

Hon Mrs Selina CHOW to ask on 11/07/07

With effect from October 2003, employers of foreign domestic helpers ("FDHs") in Hong Kong have to pay the Employees Retraining Levy (commonly known as "levy on FDHs") of \$400 per month to the Government for the purpose of providing training and retraining to local employees. Subsequently, in view of the application for judicial review against the imposition of the levy lodged by some FDHs, the levy collected has not been utilized so far. However, the FDHs concerned have all along not lodged any appeal with the Court of Final Appeal after the dismissal of their case by the Court of Appeal in July last year, and the time limit for lodging appeals has already expired. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

1. of the situation of the collection of the above levy since October 2003 and the amount accumulated so far;
2. why it has so far not utilized the levy collected, as well as when and how it intends to utilize that amount of money; and
3. whether it has assessed if the amount of levy accumulated so far is sufficient to meet the needs for providing training and retraining to local employees for a certain period of time in the future; if the assessment results are in the affirmative, whether it has plans to reduce or even abolish the levy on FDHs, so as to ease the burden on employers of FDHs?

Public Officer to reply : **Secretary for Labour and Welfare**