

**LegCo Panel on Manpower  
(Meeting to be held on 21 March 2002)**

**Briefing by Census and Statistics Department on  
the Summary Results of the 2001 Population Census  
Relating to Labour and Manpower Matters**

**Purpose**

This paper briefs members on the summary results of 2001 Population Census on labour and manpower matters and analyzes the key trends and policy implications.

**Background**

2. The 2001 Population Census was conducted in March 2001, with the first report “Summary Results” released in October 2001. The census provides a wealth of data on the socio-economic characteristics of the population in Hong Kong, thus allowing studies to be undertaken on various facets of the community. Key statistics on labour and manpower matters are contained in the Annex I.

3. More detailed data and analysis of the 2001 Population Census will be made available in the reports to be released later. These include the “Graphic Guide”, “Main Report”, “Main Tables” and a series of thematic reports on population sub-groups. For data at the district level, reports entitled “Basic Tables for District Council Districts”, “Basic Tables for Constituency Areas” and “Basic Tables for Tertiary Planning Units” have been released.

**Key trends and phenomenon**

***Expanding labour force***

4. The labour force increased by 22.3% from 2.81 million in 1991 to 3.44 million in 2001, with an average annual growth rate of 2.0%. This average annual growth rate was lower than that of 2.5% for all persons aged 15 and over.

### ***Growing female participation in labour force***

5. Further analyzing the increase in labour force by sex indicated that the increase, in both absolute and relative terms, was much larger for females than males. The number of males in the labour force increased by 206 705 (or 11.9%) from 1991 to 2001, while the corresponding increase in the number of females was 420 285 (or 39.3%). However, a significant proportion of the growth in the female labour force was attributable to the increase in foreign domestic helpers. Nearly all of the foreign domestic helpers (over 98%) were females. The increase in the number of female foreign domestic helpers during the past ten years was 125 153, which accounted for 29.8% of the increase in the female labour force. With foreign domestic helpers excluded, the number of females in the labour force increased by 295 132 (or 29.1%), from 1.01 million in 1991 to 1.31 million in 2001.

### ***Aging of the workforce***

6. Over the past ten years, the proportion of persons aged 25-54 in the labour force increased from 71.8% in 1991 to 79.2% in 2001, but the proportion of the younger and older age groups decreased. The median age of the labour force increased from 34 in 1991 to 37 in 2001 due to aging of the overall population and delayed entry into the labour force as a result of increased post-secondary educational opportunities.

### ***Declining labour force participation rate***

7. The overall labour force participation rate (i.e. the proportion of economically active population in the total population aged 15 and over) dropped gradually from 64.3% in 1991 to 61.4% in 2001. Analyzed by sex, the labour force participation rate for males decreased mildly from 78.7% in 1991 to 71.9% in 2001, whereas that for females increased slightly from 49.5% to 51.6% in the same period. However, when foreign domestic helpers are excluded, it could be seen that the labour force participation rate for females remained stable at around 48%.

8. In general, the labour force participation rate for males increased rapidly from a low level at ages 15-19 to a high level at ages 25-34, and then remained at such a high level for ages 35-54 before it dropped to a very low

level at ages 65 and over. As for females, the labour force participation rate also increased from a low level at ages 15-19 but peaked at ages 25-34, and it then decreased gradually with increasing age. The labour force participation rates for both male and female youths (i.e. persons aged 15-24) were at low level as a result of the increased educational opportunities. On the other hand, the female labour force participation rates at other ages were higher because more females were better educated and had strong tendency to remain in the labour force.

9. Compared with 1991, the labour force participation rates of married females had risen, reflecting more married females entering the labour market. The rates for married females remained lower than those for never married females for all age groups except for those aged 15-19. However, the opposite was observed on that for the males, with a higher rate for married males than never married males.

### ***Improved education attainment***

10. Educational attainment of the working population continued to improve over the past ten years. The proportion of the working population who had kindergarten education or no schooling decreased from 5.6% in 1991 to 2.0% in 2001. The proportion of those having secondary/matriculation education, however, increased from 57.3% in 1991 to 61.0% in 2001, and that of those having tertiary education, from 14.1% to 21.7% in the same period. Further examining the educational attainment of the working population by economic activity status, it is noted that more employees and employers in 2001 had attended secondary and higher education than those self-employed persons and unpaid family workers, being 83.3% for both employees and employers, 73.5% for self-employed persons and 65.3% for unpaid family workers. The proportion of employees having attended tertiary education was slightly higher at 22.1%, when compared with the proportion of 21.7% for all working population. Detailed statistics on working population by education attainment and economic activity status is at Annex II.

