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For information

**Subcommittee to Study Issues
Relating to Mainland-HKSAR Families**

**Implications of the integration of local transportation network
with that of the Mainland on Hong Kong's population**

PURPOSE

At the meeting of the Subcommittee to Study Issues Relating to Mainland-HKSAR Families held on 19 January 2010, Members enquired whether there would be any implications on Hong Kong's population structure in the light of the integration of local transportation network with that of the Mainland. This paper provides the relevant information.

DETAILS

Background

2. Historically there have been strong social and economic integration between Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region due to their proximity. This socio-economic interaction has continued to grow over the years as a result of a number of latest developments. Among others, the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA) and the Individual Visit Scheme (IVS) have brought along more economic cooperation and more frequent movements of people of Hong Kong and the Mainland across the boundary. With the rapid social and economic developments in the PRD region, there is also an increasing trend of Hong Kong residents spending leisure time or taking up employment in the Mainland; getting married with Mainland residents; residing in the Mainland, etc. The most recent signing of the Framework Agreement on Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation in April 2010, which is key to implementing the "Outline of the Plan for the Reform and Development of the PRD", opens up new opportunities for further development and economic cooperation between Hong Kong and the PRD region.

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3. In addition, the development of a number of mega cross-boundary infrastructural projects would significantly reduce the travelling time between Hong Kong and the Mainland, in particular the PRD region, bringing Hong Kong and the PRD region even closer and inducing more frequent and rapid movements of people of Hong Kong and the Mainland across the boundary.

Projections of Hong Kong Population

4. Population¹ projections of Hong Kong by age and sex for a time span of 30 years are compiled by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD): one following each population census or by-census, and an updating performed two to three years later if there is deemed to be a need for updating in the light of analysis of available data. The projections provide a common and up-to-date basis for bureaux/departments in planning various programme areas including education, housing, transport, social service, medical and health services and infrastructural facilities.

5. The projection exercise takes into account the latest demographic and socio-economic developments in Hong Kong, specifically the trends on fertility, mortality and movement. Views from relevant bureaux/departments regarding the assumptions and methodology are sought and incorporated into the projection model. Where government policies are involved, the existing policies are taken to continue to apply. The population projections have been prepared in a rigorous manner by applying appropriate statistical projection techniques, making reference to the most recent trends, and incorporating views of relevant bureaux/departments regarding the assumptions which have to be made in the course of compiling the projections. However, there could often be unforeseen circumstances and developments in the future which may cause

¹ The "Hong Kong Resident Population" concept has been adopted by C&SD in compiling Hong Kong population estimates/statistics. Under this enumeration approach, the Hong Kong population comprises "Usual Residents" and "Mobile Residents" only. "Usual Residents" refer to two categories of people: (a) Hong Kong Permanent Residents who had stayed in Hong Kong for at least three months during the six months before or for at least three months during the six months after the reference time point; and (b) Hong Kong Non-permanent Residents who were in Hong Kong at the reference time point. As for "Mobile Residents", they are Hong Kong Permanent Residents who had stayed in Hong Kong for at least one month but less than three months during the six months before or for at least one month but less than three months during the six months after the reference time point, regardless of whether they were in Hong Kong or not at the reference time point.

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the actual outcome to deviate from the projection results. An updating will be performed if there is deemed to be a need for updating in the light of analysis of available data.

6. In updating the assumptions about the projected net movement of Hong Kong residents, due consideration would be given to the movement patterns in the past few years where the effect of the continuous social and economic integration between Hong Kong and the Mainland on demographic trends is reflected. Based on the recent past trend, it is projected that the number of Mobile Residents will continue to grow over the coming 30 years due to the continuous integration between Hong Kong and the PRD region.

Implications of the integration of transportation network between Hong Kong and the Mainland

7. Latest infrastructural development will bring Hong Kong and the PRD region even closer. Upon completion of the Hong Kong section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link in 2015, the travelling time will be 14 minutes from West Kowloon to Shenzhen, 48 minutes to Guangzhou, four hours to Wuhan and six hours to Shanghai. Besides, when the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge opens in around 2016, the western PRD will be within a three-hour commuting radius from Hong Kong. The new boundary control point at Liantang/Heung Yuen Wai and the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Express Line, if built, will also enhance Hong Kong's integration with the Mainland. They will also shorten travelling time between Hong Kong and the Mainland and increase the volume of passenger flow between Hong Kong and the Mainland.

8. With travelling time further reduced, Hong Kong people are opened up to much more opportunities whether in terms of employment opportunities in the Mainland or the choice of their places of residence. People from the Mainland would also have more incentives to visit Hong Kong. For instance, Hong Kong people can commute frequently to the PRD region to set up business or take up employment in the PRD region without the need to actually reside across the boundary. For those who choose to reside in the PRD region while maintaining their employment in Hong Kong, their children may also commute to Hong Kong for education.

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9. While improved transportation network would inevitably increase the number of commuting trips, people's choice to live in the Mainland or in Hong Kong is far more complex. Amongst others, the ease and cost of cross-boundary commuting; availability of employment opportunities; the narrowing difference in living standard and cost of living between Hong Kong and the PRD region would affect people's decisions. As there are many factors other than transportation network which may affect Hong Kong people's propensity to take up residence in the Mainland, it is difficult, if not impossible, to single out the effect of the transportation network factor.

10. In view of the latest social and economic developments, C&SD is now updating the population projections using 2009 as the base year. The projections will soon be released. In updating the assumptions about the projected net movement of Hong Kong residents, views from relevant bureaux/departments with due consideration given to the latest socio-economic and infrastructural developments are sought and incorporated into the projection model.

11. Given the complexity and uncertainty of the issue, the Government will closely monitor the situation through analysing movement records of Hong Kong people and undertaking surveys as appropriate. C&SD will closely monitor the performance of the population projections and review regularly the need of updating the projections.

Census and Statistics Department
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