

# Summary results of 2021 Population Census and Year-end Population Estimate for 2021

The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) released today (February 28) the summary results of the 2021 Population Census and the provisional estimate of the year-end population for 2021.

## I. Summary results of the 2021 Population Census

According to the results of the 2021 Population Census, the Hong Kong population, as measured by the definition of Resident Population, was 7 413 070 at the end of June 2021, with an average annual growth rate of 0.5% over the last decade. Of the total population at the end of June 2021, 7 334 652 were Usual Residents and 78 418 were Mobile Residents.

The ageing trend in the population continued. The proportion of elderly persons aged 65 and over in the total population rose from 13% in 2011 to 20% in 2021.

The median age of the population increased from 41.7 in 2011 to 46.3 in 2021, also reflecting the ageing trend.

Excluding foreign domestic helpers, the sex ratio (i.e. the number of males per 1 000 females) dropped from 939 in 2011 to 910 in 2021.

As regards marital status, the proportion of never-married population aged 20 and over increased in the past 10 years. The increase in proportion (excluding foreign domestic helpers) was particularly remarkable among females aged 25 to 29 (from 71% to 80%) and males aged 30 to 34 (from 50% to 58%).

Majority of the population was of Chinese ethnicity, while about 8% (or 0.62 million persons) were non-Chinese. The two largest non-Chinese ethnic groups in Hong Kong were Filipino and Indonesian, representing 2.7% and 1.9% of the population respectively.

The educational level of the population has generally improved. Of the population aged 15 and over, the proportion having attended post-secondary education increased from 27% in 2011 to 35% in 2021.

The working population in 2021, at 3.68 million persons, showed an increase compared with the 3.55 million persons in 2011.

Over the last decade, the number of domestic households rose from 2.37 million households to 2.67 million households, with an average annual growth rate of 1.2%. Along with the change in the composition of domestic households, the average household size dropped from 2.9 to 2.7.

In 2021, 53% of the population lived in private permanent housing, 29% in public rental housing and 16% in subsidised home ownership housing. The proportions were similar when compared to 10 years earlier.

In 2021, the three most populated District Council districts were Sha Tin District, Kwun Tong District and Yuen Long District, whereas the least populated district was Wan Chai District. Islands District had the highest proportion of young people aged below 15 in its population, followed by Kowloon City District and Tsuen Wan District. On the other hand, Eastern District had the highest proportion of people aged 65 and over in its population, followed by Wong Tai Sin District and Kwai Tsing District. As for population density, the most densely populated districts were Kwun Tong District, Sham Shui Po District and Yau Tsim Mong District, whereas the least densely populated district was Islands District.

Table 1 presents key statistics of the 2021 and 2011 Population Census, while Table 2 presents key demographic characteristics of District Council districts in 2021.

## II. Year-end Population Estimate for 2021

With the availability of the benchmark population figures from the 2021 Population Census, the year-end population estimate for 2021 was compiled taking into account the natural change and net movement during the second half of 2021 using administrative data such as birth, death and passenger movement records.

The provisional estimate of the Hong Kong population was 7 403 100 at end-2021, representing a decrease of 23 600 or 0.3% from 7 426 700 at end-2020.

The population decrease between end-2020 and end-2021 comprised a natural decrease (i.e. deaths surpassing births) and a net outflow of Hong Kong residents (i.e. inflow less than outflow). A natural decrease of 14 200 was recorded during the period, with 37 000 births and 51 200 deaths. Over the same period, a net outflow of 9 400 persons was recorded, with an inflow of 17 900 One-way Permit holders and a net outflow of 27 300 other Hong Kong residents.

Among the total population at end-2021, 7 301 300 were Usual Residents and 101 800 were Mobile Residents.

Table 3 presents estimated total population as at end-2021, while Table 4 presents population figures from mid-2010 to end-2021.

## Commentary

A government spokesperson pointed out that the 2021 Population Census provides a comprehensive database on population statistics, which is essential to the development of Hong Kong. The census data can facilitate research, discussion, planning, policy formulation and decision-making within the Government and in the community, particularly in such areas as education, housing, transport, medical and social services.

The spokesperson noted that the year-on-year decrease in the Hong Kong population in 2021 (-0.3%) has narrowed as compared to 2020 (-1.2%).

