and modus operandi, including the mechanism and criteria for performance evaluation, of the Programme with the participating tertiary institutions and relevant stakeholders. We are open-minded as to the types of enterprises which will offer internship opportunities under the Programme. The primary considerations will be the training contents of the offers and the likely benefits that the interns may be able to derive from the internship arrangements.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)091

Question Serial No.

2606

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Labour Department (LD) states that it will provide active assistance and counselling services to the unemployed and the disabled, as well as careers guidance, pre-employment and on-the-job training to young people. Meanwhile, the Financial Secretary says in the Budget Speech (paragraph 28) that the Government will provide training and job opportunities specifically to those in need, including young people, graduates, women, the middle-aged and the disabled. These measures will entail a provision of \$1.6 billion and create 62 000 jobs and internship opportunities in the next three years, i.e. from 2009 to 2011. Could the Government advise this Committee on the following :

- (a) How many training and job opportunities will be provided to those in need, including young people, graduates, women, the middle-aged and the disabled? What is the estimated expenditure involved? Are the professionals included? If yes, what is the percentage? If no, what are the reasons?
- (b) Details of the 62 000 jobs and internship opportunities concerned, including the job nature and timetable for implementation.

Asked by : Hon. LAM Tai-fai

Reply :

The Budget has announced the introduction of some targeted measures to provide various types of jobs and internship opportunities. For the youth, the middle-aged and people with disabilities, LD will enhance and integrate its various employment programmes, including the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP), the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS), the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM) and the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS) to provide training and employment opportunities for the youth, the middle-aged and people with disabilities.

An amount of \$400 million has been earmarked for the implementation of the above initiative in the next two years. While the employment services of LD are essentially demand-led, the funding sought is based on an estimate of 35 000 young people as users of the revamped YPTP and YWETS, 8 000 middle-aged job seekers for the revamped EPM and 800 PWDs for the revamped WOPS.

As for university graduates, LD will launch an Internship Programme for University Graduates in the middle of the year. About \$140 million has been earmarked for subsidizing the internships and meeting other related expenses under the Programme. The Programme will provide 4 000 places for interested graduates to work as interns and receive training in local or Mainland enterprises of various trades and industries for a period of six to 12 months. Of the 4 000 places, not more than 1 000 will be earmarked for internships on the Mainland.

We plan to seek the funding approval of the Finance Committee for implementation of the above proposals as soon as possible. Apart from the above measures, details of other employment opportunities are as follows :

- the Government will introduce a two-year "Operation Building Bright" campaign for maintenance of 1 000 dilapidated buildings, including those without owners' corporations. The campaign will create 10 000 jobs in the next two years;
- the Government will host more attractive events in the areas of arts, culture and sports over the next three years to further promote Hong Kong as an events capital of Asia. It is expected that such activities will create some 2 800 jobs;
- the Government will promote and organise community involvement activities under the theme of "Green, Cultural, Dynamic Games", publicise the 2009 East Asian Games and celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. It is expected that such activities will create about 260 jobs in project co-ordination, publicity and promotion;
- to teach Internet users, especially young students, how to use the Internet appropriately and safely, the Government will conduct a one-year education programme. It is expected that this programme will create about 500 jobs; and
- the Government will carry out works to enhance energy efficiency of government buildings and public facilities. It is expected that this measure will create some 200 jobs while helping to improve the quality of public buildings.

These employment opportunities and internship places will span various academic requirements, professions and job categories in order to provide employment opportunities for different job seekers.

Signature	
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)092

Question Serial No.

1168

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Financial Secretary stated in paragraph 27 of the Budget Speech that it “will earmark \$400 million non-recurrent funding for the Labour Department (LD) to enhance and integrate its various employment programmes to provide training and employment opportunities.” Please provide details of the plan and the distribution of beneficiaries.

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla

Reply :

LD will enhance and integrate its various employment programmes to provide training and employment opportunities for different target groups.

The Youth Pre-employment Training Programme (YPTP) and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme (YWETS) administered by LD will (a) adopt year-round enrolment of trainees in the place of the current two phases of recruitment per annum; (b) extend the provision of personalised career guidance and counselling services by registered social workers for an additional 12 months for trainees who have secured employment; and (c) organise more tailor-made and value-adding training-cum-employment projects in collaboration with employers and training bodies. The revamped YPTP and YWETS are expected to provide training and employment to 35 000 young people in the next two years.

LD will strengthen the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM) to assist middle-aged job seekers in re-entering the labour market as early as possible. The eligibility criteria of job seekers in respect of the period of unemployment will be relaxed from “three months or more” to “one month or more”. Job seekers with different educational background and skills levels will be admitted into EPM on a flexible basis. Moreover, on-the-job training allowance payable to eligible employers will be increased from \$1,500 to \$2,000 per employee per month and the subsidy period for deserving cases will be extended by three months to a maximum of six months. The enhanced EPM is expected to benefit 8 000 middle-aged job seekers in the next two years.

LD will also enhance the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme (WOPS) to provide employment support and training opportunities for people with disabilities (PWDs). The monthly allowance payable to eligible employers will be increased from 1/2 to 2/3 of the actual monthly wages of the disabled employee during the work trial period, subject to an enhanced ceiling of \$4,000 per employee per month. The subsidy period for deserving cases will be extended by three months to a maximum of six months. The enhanced WOPS is expected to benefit 800 PWDs in the next two years.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

A large number of high-income middle-class people, including many middle-aged persons, are facing the risk of unemployment in the wake of the financial tsunami. What specific measures does the Administration have to provide employment assistance to this group of middle-class people so as to alleviate the enormous pressure in the community owing to unemployment? Will the Administration set up a loan fund to help them in a career change and to secure re-employment?

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Mei-fun, Priscilla

Reply :

The Labour Department (LD) provides comprehensive employment services to all job seekers, including the middle class. In the face of rising unemployment triggered by the financial tsunami, LD will adopt a more proactive approach to providing employment assistance to employees who have lost their jobs in redundancy and closure exercises. We will strengthen the collection of intelligence of redundancy and closure exercises and reach out to the retrenched employees to render our support services. We will offer them with priority job matching and referral services, canvass suitable vacancies from employers, and organise thematic job fairs targeted at hard-hit industries as well as district-based job fairs at shopping centres and community halls for the dissemination of vacancy and employment information. As appropriate, they will also be referred to attend suitable training courses to enhance their employability. Funding of \$13 million has been earmarked for LD to implement the above enhancement measures in the next two years.

Moreover, an amount of \$400 million has been earmarked for LD to enhance and integrate its various employment programmes, including the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM). Under the enhanced EPM, job seekers with different educational background and skills levels will be admitted on a flexible basis. The eligibility criteria of job seekers in respect of unemployment period will be relaxed from “three months or more” to “one month or more”. The incentives to employers for engaging middle-aged job seekers will also be enhanced by increasing the amount of on-the-job training allowance payable to eligible employers and extending the length of subsidy period for deserving cases.

The above measures will assist job seekers from different walks of life including the middle class in re-entering the labour market as early as possible. The Administration has no plan to set up a loan fund for the middle class.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) In 2008-09, the revised estimate of the Labour Department (LD) is 11.6% higher than the original estimate. What are the reasons?
- (b) Will LD set up performance measures in respect of the processing and approval of the pilot Transport Support Scheme (TSS)?

Asked by : Hon. LAU Kin-ye, Miriam

Reply :

- (a) The revised estimate for 2008-09 is 11.6% higher than the original estimate. The increase was mainly due to the 2008 civil service pay rise, and the relaxation of the eligibility criteria and extension of subsidy period of TSS implemented since July 2008. The increase was partly offset by savings arising from unfilled vacancies and the lower-than-expected expenditure level of some employment programmes due to economic buoyancy in the first half of 2008-09.
- (b) LD oversees the administration of TSS. LD has commissioned a total of 12 non-government organisations (NGOs) to assist in implementation. They are responsible for receiving applications, matching the particulars of the applicants against the eligibility criteria of TSS, verifying documentary proof tendered by the applicants, approving applications and disbursing allowances. To ensure service quality and consistency in processing and approval of claims, LD has specified the procedural requirements and service indicators for NGOs to follow in handling claims under TSS, as well as providing briefing and training to staff engaged by NGOs.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (1) Labour Relations

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the “labour disputes and claims handled” and the “labour disputes and claims with conciliation service rendered”, what are the reasons for the Labour Department (LD) to set figures for 2009 which are lower than the estimated figures for 2008? Will the staffing establishment for handling the above work be affected by LD’s downward adjustment of the estimate?

