

For information
on 10 December 2010

**LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
HOUSE COMMITTEE**

Population Policy Review

PURPOSE

This paper invites Members' views on the population policy review in respect of two specific topics as laid down in the Chief Executive's 2010-11 Policy Address.

DETAILS

Background

2. In his 2010-11 Policy Address, the Chief Executive tasked the Steering Committee on Population Policy (SCPP)¹ to focus its study on two topics, namely –

- (a) to examine ways to facilitate and support our elderly people to settle in the Mainland after retirement if they so wish; and
- (b) to study in detail the ramifications of children born in Hong Kong to Mainland women returning to Hong Kong to study and live.

3. Since the two topics cover a wide range of complex issues, some of which cannot be dealt with under our existing policy framework, we envisage that certain areas would require more time for in-depth study and

¹ The Steering Committee on Population Policy (SCPP) was set up in October 2007 to facilitate the better planning and coordination of Government's efforts on population policy, with relevant bureaux continuing to be responsible for reviewing and implementing specific measures under their respective policy purviews which have a population angle. The SCPP is chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration and comprises the Financial Secretary, Secretary for Education, Secretary for Security, Secretary for Food and Health, Secretary for Home Affairs, Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury and directorates of relevant departments as core members.

long term planning.

Facilitating our elderly to retire in the Mainland

4. According to a survey conducted by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) in 2007, it is estimated that about 121 800 elderly people have resided/stayed substantially in the Mainland, most of them in the Guangdong Province. As the relationship between Hong Kong and Guangdong grows closer, there are suggestions in the community that the Government should examine ways to facilitate and support our elderly people to settle in the Mainland after retirement, in particular in the Guangdong province, if they so wish. We consider that this suggestion is also worth examining from the perspective of regional integration. The ultimate aim is to offer our elderly people more options.

5. We appreciate that there are a number of factors which affect the decision of many who contemplate to retire in the Mainland. They include, for instance, medical services, welfare services, support network etc. The SCPP will examine these issues in details in the coming months. In addition, Secretary for Labour and Welfare is separately examining the feasibility of introducing a maintenance allowance for our elderly who have retired. This will be an integral and important component of our review.

Children born in Hong Kong to Mainland women

6. According to the latest statistics of C&SD, the total number of babies born in Hong Kong in 2009 is 82 095. Among them, the number of babies born to Mainland mothers is 37 253 : 6 213 of them are Type I babies (i.e. the fathers are Hong Kong permanent residents); 29 766 are Type II babies (i.e. both parents are non-Hong Kong permanent residents); and the remaining 1 274 are those whose Mainland mothers chose not to provide the fathers' residential status during birth registration. According to the Hong Kong Population Projections 2010-2039, the total number of babies born in Hong Kong to Mainland women is projected to rise to about 40 000 to 50 000 per year (among them, about 34 000 to 43 000 will be Type II babies).

7. Both Type I and Type II children are Hong Kong permanent

residents by birth. Many of them, especially Type II children, return to the Mainland after birth. We need to make better preparations to facilitate their smooth integration into the local community when they return to Hong Kong to study and live.

8. A major challenge posed to us is the uncertainty as to whether, and if so when, these children will return to Hong Kong. With reference to the results of the “Survey on babies born in Hong Kong to Mainland women” conducted at the birth registries by C&SD, as well as the preliminary analytical results based on cross-boundary movement data, it is projected in the Hong Kong Population Projections 2010-2039 that 52% of Type I children will stay in Hong Kong after birth; 92% of them will eventually settle in Hong Kong. The case for Type II children is less certain as both of their parents are not Hong Kong residents. While it is currently projected that about 5% of them will stay in Hong Kong after birth and 52% of them will eventually settle in Hong Kong, the intention of their parents as gathered during the surveys may change over time. We need to examine ways to improve our existing mechanism to better ascertain the intention of their parents in order to better plan our service support for these children when they return to live in Hong Kong.

Way forward

9. The SCPP will study the above two topics in detail in the coming months and aims at working out initial proposals in about a year’s time. We welcome Members’ comments and views on the issues involved.

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Chief Secretary for Administration’s Office
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