



社評
雙語道

優化最低工資檢討機制

Improve the SMW review mechanism to enhance work incentive and labour protection

原文

下文摘錄自2023年1月11日香港《文匯報》：

行政長官會同行政會議接納最低工資委員會建議，將法定最低工資水平由現時每小時37.5元，調升至40元。如獲立法會通過，在今年5月1日實施。本港最低工資的「安全網」作用持續遞減，最低工資增幅低於整體平均工資及通脹增幅，難以令基層勞工分享經濟成果，失去最低工資保障基層的意義。有必要優化最低工資檢討機制，考慮與工資中位數掛鈎，訂在高於綜援水平，以增強基層勞工工作意慾，提升社會生產力，亦讓基層勞工可以自食其力、有尊嚴地生活。

受疫情影響，2021年檢討最低工資時凍結在37.5元水平。去年展開新一輪最低工資水平檢討，最低工資委員會最終達成共識。不過，有勞工界人士形容，有關加幅僅貼近4年通脹，最低工資即使調升至40元，增幅與勞工界的期望存在落差，只是擔心若再次無法達成共識，最低工資會再凍結一次，只能勉強接受。

資料顯示，本港2011年實施最低工資的時薪為28元，2021年為37.5元，累計升幅為33.9%。由於28元最低工資水平按2009年數據訂立，2009年至2021年所有選定行業主類的名義工資已上升59%，較最低工資多出約25個百分點。政府統計處資料則顯示，反映基層消費物價的「甲類消費物價指數」，由2011年最低工資實施時的75.8升至2021年的104.6，升幅為38%，高於同期最低工資的33.9%升幅。

最低工資不但跑輸整體平均工資和通脹，甚至和綜援水平相差不少。以4人家庭計算，平均每月綜援金額為16,975元，若以最低工資40元計，4人家庭中有兩人工作，每天8小時，每月26天，全家月入僅16,640元。現實反映，最低工資保障效應減少，追不上經濟發展水平，不利於紓解在職貧窮問題，發揮不到鼓勵就業的作用。

本港每次調整最低工資均備受關注，勞資雙方每次都爭論激烈，有商界人士屢屢表達憂慮，指大幅、

頻繁調整最低工資，會導致低薪職位流失，增加中小企負擔，削弱本港競爭力。事實上，本港作為全球最自由經濟體，高度重視市場調節作用，在稅制、勞工政策已對資方作出傾斜；對勞工階層提供必要保障，亦是本港作為富裕文明國際都會促進社會公平、收窄貧富差距的應盡之責。

本港有不少聲音要求最低工資檢討機制應由「兩年一檢」改為「一年一檢」，公務員薪酬趨勢調查就是每年進行，最低工資「一年一檢」並非不可能、不可行。而且「一年一檢」，每次調整幅度較小，商界較容易接受。目前，發達經濟體普遍將最低工資的標準定於收入中位數的60%，令受惠人數保持在一成左右，本港亦可參考仿效，免卻收集分析數據等繁複程序和爭議，令最低工資增幅高於通脹、綜援，增加基層勞工投入就業市場的誘因，紓緩本港基層職位長期人手不足的問題，基層家庭收入增加亦有助刺激消費，中小企同樣受惠。完善最低工資檢討機制，勞資雙贏，有利香港社會和諧，值得各方認真考慮。



◆ 法定最低工資水平將由現時每小時37.5元，調升至40元，不少基層將受惠。圖為保安員。資料圖片

譯文

The Chief Executive in Council has adopted the recommendation of the Minimum Wage Commission (MWC) to raise the Statutory Minimum Wage (SMW) rate from its prevailing level of \$37.5 per hour to \$40. Subject to the approval of the Legislative Council, the revised SMW rate will come into force on 1 May this year. The "safety net" effect of SMW in Hong Kong continues to wear off, and the uprating magnitude of SMW is lower than the increase in overall average wage and inflation, making it difficult for grassroots employees to share the fruits of economic success and defeating the purpose of SMW to protect the grassroots. It is necessary to enhance the SMW review mechanism by linking it to the median wage and setting it at a level such that the total work income of a household would be higher than the amount of CSSA payments, so as to enhance work incentive, improve social productivity and enable the grassroots employees to stand on their own feet and earn their living with dignity.

The SMW rate was frozen at \$37.5 in 2021 review because of the pandemic. Last year, a new round of review on SMW was launched and the

MWC finally reached a consensus. However, some members of the labour sector said that the uprating magnitude was only in line with the four-year inflation rate, and even if the SMW was raised to \$40, it was still lower than what the sector expected; they reached the consensus only because they worried that, if they did not, the SMW rate would be frozen again.

