

MOHW, MOEL and MOGEF discuss their key policies

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- ◆ MOHW will expand investment in children, for example by introducing child benefits (0~5-year-olds), reducing inpatient medical expenses, subsidizing flu vaccination and providing full child care for elementary school children, and create decent jobs in the healthcare sector.
- ◆ MOEL will realize the conversion of public-sector non-regular workers to regular status early, firmly establish the principle of hiring regular employees for all positions in the private sector, reform the discrimination correction system and come up with guidelines for regulating the inclusive wage system to eliminate the practice of working long hours.
- ◆ MOGEF will create a 'job search package program', increase the number of childcare helpers to 2,000 in 2018, pursue the enactment of the Gender Violence Prevention Act (tentative name) and strengthen the protection of female marriage migrants' human rights.

The Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW, Minister Park Neung-hoo), the Ministry of Employment and Labor (MOEL, Minister Kim Young-joo) and the Ministry of Gender Equality and Family (MOGEF, Minister Chung Hyun-baek) gave a briefing to the President on their key policies for the second half of this year and discussed them at the Sejong Convention Center on August 31st (Thu.).

The key policy discussion held today marked the end of a series of policy briefings by government agencies, which had started with the Korea Communications Commission and the Ministry of Science and ICT on August 22nd.

The Prime Minister, the Cheong Wa Dae Chief of Staff for Policy and Chief Secretaries, the Chairperson of the Democratic Party's Policy Committee and officials of related government agencies also joined the discussion.

1. MOHW

MOHW reported various measures needed to expand investment in future generations and create an environment friendly to childbirth and child care.

MOHW will expand investment in children by paying child benefits (100,000 won a month) to all children between the ages of 0~5 from July 2018 and reducing inpatient medical expenses for children aged 15 and under.

It will also strengthen the public responsibility of the child protection system from September 2017, for example by building a system of early detection of children at risk using big data, such as on long absences from school.

The State's responsibility for child rearing and child care will be strengthened by increasing the proportion using national and public childcare centers to 40%, assigning a total of 21,000 assistant and substitute teachers and realizing full child care* for elementary school children.

A government-wide joint task force will operate to spread a community-led childcare model in order to remove blind spots in child care for elementary school children, such as a lack of child care during commuting hours and after-school hours.

* caring together program (MOHW·MOIS) + care classes in elementary schools (MOE)
+ cooperative childcare sharing centers (MOGEF)

MOHW said that in order to bring about a fundamental recovery in the fertility rate, it will pursue structural reform in the areas of employment, housing and work-life balance and discuss Korea's long-term demographic vision through the Presidential Committee on Ageing Society and Population Policy.

MOHW also discussed a plan to create 100,000 decent jobs by improving medical services and fostering the health industry.

* If about 100,000 jobs added through the growth of the healthcare sector, including a higher income level and stronger protection offered by health insurance, are included, the number of jobs created could reach 200,000.

A model of managing chronic diseases through community clinics will be created in the second half of this year and begin to be implemented next year.

MOHW will improve the level of medical services, for example by expanding the scope of those eligible for hospice care* and introducing home- and consultation-based hospice care, and expand professional medical services, with a view to creating jobs.

* (Previously) patients with terminal cancer → (after expansion) patients with non-cancer disease, such as AIDS, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and chronic liver cirrhosis

Home visiting healthcare services which have been provided mainly for elderly people living alone will be expanded to provide such services to all elderly people through public health centers, and healthy living support centers will be spread across the country.

Meanwhile, MOHW will set up a public medical service system by creating a hub general hospital in each vulnerable region and strengthening the network between local public hospitals and university hospitals, so that people can use quality medical services in their areas of residence no matter where they live.

Moreover, in an effort to cope with the fourth industrial revolution, MOHW will actively foster the health industry and thereby create professional jobs in that sector.

To that end, it will establish a comprehensive plan on pharmaceuticals, medical devices and cosmetics in December and come up with a healthcare big data strategy.

