

Eliminating discrimination on the ground of sexual orientation

Dedicating efforts to promoting equal opportunities in employment

Growing support from the public and private sectors for the Code of Practice against Discrimination in Employment on the Ground of Sexual Orientation has been noted recently.

The Government has played an active role in promoting the Code of Practice against Discrimination in Employment on the Ground of Sexual Orientation (the Code) and appealing to the public and private sectors for voluntary adoption of the Code in recent years, as part of the enhanced effort to promote equal opportunities on the ground of sexual orientation in the community.

Setting out good practices to eliminate discrimination

The Code was issued by the Government to facilitate the elimination of discriminatory practices in the employment field. To achieve this aim, it provides clear definitions of "sexual orientation", "discrimination", "harassment" and "vilification", as well as recommends good practices in various aspects of employment, including recruitment, appraisal, promotion, posting and training, dismissals, redundancies, handling of grievances, etc.

Increasing number of organisations adopting the Code

Since the Government first wrote to the top management of major employers to appeal for their adoption of the Code in the latter half of 2013, the number of organisations that have pledged to adopt the Code has been on a rising trend. In August 2014, around 90 organisations had pledged to adopt it and to date, the number has doubled, with more than 180 organisations from both the public and private sectors. It is indeed encouraging to see more and more organisations adopting the Code and participating in building Hong Kong as a



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Dr Eddy Li Sau-hung, President of the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong



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society that upholds equal opportunities and mutual respect.

Retaining the best talents by creating a fair working environment

Being one of the most representative and well-established chambers of commerce in Hong Kong, the Chinese Manufacturers' Association of Hong Kong (CMA) belongs to the first batch of organisations that pledged to adopt the Code. Dr Eddy Li, President of CMA, shared that CMA supported the maintenance of a harmonious society featuring individuals with diversified backgrounds, and believed that no one should be treated unfairly or subjected to discrimination or harassment at work because of his or her sexual orientation.

With over 3 000 corporate members from various sectors of industry and trade, CMA took the lead in pledging to adopt the Code, with a view to setting a good example for its corporate members and other enterprises to follow. "Adopting the Code does not cause any trouble to our daily operation," Dr Li said. "On the contrary, it brings benefits. It is easy to understand that when employees see a level playing field, they will definitely work harder for their career and own future, thereby increasing productivity. Besides that, adopting

the Code can also help enhance corporate image which brings business. Hence, I see no reason for CMA not to support the Code and set an example."

Dr Li also foresaw the increased importance of creating a discrimination-free working environment for employees of different sexual orientation. "In this globalised world, we see more and more leaders and

outstanding people with different sexual orientation. To attract and retain talents, Hong Kong certainly needs to set a fair working environment for all," he concluded.

Fulfilling social responsibility for promoting equal opportunities

With over 7 000 staff members and 28 000 students, the University of Hong Kong (HKU) is also one of the pioneer pledgees who have a strong sense of social responsibility in building Hong Kong into a discrimination-free society.

"The University adopted the Code as a public demonstration of our commitment to anti-discrimination," Dr Steven J. Cannon, Executive Vice President (Administration & Finance) explained. He pointed out that adoption of the Code created no burden to HKU's daily operation. In contrast, if discrimination continued to exist, it would be a burden to our society.

To help promote anti-discriminatory practices in the campus, Dr Cannon shared that HKU had an Equal Opportunity Unit (the Unit). The Unit does not only state its policy



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(Left) **Ms Sanlies Lo**, Head of Human Resources, Chun Wo Construction Holdings Limited
(Right) **Mr Steve Tam**, General Manager of Internal Operations, Chun Wo Construction Holdings Limited

on its website, forbidding discrimination or harassment on the ground of sexual orientation, amongst others, in the University but also organises orientation talks and events for staff and students, such as Equal Opportunities Festival, to further raise HKU members' awareness on equal opportunities. Multiple channels and established procedures are also provided for handling complaints of discrimination and harassment, including those in relation to sexual orientation. Dr Cannon emphasised that the procedures ensured fairness and independence in the investigation process, and respected for the confidentiality of the parties involved.

Employee-centered human resources policies and practices

Chun Wo Development Holdings Limited (Chun Wo) has over 3 000 staff members based in Hong Kong and is unflaggingly committed to promoting equal employment opportunities through its human resources policies and practices. The construction and development company had no hesitation in adopting the Code when being appealed in late 2013 because the objective of the Code is consistent with its open and inclusive management culture.

"Chun Wo firmly believes that people with different sexual orientations should respect one another, and embrace their differences. Therefore, we did not see any negative impacts in adopting the Code," said Mr Steve Tam, General Manager of Internal Operations of Chun Wo Construction Holdings Limited. Chun Wo delivers the message against discrimination on ground of sexual orientation through its staff handbook and staff orientation, which are well-received and supported by its employees. Ms Sanlies Lo, Head of Human Resources of Chun Wo Construction Holdings Limited, also said,



A step forward in maintaining business competitive edge

Established in 1986, Pollution and Protection Services Limited (PPS) is one of the major professional environmental service providers in Hong Kong. PPS provides diverse environmental services to customers in different industries in Hong Kong and Mainland China. Currently, the company has more than 1 500 employees and manages more than hundred major contract projects.

"PPS has been pursuing the principle of meritocracy and equal opportunities in human resources management policy, and our company never assesses and makes decision based on gender, age and sexual orientation etc. in the recruitment or assessment of staff members," said Mr Jingyuan Ye, Chief Executive Officer of PPS. "In addition, we have a sound mechanism to deal with personnel issues and ensure that our company strictly abides by the best practices recommended by the Code. Our company also provided training and conducted vigorous promotion to staff members. The management is committed to monitor effectiveness with a view to ensuring compliance with the Code."

Mr Billy Tse, Chief Operating Officer of PPS, believes that the Code is in line with PPS's principle of management. "The market is highly competitive and our company is in great demand for talents. The concept of the Code is able to retain talents, reduce loss in headcount and helps our company to expand its business," he said.



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(Left) **Mr Jingyuan Ye**, Chief Executive Officer of Pollution and Protection Services Limited
(Right) **Mr Billy Tse**, Chief Operating Officer of Pollution and Protection Services Limited

If any organisation wishes to know more about the Code, and/or to organise briefings/seminars on the Code for their staff/members, please contact the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau by phone on **2810 3205**, or email gisou@cmab.gov.hk.

Website: www.cmab.gov.hk/en/issues/code_of_practice.htm

