

Support continues for hiring disabled job seekers in China

BEIJING, China - World Hotel, IBM Cooperation Limited and Panasonic were among the nearly 50 companies taking part in this spring's Job Fair for People with Disabilities in Beijing, organized by the China Disability Persons' Federation (CDPF) Beijing branch and the Beijing Talent Service Centre.

Over the past few years, companies have begun taking bigger steps to bring more women and men with disabilities into the workforce. Both businesses and organizations recognize that when given the opportunity and in jobs suited to their abilities, people with disabilities make good employees. Simply put, it makes good business sense. It's a market that this year's recruiters are tapping into to fill more than 300 openings.

A graduate of Beijing Science and Technology University, Mr. Chen, 25, attended the Beijing Job Fair. He specializes in office Information Technology (IT) and Automatic Equipment. Mr. Chen, a wheelchair user, hopes to land a job with IBM.

An initial interview with Ms. Wang Dan, Senior Employment Consultant with IBM's Human Resource Department, proved successful and Mr. Chen was offered an opportunity to interview with IT specialists at IBM's office in the coming weeks.

"Companies like IBM have learned that persons with disabilities are productive and they bring many benefits to the workplace," says Ms. Wang.

Beijing's 'One Plus One' Cultural Exchange Centre was also among the companies looking to hire disabled workers. It's a business run entirely by people with disabilities. They have set up the country's first radio production centre staffed entirely by disabled journalists. In 2008, two of the company's staff became the first fully accredited, disabled Chinese journalists in the history of the Olympics. Their radio shows now reach most parts of China. They attended the Job Fair in search of talented media producers and journalists.

The Job Fair was the eighth organized over the past years by the CDPF Beijing branch and the Beijing Talent Service Centre. It is one of several major events and activities to mark the Chinese National Day of Supporting People with Disabilities, celebrated annually on the third Sunday of May. More than 600 people with disabilities with training and work experience in fields ranging from medicine and finance to IT attended the Fair.

"The Job Fair is not only opening the doors to person with disabilities but also a platform for easy communications and discussions between the employers and people with disabilities," said Ms. Li Dong Mei, Director of the Employment Department,

CDPF Beijing branch.

Beyond connecting businesses to disabled job seekers, a small “Policy Consultation Centre” was set up at the Job Fair. Among the materials made available, free of charge, to participants were the Regulations on the Employment for Person with Disabilities and a list of training courses at the Beijing Vocational Training Centre. ILO publications highlighting the Organization’s work in promoting decent work for persons with disabilities were also distributed to prospective employers, CDPF Beijing branch staff and other participants. Key among these resources, available in Chinese, were “Assisting People with Disabilities in Finding Employment: a resource book for trainers of employment service personnel”; “Achieving Equal Employment Opportunities for People with Disabilities through Legislation, Guidelines”; and, “The right to decent work of person with disabilities”.

“What’s important about the Job Fair is that it promotes employment opportunities for one of the most disadvantaged in the labour market, while at the same time providing very important and practical information to employers in making hiring decisions,” says Ms. Constance Thomas, ILO Director for China and Mongolia. These aims are in line with the outcomes highlighted in the 2006-2010 Decent Work Country Programme in China, Realizing Decent Work.

In China, a current ILO technical cooperation projects on disability is “Promoting the Employability and Employment of People with Disabilities through Effective Legislation” (PEPDEL). Earlier phases of PEPDEL included support for the CDPF in the development of Regulations for the implementation of the Law concerning the Employment of Persons with Disabilities. The Law promotes equality, participation and sharing, and prohibits discrimination.

According to the CDPF, in 2008, some 367,647 disabled persons in urban areas were newly employed, including 113,436 through placement; 98,561 through quota schemes; and, 155,650 through various forms of self-employment. In addition, some 17 million disabled persons in rural areas were employed.

This contribution was submitted by Ms. Liu Chunxiu, National Programme Coordinator on Disability, ILO-Irish Aid Partnership Programme, PEPDEL Project.