Asked by : Hon. LAU Kin-yee, Miriam

Reply :

Experience suggests that it is difficult to predict accurately the number of labour disputes and claims and the number of labour disputes and claims requiring conciliation service. For this reason, the estimated figures for 2009 are thus projected on the basis of the actual figures in 2008. Similarly, the estimated figures for 2008 were projected from the actual figures in 2007.

The estimated figures will not affect our staffing establishment for rendering conciliation service which in essence is demand-driven. We shall closely monitor the labour relations scene as well as the workload situation and ensure effective and timely delivery of conciliation service to the public through internal redeployment of resources.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Since the commissioning of the two Youth Employment Resource Centres (YERCs) in March 2008, it is estimated that the number of young people receiving employment and self-employment advisory and support services offered by YERCs in 2009 will increase by more than 8 300. In this connection, what are the financial resources earmarked by the Administration to cope with the work? Will there be any increase in manpower? Will the Administration consider setting up more YERCs?

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Hak-kan

Reply :

The two YERCs together offered employment and self-employment advisory and support services to 63 636 young people in 2008. The figure does not reflect the full capacity of the two YERCs as the second YERC only commenced operation in March 2008. The anticipated increase in the number of young people served by YERCs in 2009 has taken into account the capacity of the two YERCs operating in full swing. No additional financial or manpower resources will be required to cope with the increase.

The Labour Department will closely monitor the performance of YERCs and their ability to address the demand for its services by young people. We have no plan to set up more YERCs for the time being.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Financial Secretary states that the employment programmes of the Labour Department (LD) will be enhanced to provide training and employment opportunities in the next two years, i.e. 2009 and 2010. The levels of subsidy to employers will also be raised as an incentive for them to hire middle-aged people and disabled persons. These measures are expected to benefit 44 000 people. Regarding the middle-aged people, please provide the following information:

- (a) How many employment and training opportunities are expected to be available? What are the figures and proportions?
- (b) Among the job opportunities, how many are temporary in nature?
- (c) Of these employment and training opportunities, how many are expected to be suitable for middle-aged women with low educational level? What are the figure and proportion?

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Kwok-hung

Reply :

- (a) LD will strengthen the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM) to assist middle-aged job seekers in re-entering the labour market as early as possible. The enhanced EPM is expected to provide 8 000 jobs with on-the-job training opportunities for the middle-aged job seekers in the next two years, in addition to the employment support available through LD's 12 Job Centres, the Interactive Employment Service website and job fairs organised from time to time and at different locations.
- (b) Employers participating in EPM are required to offer full-time permanent jobs with on-the-job training opportunities to the middle-aged job seekers. Offers of temporary or part-time jobs will not be accepted under EPM.
- (c) Under the enhanced EPM, middle-aged job seekers will be admitted irrespective of their sex and educational background. According to the work statistics of EPM in 2007 and 2008, about 60% of the placements under EPM were taken up by middle-aged women.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

LWB(L)098

2650

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Financial Secretary says that the Government will raise the levels of subsidy to employers as an incentive for them to hire middle-aged people and disabled persons. Regarding the middle-aged people:

- (a) What was the expenditure on employment subsidy payable to employers for hiring the middle-aged in 2008-09?
- (b) How many middle-aged women have benefited from the programme in 2008-09? What is the percentage among the middle-aged population?
- (c) Does the Labour Department (LD) have any indicators for evaluation of the programme? If yes, what are they? Do they include any indicator data on whether the beneficiaries can retain employment after the end of subsidy period?
- (d) How many complaints were received by LD on employers violating the employment programme in the previous year? Please provide the number and details of the complaints, the percentage among all complaints received by LD, the number of prosecutions, as well as the number of successful prosecutions.

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Kwok-hung

Reply :

- (a) In 2008, the amount of on-the-job training (OJT) allowance paid to eligible employers for engaging middle-aged job seekers under the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged (EPM) and providing them with on-the-job training was \$ 6.41 million.
- (b) In 2008, 3 738 middle-aged female job seekers were placed into employment under EPM. This represented 60% of the total number of placements of middle-aged job seekers under EPM.
- (c) LD conducts from time to time retention surveys on middle-aged job seekers placed into employment under EPM with a view to evaluating the effectiveness of EPM. Information collected by the retention surveys includes the employment status of trainees, the period when they are in employment and the reasons for termination of employment, if applicable.

- (d) In 2008, LD received a total of five complaints against employers under EPM. The complaints were related to alleged non-compliance with the requirements pertaining to prohibition against displacement of workers, unreasonable termination of employment and non-provision of on-the-job training as promised. Of the five complaints, four were found unsubstantiated after investigation. One complaint on non-provision of on-the-job training as promised was substantiated and the application by the concerned employer for OJT allowance was rejected.

We are unable to provide the percentage of EPM-related complaints among all complaints received by LD. The latter are widely varied in nature and may involve complaints on failure to observe statutory requirements, complaints against individual officers of LD as well as complaints against third parties.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	_____ Mrs Cherry TSE _____
Post Title	_____ Commissioner for Labour _____
Date	_____ 18.3.2009 _____

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Financial Secretary Mr. TSANG announced a series of measures to preserve employment in his Budget. Will the Administration also consider further relaxing the eligibility criteria of the Transport Support Scheme (TSS) to enhance the opportunities for low-income people to work across districts?

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Kwok-hung

Reply :

TSS was launched on a pilot basis in June 2007 to provide time-limited transport subsidy to needy job seekers and low-income employees in the four designated remote districts of Yuen Long, Tuen Mun, North and Islands with a view to encouraging them to look for jobs and stay in employment. In July 2008, the Labour Department implemented a range of relaxation measures to TSS which included relaxing the income threshold and extending the subsidy period. Eligible persons living and working in the same designated remote district could also apply to join TSS.

We will closely monitor the implementation of the relaxation measures. As indicated when the relaxations were announced, we shall conduct a review of TSS after the relaxations have been implemented for at least one year, when detailed work statistics are available for an informed analysis.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the prosecutions taken by the Labour Department (LD) under this Programme in the past 2 years, i.e. 2007 and 2008, what was the breakdown, by industry and reason(s), of the number of prosecutions taken each year? What were the details, including the convictions and penalties, of such prosecutions?

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

In 2007 and 2008, the respective number of prosecutions taken out by LD under the Employee Rights and Benefits Programme by industries and results are as follows:

Industry	2007		2008	
	Prosecutions Taken	Convictions	Prosecutions Taken	Convictions
Catering	637	530	667	561
Manufacturing	313	269	226	197
Construction	393	301	276	227
Import/Export	222	201	241	216
Wholesale/Retail	564	507	510	474
Transport, Storage and Communication	188	154	181	149
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	242	212	259	249
Community, Social and Personal Services	492	410	478	429
Others	194	150	219	179
Total	3 245	2 734	3 057	2 681

Major offences prosecuted were wage offence, holiday offence and failure to take out employees' compensation insurance. In 2007, the corresponding numbers of these prosecutions were 1 225, 759 and 993, resulting in 960, 612 and 951 convictions respectively. In 2008, the corresponding numbers of prosecutions were 1 088, 574 and 1 130, resulting in 958, 442 and 1 089 convictions respectively.

In 2007, the highest fine imposed in a case involving wage offence, holiday offence and failure to take out employees' compensation insurance was \$114,000, \$20,000 and \$13,000 respectively. Correspondingly, in 2008, the highest fine imposed was \$95,000, \$15,000 and \$10,000 respectively. The court imposed 4 months' imprisonment, the highest custodial sentence so far, in respect of two cases, one each in 2007 and 2008. Community service orders were also imposed on employers in five convicted wage offence cases, two in 2007 and three in 2008.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

What were the details of the work of the Administration, the expenditure involved and the effectiveness in eliminating age discrimination in employment in the past 2 years? In the understanding of the Administration, what is the actual situation of age discrimination in employment at present? What additional measures and resources will be provided for promotion of equal employment opportunities in 2009-10?

