

Reports containing key statistics on various major industry sectors in 2018 published

The following five reports presenting the key statistics on the business performance and operating characteristics of various major industry sectors in 2018 have been published by the Census and Statistics Department (C&SD):

- (i) Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Industrial Sector in 2018;
- (ii) Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Building, Construction and Real Estate Sectors in 2018;
- (iii) Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Import/Export, Wholesale and Retail Trades, and Accommodation and Food Services Sectors in 2018;
- (iv) Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Transportation, Storage and Courier Services Sector in 2018; and
- (v) Key Statistics on Business Performance and Operating Characteristics of the Information and Communications, Financing and Insurance, Professional and Business Services Sectors in 2018.

The key statistics presented in these reports were compiled from the results of the 2018 Annual Survey of Economic Activities conducted by the C&SD. They contain a wide range of statistics reflecting the business performance and operating characteristics of various major industry sectors in 2018, mainly including:

- * number of establishments;
- * number of persons engaged;
- * value of sales of goods, business receipts and other income;
- * compensation of employees;
- * operating expenses;
- * gross surplus;
- * value added; and
- * gross additions to fixed assets.

Apart from statistics relating to 2018, summary statistics for 2016 and 2017 are also contained in these reports to facilitate reference and comparison.

The statistics in the aforementioned reports are complementary to those relatively timely but less detailed statistics on the current situation of various major industry sectors as provided by the relevant quarterly or monthly surveys. They together constitute a comprehensive series of sectoral economic statistics to facilitate readers in grasping the salient features and developments of various major sectors.

Users can download these reports free of charge from the website of the

C&SD (www.censtatd.gov.hk/hkstat/sub/sp70.jsp).

Enquiries regarding the reports can be directed to the relevant Sections of the C&SD shown in the attached table.

Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

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

The Hong Kong Monetary Authority (HKMA) announced today (December 31) that the total assets of the Exchange Fund amounted to HK\$4,142.8 billion as at November 30, 2019, HK\$45.2 billion lower than that at the end of October 2019. Foreign currency assets decreased by HK\$40.9 billion and Hong Kong dollar assets decreased by HK\$4.3 billion.

The decline in foreign currency assets was mainly due to the settlement of foreign exchange-related contracts, which was partly offset by an increase in unsettled purchases of securities. The decline in Hong Kong dollar assets was mainly due to a decrease in market value of Hong Kong equities.

The Currency Board Account shows that the Monetary Base at the end of November 2019 was HK\$1,653.8 billion, increased by HK\$7.6 billion, or 0.5 per cent, from the end of October 2019. The rise was mainly due to an increase in the outstanding amount of Certificates of Indebtedness.

The amount of Backing Assets increased by HK\$4.7 billion, or 0.3 per cent, to HK\$1,847.3 billion. The increase was mainly attributable to the issuance of Certificates of Indebtedness. The backing ratio decreased from 111.92 per cent at the end of October 2019 to 111.70 per cent at the end of November 2019.

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 December 2019, the scheduled dates for issuing the press releases are as follows:

December 6 (Issued)	SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
December 13 (Issued)	SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Analytical Accounts of the Exchange Fund)
December 31	SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity
December 31	Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account

Opening remarks by SDEV on land sale programme for January to March 2020

Following is the transcript of the opening remarks by the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong, at a media session today (December 31) on the land sale programme for January to March 2020:

In the fourth quarter of the financial year 2019-20, the Government will sell by tender three residential sites, two in Mong Kok and one on Anderson Road in Kwun Tong. The total estimated flat yield of these three sites is about 1 850 units.

The Anderson Road site is the largest amongst these three sites and will provide about 1 720 units, including 1 000 units as Starter Homes units. The Transport and Housing Bureau will announce in due course more details about these units.

The Urban Renewal Authority will also tender a project at the junction of Tonkin Street and Fuk Wing Street in Sham Shui Po, which will provide about 180 flats. The four sites, taken together, will provide a supply of about 2 030 flats.

Together with the land supply in the first three quarters, the private housing land supply from all sources in this financial year, as of today, has reached almost 90 per cent of our annual target.

As regards commercial sites, the Government will sell by tender one

commercial site in Kai Tak, which is capable of providing about 105 000 square metres of floor area. The successful bidder will be required to include a number of welfare facilities on this site, which will take up about 10 per cent of the gross floor area.

Looking ahead, the Government will continue to increase land supply through a multi-pronged approach, and maintain a sustained and steady land supply to meet the community's needs for housing and economic and social development.

Thank you.

Effective Exchange Rate Index

The effective exchange rate index for the Hong Kong dollar on Tuesday, December 31, 2019 is 105.9 (down 0.2 against yesterday's index).

Substantive hearing of CoI into Construction Works at and near Hung Hom Station Extension under Shatin to Central Link Project resumes on January 2, 2020

The following is issued on behalf of the Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project:

The Commission of Inquiry into the Construction Works at and near the Hung Hom Station Extension under the Shatin to Central Link Project will resume its substantive hearing on Thursday (January 2) at the hearing room on the first floor of the former Tsuen Wan Law Courts Building (Courts Building), 70 Tai Ho Road, Tsuen Wan, New Territories. The substantive hearing shall, subject to any adjournments that the Commission may consider necessary from time to time, continue until mid-February 2020.

Upon approval of a further extension of time by the Chief Executive in Council on September 10, 2019, the Commission will submit a final report on

its findings and recommendations to the Chief Executive on or before March 31, 2020. The Commission plans to finish all expert evidence and, if necessary, further factual evidence, as well as all closing submissions by mid-February 2020.

Unless otherwise directed by the Commission, the substantive hearing will be held from 10am to 1pm and from 2.30pm to 5pm on weekdays. The Commission may consider holding the substantive hearing on Saturdays during the said period if necessary.

The substantive hearing will be open to the public, and live video/audio broadcasts of the proceedings will be provided at the hearing transmission gallery and the hall area next to the hearing room. No photography or audio/video recordings are allowed inside the hearing room, hearing transmission galley, hall area and other areas within the Courts Building.