



# Opinion Survey of Accounting Profession on Policy Address, Six Economic Areas and the Performance of the HKSAR Government for the year 2009-2010

## Summary of Survey Results

September 2009

## **1. Introduction and Survey Objectives**

The Hon. Paul Chan Mo-po, Legislative Councillor (Accountancy), has commissioned the Centre for Social Policy Studies of the Department of Applied Social Sciences of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, to conduct an opinion survey among the accountancy constituents during August and September of 2009.

The survey objective is to collect their opinions with regard to the 2009-2010 Government Policy Address and the performance of the HKSAR government in the past year. The survey was conducted in the form of questionnaire.

The web-based questionnaire, designed by the research team of the Centre for Social Policy Studies of the Department of Applied Social Sciences of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University, was sent out to all constituents through the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

A total of 561 completed questionnaires have been successfully collected throughout the period from 20 August to 5 September 2009 and passed to the Centre for Social Policy Studies of the Department of Applied Social Sciences for analysis.

In this survey, respondents were asked to accord a score to their answers on a 6-point scale. 6 is the highest score representing 'very urgent / very satisfactory'. 1 is the lowest score representing 'not very urgent / not satisfactory'. To simplify cross-tabulation analyses, scores 1 to 2 are regarded as 'low urgency / satisfaction'. Scores 3 to 4 are regarded as 'median urgency / satisfaction' and scores 5 to 6 are classified as 'high urgency / satisfaction'.

## **2. Survey results**

### **2.1 Performance of the HKSAR Government:**

The mean score given by respondents is 3.05. Nearly 60% of the respondents gave a score of 3 or 4 to the performance of the HKSAR government in the past year. Nevertheless, two-third of the respondents chose scores at the lower end of the scale (scores 1 to 3), which implies that the majority of respondents were dissatisfied with the government's performance.

Respondents aged above 60 were more satisfied with the performance of the HKSAR government as about one-fifth (19.2%) of the respondents in this age group gave a high rating on the performance. The younger the population, the less satisfied they were. Respondents aged below 29 were the most dissatisfied (39.6%).

About one-third of the respondents came from accounting firms (34.6%) and another one-third from the business sector (32.6%). Accountants in both sectors gave a lower rating to the government's performance, with only a very small proportion willing to give high scores in this aspect. Respondents who have retired were more satisfied with the performance of the HKSAR government, followed by those who work for the government. Respondents from the education sector gave the lowest score.

## **2.2 Development of the Six Economic Areas:**

Amongst the six economic areas suggested by the Task Force on Economic Challenges, 'medical services' received a high mean score of 4.93, followed by 'educational services' (4.77), 'environmental industry' (4.67) and 'innovation and technology' (4.49). 'Cultural and creative industries' received the lowest score, and biggest diversity of opinions.

## **2.3 Policy areas:**

Amongst the six policy areas, 'economy and employment problems', with the highest mean score of 5.43, was regarded as the most urgent issue to be dealt with. It is followed by 'education' (5.02), 'healthcare and food safety' (5.00). In respect of 'economy and employment', over 80% of respondents gave a score of 5 or 6. As for 'housing' (1.223), 'environmental protection' (1.235) and 'governance and politics' (1.363), scores from the respondents were quite diverse.

### **2.3.1 Economy and employment**

With the highest mean score of 4.89, respondents regarded 'improving employment situation' as most urgent. It is followed by 'promoting Hong Kong as an international financial centre' (4.84) and 'strengthening the cooperation between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta' (4.82). Amongst the 8 issues, 'minimum wage legislation' was rated with the lowest mean score (3.04) and the highest standard

deviation. It shows that this issue is the most controversial one among the eight issues named.

### **2.3.2 Education**

Regarding education, with the highest mean score of 5.33 and the lowest standard deviation of 0.960, almost all respondents were of the opinion that "enhancing students' language proficiency" had to be dealt with urgently. It was followed by "improving teachers' standard of teaching" (5.15) and 'beating drug abuse at schools' (4.84). 'Extending pre-primary education voucher scheme to nursery' was accorded the lowest mean score 3.44 and the highest standard deviation of 1.492. It shows that respondents' opinions on this issue were quite diverse.

### **2.3.3 Healthcare and food safety**

Respondents considered 'drawing up healthcare reform proposals as soon as possible', 'improving emergency ambulance service' and 'strengthening cooperation between the public and private medical sectors' as urgent issues. Amongst these, 'drawing up healthcare reform proposals as soon as possible' received the highest mean score of 4.77. 'Establishing official certification mechanism for organic products' was regarded as the least urgent. It received a mean score of 4.12 and a high standard deviation of 1.307. The respondents' views on this issue were more diverse.

### **2.3.4 Environmental protection**

With nearly 90% of respondents giving 5 or 6 points on 'improving air quality', respondents were obviously most concerned about this issue. The next in line is 'enhancing energy efficiency in buildings' (4.74). 'Improving the policy on the preservation of heritage/ historic building' received a mean score of 4.24 and a standard deviation of 1.380, showing that the views of respondents towards this issue were more diverse.

### **2.3.5 Housing:**

Amongst the six named issues related to housing policies, 'stringent monitoring on gross floor area (GFA) of property on sale' received the highest mean score of 4.94. It is followed by 'increasing the maximum

period / amount of home mortgage interest reduction' (4.52). The third priority issue is 'relaxing the eligibility criteria for public housing' which recorded the highest standard deviation of 1.533, showing that the opinions on this issue were most diverse.

### **2.3.6 Governance and constitution**

Respondents were more concerned about 'improving governance standards'. This issue received the highest mean score of 5.17. It is followed by 'strengthening corporate governance in public sector' (5.02) and 'improving the performance of Under Secretaries and Political Assistants' (4.91). Both 'promoting constitutional development decided pursuant to the decision of the National People's Congress' and 'implementing universal suffrage as soon as possible' were given lower mean scores of 3.92 and 4.17 respectively. The view of respondents was, however, more diverse on these two issues, especially the latter which scored a high standard deviation of 1.603.

### **2.4 Motions in the Coming Legislative Year:**

Among the six topics surveyed, 'regulation of the financial industry' was given the highest priority, with a mean score of 4.87. It was followed by 'career prospects of the accountancy sector' (4.59) and 'enabling measures for HK professionals to practise on the Mainland' (4.40). 'Tax reform' and 'career prospects of the accountancy sector' each scored a relatively high standard of deviation of 1.474 and 1.400 respectively, showing that respondents had a more diverse view on these two issues.

## **3. Demographic Profiles of Respondents**

Out of the 561 respondents who participated in this survey, there were 376 males and 185 females, accounting for 67.0% and 33.0% of respondents respectively.

The majority of respondents (41.9%) were in the age group of 40-49. Respondents aged 30-39 and 50-59 accounted for 28.7% and 16.2% of the total respectively. Only 13.2% of respondents were below 29 or above 60.

Most respondents (53.1%) were from the business sector. 27.3% of respondents work in accounting firms. About 11% of respondents work in public organizations (5.5%) and other statutory organizations (5.5%). The remaining respondents were

from the government (3.4%), educational sector (2.3%) or retirees (2.9%).

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