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

In 2007-08 and 2008-09, the Labour Department (LD) publicised the importance of eliminating age discrimination in employment through various measures. We broadcast Announcements in the Public Interest titled “Count on talent not age in employment” through TV, radio and on buses, trains, concourses of train stations, at commercial buildings as well as on the outside walls of commercial buildings. We also advertised on bus bodies, displayed large publicity banners at prominent locations and distributed practical guidelines and leaflets for public consumption. These publicity efforts should help enhance public awareness of the matter.

The total expenditure on the education and publicity measures in 2007-08 and 2008-09 was about \$1,200,000.

Apart from continuing with education and publicity, LD has also commissioned the Census and Statistics Department to conduct a survey on possible areas of concerns in respect of age discrimination in employment. The survey report would be available in the latter part of 2009.

We have earmarked about \$600,000 for education and publicity measures in 2009-10.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

How many cases seeking assistance were received by the branch offices of the Employees' Compensation Division (ECD) last year, i.e. 2008? What was the breakdown of these cases by cause? Please provide a breakdown of the cases received by branch office.

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

In 2008, 59 867 employees' compensation cases were reported to various branch offices of ECD. In the majority of cases, the employees concerned required the services of the Labour Department (LD) in processing their claims for employees' compensation, determining the degree of permanent loss of earning capacity and the amount of employees' compensation payable, and resolving disputes in different areas including the causal relationship between the injury and employment. As the employees concerned might require assistance in more than one aspect, LD did not keep statistical breakdown of the nature of assistance required in the reported cases.

The breakdown of employees' compensation cases reported to different branch offices of ECD is as follows:

Branch Office	Number of Reported Cases
Hong Kong East Office	6 221
Hong Kong West Office	9 678
Kowloon East Office	6 978
Kowloon West Office	5 128
Kwun Tong Office	7 130
Government Servants and Seamen Office	6 877
Kwai Chung Office	5 310
Tsuen Wan Office	5 426
Shatin Office	6 923
Fatal Cases Office	196
Total	59 867

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (4) Employee Rights and Benefits

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) How many cases were handled by the Fatal Cases Office in 2008? What were the respective figures of completed and uncompleted cases in the year? What were the reasons that accounted for the uncompleted cases?
- (b) What is the breakdown of the cases, by occupation and job title, handled by Fatal Cases Office in 2008?

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

- (a) In 2008, 196 cases were reported to the Fatal Cases Office. Of these, 56 cases were settled in the year and the remaining 140 cases were still being processed as at the end of 2008.

In the majority of the outstanding cases, more time is needed for the collection of relevant information and documents from the employers and the family members of the deceased employees, verification of the particulars of the claims, and adjudication by the court over issues in dispute.

- (b) A breakdown of the reported fatal cases by industries is as follows : -

Industry	Number of Cases
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate and Business Services	48
Community, Social and Personal Services	38
Construction	36
Transport, Storage and Communication	26
Manufacturing	16
Wholesale/Retail, Import/Export and Hotel	11
Catering	7
Others	14
Total	196

We do not keep the breakdown of these cases by occupations and job titles.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)104

Question Serial No.

2857

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (3) Safety and Health at Work

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) Please provide a breakdown, by industry and job title, of occupational accidents which occurred in the past 2 years, i.e. 2007 and 2008.
- (b) Does the Administration have any specific plans for preparation in response to the trend of occupational accidents so as to reduce the overall number of occupational accidents in the coming year, i.e. 2009-10?

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

- a) The occupational accident statistics for the full year of 2008 will not be available until mid-April this year. However, in the first three quarters of 2008, there were 32 056 occupational accidents. As for 2007, there were a total of 43 979 occupational accidents. The breakdown of occupational accidents in 2007 and the first three quarters of 2008 by major economic activities is shown in the **Table** below. We do not compile a separate breakdown of the figures by work type.

Table: Occupational Accidents of All Economic Activities in 2007 and First Three Quarters of 2008

Major Economic Activity	2007		First Three Quarters of 2008	
	No. of Accidents	%	No. of Accidents	%
Manufacturing Industry	3 967	9.0%	2 764	8.6%
Construction Industry	3 135	7.1%	2 295	7.2%
Catering Industry	9 389	21.3%	6 377	19.9%
Wholesale Trade	611	1.4%	428	1.3%
Retail Trade	2 703	6.1%	1 995	6.2%
Hotels and Boarding Houses	1 213	2.8%	899	2.8%
Transport & Related Services	4 737	10.8%	3 861	12.0%
Financial Institutions	224	0.5%	173	0.5%
Business Services (including Import & Export Trade)	5 443	12.4%	4 034	12.6%
Education Services	1 197	2.7%	831	2.6%
Medical, Dental & Other Health Services	2 031	4.6%	1 352	4.2%
Welfare Institutions	1 594	3.6%	1 123	3.5%
Sanitary and Similar Services	2 194	5.0%	1 812	5.7%
Other Economic Activities	5 541	12.7%	4 112	12.9%
TOTAL	43 979	100.0%	32 056	100.0%

- b) The construction and catering industries remain the major areas of concern, with the construction industry continuing to record the highest accident rate and number of fatalities, and the catering industry topping the list among all industries in terms of the number of accidents. The Labour Department (LD) has been addressing the safety problems of these two industries, as a matter of priority, through enforcement, promotion and publicity.

On enforcement, LD will continue to step up inspections, including launching enforcement campaigns on construction sites and catering establishments to ensure compliance with relevant safety legislation and seek improvements in safety and health standards. We will pay particular attention to high-risk activities, such as building repair, maintenance, alteration and addition (RMAA) works, work-at-height, use of scaffolds, tower cranes, construction vehicles and mobile plant on construction sites to deter unsafe practices.

On promotion and publicity, we will continue to focus on accident-prone industries and high-risk work areas. In 2009-10, large-scale promotional campaigns to enhance the safety awareness of employers and employees in the construction and catering industries will be organised jointly with the Occupational Safety and Health Council and key stakeholders in the two industries, including major trade associations, labour unions, related organisations, relevant government departments and District Councils. We will also step up our efforts to promote safety in work-at-height and RMAA works, especially in the use of truss-out scaffolds, through safety seminars and talks, roving exhibitions, Announcements in the Public Interest on television and radio, broadcast of promotional films on mobile advertising media, display of posters and distribution of safety publications.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	_____ Mrs Cherry TSE _____
Post Title	_____ Commissioner for Labour _____
Date	_____ 18.3.2009 _____

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)105

Question Serial No.

2858

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

700 General
non-recurrent

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Administration states that it will undertake if necessary a review one year after the implementation of the relaxation measures under the Transport Support Scheme (TSS). Now that the relaxation measures have been implemented for almost a year, has the Government decided that a review will be conducted? If yes, what are the details of the review and its timetable? Have additional resources been earmarked in 2009-10 to meet the expenditure arising from the possible implementation of further relaxation measures under TSS?

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

TSS was first launched on a pilot basis in June 2007. In July 2008, the Labour Department implemented a range of relaxation measures which included relaxing the income threshold and extending the subsidy period. Eligible persons living and working in the same designated remote district could also apply to join TSS.

The relaxation measures have only been implemented for eight months. As indicated when the relaxations were announced, we shall conduct a review of TSS after the relaxations have been implemented for at least one year, when detailed work statistics are available for an informed analysis.

As the way forward for the review of TSS has yet to be determined, it is too early to consider the resource implications arising from the possible implementation of further relaxation measures under TSS.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

Mrs Cherry TSE

Commissioner for Labour

18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

What were the details of the number of applications for the Supplementary Labour Scheme (SLS) and the number of approved applications by industry and job title over the past two years (i.e. in 2007 and 2008)?

Asked by : Hon. LEUNG Yiu-chung

Reply :

The number of applications received under SLS in 2007 and 2008 was 586 and 589 respectively, whilst the number of applications approved was 410 and 479 respectively.

Each application under SLS usually involves more than one vacancy. Breakdowns by industry and job title of the vacancies received and approved under SLS in 2007 and 2008 are at Appendices 1 to 4.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**Vacancies received and approved under the
Supplementary Labour Scheme in 2007
with breakdown by industry**

Industry	Number of vacancies received*	Number of vacancies approved*
1. Agriculture and fishing	275	224
2. Manufacturing	444	163
3. Construction	21	2
4. Wholesale, retail and import/ export trades, restaurants and hotels	182	46
5. Transport, storage and communication	24	17
6. Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	37	0
7. Community, social and personal services	942	393
Total	1 925	845

* For applications received towards year-end, the approvals may take place in the following year.

