

ADPL to seek labour concord

Jimmy Cheung

The Association for Democracy and People's Livelihood (ADPL) has vowed to join hands with other parties for a comprehensive package to enhance labour benefits in the new legislature.

It also pledged to seek a united front to thwart the mandatory provident fund (MPF) scheme when the Legislative Council begins next month.

The ADPL, which won four seats on Sunday, yesterday unveiled an ambitious programme to protect local workers' rights.

This includes enacting laws to enhance local workers' priorities in employment, banning labour importation and give the jobless an unemployment benefit.

The Democratic Party, the pro-China Democratic Alliance for the Betterment of Hong Kong, the leftwing Federation of Trade Unions and the liberal Confederation of Trade Unions have made similar promises.

Although the factions and unions are set to command a clear majority over the issues in the new Legislative Council, the ADPL chairman, Frederick Fung, raised concerns that they might differ on the details.

He called on his colleagues to hammer out an acceptable

package of measures instead of tabling their own bills separately.

"There may be a lot of bargaining when the parties seek support to their own bills.

"The best way is to discuss the proposals as a whole, otherwise the support will be split," he said.

The party is also pressing for laws against monopolies and to enhance fair business transactions.

But Fung said he would first lobby the Government to enact them before pushing private member's bills forward.

The party also reiterated that it would continue to fight for an across the board retirement scheme and a central provident fund with contributions from the Government, workers and employers.

"We will continue our effort to block the MPF in the new term," Fung said.

On the issue of a provisional legislature, the party's preliminary idea is that the members will join the structure if it is representative and legitimate.

But Fung stressed that the public should not overreact to the proposal, saying that the question of how to set up the preparatory committee was more crucial.

"If the preparatory committee is good, I am not at all worried that the provisional legislature will be bad," he said.