

LEGCO QUESTION NO. 12

(Written Reply)

Asked by : Hon Howard YOUNG

Date of meeting : 3 May 2006

Replied by : Secretary for Economic
Development and Labour

Question

It is learnt that a number of hotels in Hong Kong have started business one after another recently and up to 52 hotels will be opened in Macau in the coming six years, which has prompted a shortage of manpower, particularly the senior management staff, in Hong Kong's hotel industry. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) whether it has assessed the demand and supply of manpower in Hong Kong's hotel industry in the next five years; if it has, of the assessment results; if not, the reasons for that; and
- (b) of the measures in the short, medium and long terms to alleviate the problem of manpower shortage in the hotel industry?

Reply

Madam President,

- (a) In respect of manpower training, the Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) conducts manpower projection of different industries (including the hotel industry) from time to time. It also takes into account the feedback from professional bodies and trade organisations in assessing the manpower requirements; and reviews regularly the allocation of resources for higher education and pre-employment training in order to meet the needs of economic development of Hong Kong. When planning their future programmes, the tertiary institutions also take into account market needs in allocating student places.

The Economic Development and Labour Bureau also monitors regularly the hotel supply so as to assess the provision of employment opportunities in the hotel industry. By end 2005, there were a total of 118 hotels and 467 guesthouses in Hong Kong. According to the “Employment and Vacancies Statistics for December 2005” recently published by the Census and Statistics Department, the hotels and boarding houses sector has engaged 28 400 persons and the vacancy rate was 1.8%. This ratio was similar to other tourism-related sectors, such as the retail and catering sectors. It is estimated that 37 new hotels will be built in the coming five years (2006–2010). Upon completion, these hotels will provide about 8 000 positions, including managerial and frontline, in the labour market. EMB and the tertiary institutions will plan for student places for the tourism and hotel management programmes based on the above projections.

- (b) Tourism is one of the major economic pillars of Hong Kong and the Government attaches great importance to the long term development and manpower training of the industry. The Government has invested considerably in providing education and training through subsidising tertiary institutions, Vocational Training Council (VTC) and other training institutes to provide a variety of training programmes for people who intend to join the tourism industry.

Regarding the training of professionals, the courses currently provided by the tertiary institutions include operations and management of hotels and food and beverages, service techniques and management, tourism economics and accounting, human resources management for tourism industry, etc. Apart from classroom teaching, the tertiary institutions also collaborate with the hotel industry to provide internship that allows students to have a better understanding of the practical requirements and the working environment of the industry. Such internship also allows the hotel industry to train and identify suitable candidates at an early stage. The above training programmes contribute to the continual supply of suitable professionals to the hotel industry.

Regarding the training of junior and middle management staff, the Hospitality Industry Training and Developing Centre and the Chinese Cuisine Training Centre under the VTC mainly train operational staff and supervisors for the industry. Their courses include practical training on

front office operations, housekeeping, Chinese and Western food and beverage service and cooking, as well as supervisory operations. The Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education under the VTC offers various diploma courses to train junior and middle management staff. Courses include housekeeping and frontline operations, customer service management, human resources operations, information systems and operations for hotels. The above training programmes at different levels aim to provide those who intend to join the hotel industry with a solid foundation of knowledge. In fact, many senior management staff of hotels joined the industry at a junior level and work their way up the career ladder.

The tourism industry has continued to perform well in recent years and there has been an increasing demand for tourism related services. More students enrolled in the tourism and hotel management related programmes at tertiary institutions (including the Chinese University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Polytechnic University) in the past few years. In the 2005-06 academic year, about 1,100 students have enrolled in the seven tourism and hotel management related degree and sub-degree programmes funded by the University Grants Committee. The number represents an increase of almost 20% as compared with the 2003-04 academic year. In the next two years, the Government will maintain a similar number of subsidised student places. The tertiary institutions will continue to take into account the market demand in planning future academic programmes, and good career prospect will also help attract students to take those programmes. Besides, the VTC has also enhanced their facilities to accommodate an increase in the number of student places in the past few years. In the 2005-06 academic year, the Hong Kong Institute of Vocational Education, the Hospitality Industry Training and Developing Centre and the Chinese Cuisine Training Centre under the VTC provided about 6,200 places for pre-employment and on-the-job training programmes. This has increased by 43% as compared with the 2003-04 academic year; and is expected to increase by 78% in the 2009-10 academic year as compared with 2003-04.

Other than the above Government-funded training places, there are also a number of organisations in the community that offer a variety of training programmes for people who intend to join the hotel industry. These

programmes include various certificate and diploma courses in hospitality management, and hotel frontline operations and services etc.

The demand and supply of labour in the hotel industry is determined by market forces. We believe that the hotel industry will also, based on its operations, devise suitable personnel and resources management strategies to attract, train and retain the talents. The Government will continue to provide training opportunities to meet the long-term development needs of the tourism industry.

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