**Vacancies received and approved under the
Supplementary Labour Scheme in 2007
with breakdown by job title**

Job title	Number of vacancies received*	Number of vacancies approved*
1. Care Worker (Elderly Service)	797	372
2. Livestock/ Poultry/ Fish/ Crops Farm Worker	261	211
3. Cook	101	29
4. Machine Setter	62	1
5. Transmission Tower Painter	50	0
6. Machine Operator	44	11
7. Knitting Machine Operator	39	46
8. Bean Curd/ Soya Bean/ Bean Sprout Processing Worker	36	37
9. Ship Fitter	30	12
10. Others	505	126
Total	1 925	845

* For applications received towards year-end, the approvals may take place in the following year. This explains, in some cases, the number of vacancies approved was more than that received.

**Vacancies received and approved under the
Supplementary Labour Scheme in 2008
with breakdown by industry**

Industry	Number of vacancies received*	Number of vacancies approved*
1. Agriculture and fishing	305	229
2. Manufacturing	585	132
3. Construction	188	5
4. Wholesale, retail and import/ export trades, restaurants and hotels	173	41
5. Transport, storage and communication	152	125
6. Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	166	2
7. Community, social and personal services	871	548
Total	2 440	1 082

* For applications received towards year-end, the approvals may take place in the following year.

**Vacancies received and approved under the
Supplementary Labour Scheme in 2008
with breakdown by job title**

Job title	Number of vacancies received*	Number of vacancies approved*
1. Care Worker (Elderly Service)	719	522
2. Livestock/ Poultry/ Fish/ Crops Farm Worker	253	205
3. Aircraft Maintenance Technician	140	124
4. Alloy Welder	100	0
5. Anti-corrosion Lining Worker	85	0
6. Knitting Machine Operator	68	33
7. Cook	48	15
8. Flue Gas Desulphurisation Specialist Welder	45	0
9. Electric Arc and Gas Welder	42	0
10. Others	940	183
Total	2 440	1 082

* For applications received towards year-end, the approvals may take place in the following year.

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)107

Question Serial No.

2925

Head : 90 – Labour Department

Subhead (No. & title) :

Programme : (2) Employment Services

Controlling Officer : Commissioner for Labour

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

It is claimed in the Budget that about 62 000 jobs and internship opportunities will be created with a provision of \$1.6 billion in the next three years. Please advise how the Administration came up with the figure of “62 000 jobs and internship opportunities”. Could the Administration specify the distribution of the jobs to be created? Or simply admit that it is an exaggerated figure?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Yuk-man

Reply :

The Budget has announced the introduction of some targeted measures to provide about 62 000 jobs and internship opportunities in the next three years. Details are as follows :

- the Labour Department will enhance and integrate its various employment programmes, including the Youth Pre-employment Training Programme, the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme, the Employment Programme for the Middle-aged and the Work Orientation and Placement Scheme to provide training and employment opportunities for the youth, the middle-aged and people with disabilities. They are expected to benefit 44 000 people in the next two years;
- to address the influx of university graduates into the labour market, the Government will launch an Internship Programme for University Graduates in the middle of the year. The Programme will provide interested graduates to work as interns and receive training in local or Mainland enterprises for a period of 6 to 12 months. The Programme is expected to benefit about 4 000 graduates;
- the Government will introduce a two-year "Operation Building Bright" campaign for maintenance of 1 000 dilapidated buildings, including those without owners' corporations. The campaign will create 10 000 jobs in the next two years;
- the Government will host more attractive events in the areas of arts, culture and sports over the next three years to further promote Hong Kong as an events capital of Asia. It is expected that such activities will create some 2 800 jobs;

- the Government will promote and organise community involvement activities under the theme of "Green, Cultural, Dynamic Games" and publicise the 2009 East Asian Games and celebrate the 60th anniversary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. It is expected that such activities will create about 260 jobs in project co-ordination, publicity and promotion;
- to teach Internet users, especially young students, how to use the Internet appropriately and safely, the Government will conduct a one-year education programme. It is expected that this programme will create about 500 jobs; and
- the Government will carry out works to enhance energy efficiency of government buildings and public facilities. It is expected that this measure will create some 200 jobs while helping to improve the quality of public buildings.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	Mrs Cherry TSE
Post Title	Commissioner for Labour
Date	18.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

LWB(L)108

Question Serial No.

2235

Head: 100 Marine Department

Subhead: 000 Operational expenses

Programme: (4) Services to Ships

Controlling Officer: Director of Marine

Director of Bureau: Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The provision for 2009-2010 is \$4.8 million (7.2%) higher than the revised estimate for 2008-2009. Apart from the increased provision for the filling of vacancies, this is due to the increase in other operating expenses. Please provide details about the increase in other operating expenses.

Asked by : Hon. LAU Kin-ye, Miriam

Reply :

The increase in other operating expenses is mainly to meet increased demand for goods and services, including expenses on promotion of employment of seafarers and safe working practice on board river trade vessels.

Signature _____

Name in block letters ROGER TUPPER

Post Title Director of Marine

Date 13 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)109

Question Serial No.

1750

Head : 141 – Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Programme : (7) Subvention: Vocational Training Council (Vocational Training)

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Would the Administration advise on the reason for reducing the financial provision to the Vocational Training Council in 2009-10 by 8.1% as compared to last year (2008-09) despite the increase in the number of trainees?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply :

With effect from 2009-10, the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) will provide funding support for the courses for non-engaged youth aged between 15 and 20 offered under the Vocational Development Programme (VDP) run by the Vocational Training Council (VTC) which were previously funded by the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). As a result, there will be a reduction in the amount of subventions provided by the LWB to the VTC from 2009-10 onwards. Apart from the VDP, the VTC also plans to offer more training places under the Employees Retraining Scheme administered and funded by the ERB in 2009-10. This accounts for the increase in the number of planned training places for the year.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

PAUL TANG

Permanent Secretary
for Labour and Welfare

19.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)110

Question Serial No.

2603

Head : 141 – Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Programme : (4) Manpower Development

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Of the \$400 million funding earmarked in the Budget for enhancing and integrating the existing employment programmes, how much will be used specifically on non-engaged youth (NEY)? What are the Government's current figures of NEY, their employment difficulties and the seriousness of the problem? Will consideration be given in the Budget to allocating funds to continue the operation of the Youth Sustainable Development and Engagement Fund so as to subsidise the employment-related training programmes for NEY? Please set out the information by requirement categories in the following table.

Targets : Youth aged 15 - 24	Policies and specific initiatives for NEY in the Budget
NEY: 1.1 With lower motivation 1.2 With weak social network 1.3 With learning difficulties 1.4 With psychological problems 1.5 In a "hidden" state 1.6 South Asian ethnics	

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Kwok-che

Reply :

The Government presently provides funding support for a number of training and welfare programmes as set out in the ensuing paragraphs with a view to better supporting our young people, including non-engaged youth (NEY) and disadvantaged youth.

The Youth Pre-employment Training Programme and the Youth Work Experience and Training Scheme administered by the Labour Department (LD) provide

pre-employment training and on-the-job training to young people aged between 15 and 24 with educational attainment below the degree level with a view to enhancing their employability. Each trainee is assisted by a registered social worker who helps the trainee map out his/her career path and overcome barriers to training and employment.

Under the two youth programmes, tailor-made training projects are organised from time to time to cater for the special characteristics and needs of youth at risk. There are also special projects organised in collaboration with the Community Investment and Inclusion Fund Secretariat to assist disadvantaged youth with difficulties in finding employment.

The two youth programmes are expected to provide pre-employment training and on-the-job training to 35 000 young people in the next two years. The total expenditure involved is estimated to be \$326.2 million.