### ***Growing share of managers and professionals***

11. Analyzed by occupation category, the proportion of professionals, associate professionals, managers and administrators in the working population increased from 3.7%, 10.3% and 9.2% in 1991 to 5.5%, 15.3% and 10.7% in 2001. On the other hand, there was a continuous decrease in the proportion of craft and related workers and plant and machine operators and assemblers in the working population, from 14.7% and 13.5% in 1991 to 9.9% and 7.3% in 2001.

12. The occupational distribution varied between males and females. A significantly higher proportion of females was found working as clerks and as workers in elementary occupations than males. The reverse situation was found in such occupations as managers and administrators, craft and related workers, and plant operators and assemblers. However, the differences between males and females in these occupations have narrowed significantly in the past ten years. Detailed statistics on working population by occupation and sex is at Annex III.

### ***Redistribution of economic sectors of the workforce towards service-oriented***

13. “Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels” remained the largest sector, with its share in total employment increasing from 22.5% in 1991 to 26.2% in 2001. “Community, social and personal services” was the second largest sector, with its share increasing from 19.9% to 25.5%. The proportion of the working population in the “Financing, insurance, real estate and business services” sector also increased, from 10.6% to 16.1%. Yet the increase in working population in these three sectors were accompanied by a significant decline of workers in the “Manufacturing” industry, with its share decreasing from 28.2% in 1991 to 12.3% in 2001. Detailed statistics on working population by industry and sex is at Annex IV.

### ***Rising median monthly income***

14. The median monthly income from main employment of the working population increased by 93% from \$5,170 in 1991 to \$10,000 in 2001. Over the same period, overall consumer prices as measured by the Composite Consumer Price Index increased by 53%.

15. The median monthly income from main employment of males was \$12,000 in 2001, 34.8% higher than that of their female counterparts at \$8,900. When analyzed by age, males in the age group 25-54 and females in the age group 25-44 had relatively higher median monthly income from main employment.

16. The median monthly income from main employment varied greatly among occupations. It ranged from \$30,000 for professionals and \$26,000 for managers and administrators, down to \$5,300 for workers in the elementary occupations. Detailed statistics on median monthly income from main employment of working population by occupation is at Annex V.

### **Key trends and policy implications**

17. We observe the following key trends and phenomena in the past 10 years that have implications on manpower and labour matters:

- (a) there was a marked increase in the number of female workers, in particular married women;
- (b) the median age of labour force rose from 34 to 37 between 1991 and 2001;
- (c) by occupation, the proportion of professionals, associate professionals, managers and administrators increased significantly while the percentage accounting for the plant and machine operators and assemblers decreased;
- (d) in terms of economic sectors, both community, social and personal services industry and financing, insurance, real estate and business services industry rose significantly in their share of working population whereas manufacturing declined sharply;

18. With regard to (a), we recognize the growing importance of female in the workforce. In the last ten years, the percentage of female in the labour force has risen from 38% to 43.3%. As for the increase of married women in the labour force, the rise appeared to coincide with the onset of the Asian financial crisis. This suggested that more married women are required to work to

supplement the family income during the economic downturn. To this end, we have been promoting job opportunities in areas such as local domestic helpers and care home workers so that more openings can be made available to them.

19. With the continued aging of our working population, more focused training and employment services are increasingly important for the middle-aged group, who form the backbone of the workforce but face heightening pressure on adjustment to the economic restructuring. To upgrade our workforce, we launched the Skills-upgrading Programme last year. The Programme provides industry-specific skills training for in-service workers with secondary or lower education to equip them with new knowledge and skills to meet changing job requirements. To help long-termed unemployed people aged above 40 to find jobs, The Labour Department launched the Reemployment Pilot Programme for the Middle-Aged. The Programme provides a comprehensive range of value-adding services to the long-term unemployed aged 40 or above. The Programme was piloted to run for 12 months in 2001 and will be extended for another 12 months.