The spokesperson highlighted that natural decrease (deaths surpassing births) in Hong Kong, which was first occurred in 2020, has widened in 2021. Over the past five years, the number of births declined continually from 60 900 in 2016 to 52 900 in 2019, and further to 43 000 and 37 000 respectively in 2020 and 2021. Hong Kong's fertility rate is persistently among the lowest in Asian economies. The plunge in births in the recent two years might be partly attributable to the outbreak of COVID-19 since early 2020. On the other hand, the number of deaths edged up gradually from 46 900 to 51 200 over the past five years in tandem with the ageing trend of the population.

"Amidst the continued impact of COVID-19, stringent border control and quarantine measures have been in place in Hong Kong, the Mainland and other places around the world, resulting in severe interruption of cross-boundary travel. It is observed that the inflow of people into Hong Kong, including One-way Permit holders, foreign domestic helpers and those coming to work or study in Hong Kong under various admission schemes has remained at a low level. Among others, the flight boarding restrictions imposed on arrivals from certain places from time to time in 2021 due to the then prevailing COVID-19 situation had interrupted population inflow. Although the number of One-way Permit holders who arrived in Hong Kong in 2021 (17 900) rebounded somewhat as compared to that in 2020 (10 100), it was still visibly lower than the pre-pandemic level (39 100 in 2019). Meanwhile, Hong Kong residents who had left Hong Kong before the pandemic may have chosen to reside in other places temporarily or were unable to return to Hong Kong. All these might have contributed to the net outflow of Hong Kong residents during the period," the government spokesperson said.

"Thus, implying an emigration tide in Hong Kong solely from the increase in net outflow of residents is a sweeping generalisation."

"Indeed, net movement includes the movement of Hong Kong residents into and out of Hong Kong for various purposes such as work, study and migration, but the breakdown of figures is not available. Hong Kong residents travelling abroad are not required to declare to the Government their purpose of travel. Therefore, the Government does not have direct statistics on emigration of Hong Kong residents. Being an international city, Hong Kong's population has always been mobile. During the past ten years, net outflows of Hong Kong residents other than One-way Permit holders were recorded for most of the years," the government spokesperson added.

"Hong Kong is still a city attracting Mainland and overseas talents. In view of the notable increase in the number of applications for the Quality Migrant Admission Scheme (QMAS) in recent years, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region doubled the annual quota to 2 000 in 2020 in an attempt to expand the talent pool of Hong Kong. Over 1 700 talents from more than a dozen of countries and regions were approved with a quota, showing the effectiveness of the measure. In view of this, the Chief Executive announced in the 2021 Policy Address to further double the annual quota of the QMAS to 4 000 to attract talents from all over the world to work

in Hong Kong."

#### Further information

Summary findings of the 2021 Population Census are published in the report "2021 Population Census Summary Results" and the leaflet "2021 Population Census Key Statistics", which can be downloaded from the website of the C&SD ([www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode600.html](http://www.censtatd.gov.hk/en/scode600.html)) and the thematic website of the 2021 Population Census ([www.census2021.gov.hk/en/index.html](http://www.census2021.gov.hk/en/index.html)).

The C&SD thanks all households for their active participation in the 2021 Population Census, which was conducted last year from June 23 to August 4. Detailed results of the 2021 Population Census will be released by stage. Various kinds of data dissemination services, including a series of online publications, statistical tables and district profiles as well as an online platform for building statistical tables, will be launched successively to meet the needs of different data users.

Based on the population benchmark from the results of the 2021 Population Census, the population figures for end-2016 to mid-2021 have been revised.

"Usual Residents" refer to two categories of people: (1) Hong Kong Permanent Residents who have 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, regardless of whether they are in Hong Kong or not at the reference time-point; and (2) Hong Kong Non-permanent Residents who are in Hong Kong at the reference time-point.

For those Hong Kong Permanent Residents who are not "Usual Residents", they are classified as "Mobile Residents" if they have 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 are in Hong Kong or not at the reference time-point.

Under the current practice, the latest population estimate is released on a provisional basis in each round. The revised estimate will be released six months later. In other words, while the provisional population estimate for end-2021 is released today, the corresponding revised estimate will be released in August 2022.

For enquiries about the summary results of the 2021 Population Census, please contact the Census Planning Section (3) of the C&SD (Tel: 3428 2744; fax: 3584 7864; email: [census2021@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:census2021@censtatd.gov.hk)). For enquiries about the population estimates, please contact the Demographic Statistics Section (1) of the C&SD (Tel: 3903 6943; fax: 2716 0231; email: [population@censtatd.gov.hk](mailto:population@censtatd.gov.hk)).