Apart from the services provided by LD, the Social Welfare Department (SWD) and subvented non-governmental organisations (NGOs) also provide a wide spectrum of preventive, developmental and remedial services to help and develop young people, including NEY, to become mature, responsible and contributing members of the society. The welfare services to be provided to young people in 2009-10 are as follows

-

- (1) one school social worker for each of the 487 secondary schools;
- (2) 137 integrated children and youth services centres (ICYSCs) serving the territory on a neighbourhood basis;
- (3) 18 designated ICYSCs providing overnight outreaching service for young night drifters;
- (4) five designated ICYSCs rendering community support service scheme for those young offenders cautioned under the Police Superintendents' Discretion Scheme;
- (5) 16 district youth outreaching social work teams reaching out to those youth at risk;
- (6) 61 integrated family service centres and two integrated services centres providing an array of services to needy people and families, including young people;
- (7) Family Support Programme with NEY as one of its service targets proactively reaching out to vulnerable families to provide services to needy cases and connect them to other community support services as appropriate;
- (8) a hotline service for youth at risk rendering immediate help for children and young people in crisis through telephone guidance, interviews, referral and other programme activities; and
- (9) the "Positive Adolescent Training through Holistic Social Programmes to Adulthood: A Jockey Club Youth Enhancement Scheme" funded by the Hong Kong Jockey Club Charities Trust and implemented in collaboration with the Education Bureau and SWD. The scheme, implemented since the 2005/06

academic year, aims at promoting the secondary students' healthy life style and positive values as well as enhancing their resilience and life skills etc. It also helps prevent students from becoming youth at risk.

Services for NEY are an integral part of our ongoing youth training and welfare programmes. We do not have separate breakdown on the funding committed for NEY services or updated statistics on NEY.

Apart from the above ongoing efforts, in view of the special training needs of NEY, starting from the 2008/09 academic year, the Employees Retraining Board has partnered with the Vocational Training Council (VTC) to launch a pilot Youth Training Programme targeting NEY aged between 15 and 20. The VTC plans to provide about 2 000 training places annually for NEY under the programme in the 2008/09 and 2009/10 academic years. The annual expenditure is estimated to be about \$52 million. For NEY aged below 15 and above 20, the VTC has earmarked another \$9.5 million for providing training services to them in 2009-10. While dedicated courses are organised for ethnic minority youth, other NEY with different background and characteristics may choose and apply for courses that are suitable for them according to their personal interests and training needs.

In view of the above, we see no need to continue with the operation of the one-off Youth Sustainable Development and Engagement Fund.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	PAUL TANG
Post Title	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Date	19.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)111

Question Serial No.

1065

Head : 141 – Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Programme : (4) Manpower Development

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) In 2009-2010, how much of the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) will be for cash flow and for operating expenses?
- (b) Is there a mechanism to ensure the eligibility of the categories of courses to benefit from the CEF and the Skills Upgrading Scheme (SUS)? How to ensure that the public purse and course participants will not incur any loss?

Asked by : Hon. TONG Ka-wah, Ronny

Reply :

- (a) The total amount of subsidies to be disbursed to applicants of the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) and the administrative cost to be incurred in 2009-10 are estimated to be \$543.13 million and \$13.37 million respectively.
- (b) Before the Qualifications Framework (QF) was launched in May 2008, education and training courses falling within eight specified domains might be registered as reimbursable courses under the CEF after having been assessed by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ). The eight domains are business services, financial services, logistics, tourism, creative industry, design, language, and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills for the workplace.

Upon the implementation of the QF in May 2008, all new courses are required to undergo a formal accreditation exercise and be uploaded onto the Qualifications Register before they could be registered under the CEF. Courses designed in accordance with the Specifications of Competency Standards developed by the respective Industry Training Advisory Committees under the QF but falling outside the eight specified domains may also be registered under the CEF.

Courses registered under the CEF are subject to audit inspections by the HKCAAVQ to ensure that they are operated in full compliance with the conditions of approval of the CEF. The Office of the Continuing Education Fund (OCEF) also monitors the operation of course providers under the CEF. In addition to authentication of students' attendance records, course assessment results and other reimbursement related matters, the OCEF also conducts surprise inspections to ensure that course providers fully comply with the conditions of approval of the CEF. A warning will be issued to the course provider in case of any non-compliance. If the breach is serious or repetitive in nature, the Administration will consider de-registering the concerned course(s) from the list of CEF reimbursable courses to safeguard the interests of learners. In case of any suspected criminal activities, such as deception or bribery, the Administration will immediately refer the case to the relevant law enforcement agencies for follow-up.

As to the Skills Upgrading Scheme (SUS), courses are developed by the respective Industry Working Groups (IWGs) comprising representatives of employers, employees, training providers and relevant government bureaux/departments having regard to the industry needs. Course proposals are submitted to the SUS Steering Committee for consideration and approval. After obtaining the Steering Committee's endorsement, IWGs will conduct tendering exercises and allocate the approved courses to qualified training providers in accordance with established tendering procedures, taking into account factors including tender price, training providers' quality and experience, equipment and facilities, as well as instructors' qualifications, etc.

SUS courses are monitored closely to ensure that they will be able to benefit workers from different industries. As part of the quality assurance measures, members of the IWGs and the SUS Secretariat conduct inspections to training providers to ensure that the academic standards and administrative quality of SUS courses are properly maintained. The performance of training providers and the quality of SUS courses are further assessed by collecting feedbacks from trainees and their employers. Regular reviews are also carried out by IWGs to ensure that their courses are able to meet the industry needs.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	PAUL TANG
Post Title	Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare
Date	19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 141 – Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Programme : (7) Subvention: Vocational Training Council (Vocational Training)

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) What are the respective estimated numbers of training places provided by the Vocational Training Council (VTC) in 2008-09 and in 2009-10 after deduction of the additional training places provided under the Employee Retraining Scheme (ERS)?
- (b) What is the number of training places for non-engaged youth aged between 15 and 20 and the expenditure involved in 2008-09?
- (c) What is the estimated number of training places provided by the VTC for non-engaged youth aged between 15 and 20 in 2009-10?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

- (a) Excluding the training places to be provided under the ERS, the VTC plans to offer 107 520 and 112 640 training places in the 2008/09 academic year (AY2008/09) and the 2009/10 academic year (AY2009/10) respectively.
- (b) & (c) The VTC plans to provide about 2 000 training places annually for non-engaged youth aged between 15 and 20 under the Youth Training Programme funded by the Employees Retraining Board in AY2008/09 and AY2009/10. The annual expenditure is estimated to be about \$52 million.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

PAUL TANG

Permanent Secretary
for Labour and Welfare

19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 141 – Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Programme : (4) Manpower Development

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Please give a breakdown, by age and education level, of the number of people enrolled in all the Employees Retraining Scheme (ERS) courses in 2007-08 and 2008-09, the years before and after the Employees Retraining Board relaxed the eligibility criteria for enrolment for the ERS courses in December 2007.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

Breakdown of the number of applications received for enrolment in courses under the ERS by age and education level in 2007-08 and 2008-09 is as follows:

Year	Aged 15-29		Aged 30 or above		Total
	Form 3 or below	Above Form 3 and at or below sub-degree	Form 3 or below	Above Form 3 and at or below sub-degree	
2007-08	1 538	2 046	55 166	28 269	87 019
2008-09 (up to 28 February 2009)	3 449	8 579	51 949	37 112	101 089

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

PAUL TANG

Permanent Secretary
for Labour and Welfare

19.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)114

Question Serial No.

1784

Head : 141 – Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Programme : (4) Manpower Development

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Employees Retraining Board (ERB) has relaxed the eligibility criteria for course enrolment and provided additional training places since December 2007. Please give a breakdown of the additional training places by course category and the number of enrolment for those courses in 2007-08 and 2008-09.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

Breakdown of the additional training places offered by the ERB by course category and the number of applications received for enrolment in these courses in 2007-08 and 2008-09 is as follows:

Course Category	Number of additional training places in 2008-09 as compared with 2007-08	Number of applications received	
		2007-08	2008-09 (up to 28 February 2009)
Job specific skills courses	17 662	53 721	65 608
Generic skills courses	9 502	30 417	31 314
Courses for special service targets / special schemes	7 859	2 881	4 167
Total	35 023	87 019	101 089

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

PAUL TANG

Permanent Secretary
for Labour and Welfare

19.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)115

Question Serial No.

1550

Head : 141 – Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Programme : (4) Manpower Development

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding Matters Requiring Special Attention in 2009-10, would the Administration advise us of the details of the adjustments to be made by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB) to its work in view of the financial crisis? What impacts will the change of training policy have on the ERB services? Will it result in a decrease or increase for certain courses?

