



For immediate release

**People with Disabilities (PWD) Suffer Poor Employment Situation
Nearly 90% of employers face barriers and not consider hiring PWD
Rents and resources become key factors**

Nearly 60% of employers will not hire PWD in the coming five years

Concern organization hopes the Government to enhance supports to improve employment of PWD

(Hong Kong, 18 May 2015) Today, Unleash Foundation Limited (the “Foundation”) has announced a survey report on “Employers’ Attitudes towards Employment of People with Disabilities”. It shows that nearly 90% of the employers have encountered barriers in various levels when hiring people with disabilities (PWD). And nearly 70% of the employers expressed that most of the difficulties were external factors such as high rental fee and cost of additional resources. These factors are pivotal in affecting the employment of PWD. According to the current market situation, it is worrying that nearly 60% of the respondents claimed that they did not have a plan to hire PWD in the coming five years.

This survey is sponsored by the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC) under its “Funding Program of Research Projects on Equal Opportunities 2013/14”. The Foundation conducted this survey during the period from August 2014 to January 2015. A total of 209 completed questionnaires were collected from the respondents. Furthermore, eight companies of different industries in Hong Kong were invited for in-depth interviews. The aims of the interviews are to understand the current situation of PWD in the job market; to find out how to create an environment of providing more job opportunities for PWD; and to formulate strategies to help the employment of PWD. Target respondents are business owners, human resources (HR) practitioners or people who are performing HR function in a company.

Mr. Mac CHAN Ho-ting, one of the research team members and also the Director of the Foundation, pointed out at the press conference that up to 88% of the respondents indicated some barriers of hiring PWD. Most of the barriers (69%) came from additional costs in training, supervision and accommodation, lack of management commitment and so on. Only 19% of the employers indicated that the barriers came from the candidates being



lack of requisite skills or related experience. This shows that the employment of PWD does not solely attribute to PWD's personal ability. Conversely, some external factors in the market are key factors that lead to a high unemployment rate of PWD.

Some employers think that high rents and limited space are critical in the Hong Kong situation. As a result, it is relatively simple to hire people with mental disabilities than people with physical disabilities because employers do not need to provide accommodation in facilities. Although some employers once conducted a feasibility study on hiring PWD, they shelved the plan finally, since there were access barriers in the premises. Considering the high cost of renovation or relocation, it reflects that employers will show hesitation in hiring PWD due to barriers of hardware infrastructure.

Dr. Ferrick CHU Chung-man, Head of Policy and Research of EOC, expressed his concerns about the survey results at the press conference. He was alerted that PWD would not be provided with equal opportunities when they were seeking jobs. It showed that around 60% respondents did not provide any special arrangements for PWD during recruitment. Dr. Chu urged employers that they should strictly follow the Code of Practice on Employment under the Disability Discrimination Ordinance issued by the EOC in 2011. Employers should offer reasonable accommodations that allow all candidates will unleash their potential.

The report also reveals that employers in Hong Kong show a relatively low intention to employ PWD. Up to 60% of the respondents were not planning to hire PWD in the coming five years. Mr. Mac CHAN Ho-ting suggested that the Government should take initiatives to formulate promotion and educational programmes in order to increase public awareness. Simultaneously, EOC might partner with different non-governmental organizations to hold seminars, talks and training workshops for stakeholders in order to promote equal opportunities for PWD in employment.

Moreover, Mr. Lam Chi Wai, the Physically Handicapped and Able-Bodied Representative in ATV Hong Kong Loving Hearts Campaign 2013, also shared that PWD faced hardship when they were seeking jobs. He emphasized that in general, employers were positive in employing PWD but they were concerned about additional costs in providing accommodations to staff with disabilities. In this regard, the Government should consider the provision of different incentives to the employers for hiring PWD, such as wage subsidy, tax allowance, etc. These incentive measures are important in facilitating the transition of PWD into the labor market.



About Unleash Foundation Limited

Unleash Foundation Limited (the “Foundation”) is a people-oriented charitable fund which is an approved charitable body within the definition of the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap.88). The Foundation was established in January 2012. It strives unremittingly for people from different strata, categories and age ranges such as: youth, people with disabilities, ethnic minorities, etc. Through a wide variety of activities, for instance, public education, book publishing and charitable competitions and so forth, the Foundation encourages people to unleash their potential and to promote the humanistic spirit. The Foundation has a huge network covering different sectors, including social institutions and corporations in city in order to advocate civic education as well as sustainable development by means of handing out funding and fund-raising.

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