20. The trends highlighted in (c) and (d) above largely matched our forecasts on manpower needs as a result of the ongoing restructuring of our economy and transformation to knowledge-based society. Faced with the development of a knowledge economy, we need to promote lifelong learning and upgrade the overall educational attainment of Hong Kong people. To this end, we will expand our upper secondary school and tertiary places. Apart from formal education, we also need to build a flexible education system and a qualification framework so that there will be multi-layers and multi-channeled learning opportunities to facilitate continuing education and personal development. To promote life-long learning in the community, we have earmarked \$5 billion to subsidize adults wishing to pursue continuing education. We are also setting up a Manpower Development Committee to review the provision of vocational training and retraining, develop qualifications framework, and a system of accreditation and quality assurance.

## **Conclusion**

21. The Department is continuing with work on consolidating the statistical database of the 2001 Population Census. These findings would provide useful reference for policy formulation in regard to manpower and labour matters. In particular, these findings should enable the Manpower Development Committee, which will be established in 2003, to better assess manpower needs, map out training requirements and draw up priorities to the effect that manpower training can more effectively support the needs for the economic development of Hong Kong. The Administration's aim is to provide high quality workers that are innovative, adaptable and with high education attainment and ability for self-learning in a bid to maintain our competitive edge in the face of the economic restructuring.

Education and Manpower Bureau  
Census and Statistics Department  
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## Key Labour and Manpower Statistics

	1991	1996	2001
<b>I. Labour force</b>			
Male	1 742 271	1 925 095	1 948 976
Female	1 068 731	1 257 402	1 489 016
Total	2 811 002	3 182 497	3 437 992
<b>II. Median age of labour force</b>	34	36	37
<b>III. Sex ratio of labour force (males per 1 000 females)</b>	1 630	1 531	1 309
<b>IV. Labour force participation rate (%)</b>			
Male			
Married	81.0	78.8	74.5
Never married	74.8	72.5	66.7
Overall	78.7	76.6	71.9
Female			
Married	41.3	41.6	44.5
Never married	69.8	67.9	67.9
Overall	49.5	49.2	51.6
Both sexes			
Married	60.3	59.3	58.6
Never married	72.6	70.4	67.3
Overall	64.3	62.8	61.4
<b>V. Working Population</b>			
(i) Working population	2 715 103	3 043 698	3 252 706
(ii) Proportion of working population engaged in			
Managers and administrators	9.2%	12.1%	10.7%
Professionals	3.7%	5.0%	5.5%
Associate professionals	10.3%	12.1%	15.3%
Clerks	15.9%	16.8%	16.3%
Service workers and shop sales workers	13.2%	13.8%	15.0%
Craft and related workers	14.7%	12.3%	9.9%
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	13.5%	8.5%	7.3%
Elementary occupations	18.5%	18.6%	19.5%
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers; and occupations not classifiable	1.0%	0.8%	0.3%
(iii) Proportion of working population engaged in			
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels industry	22.5%	24.9%	26.2%
Community, social and personal services industry	19.9%	22.3%	25.5%
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services industry	10.6%	13.4%	16.1%
(iv) Median monthly income from main employment (HK\$)			
Male	6,000	10,000	12,000
Female	4,250	8,000	8,900
Both sexes	5,170	9,500	10,000



**Working Population by Educational Attainment (Highest Level Attended)  
and Economic Activity Status, 1991, 1996 and 2001**