Asked by : Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply :

To meet the training needs of its expanded target clientele (i.e. those aged 15 or above with education level at sub-degree or below), and in face of the financial turmoil and its adverse impact on local employment, the ERB has increased the number of training places it offers by 40%, from 87 000 in 2007-08 to 122 750 in 2008-09. For 2009-10, the ERB will provide at least 123 000 training places and has reserved resources for providing an additional 20 000 training places in anticipation of an increasing training demand.

Apart from increasing the number of training places, the ERB has introduced a number of special measures to help our local work force meet the challenges arising from the financial tsunami. It has relaxed the enrolment criteria for the part-time courses so that all eligible persons may now apply regardless of their employment status and income level. Adversities management workshops have also been launched with the objective of enhancing the resilience of the local workers. In addition, the ERB will launch skills upgrading courses in 2009-10 to help in-service workers upgrade their skills or acquire new skills to enhance their employability. The ERB will continue to closely monitor the changes in the labour market and adjust the allocation of training places flexibly. ERB will also process training bodies' applications for transfer of training places in a flexible manner in order to cater to the changing training needs.

Signature

Name in block letters

PAUL TANG

Post Title

Permanent Secretary
for Labour and Welfare

Date

19.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)116

Question Serial No.

1729

Head : 141 – Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) : 700 General
Labour and Welfare Bureau non-recurrent

Programme : (4) Manpower Development

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Would the Administration please inform us as to when the balance of \$68.5m in respect of the Skills Upgrading Scheme is expected to use up? Does the Government have any plan to allocate further funds to continue implementing the Scheme?

Asked by : Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply :

We expect that the remaining balance should be able to support the continued operation of the Skills Upgrading Scheme (SUS) till early 2011. To achieve better co-ordination and synergy, our current plan is for the Employees Retraining Board to take over the administration of the SUS in phases and provide funding support to sustain its operation beyond 2011.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

PAUL TANG

Permanent Secretary
for Labour and Welfare

19.3.2009

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Head : 141 – Government Secretariat: Subhead (No. & title) :
Labour and Welfare Bureau

Programme : (7) Subvention: Vocational Training Council (Vocational Training)

Controlling Officer : Permanent Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) How many additional training places were provided under the Employee Retraining Scheme (ERS) in 2008-09?
- (b) Will the courses for non-engaged youth aged between 15 and 20 provided by the Vocational Training Council (VTC) be reduced after they are funded by the ERS? If yes, how many training places will be involved?

Asked by : Hon. PAN Pey-chyou

Reply :

- (a) Subject to the outcome of the bidding exercises to be administered by the Employees Retraining Board (ERB), in the 2008/09 academic year, the VTC plans to organise different types of training courses under the ERS funded by the ERB. These include placement-tied training courses for the unemployed, generic skills training courses for the unemployed and in-service workers, and vocational training courses for in-service workers, totalling 4 850 training places.
- (b) As a pilot scheme, the VTC has been commissioned by the ERB to provide 2 000 training places annually under the Youth Training Programme targeting non-engaged youths aged 15-20 for the academic years of 2008/09 and 2009/10. There is no reduction in the number of annual planned places for this Programme.

Signature

Name in block letters

Post Title

Date

PAUL TANG

Permanent Secretary
for Labour and Welfare

19.3.2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)118

Question Serial No.

2044

Head : 173 Student Financial
Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
700 General non-recurrent
Item 508 Continuing Education
Fund

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

To oversee the implementation of the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) and assess its effectiveness, the Administration has engaged an independent consultant (Policy 21 Limited, The University of Hong Kong) to conduct a research by interviewing sampled participants. Would the Administration advise on the following:

- (a) how many participants are interviewed in the research? What is the expenditure involved?
- (b) how will it oversee the CEF in 2009-10? What are the details and estimated expenditure involved?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Sing-chi

Reply :

- (a) The number of sampled participants to be interviewed in the evaluation of the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) is 3 000. The estimated expenditure of the evaluation is \$1.3 million.
- (b) The Student Financial Assistance Agency (SFAA) has put in place a series of measures to monitor the operation of the CEF. In respect of the application for course fee reimbursement under the CEF, each applicant is required to submit an application form which has been certified by the course provider concerned to ensure the accuracy of the course information. The applicant also needs to provide documentary proof to support the application. SFAA will check the supporting documents and verify the information with those collected from the application form. Should discrepancies be found, SFAA will check and follow up with the course provider concerned. An application for reimbursement will be approved only when the information provided by both the applicant and the course provider is found in order.

On the monitoring of course providers under the CEF, in addition to authentication of the CEF applicants' attendance records, course assessment results and other reimbursement related matters, SFAA conducts regular and surprise inspections to ensure that course providers fully comply with the conditions of approval of the CEF. A warning will be issued to the course provider in case of any non-compliance. If the breach is serious or repetitive in nature, we will consider de-registering the concerned course(s) from the list of CEF reimbursable courses to safeguard the interests of learners. In case of any suspected criminal activities, such as deception or bribery, we will immediately refer the case to the relevant law enforcement agencies for follow-up.

The administrative cost of the CEF in 2009-10 is estimated to be \$13.37 million.

Signature	_____
Name in block letters	LI Wing
Post Title	Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency
Date	20 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)119

Question Serial No.

0895

Head : 173 Student Financial
Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
700 General non-recurrent
Item 508 Continuing Education
Fund

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

According to the indicators, the number of applications, funds disbursed and number of applications/post for the Continuing Education Fund in 2009/10 are 72 534, \$543.1 million and 1 395 respectively. In the analysis of Financial and Staffing Provision, it is stated that an increase in the demand for financial assistance under various student financial assistance schemes is expected having regard to the prevailing economic downturn. Would the Administration explain to/inform the Committee

- (a) the reasons for an expected decrease of the number of applications by 1.64% instead of an increase?
- (b) the reasons for an increase of the funds disbursed by 5.99% in contrast to an expected decrease of the number of applications in 2009/10?
- (c) if the expected decrease of the number of applications/post by 1.62% is related to the creation of 62 posts by the Student Financial Assistance Agency in 2009/10? If so, why is the decrease less than the 5.53% of the revised estimate of 2008/09?
- (d) when will the balance of \$2,576 million of the Continuing Education Fund be expected to use up?

Asked by : Hon. CHAN Mo-po, Paul

Reply :

- (a) The number of new applications under the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) is estimated to slightly decrease in 2009-10 on the basis of a downward trend of new applications received in recent years. When working on the estimates, we have already taken into account the latest economic situation and expect that the number of new applications may increase and, to a certain extent, moderate the downward trend of the number of new applications to be received in 2009-10.

- (b) The number of claims for course fee reimbursement received in a particular year will have a bearing on the total amount of subsidies to be disbursed under the CEF in that year. As an improvement measure, we have extended the validity period of a CEF applicant to claim for course fee reimbursement upon completion of registered CEF course(s) from two years to four years with effect from December 2007. Following the extension, the extended validity period of a considerable number of CEF applicants for claiming the CEF subsidies will expire in 2009-10. We expect that some of them may submit their reimbursement claims before the expiry date, resulting in an increase in the number of claims and the amount of subsidies to be disbursed in 2009-10.
- (c) The 62 posts to be created in the Student Financial Assistance Agency in 2009-10 are not earmarked for handling CEF applications. The estimated decrease in the rate of “number of applications/post” in 2009-10 as compared with that of 2008-09 is a result of the anticipated decrease in the number of new CEF applications to be received in the year.
- (d) On the basis of the past record on disbursement of CEF subsidies, we expect that the CEF balance of \$2,576 million will not be fully depleted until 2015-16. The Administration is reviewing the operation of the CEF and will consider the way forward in due course.

Signature _____
Name in block letters LI Wing
Post Title Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency
Date 20 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)120

Question Serial No.

2777

Head : 173 Student Financial
Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
700 General non-recurrent
Item 508 Continuing Education
Fund

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

It is estimated that the number of applications under the Continuing Education Fund will drop. What are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Man-kwong

Reply :

The number of new applications under the Continuing Education Fund is estimated to slightly decrease in 2009-10 on the basis of a downward trend of new applications received in recent years. When working on the estimates, we have already taken into account the latest economic situation and expect that the number of new applications may increase and, to a certain extent, moderate the downward trend of the number of new applications to be received in 2009-10.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LI Wing

Post Title _____ Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Date _____ 20 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)121

Question Serial No.

