

Taiwan: Trade unions call for worker participation in labor policy formulation

Monday 22 January 2024, by [HSIN-YUN Wu](#), [KAO Evelyn](#) (Date first published: 17 January 2024).

Taipei, Jan. 17 (CNA) Several trade and teachers unions led by the Taiwan Confederation of Trade Unions (TCTU) on Wednesday called on the incoming government to allow workers to play a bigger role in creating labor policy and bill formulation.

On Wednesday, the TCTU, along with the National Federation of Teachers Unions, Taiwan Federation of Financial Unions, Taipei Federation of Trade Unions, and Kaohsiung City Confederation of Trade Unions called on the ruling and opposition parties to prioritize policies that would benefit the country and the people, in a joint statement.

The unions said they hoped that in the next four years, the new Democratic Progressive Party (DPP) government, slated to take office on May 20, would enter into discussions with unions and workers before rushing to pass key labor legislation in the Legislative Yuan.

They emphasized that to ensure co-prosperity in society, when discussions on matters such as increasing the amount employers pay into labor pension funds, improving workers' rights, addressing the nursing shortage and low wages in several industries were taking place, along with the ruling and opposition parties, workers also need a seat at the table.

The groups also called for the incoming government to come up with policy measures and introduce legislation regarding labor pension reform, protecting the rights of employees during a business merger or acquisition, and the right of collective bargaining and action as well as promoting a just transition to a green economy.

A just transition means ensuring nobody is left behind during the transition to a low-carbon economy.

Last Saturday, Taiwanese voters elected the ruling DPP presidential candidate Lai Ching-te (賴清德) into power, but the DPP lost its absolute majority in the 113-seat Legislature after it secured 51 seats.

Meanwhile, the unions said the Kuomintang, (KMT) which won 52 seats, becoming the largest single party in the Legislative Yuan, and the Taiwan People's Party (TPP), which secured eight, should also respond to public opinion.

The KMT and the TPP should work to ensure the labor policies presented by their presidential candidates, Hou Yu-ih (侯友宜) and Ko Wen-je (柯文哲), are implemented, through law amendments and by pressuring the government, they said.

For example, during campaigning, all three candidates had commented on whether or not Taiwan should permit more migrant workers to tackle worker shortages.

The TPP's Ko had said Taiwan needs to know the total labor demand in each sector before allowing migrant workers into the country.

Migrant workers should not replace local workers, he added.

The KMT's Hou had said he would create a migrant worker outreach platform to engage with migrant workers, brokers, and employers, to address the labor shortage in the agricultural sector.

Lai had said that before introducing foreign workers, the government should first ensure domestic workers are being paid fair wages.

Following pressure from the hospitality industry and foreign chambers of commerce, the new government is expected to open the door to migrant workers, going against the Ministry of Labor's previous plans to expand work opportunities for locals and improve their labor protection, according to the statement.

The unions also said that a range of industries do not face a labor shortage, but that companies simply want to pay low wages.

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