Year and Educational Attainment	Self-employed		Employers		Employees <sup>(1)</sup>		Unpaid family workers		Total	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1991										
No schooling/Kindergarten	15 135	10.4	4 878	3.2	126 879	5.3	5 822	17.4	152 714	5.6
Primary	45 665	31.4	31 490	20.6	534 115	22.4	10 796	32.2	622 066	22.9
Lower secondary	31 702	21.8	31 687	20.7	502 006	21.1	6 676	19.9	572 071	21.1
Upper secondary	31 666	21.8	46 316	30.3	745 497	31.3	7 338	21.9	830 817	30.6
Matriculation <sup>(2)</sup>	5 785	4.0	9 359	6.1	137 776	5.8	985	2.9	153 905	5.7
Tertiary : Non-degree course	5 292	3.6	8 483	5.5	166 621	7.0	966	2.9	181 362	6.7
Degree course	10 236	7.0	20 730	13.6	170 265	7.1	937	2.8	202 168	7.4
Total	145 481	100.0	152 943	100.0	2 383 159	100.0	33 520	100.0	2 715 103	100.0
1996										
No schooling/Kindergarten	8 721	6.8	3 587	1.8	73 011	2.7	3 549	13.0	88 868	2.9
Primary	35 672	28.0	34 337	16.8	472 340	17.6	7 870	28.9	550 219	18.1
Lower secondary	31 241	24.5	41 628	20.4	541 087	20.2	5 930	21.8	619 886	20.4
Upper secondary	29 061	22.8	62 104	30.4	890 414	33.2	6 538	24.0	988 117	32.5
Matriculation <sup>(2)</sup>	6 340	5.0	15 806	7.7	179 963	6.7	1 189	4.4	203 298	6.7
Tertiary : Non-degree course	4 089	3.2	10 830	5.3	172 276	6.4	834	3.1	188 029	6.2
Degree course	12 337	9.7	36 122	17.7	355 498	13.2	1 324	4.9	405 281	13.3
Total	127 461	100.0	204 414	100.0	2 684 589	100.0	27 234	100.0	3 043 698	100.0
2001										
No schooling/Kindergarten	4 745	3.5	3 635	1.7	55 242	1.9	2 245	9.5	65 867	2.0
Primary	30 919	23.0	31 947	15.0	426 735	14.8	5 946	25.2	495 547	15.2
Lower secondary	35 004	26.0	45 411	21.3	559 666	19.4	5 311	22.5	645 392	19.8
Upper secondary	34 803	25.9	63 743	29.9	889 958	30.9	6 228	26.4	994 732	30.6
Matriculation <sup>(2)</sup>	10 067	7.5	21 919	10.3	311 438	10.8	1 682	7.1	345 106	10.6
Tertiary : Non-degree course	4 247	3.2	9 025	4.2	147 015	5.1	595	2.5	160 882	4.9
Degree course	14 790	11.0	37 629	17.6	491 169	17.0	1 592	6.7	545 180	16.8
Total	134 575	100.0	213 309	100.0	2 881 223	100.0	23 599	100.0	3 252 706	100.0

Notes : (1) Figures include outworkers and student workers.

(2) The figures include the equivalent educational attainment (highest level attended) of "Technician level (other further non-advance education)" in the 1996 Population By-census and "Diploma/certificate courses in Institute of Vocational Education / former polytechnics" in the 2001 Population Census. However, the similar group "Diploma/certificate courses in technical institutes / polytechnics" was included under "Tertiary: Non-degree course" in the 1991 Population Census.

## Working Population by Occupation and Sex, 1991, 1996 and 2001

Year and Occupation	Male		Female		Both Sexes	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1991						
Managers and administrators	198 857	11.8	50 390	4.9	249 247	9.2
Professionals	68 516	4.1	30 815	3.0	99 331	3.7
Associate professionals	164 121	9.7	115 788	11.3	279 909	10.3
Clerks	135 665	8.0	295 986	28.8	431 651	15.9
Service workers and shop sales workers	230 823	13.7	128 496	12.5	359 319	13.2
Craft and related workers	352 264	20.9	45 728	4.4	397 992	14.7
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	234 929	13.9	130 897	12.7	365 826	13.5
Elementary occupations	280 434	16.6	223 398	21.7	503 832	18.5
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers; and occupations not classifiable	20 757	1.2	7 239	0.7	27 996	1.0
Total	1 686 366	100.0	1 028 737	100.0	2 715 103	100.0
1996						
Managers and administrators	282 969	15.4	86 354	7.1	369 323	12.1
Professionals	100 130	5.5	51 461	4.3	151 591	5.0
Associate professionals	201 405	11.0	167 727	13.9	369 132	12.1
Clerks	155 547	8.5	357 172	29.5	512 719	16.8
Service workers and shop sales workers	256 125	14.0	163 596	13.5	419 721	13.8
Craft and related workers	328 086	17.9	45 057	3.7	373 143	12.3
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	211 748	11.6	48 161	4.0	259 909	8.5
Elementary occupations	280 114	15.3	284 568	23.5	564 682	18.6
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers; and occupations not classifiable	17 181	0.9	6 297	0.5	23 478	0.8
Total	1 833 305	100.0	1 210 393	100.0	3 043 698	100.0
2001						
Managers and administrators	257 023	14.1	92 614	6.5	349 637	10.7
Professionals	114 340	6.3	65 485	4.6	179 825	5.5
Associate professionals	265 829	14.6	232 842	16.2	498 671	15.3
Clerks	148 646	8.2	381 346	26.6	529 992	16.3
Service workers and shop sales workers	264 466	14.5	224 495	15.7	488 961	15.0
Craft and related workers	294 036	16.2	26 964	1.9	321 000	9.9
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	207 001	11.4	31 665	2.2	238 666	7.3
Elementary occupations	260 337	14.3	375 056	26.2	635 393	19.5
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers; and occupations not classifiable	7 725	0.4	2 836	0.2	10 561	0.3
Total	1 819 403	100.0	1 433 303	100.0	3 252 706	100.0

