

Transcript of remarks by SLW on abolishing “offsetting” arrangement under MPF Scheme and maternity leave in Policy Address

Following is the transcript of remarks by the Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Dr Law Chi-kwong, on abolishing the "offsetting" arrangement under the Mandatory Provident Fund (MPF) Scheme and maternity leave after attending a radio programme on "The Chief Executive's 2018 Policy Address" this morning (October 12):

Reporter: Mr Law, can you speak about the legislative timetable for the scrapping of the MPF "offsetting" mechanism? My second question is about maternity leave because the HA has announced yesterday that it would very soon, it seems that it would very soon implement the extended maternity leave following the footsteps of the government. Do you hope other statutory bodies to follow the government's footsteps as soon as possible?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: We definitely welcome all employers to follow the practice of the government in the civil service, that is to extend the maternity leave from 10 weeks to 14 weeks. If they can afford, I would actually ask them if they can do more and the more, the better. So looking at what the response is from various bodies – in fact some employers are doing more than 14 weeks already – we will encourage all employers in Hong Kong to consider before the implementation of the amendment of the legislation on maternity leave if they can do a step very much like what the Hong Kong Government is doing right now. That would be better.

Reporter: How about the legislative timetable in scrapping the MPF "offsetting" mechanism?

Secretary for Labour and Welfare: As for the timetable in abolishing the "offsetting" mechanism for MPF and the severance payment and long service payment, we will try our very best to complete the drafting of the legislative amendment. However, because I would consider this as a complicated amendment, we should allow the Legislative Council (LegCo) sufficient time to go over the bill and to deal with some of those controversial parts of the bill. Therefore, if we can't table the bill before the end of 2019 or end of next year, it will be unlikely for the bill to be passed before this term of the Legislative Council. We then have to wait until the election of LegCo members in 2020. Hopefully if we can complete the legislative process before 2021, then it will take another two years for us to implement the whole thing. Then the earliest time for the implementation would be 2023.

(Please also refer to the Chinese portion of the transcript.)