

**Information Note for
the LegCo Panel on Financial Affairs**

Summary Results of the 2006 Population By-census

Background

The 2006 Population By-census (06BC) was conducted in the 18-day period from 15 July to 1 August 2006 and the summary results were released on 22 February 2007. A report "Hong Kong 2006 Population By-census Summary Results", which presents the basic facts for the whole range of data topics in the 06BC, was published on the same day.

2. More reports containing data in detailed form and in-depth statistical analysis will be released in stages. The Census and Statistics Department also provides service to users who require tabulations which have to be specially compiled.

Selected Key Findings

Demographic characteristics

3. The Hong Kong Resident Population was 6.86 million in mid-July 2006. During 2001-2006, the average annual growth rate of the population was 0.4%, which was lower than that of 0.9% during 1996-2001.

4. The ageing trend of the population continued during the past ten years, with median age rising from 34 in 1996 to 36 in 2001 and further to 39 in 2006. This is attributable to the continuously low level of fertility rate and mortality improvement experienced by the population, thus leading to a reduction in the proportion of children aged under 15 (from 18.5% in 1996 to 13.7% in 2006) and an increase in the proportion of people aged 65 and over (from 10.1% in 1996 to 12.4% in 2006). However, the overall dependency ratio (which refers to the ratio of the number of persons aged under 15 and those aged 65 and over to 1 000 persons in the 15-64 age group) dropped from 401 in 1996 to 353 in 2006. The decline was due to a rapid reduction in child dependency which more than offset a surge in elderly dependency.

5. The sex ratio has fallen below parity. From 1 000 males per 1 000 females in 1996, the sex ratio dropped to 911 in 2006. The corresponding sex ratios after excluding foreign domestic helpers were 1 037 and 961.

6. In analysing the sex ratio of the population, it is relevant to consider several factors: (i) at birth there are more baby boys than baby girls; (ii) there is a large number of foreign domestic helpers in the population, who are mostly female and are increasing; (iii) for the new arrivals from the mainland of China, many are wives of Hong Kong men; and (iv) females live longer than males.

7. As regards marital status, the proportion of never-married persons among the male population of age 15 and over decreased from 34.2% in 1996 to 33.9% in 2001 but bounced back to 34.3% in 2006. For the females, the proportion was 28.9% in 1996, rising to 30.1% in 2001 and further to 30.7% in 2006. On the other hand, the proportion of females aged 15 and over being now married continued to decline over the past 10 years, from 59.3% in 1996 to 55.1% in 2006. Besides, the proportion of divorced/separated females (4.7% in 2006) was much higher than that of the males (2.8% in 2006), probably associated with more males getting re-married after divorce than females.

8. About 95% of the population were ethnic Chinese. The two largest non-Chinese ethnic groups in Hong Kong were Filipinos and Indonesians.

Education Characteristics

9. The educational level of the population has improved. The proportion of the population aged 15 and over with secondary or higher education increased from 68% in 1996 to 75% in 2006. In particular, the proportion of those with post-secondary education in degree courses or above also increased significantly from 10% to 15%. Progressive involvement and attainment level of women were particularly remarkable. The proportion of women aged 15-44 having attended secondary and above education increased from 83.6% in 1996 to 92.8% in 2006.

10. About 81% of the students studying full-time courses in schools or educational institutions in Hong Kong attended schools in the same area as that of their residence. About 34% of students walked to school.

Economic Characteristics

11. The labour force increased from 3.2 million in 1996 to 3.6 million in 2006, despite a drop in the overall labour force participation rate from 63% to 60% over the same period. This was mainly due to the increase in population size and the changes in the age-sex structure of the population. Nonetheless, accompanied with the higher educational attainment, the labour force participation rate for females rose from 49.2% in 1996 to 52.4% in 2006. Among the females, the increase in labour force participation rate was particularly pronounced for women aged 25-44, rising from 66.5% in 1996 to 75.0% in 2006, probably associated with the implementation of the compulsory education scheme in 1978.

12. In 2006, about 33% of the working population were managers, administrators, professionals and associate professionals, up from 29% in 1996. In contrast, the proportion of working population engaged as craft and related workers dropped from 12% in 1996 to 8% in 2006.

13. “Wholesale, retail and import/export trades, restaurants and hotels” was the largest economic sector, employing more than 27% of the working population. This was followed by “Community, social and personal services” which also employed almost 27% of the working population.

14. The median monthly income from main employment of the working population was \$10,000 in 2006, representing an increase of 5% over the past ten years.

Household characteristics

15. Over the last decade, the number of domestic households increased by 20% from 1.86 million to 2.23 million. As it increased at a faster rate than the population, the average household size decreased from 3.3 to 3.0. Households became smaller in size over the last decade. In 2006, majority (63.8%) of the households comprised 3 members or less. The corresponding percentage was 54.2% in 1996. For 1-person households, there had been increasing number and proportion of persons aged 30-59 who were never married or divorced/separated, and elderly persons aged 60 and over living alone by themselves.

As regards 2-person households, majority were couples, where a notable increase was noted in the number of elderly couples (i.e. comprising member(s) aged 60 and over) over the past ten years. There was also a significant increase in the number of households with one parent living with one child. For 3-person households, a remarkable increase was recorded in both the number and proportion of small size families with those comprising couples with 1 child becoming more and more common in the ten-year period from 1996 to 2006.

16. The median monthly income of domestic households was \$17,250, a slight decrease of 1% over that of ten years ago. The proportion of domestic households with monthly household income lower than \$8,000 increased from 16.4% in 1996 to 21.2% in 2006 while, on the other hand, the proportion of domestic households with monthly household income higher than \$40,000 also increased from 15.0% to 17.0% over the last ten years. In the same period, prices decreased by 2%, as measured by the Composite Consumer Price Index.

Housing characteristics

17. Some 3.4 million persons lived in private permanent housing, 2.1 million in public rental housing and 1.2 million in subsidized sale flats.

18. There were 1.17 million households who owned the quarters they lived in. Among these households, 52% did not need to pay mortgage payment and loan repayment. Owner-occupiers living in private permanent housing with mortgage payment or loan repayment incurred a median monthly payment of \$9,500, and the median mortgage payment and loan repayment to income ratio was 29%.

19. Domestic households renting whole private housing units paid a median monthly rent of \$5,500. Those living in public rental housing paid less, with a median monthly rent of \$1,390.

Geographical characteristics

20. There was substantial internal migration of the population during the last decade. While ten years ago, Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New

Territories had respectively 21%, 32% and 47% of the population, by now the respective proportions were 18%, 29% and 52%.

21. Many districts in the New Territories like Islands, Sai Kung and Yuen Long recorded a marked population growth because of new towns development, whereas districts like Wan Chai, Southern and Kowloon City experienced population decrease.

22. Among the District Council districts, Yuen Long had the largest proportion of young people aged below 15 in its population; whilst Wong Tai Sin had the largest proportion of people aged 65 and over.

23. Among the District Council districts, Kwun Tong had the largest number of domestic households at 194 000. However, the most significant growth was found in Sai Kung, where the number of domestic households increased by nearly 125% from 57 000 in 1996 to 127 000 in 2006.

Census and Statistics Department
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