## Working Population by Industry and Sex, 1991, 1996 and 2001

Year and Industry	Male		Female		Both Sexes	
	Number	%	Number	%	Number	%
1991						
Manufacturing	446 676	26.5	321 445	31.2	768 121	28.2
Construction	176 629	10.5	11 222	1.1	187 851	6.9
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	363 683	21.6	247 703	24.1	611 386	22.5
Transport, storage and communication	220 974	13.1	44 712	4.3	265 686	9.8
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	171 618	10.2	115 550	11.2	287 168	10.6
Community, social and personal services	264 821	15.7	274 302	26.7	539 123	19.9
Others <sup>(1)</sup>	41 965	2.5	13 803	1.3	55 768	2.1
Total	1 686 366	100.0	1 028 737	100.0	2 715 103	100.0
1996						
Manufacturing	354 345	19.3	220 522	18.2	574 867	18.9
Construction	225 061	12.3	20 379	1.7	245 440	8.1
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	426 597	23.3	330 642	27.3	757 239	24.9
Transport, storage and communication	256 397	14.0	74 577	6.2	330 974	10.9
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	243 334	13.3	165 352	13.7	408 686	13.4
Community, social and personal services	292 666	16.0	387 382	32.0	680 048	22.3
Others <sup>(1)</sup>	34 905	1.9	11 539	1.0	46 444	1.5
Total	1 833 305	100.0	1 210 393	100.0	3 043 698	100.0
2001						
Manufacturing	247 887	13.6	153 065	10.7	400 952	12.3
Construction	227 594	12.5	20 289	1.4	247 883	7.6
Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels	426 747	23.5	425 872	29.7	852 619	26.2
Transport, storage and communication	283 294	15.6	83 018	5.8	366 312	11.3
Financing, insurance, real estate and business services	309 218	17.0	213 604	14.9	522 822	16.1
Community, social and personal services	299 674	16.5	530 046	37.0	829 720	25.5
Others <sup>(1)</sup>	24 989	1.4	7 409	0.5	32 398	1.0
Total	1 819 403	100.0	1 433 303	100.0	3 252 706	100.0

Note: (1) "Others" include such industries as "Agriculture and fishing", "Mining and quarrying", "Electricity, gas and water" and industrial activities inadequately described or unclassifiable.

**Median Monthly Income from Main Employment of Working Population<sup>(1)</sup>  
by Occupation and Sex, 1991, 1996 and 2001**

Occupation	Median Monthly Income from Main Employment (HK\$)								
	1991			1996			2001		
	Male	Female	Overall	Male	Female	Overall	Male	Female	Overall
Managers and administrators	12,000	10,000	12,000	20,000	18,000	20,000	26,380	24,000	26,000
Professionals	16,000	12,500	15,000	26,000	21,000	24,000	30,000	26,250	30,000
Associate professionals	8,500	8,000	8,000	15,000	13,500	14,000	16,500	16,000	16,000
Clerks	5,500	5,000	5,000	9,500	8,600	9,000	10,000	10,000	10,000
Service workers and shop sales workers	6,000	4,000	5,000	10,000	7,000	8,500	11,000	7,300	9,110
Craft and related workers	5,500	3,600	5,000	9,000	6,500	8,500	10,000	7,000	10,000
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	5,500	3,000	4,500	9,000	5,400	8,500	10,000	6,000	10,000
Elementary occupations	4,000	3,000	3,500	7,000	3,800	5,500	7,500	3,860	5,300
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers; and occupations not classifiable	4,000	2,000	3,500	7,500	5,480	7,000	8,000	4,500	7,000
Overall	6,000	4,250	5,170	10,000	8,000	9,500	12,000	8,900	10,000

Note : (1) Working population excludes unpaid family workers.