

Minister emphasizes corporate social responsibility to businesses

May 2, 2018

Employment and Labor Minister Kim Young-joo held a meeting with businesses at the Korea Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) on May 2nd (Wed.).

The meeting, the second of its kind following the one that took place for the banking sector last April, was attended by KCCI Executive Vice Chairman Kim Jun-dong and business leaders of companies with more than 300 employees, including Samsung Electronics and Hyundai Motor.

At the meeting, the Minister and the business leaders exchanged opinions on measures to ensure a soft landing of the scheduled implementation of the amended law to reduce working hours in workplaces and that reduced working time will lead to the creation of jobs for young people.

The business representatives at the meeting introduced their own efforts to reduce working hours and shared difficulties they faced in the process and opinions about the government support for working-hour reduction.

Minister Kim stressed that with the 52-hour limit on weekly working hours in the latest amendment to the Labor Standards Act due to take effect on July 1st, starting with companies with more than 300 employees, the companies gathered today can lead other smaller companies by reducing their working hours proactively. She also asked them to join efforts to ensure that working time reduction can lead to more jobs for young people.

The Minister also emphasized that the 52-hour cap will be phased in according to company size by July 2021, to give workplaces with fewer than 300 employees enough time to prepare for the change. The new regulation will apply to workplaces with more than 300 employees from Jul. 1st, 2018 (Jul. 1st, 2019 for the 21 industries taken off the list of industries granted exemption); workplaces with 50-300 employees from Jan. 1st, 2020; and workplaces with 5-50 employees from Jul. 1st, 2021.

She asked the business leaders with more than 300 employees to actively support the new regulation by for example making prices reflect actual supply costs to help their suppliers minimize difficulties caused by working time reduction.

Minister Kim said that childcare facilities reliable enough for working parents to leave their children during daytime are needed in order to address the serious problem of low fertility in Korea and prevent women suffering from career breaks.

She emphasized that the government is setting up joint childcare centers at transportation hubs, such as locations near a subway station, to make it easy for dual-earner parents working as non-regular employees or in SMEs to leave their children to childcare providers. She also

talked about a plan recently announced by the Korea Federation of Banks to establish childcare centers in 20 hub areas nationwide and requested the business leaders to actively take part in pursuing win-win cooperation to provide childcare support for SME and non-regular workers.

Moreover, noting that the percentage of women in managerial positions has been stuck in the 20% range, the Minister called for businesses' efforts to ensure that female workers can pursue their career in a respected and non-discriminative environment.