It will also pre-emptively build public vaccine development infrastructure, such as the public vaccine development support center (2020), and begin R&D on diagnosis and treatment of Alzheimer's disease and infectious disease R&D linked to the national prevention and control system in the first half of next year.

Meanwhile, based on the joint declaration issued by tripartite partners in the healthcare sector on August 23rd, MOHW will begin in earnest social discussions on comprehensive measures to match labor supply and demand and the improvement of working conditions, thereby reinforcing the foundation for creating decent jobs.

2. MOEL

MOEL gave its briefing under the themes "non-regular employment" and "long working hours", both of which are pending issues in the labor market and directly related to people's lives.

It stressed that to address these two issues, it will not only make legislative and institutional improvements but also pursue strong innovation of labor inspection administration.

MOEL said that non-regular employment, the first theme of the briefing, causes not just employment insecurity of workers but also other complex problems, such as exposure to the risk of industrial accidents, a wage gap and blind spots in the social safety net, so it is essential to come up with countermeasures against non-regular employment and outsourcing.

For a start, the public sector will play a pump-priming role in addressing the problem of non-regular employment.

MOEL will push ahead with the conversion of public-sector non-regular workers to regular status as planned according to the guidelines announced in July and unveil a roadmap containing the number of non-regular workers to be converted in 852 institutions (central administrative agencies, public institutions, local

governments, etc.) within September.

* e.g. (Seoul and Gwangju Metropolitan Governments) Part of the profits or management costs of contract companies will be used to finance the improvement of their workers' working conditions.

Specialist consulting services (more than 500 specialists) tailored to the needs of each institution will be provided to deal with labor-management conflict that might arise in the conversion process.

MOEL will firmly establish the principle of hiring regular employees for all positions, eradicate irrational discrimination against non-regular workers and actively respond to problems facing subcontractors' workers who have been insufficiently protected.

The principle of employing regular workers for work of a permanent and continuous nature or work related to people's lives and safety will be institutionalized. Non-regular employment will be allowed only when there is a reasonable ground (vacancy replacement, seasonal work, etc.).

MOEL will reform the system of correction of discrimination against non-regular workers* and put in place a dedicated team in each local employment and labor office to judge more actively and promptly whether there is discrimination.

* The reform includes broadening the range of comparable workers and reducing the list of reasonable grounds that are used as standards whereby discrimination is recognized.

MOEL will also enhance protection for subcontractors' workers by institutionalizing principal contractors' responsibility for occupational safety*, guaranteeing proper wages and pay delays.

* Specific measures include prohibiting principal contractors from contracting out highly hazardous or dangerous work to subcontractors, expanding the scope of principal contractors' responsibility and raising the level of punishment.

MOEL will announce concrete measures for non-regular workers in the private

sector in its five-year jobs policy roadmap in the second half of this year.

After the announcement of the roadmap, a non-regular employment task force involving both employers and workers will be set up to build social consensus on concrete details.

With regard to the second theme, MOEL emphasized that working long hours is a major cause of Korea's high suicide rate and lowest rank in the national happiness index and labor productivity and therefore needs to be addressed urgently.

To begin with, as its top priority, MOEL will pursue an amendment to the Labor Standards Act which will reduce the maximum working hours to 52 hours a week. It will also reduce the scope of industries exceptionally excluded from the working hour provisions and consider its eventual abolition.

MOEL will come up with guidelines for regulating the inclusive wage system which has been pointed out as a cause of long working hours, by October and consider legally restricting it.

Labor inspection administration will be made more scientific and professional, for example by expanding the digital evidence analysis team, to find and correct hidden working hour violations that are hard to detect by examining documents.

Reducing working hours requires a change in culture as well as legislative and institutional change, so MOEL will strengthen its collaboration with the private sector to improve the way of working and work culture*.

* Specific improvements include promoting the use of annual leave, refraining from work-related contacts after hours, increasing work efficiency and encouraging workers to leave work on time.

MOEL said that reducing working hours will lead to people's happy lives by protecting the health of workers, promoting the employment of young people and enabling work-life balance.

It reiterated that the National Assembly, private firms and the society as a whole as well as the government should make concerted efforts to reduce working hours.