2778

Head : 173 Student Financial
Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
700 General non-recurrent
Item 508 Continuing Education
Fund

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Please provide the figures on the number of cases applying for enlisting on the list of providers and courses eligible for reimbursement under the Continuing Education Fund and the number of approved cases from 2006-07 to 2008-09. Please also provide the figures on the number of cases of removal from the list and appeal cases in each respective year.

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Man-kwong

Reply :

The number of applications for registering a course under the Continuing Education Fund (CEF), the number of applications approved, the corresponding number of course providers involved, as well as the number of courses de-registered and appeal cases from 2006-07 to 2008-09 are as follows –

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)
Number of applications for course registration ¹ (Number of course providers involved)	1 540 (112)	1 152 (103)	283 (36)
Number of applications approved ¹ (Number of course providers involved)	865 (106)	1 480 (99)	469 (60)
Number of de-registered courses ² (Number of course providers involved)	14 (3)	2 (2)	32 (4)
Number of appeal cases	0	0	0

¹ Applications received in February/March each year may only be approved in April or later. Thus, the corresponding approval figures will only feature in the next financial year.

² These are courses de-registered due to non-compliance with CEF conditions.

Signature _____

Name in block letters LI Wing

Post Title Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Date 20 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
 INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)122

Question Serial No.

1669

Head : 173 Student Financial
 Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
 700 General non-recurrent
 Item 508 Continuing Education
 Fund

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the Continuing Education Fund, please provide the following information:

- (a) the number of applicants, the number of approved cases and the total amount of subsidies granted in each year from 2006-07 to 2008-09;
- (b) the annual numbers of applicants by age groups and course areas (such as logistics, languages etc.) from 2006-07 to 2008-09; and
- (c) the number of courses deregistered in each year from 2006-07 to 2008-09 and the percentage they accounted for in the total number of reimbursable courses in the year concerned.

Asked by : Hon. CHEUNG Yu-yan, Tommy

Reply :

- (a) The number of applicants, the number of approved applications and the amount of subsidies disbursed under the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) from 2006-07 to 2008-09 are as follows:

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)
Number of applicants	83 670	73 563	57 722
Number of approved applications	77 216	68 085	52 955
Amount of subsidies disbursed (\$ million)	507.1	478.6	336.5

- (b) Breakdown of the number of applicants by age group and course domain under the CEF from 2006-07 to 2008-09 is as follows:

2006-07					
Course domain	Age group ^{Note}				
	18 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 65	<18 or >65
Financial services	9 982	4 477	2 159	887	13
Languages	17 053	8 012	4 488	1 112	52
Logistics	2 202	1 073	391	58	1
Design	4 947	1 520	649	190	40
Tourism	2 567	637	330	98	11
Business services	9 829	5 477	2 629	450	14
Creative industries	878	323	152	42	15
Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills	336	191	101	31	0
Courses not reimbursable under CEF	126	72	30	12	13
Total	47 920	21 782	10 929	2 880	159

2007-08					
Course domain	Age group ^{Note}				
	18 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 65	<18 or >65
Financial services	9 883	4 385	2 944	1 278	12
Languages	14 787	6 029	3 295	1 006	35
Logistics	1 510	776	292	37	0
Design	4 183	1 367	701	191	18
Tourism	1 999	415	287	113	17
Business services	8 531	4 610	2 224	497	26
Creative industries	869	234	141	28	3
Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills	174	162	118	30	0
Courses not reimbursable under CEF	186	93	48	18	11
Total	42 122	18 071	10 050	3 198	122

2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)					
Course domain	Age group ^{Note}				
	18 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50 - 65	<18 or >65
Financial services	7 451	2 368	1 254	641	8
Languages	11 834	4 906	2 571	997	38
Logistics	1 083	542	264	83	2
Design	3 473	1 070	434	133	8
Tourism	1 754	404	243	115	10
Business services	8 013	3 731	1 867	455	9
Creative industries	703	235	87	41	6
Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills	226	166	96	31	0
Courses not reimbursable under CEF	188	116	50	8	8
Total	34 725	13 538	6 866	2 504	89

Note : To be eligible for CEF subsidies, the applicant must be aged between 18 and 65 at the time of application and on seeking reimbursement of the course fees.

- (c) The number of courses de-registered from the reimbursable course list of the CEF from 2006-07 to 2008-09 and the percentage over the total number of reimbursable courses of that year are as follows:

	2006-07	2007-08	2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)
Number of de-registered courses ^{note}	14	2	32
% of the total number of reimbursable courses	0.25%	0.03%	0.43%

Note: These are courses de-registered due to non-compliance with CEF conditions.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LI Wing

Post Title _____ Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Date _____ 20 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
 INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)123

Question Serial No.

1339

Head : 173 Student Financial
 Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
 700 General non-recurrent
 Item 508 Continuing Education Fund

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Regarding the studies (including in-house studies or those entrusted to consultants) conducted by the Bureau for the purposes of formulating and assessing policies, please provide the relevant information in the following format:

- (1) For the projects that have reserved funds for conducting consultancy studies in 2008-09, please provide information in the following format:

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Revised Estimate (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	The follow-ups taken by the Administration on the study reports and their progress (if any)	If completed, have they been released to the public? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?

- (2) Is there any project that will reserve funds for conducting consultancy study in 2009-10? If yes, please provide the following information:

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Expenditure (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	Will the studies be released to the public if they are expected to be completed in the 2009-10 financial year? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?

Asked by : Hon. EU Yuet-mee, Audrey

Reply :

(1) Information about a consultancy study for the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) conducted in 2008-09 is as follows -.

Name of Consultant (if any)	Content	Revised Estimate (\$)	Progress of Studies (under planning / in progress / completed)	The follow-ups taken by the Administration on the study reports and their progress (if any)	If completed, have they been released to the public? If yes, through which channels? If no, what are the reasons?
Policy 21 Limited, The University of Hong Kong	Evaluation of the CEF	1,300,000	In progress	Not applicable	Not applicable

(2) No consultancy study for the CEF has been planned for 2009-10.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LI Wing

Post Title _____ Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Date _____ 20 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)124

Head : 173 Student Financial
Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
700 General non-recurrent
Item 508 Continuing Education
Fund

Question Serial No.

1617

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

- (a) Please provide a breakdown of the number of reimbursable courses currently under the Continuing Education Fund by academic qualifications awarded and types of courses respectively.
- (b) Please provide a breakdown of the number of applications and cases approved under the Continuing Education Fund in 2008-09 by types of courses and academic qualifications awarded respectively.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply : (a) and (b)

As at 31 January 2009, there were 7 377 reimbursable courses registered under the Continuing Education Fund (CEF). Breakdown of these courses by academic qualifications to be awarded and course domains as well as the statistics on applications for CEF subsidies received and approved in 2008-09 are set out in the following tables:

Academic qualifications to be awarded	Number of courses	Number of CEF applications received in 2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)	Number of CEF applications approved in 2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)
Doctorate	1	0	0
Master Degree	91	366	336
Postgraduate Diploma	25	178	166
Bachelor Degree	94	1 137	1 043
Postgraduate Certificate / Postgraduate Award	11	0	0
Associate Degree	20	107	96
Higher Diploma	44	259	252
Advanced Diploma / Professional Diploma / Post-diploma Certificate	253	2 067	1 923
Diploma / Executive Diploma / Graduate Diploma	366	7 031	6 494
Associate Diploma	2	254	229
Advanced / Professional / Higher Certificate	224	2 289	2 045
Certificate / Executive Certificate / Graduate Certificate	831	11 094	10 328
Others, e.g. certificate of completion / attendance	5 415	32 940	30 043
Total	7 377	57 722	52 955

Course domains	Number of courses	Number of CEF applications received in 2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)	Number of CEF applications approved in 2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)
Financial services	1 890	11 721	10 713
Languages	592	20 345	19 019
Logistics	592	1 974	1 802
Design	693	5 118	4 734
Tourism	520	2 526	2 342
Business services	2 715	14 074	12 868
Creative industries	361	1 072	983
Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills	14	519	494
Courses which are not reimbursable under the CEF	0	373	0
Total	7 377	57 722	52 955

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LI Wing

Post Title _____ Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Date _____ 20 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
 INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)125

Head : 173 Student Financial
 Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
 700 General non-recurrent
 Item 508 Continuing Education
 Fund

Question Serial No.

