

LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL BRIEF

Census and Statistics Ordinance
(Chapter 316)

CENSUS AND STATISTICS (2001 POPULATION CENSUS) ORDER

INTRODUCTION

At the meeting of the Executive Council on 16 May 2000, the Council ADVISED and the Chief Executive ORDERED that the Census and Statistics (2001 Population Census) Order, at the **Annex**, should be made under section 9 of the Census and Statistics Ordinance, to enable the conduct of a population census in March 2001.

BACKGROUND AND ARGUMENT

2. It is established practice in Hong Kong (since 1961) to conduct a population census every ten years and a by-census in the middle of the inter-censal period. In line with this practice, a population census is scheduled to be conducted during 15 to 27 March 2001. The aim of conducting population censuses and by-censuses is to obtain up-to-date benchmark information on the demographic and socio-economic characteristics of the population, as well as on its geographical distribution. Such information is vital to Government for planning and policy formulation and also important to the private sector for business and research purposes.

3. The 2001 Population Census will cover all Hong Kong residents (including those away from Hong Kong for various purposes like business, working and touring) and all others who are present in Hong Kong at the Census reference moment, i.e. 3 a.m. of 14 March 2001.

4. A sampling fraction of about one-seventh will be adopted for selection of households for detailed enquiry on a broad range of socio-economic characteristics. The remaining six-sevenths of households will be subjected to a simple enumeration, with households and persons being enquired only on the basic characteristics. These together will provide a full count of the population with information on its socio-economic characteristics.
5. The data topics to be collected in the Census are specified in the schedule under the Order.
6. As in the previous rounds of census and by-census, strict procedures will be implemented in the 2001 Population Census to ensure that all information collected on individual persons and households will be handled in strict confidence for protecting data privacy. Only statistics from which individual identity cannot be revealed will be released. The completed questionnaires containing data on individual persons and households will all be destroyed not later than one year from the commencement date of the Census.

THE ORDER

7. The main provisions of the Order are to specify the persons and premises in respect of which particulars are to be obtained, the purpose of the census, the persons who are required to give the information, the dates for taking the census, and the dates for destroying the completed schedules. A schedule specifying the particulars which are required to be given by the respondents is included in the Order.

PUBLIC CONSULTATION

8. The Statistics Advisory Board has discussed the project in detail. Its views have been incorporated in the present plan. Extensive consultation has also been held with relevant private sector organisations prior to drawing up the list of data topics.

BASIC LAW IMPLICATIONS

9. The Department of Justice advises that the Order does not conflict with those provisions of the Basic Law carrying no human rights implications.

HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

10. The Department of Justice has advised that the Census, to be conducted in accordance with the Census and Statistics Ordinance, is consistent with the human rights provisions of the Basic Law.

FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

11. The total expenditure (excluding data processing expenditure) for conducting the 2001 Population Census over a four-year period from 1999-2000 to 2002-2003 is about \$500 million. As to expenditure for data processing, the amount is estimated at \$72.6 million. Funds have been provided for this purpose.

12. A Census project team comprising mainly statistical, administrative, clerical and field staff will be established. The number of additional posts required in the team varies in different stages of the project, with a peak of about 200 nearer and during the Census period. Upon completion of the Census, these posts will lapse. The civil servants posted to the project team through internal deployment within the Census and Statistics Department will be re-deployed back to other posts within the Department. The other staff employed on non-civil service contract terms will leave upon completion of contract.

13. Apart from the Census project team, about 23 000 temporary field workers will be employed. They are mainly school teachers and senior secondary and post-secondary students, in order to ensure a secured and stable supply of manpower, effectiveness of field work and better public confidence, and also to bring about a civic education effect for the younger generation. To facilitate their participation in the Census work, the Director of Education has agreed to recommend a census holiday of 13 days during the Census period for primary and secondary schools, whilst keeping the schools' entitlement to a total of 90 days of school holidays in an academic year unchanged.

ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS

14. The 2001 Population Census will provide comprehensive and useful information pertaining to the population and households not only to the Government for planning and policy making purposes but also to the business community for formulating business strategies, which should be of benefit to the overall development of Hong Kong.

LEGISLATIVE TIMETABLE

15. The legislative timetable is as follows –

Publication in the Gazette	19 May 2000
Tabling at the Legislative Council	24 May 2000

PUBLICITY

16. An extensive publicity campaign will be launched around ten weeks before the commencement of the Census. A press conference will be convened at that time, for enhancing public confidence and cooperation which is essential for the collection of accurate data. We will highlight in our publicity the importance of the Census and its benefits to the overall development of Hong Kong, and the measures that the Government will take to protect data privacy.

ENQUIRIES

17. For any enquiries, please contact Mr. H Y CHEUNG of the Financial Services Bureau at 2528 9311, or Mr. Alvin W. K. LI of the Census and Statistics Department at 2582 4801.

Financial Services Bureau
17 May 2000

Legislative Council Brief

The Secretary for Financial Services submits the following note for Members' information -

<u>Title of the note</u>	<u>Date of ExCo</u>	<u>Date of Gazette</u>
Census and Statistics Ordinance (Chapter 316) Census and Statistics (2001 Population Census) Order	16 May 2000	19 May 2000

19 May 2000

Financial Services Bureau