3. MOGEF

MOGEF discussed 'measures to prevent women's career breaks and support their re-employment' and 'measures to prevent gender violence and expand protection for victims' as its main tasks for the second half of this year.

By taking those measures, it will increase the employment rate of women in their 30s to 63% by 2022 and create a society that is free of gender violence and safe for women.

For a start, the functions of new job centers for women which have been focused mainly on helping women find work after career breaks will be expanded to include preventing women from taking a career break. MOGEF will drastically increase women's participation in economic activities by spreading family-friendly programs across workplaces and enhancing support for child care.

With a view to providing employment support to women in their 30s who take a career break most often, MOGEF, in collaboration with MOEL, will create a job search package program that establishes individualized career development plans and provides integrated services, including vocational training, job matching and support for workplace adaptation, and run it on a pilot basis from next year.

Companies will be given a stronger incentive* to increase the employment of career-break women (MOSF), and training courses in promising fields, such as 3D printing design, will be set up to cope with the fourth industrial revolution.

* The tax credit rate applicable when a company re-employs a career-break woman will be raised from 10% now to 30% in 2018.

In addition, MOGEF will operate a career development program for young

women to help women in their 20s and 30s maintain and develop their careers. Meanwhile, it will create a working environment where men and women are equal by strengthening affirmative action measures, implementing a gender pay gap disclosure system (MOEL) and distributing a equal pay manual (first half of 2018).

Moreover, MOGEF will promote family-friendly programs in workplaces and provide seamless childcare support to prevent women from taking a career break because of the burden of child care.

It will encourage voluntary participation among SMEs by giving them stronger incentives, such as more bonus points awarded to certified family-friendly enterprises when they bid for government procurement contracts (1.7 points in 2017 → 2.0 points in 2018), and develop and distribute a family-friendly program manual for SMEs and enhance the effectiveness of family-friendly programs through MOEL's reinforced labor inspections.

* Certified family-friendly companies: 1,828 (983 SMEs) in 2016→ 2,800 (1,600 SMEs) in 2017 (target number)

In order to address childcare blind spots, such as insufficient facility-based childcare services and childcare services for working parents, MOGEF will increase the number of childcare helpers (21,000 in 2017 → 23,000 in 2018) and expand cooperative childcare sharing centers aimed at promoting childcare sharing (149 in 2017 → 196 in 2018) and after-school academies for minors (250 in 2017 → 260 in 2018).

MOGEF will also strength responses to new types of gender violence, such as hidden camera crimes and digital sex crimes, which are growing these days, and human rights blind spots, such as female marriage migrants who are not protected in case of family conflict or domestic violence.

For a start, MOGEF, jointly with other relevant government agencies, will establish comprehensive measures to prevent and punish digital sex crimes, such as hidden camera crimes, and to provide support to victims.

It will step up efforts to block and prevent illegal videos, such as those taken with hidden cameras, and consider imposing punishment and the cost of deleting video records on illegal video distributors.

Meanwhile, it will expand education and campaigns for prevention of hidden camera crimes and establish a comprehensive support system, including counseling, investigation support, record deletion, litigation assistance and follow-up monitoring, to support victims.

In an effort to strengthen support for victims of gender violence and the State's responsibility, MOGEF will pursue the enactment of the Gender Violence Prevention Act (tentative name) and the Punishment for Stalking Act (tentative name) and establish a national action plan for prevention of gender violence jointly with other relevant government agencies.

In particular, in order to tackle the recent high incidence of sexual violence and harassment in public institutions, MOGEF will expand on-site inspections of public institutions where such problems have occurred to prevent recurrence, designate those institutions as institutions subject to special management and conduct continuous monitoring of them for two years.

MOGEF will strengthen the protection of female marriage migrants' human rights by preventing violence against such women and expanding protection and support for victims.

It will provide female marriage migrants with various information about living in Korea before they enter Korea, expand human rights education provided prior to entry, and enhance human rights education for prospective spouses and their families.

It will also expand the employment grant program and the self-reliance support package program to help female marriage migrants achieve self-reliance.