1618

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Please provide a breakdown by course sectors of the reasons for the rejection of reimbursement claims made by applicants under the Continuing Education Fund upon their completion of the courses, the number of rejected cases and the amount involved in 2008-09.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

Breakdown of the rejected applications for reimbursement under the Continuing Education Fund (CEF), reasons for the rejection and the amount under claim in 2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009) is as follows-

Reasons for rejection	2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)	
	No. of rejected cases	Amount under claim (\$)
Claimant was not an approved applicant	3	28,500
Claimant failed to provide the required information	322	2,375,331
Claimant had not successfully completed the course	191	660,462
The claim was submitted after the reimbursement validity period	88	605,167
Claimant has already claimed the maximum amount	34	243,845
The course was not reimbursable	6	38,282
The course commenced before the applicant submitted application	76	501,056
The course was not reimbursable at the time the claimant attended the course	27	181,840
The course was completed after the validity period	7	47,853
The benchmark examination taken was not the one specified under the CEF	9	60,033
The benchmark examination was taken after the validity period	10	34,471
Fee for the same benchmark examination already reimbursed in a previous claim	17	94,824
Total	790	4,871,664

Breakdown of the rejected applications for reimbursement under the CEF and the amount under claim in 2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009) by course domain is as follows:

Course domain	2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)	
	No. of rejected cases	Amount under claim (\$)
Financial services	246	1,450,962
Languages	170	885,374
Logistics	36	225,402
Design	46	306,020
Tourism	45	284,575
Business services	230	1,573,573
Creative industries	13	129,878
Interpersonal and intrapersonal skills for the workplace	4	15,880
Total	790	4,871,664

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LI Wing

Post Title _____ Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Date _____ 20 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)126

Head : 173 Student Financial
Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
700 General non-recurrent
Item 508 Continuing Education
Fund

Question Serial No.

1619

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Please provide information on the number of applications for enlisting on the list of providers and courses, the number of course providers approved, and the number of courses approved for inclusion into the Reimbursable Course List of the Continuing Education Fund during 2007-08 to 2008-09. Please furnish the respective numbers of course providers de-registered and appeal cases.

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

The number of applications for registering a course under the Continuing Education Fund (CEF), the number of applications approved, the corresponding number of course providers involved, as well as the number of course providers de-registered and appeal cases in 2007-08 and 2008-09 are as follows:

	2007-08	2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)
Number of applications for course registration ¹ (Number of course providers involved)	1 152 (103)	283 (36)
Number of applications approved ¹ (Number of course providers involved)	1 480 (99)	469 (60)
Number of de-registered course providers ²	2	4
Number of appeal cases	0	0

¹ Applications received in February/March each year may only be approved in April or later. Thus, the corresponding approval figures will only feature in the next financial year.

² These are course providers de-registered due to non-compliance with CEF conditions.

Signature _____

Name in block letters LI Wing

Post Title Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Date 20 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)127

Head : 173 Student Financial
Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
700 General non-recurrent
Item 508 Continuing Education
Fund

Question Serial No.

1622

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Among applicants for the Continuing Education Fund since its implementation in 2002, what is the respective proportion of degree holders and non-degree holders in each year?

Asked by : Hon. IP Kwok-him

Reply :

When the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) was first introduced in June 2002, only persons who were Hong Kong residents aged between 18 and 60 with academic qualifications below degree level were eligible to apply for the CEF. In September 2003, the eligibility criteria of the CEF were relaxed to cover degree holders.

The Office of the CEF started to collect statistics on the education level of new CEF applicants in November 2005. The statistics for the period between November 2005 and January 2009 are set out below:

	2005-06 (from 10 November 2005)		2006-07		2007-08		2008-09 (up to 31 January 2009)	
		% of the total		% of the total		% of the total		% of the total
Number of degree-holding applicants	5 729	19.1	30 791	36.8	25 085	34.1	20 607	35.7
Number of non-degree-holding applicants	6 988	23.3	52 042	62.2	40 533	55.1	32 786	56.8
Number of unspecified applicants ^{Note}	17 277	57.6	837	1.0	7 945	10.8	4 329	7.5
Total	29 994	--	83 670	--	73 563	--	57 722	--

Note : The applicants have not indicated their academic qualifications in the application forms.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____

LI Wing

Post Title _____

Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Date _____

20 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)128

Question Serial No.

1728

Head : 173 Student Financial
Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
700 General non-recurrent
Item 508 Continuing Education
Fund

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

Would the Administration please inform us of the total balance of the Continuing Education Fund and when the balance is expected to use up? Does the Government have any plan to allocate further funds to continue supporting the Fund?

Asked by : Hon. LI Fung-ying

Reply :

By the end of 2008-09, the balance of the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) is estimated to amount to \$2,576 million. On the basis of the past record on disbursement of CEF subsidies, we expect that the balance of the CEF will not be fully depleted until 2015-16.

The Administration is reviewing the operation of the CEF and will consider the way forward in due course.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LI Wing

Post Title _____ Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Date _____ 20 March 2009

Examination of Estimates of Expenditure 2009-10
**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY TO
INITIAL WRITTEN QUESTION**

Reply Serial No.

LWB(L)129

Question Serial No.

2499

Head : 173 Student Financial
Assistance Agency

Subhead (No. & title) :
700 General non-recurrent
Item 508 Continuing Education Fund

Programme : Student Assistance Scheme

Controlling Officer : Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Director of Bureau : Secretary for Labour and Welfare

Question :

The Continuing Education Fund has operated for many years, providing an important financial support to the public for self improvement. In this regard, please advise on the following:

- (a) Which types of programmes received the greatest amount of funding over the past 3 years, i.e. 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08? How much funding is involved?
- (b) The programmes recognised by the Fund are mainly “practical” courses on finance, commerce, tourism, language and design, etc. Will the Bureau extend the scope of funding to cover arts schools and cultural programmes to tie in with the development of a diversified society which focuses on culture and arts?
- (c) Will the Fund review its planning for funded programmes and assess the practicality of these programmes (such as investment programmes) to ascertain if they have positive influence on the development of Hong Kong to further support the needs of diversified development in Hong Kong?

Asked by : Hon. WONG Kwok-kin

Reply :

- (a) The three course domains with the largest amount of subsidies disbursed under the Continuing Education Fund (CEF) from 2005-06 to 2007-08 are as follows:

2005-06		
	Course domain	Amount of subsidies disbursed (\$ million)
1.	Financial services	129.6
2.	Business services	105.6
3.	Languages	86.2

2006-07		
	Course domain	Amount of subsidies disbursed (\$ million)
1.	Business services	141.1
2.	Financial services	133.9
3.	Languages	121.6

2007-08		
	Course domain	Amount of subsidies disbursed (\$ million)
1.	Financial services	136.6
2.	Business services	130.9
3.	Languages	105.7

- (b) & (c) The future direction of the CEF was fully considered in a review completed in May 2007 which concluded that further expansion of the CEF should tie in with, and support, the development of the Qualifications Framework (QF). Before the QF was launched in May 2008, education and training courses falling within eight specified domains might be registered as reimbursable courses under the CEF after assessment by the Hong Kong Council for Accreditation of Academic and Vocational Qualifications (HKCAAVQ). The eight domains are business services, financial services, logistics, tourism, creative industry, design, language, and interpersonal and intrapersonal skills for the workplace.

Upon the implementation of the QF in May 2008, all new courses are required to undergo a formal accreditation exercise and be uploaded onto the Qualifications Register before they could be registered under the CEF. Courses designed in accordance with the Specifications of Competency Standards developed by the respective Industry Training Advisory Committees under the QF but falling outside the eight specified domains may also be registered under the CEF.

Course providers may apply for registration of their courses or modules of a programme under the CEF if they are able to meet the above registration requirements.

The Administration conducts evaluations of the CEF from time to time to assess its effectiveness and ensure optimum use of resources.

Signature _____

Name in block letters _____ LI Wing

Post Title _____ Controller, Student Financial Assistance Agency

Date _____ 20 March 2009