

Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures Released

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Monetary Authority:

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (March 5) that the official foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong amounted to US\$495.9 billion as at the end of February 2021 (end-January 2021: US\$493.2 billion) (Annex).

Including unsettled foreign exchange contracts, the foreign currency reserve assets of Hong Kong at the end of February 2021 amounted to US\$495.7 billion (end-January 2021: US\$493.2 billion).

The total foreign currency reserve assets of US\$495.9 billion represent about seven times the currency in circulation or 41 per cent of Hong Kong dollar M3.

At present, four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. For the month of March 2021, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

March 5	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
March 12	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
March 31	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
March 31	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Friday, March 5, 2021 is 101.2 (up 0.3 against yesterday's index).

Hong Kong Housing Authority approves extension of rent concession period for eligible non-domestic tenants

The following is issued on behalf of the Hong Kong Housing Authority:

To tie in with the Government's latest relief measures announced by the Financial Secretary last month, the Hong Kong Housing Authority (HA)'s Commercial Properties Committee (CPC) today (March 5) approved the proposed extension of the existing 75 per cent rent concession for the HA's eligible non-domestic tenants/licensees, including carpark users for monthly parking of commercial vehicles, for six months from April 1 to September 30, 2021.

The CPC also approved that the HA's tenants/licensees may continue to apply to the HA for 100 per cent rent concession for the period during which their operations at the premises concerned are required to be closed under anti-epidemic regulations and directions of the Government.

"The Financial Secretary announced in the 2021-22 Budget a new round of relief measures, and the HA's extension of rent concession for non-domestic tenants is in line with that of the Government to further tide businesses and people over this difficult time," a spokesman for the HA said.

He noted that the HA would continue to adopt a flexible approach in dealing with the tenancies concerned which expire before the end of the extended rent concession period as a transitional arrangement.

"To enable tenants to continue their use and occupation of the premises upon tenancy expiry, licences will be granted at the existing rent pending agreement to the new rent for the new tenancies," he said.

"The same arrangements and coverage as endorsed by the CPC earlier will continue to apply during this round of the extended rent concession period."

The CPC has earlier approved five rounds of rent concessions for the HA's eligible retail, factory and non-domestic tenants, following the Government's measures to support enterprises and relieve people's financial

burden.

It is estimated that a total of around 9 900 of the HA's non-domestic tenants/licensees, including about 2 500 retail and 3 300 factory tenants/licensees, tenants/licensees of some 70 advertising signboards and some 40 tenancies of bus kiosks, as well as about 4 000 carpark users, will benefit from the extension of rent concessions.

The rent foregone for this extension of 75 per cent rent concession for six months is estimated to be around \$657.3 million.

The total rent foregone for rent concessions granted by the HA to its eligible non-domestic tenants/licensees for the 24-month period from October 1, 2019, to September 30, 2021, is estimated to be around \$2,286.8 million.

Grading of beach water quality released

The Environmental Protection Department (EPD) today (March 5) released the latest grading of water quality for nine gazetted beaches (see Note).

Nine beaches were rated as Good (Grade 1).

Grade 1 beaches are:

Big Wave Bay Beach	Repulse Bay Beach
Clear Water Bay Second Beach	Silverstrand Beach
Deep Water Bay Beach	Silver Mine Bay Beach
Golden Beach	Stanley Main Beach
Middle Bay Beach	

Under the present grading system, beaches are classified into four grades, namely Good (Grade 1), Fair (Grade 2), Poor (Grade 3) and Very Poor (Grade 4), according to the level of E. coli in the water. Grades are calculated on the basis of the geometric mean of the E. coli counts on the five most recent sampling occasions.

A summary of beach grades is published weekly before the weekend. The latest beach grades based on the most current data may be obtained from the EPD's website on Beach Water Quality (www.epd.gov.hk/epd/beach) or the beach hotline, 2511 6666.

Note: In view of the latest situation of COVID-19, the Leisure and Cultural Services Department announced that all gazetted beaches were closed from December 10, 2020, until further notice.

Approved Kwu Tung South Outline Zoning Plan amended

The Town Planning Board today (March 5) announced amendments to the approved Kwu Tung South Outline Zoning Plan (OZP).

The amendments mainly involve the rezoning of two sites on Kam Hang Road mainly from "Comprehensive Development Area" ("CDA") and "Recreation" respectively to "CDA(1)" and "CDA(2)", with a stipulation of maximum plot ratio and building height restrictions for residential developments to take forward the decisions of the Rural and New Town Planning Committee of the Board on two s.12A applications, and two sites zoned "Green Belt" and mainly "CDA" respectively are rezoned to reflect the existing developments. Opportunity is also taken to amend the Notes and Explanatory Statement of the OZP to reflect the above amendments and to update the general information of various land use zonings and the planning area, where appropriate.

The draft Kwu Tung South OZP No. S/NE-KTS/17 incorporating the amendments is now available for public inspection during office hours at (i) the Secretariat of the Board, (ii) the Planning Enquiry Counters, (iii) the Fanling, Sheung Shui and Yuen Long East District Planning Office, (iv) the North District Office, and (v) the Sheung Shui District Rural Committee.

Any person may make written representations in respect of the amendments to the Secretary of the Board on or before May 5. Any person who intends to make a representation is advised to read the revised Town Planning Board Guidelines No. 29B on "Submission and Publication of Representations, Comments on Representations and Further Representations under the Town Planning Ordinance" (TPB PG-No. 29B).

Submission of a representation should comply with the requirements set out in TPB PG-No. 29B. In particular, the representer should take note of the following:

- * If the representer fails to provide his or her full name and the first four alphanumeric characters of his or her Hong Kong identity card or passport number as required under TPB PG-No. 29B, the representation submitted shall be treated as not having been made; and
- * The Secretariat of the Board reserves the right to require the representer to provide identity proof for verification.

The Guidelines and the submission form are available at locations (i) and (ii) above and the Board's website (www.info.gov.hk/tpb).

Copies of the draft Kwu Tung South OZP are available for sale at the Map Publications Centres in North Point and Yau Ma Tei. The electronic version of the OZP can be viewed at the Board's website (www.info.gov.hk/tpb).