Statistics show that the SMW rate was \$28 in 2011 and \$37.5 in 2021, representing a cumulative increase of 33.9%. The SMW rate of \$28 is set based on 2009 data, and the nominal wages of all selected industry sections have increased by 59% between 2009 and 2021, about 25 percentage points higher than the SMW increase rate. According to the Census and Statistics Department, the Consumer Price Index (A), which reflects the consumer prices of the grassroots, has increased from 75.8 in 2011 when the minimum wage was introduced to 104.6 in 2021, representing an increase of 38%, higher than the 33.9% increase of SMW rate during the same period.

Not only does the SMW rate fail to keep up with the overall average wage and inflation, but it is also slightly lower than the income provided by CSSA. For a four-person household, the average

monthly CSSA payment is \$16,975. For the same household, if two persons work at the SMW rate of \$40, eight hours a day for 26 days a month, the monthly income of the whole family is only \$16,640. It shows that the protection effect of the SMW diminishes and the SMW cannot keep up with the level of economic development, which is not conducive to alleviating the problem of working poverty and cannot serve the purpose of encouraging employment.

Each raise of the SMW rate in Hong Kong has been a matter of great concern and the subject of contentious debate between labour and management sectors. Some from the business sector have repeatedly expressed their concern that a drastic and frequent raise of the SMW rate will lead to a loss of low-paid jobs, increase the burden on SMEs and undermine Hong Kong's competitiveness. In fact, as the world's freest economy, Hong Kong attaches great importance to the market regulation and has already tilted its taxation and labour policies in favour of employers. It is also Hong Kong's due responsibility as an affluent and civilised world city to promote social justice and narrow the gap between the rich and the poor by providing the necessary protection to the

working class.

There are calls in Hong Kong for an annual review of the SMW rate instead of the current biennial process, and an annual review is neither impossible nor impracticable as the Pay Trend Survey is conducted yearly. Moreover, a "yearly review" will result in modest magnitude of the SMW uprating, which is more acceptable to the business sector. At present, it is common for developed economies to set the minimum wage at 60% of the median income, so that the number of beneficiaries remains at around 10% of the labour force. Hong Kong can follow suit, which avoids controversies and the complicated procedures of data collection and analysis, and can uprate the SMW at a higher degree than inflation and to a level higher than the amount of CSSA payments, which incentivises grassroots to enter the workforce and alleviates the chronic shortage of manpower for low-paid jobs. The income increase of grassroots families will also help stimulate consumption, benefiting SMEs too. Enhancement of the review mechanism of the SMW brings about a win-win situation for both labour and management sectors and is conducive to Hong Kong's social harmony, thus deserving serious consideration of all parties.

◆ Kevin Cheung (CUSCS Lecturer)

小兔溫馴惹人愛 3月野兔太瘋癲

恒 大英萃

隔星期二見報

虎去威猶在，兔來運更昌。在此向讀者拜年，祝大家身體健康，闔家平安，萬事如意，大吉大利！

兔子在十二生肖中排行第四，與十二地支中的卯對應，因此兔子又稱為「卯兔」。卯乃早上五時至七時，既是一日之始，亦代表四季之春。故兔子亦象徵無限生機、躊躇滿志。

兔年，Year of the Rabbit，但為什麼不是Year of the Bunny或是Year of the Hare？動物叫法林林總總，男女長幼各有不同。中國十二生肖的英文版，相信是採用該動物最為人熟悉的名稱。

兔子不常叫rabbit

不過，若細閱兔子不同英語叫法的由來亦可見端倪，原來兔子亦不常叫rabbit！在十八世紀時的舊名叫cony / coney，rabbit專指年幼的兔子。後來rabbit一字日趨普遍，反而取代了cony成為兔子正式名稱。現時年幼的rabbit叫做bunny，恰巧又和cony押韻，難道是cony化身？Bunny在十七世紀時指青春少艾，可能因其發音趣致可愛，小兔毛茸茸的，一副乖巧溫馴的樣子，人見人愛，故bunny亦泛指年輕

女性和小動物。

同樣是兔科（Leporidae），hare則是野兔，毛色多見灰啡、體型較大、耳朵較長、不愛社交。野兔顧名思義理應屬於大草原，被圈養的野兔因此萬般不習慣，多見毛躁不安！因此harebrained（野兔腦）這形容詞解作愚昧魯莽，就如野兔遇上小事亦大吃一驚。

英文還有mad as a March hare這說法。3月的野兔為什麼瘋言瘋語？有說3月正值野兔發情期，會出現很多怪把戲來吸引異性，例如跳到半空。因此(as) mad as a March hare乃瘋癲癲癲之狀。

速度就是一切！野兔的生存關鍵在於其奔馳疾速，因此first catch a hare（或類似說法：catch a hare before cooking it）就是取自這野生動物的舉步生風，要捉到野兔勿操之過急，捉到手亦別慶祝太早，否則其立時逃之夭夭；做事應不疾不徐，才能勝算在握。

同樣地：If you run after two hares, you will catch neither! 要捕捉一隻野兔已很艱難，希望同時捉緊兩隻更是妙想天開。因此這諺語是勸誡一心切勿二用。

野兔本身已經野性難馴，若然你想與野兔共奔草原，同時追捕獵犬，簡直是難如登天！You can't run with the hare and hunt with the hounds，就是形容左顧右盼，怎料兩面不討好！

送舊迎新大掃除「斷捨離」前想清楚

英語世界

隔星期二見報

近幾年流行「斷捨離」，都說要狠心地把沒有用的東西棄掉，不要囤積。新年去舊迎新大掃除的時候，更加想把沒有用、不想要、不喜歡的物品通通扔掉。把東西拋棄，英文可有很多的動詞，常用的有throw away、dump、abandon、discard、dispose of、get rid of等等。想要特別一點，也許可以用consign to the dustbin / rubbish heap或者chuck / toss overboard。

動詞consign是發放、送出的意思，consign something to把東西發放出去，其實有棄置的意思，想把東西擺脫、送走，consign something to the dustbin / rubbish heap，把東西送到垃圾桶 / 垃圾堆，清楚不過，就是覺得東西沒有用，要棄掉。

She has just consigned many of her old clothes to the rubbish heap. What a waste!
她剛剛把許多舊衣服送進垃圾堆。真浪費！

The management thought that his proposal should be consigned to the dustbin.

管理層覺得他的建議應該被扔進垃圾桶。
至於chuck和toss兩個動詞與throw差不多，都是扔掉、拋擲的意思，overboard即是船艙外，chuck / toss something overboard把東西拋到大海中，也就是不要了、棄掉。

People today often buy excessively and chuck still useful things overboard. It's obvious not a good habit.

人們現今常常購物過量，一些依然有用的東西卻隨手扔掉。這顯然不是一個好習慣。

Many traditional practices were tossed overboard when the new boss took over.

新老闆接手後，許多傳統做法都拋進大海。
捨棄物品，其實應該小心處理，仔細考慮，以免造成無謂浪費，有時候過於魯莽，會不經意地把有用的東西亦一

併扔掉，引致損失。英文有所謂throw the baby out with the bathwater，把嬰兒和洗澡水一起倒掉，就是比喻在拋棄沒有用的物品的同時把寶貴的東西都扔掉了。

這英文用語來自德國諺語，1512年已出現在德國詩人評論家Thomas Murner的作品中，而且有木刻圖示，圖中婦人在倒掉一盆洗澡水的時候，把盆子中的嬰孩一起倒掉，比喻把不要的、不好的東西丟掉時，重要的、美好的東西也一併丟掉了。Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater是勸喻別人不要只看到事物壞的一面，要考慮好的一面，避免因為部分不想要的而放棄全部，連帶有價值的部份也棄掉。所以不要輕率行事，因小失大。

This is a good school. You don't quit it because you don't like a few of your classmates. Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater.

這是一間好學校。你不應該因為不喜歡某幾個同學而退學。不要因為小事而壞大事。

Some parts of this healthcare policy maybe outdated. But if we scrap it altogether, we throw the baby out with the bathwater. We need to keep the necessary measures.

這個醫保政策某些部分可能已經不合時宜，但如果我們把整個政策廢了，就是因局部問題而捨棄精華部分。我們需要保留那些必須的措施。

She threw the baby out with the bathwater. When she moved house, she dumped most of her things including those with sentimental value. Now she missed them so much.

她當初不分好歹，連有用的東西全都棄掉。她搬家時丟掉大部分東西，包括一些很有感情價值的。現在，她很懷念那些物品。

有用的東西不應該隨便棄掉，「斷捨離」之前要小心計劃，仔細思量，避免不分好壞，不理有用無用，在扔掉不要的東西時把寶貴的東西無意中一起扔掉了。

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