

**WOMEN'S COMMISSION**  
**Report of the Task Force on Population Policy**

**PURPOSE**

This paper presents the Report of the Task Force on Population Policy and the key recommendations and invites Members' views on the Report.

**BACKGROUND**

2. On 1 July 2002, the Chief Executive announced in his Inaugural Speech that there was an urgent need for development of a comprehensive population policy. The Chief Secretary for Administration, who was tasked to oversee the development of the population policy by the end of 2002, set up a Task Force on Population Policy which he chaired with members from all relevant Bureaux and Departments. In view of the short time, the Task Force focused on analysing the demographic characteristics of Hong Kong's population; identifying the major challenges and concerns arising from the demographic trends; setting an objective which the population policy seeks to achieve and proposing a set of policy measures for the short to medium term for achieving this objective. The Chief Secretary released the Report of the Task Force on Population Policy to the Legislative Council on 26 February 2003.

**DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS**

3. Demographic trends indicate that Hong Kong people live longer: women to 85 years and men to 78 years. On the other hand, fertility rate has been declining to an extremely low level of 927 children per 1000 women, well below the replacement level of 2100 children per 1000 women. Hong Kong's population is aging rapidly as other advanced economies. Indeed, it is projected that by 2031, 25% of our population of 8.72 million will be aged 65 or above and 58% will be economically inactive.

4. Hong Kong is committed to a programme of admitting some 55,000 immigrants from the Mainland each year. Apart from births, these immigrants form the main source of Hong Kong's population growth. Many of the new arrivals do not possess much advanced skill or education level and need to be upgraded.

5. Meanwhile, although the education attainment of the local population is continuing to improve, our workforce will increasingly be required to demonstrate higher skills as globalisation intensifies competition among developed economies in the shift towards high value-added and knowledge-based activities.

### **POLICY OBJECTIVE**

6. The vision of Hong Kong, as articulated by the Commission on Strategic Development in 2000, is as follows: *"The implementation of Hong Kong's long-term vision should also be guided by a number of overarching goals, including enhancing income and living standards for all members of society; ensuring that Hong Kong becomes the most attractive major city in Asia in which to live and work; developing a socially cohesive and stable society that recognises that the community's diversity strengthens its cosmopolitan outlook; contributing to the modernisation of China while also supporting Hong Kong's long-term development"*. The key objective of Hong Kong's population policy is to secure and nurture a population which sustains the development of Hong Kong as a knowledge-based economy and a world-class city.

### **POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS**

7. The Report of the Task Force covers a wide spectrum of public policies with a view to formulating a set of coherent and consistent measures for achieving the objective of the population policy. They include:-

- The One Way Permit Scheme;
- Training and Other Needs of New Arrivals;

- Education and Manpower Policy;
- Admission of Mainland Professionals and Talent;
- Investment Immigrants;
- Policies Impacting on Childbirth;
- Elderly Policy;
- Growing Transient Population: Foreign Domestic Helpers;
- Eligibility for Public Benefits; and
- Portability of Benefits.

8. Considering that many factors affecting the demographic conditions in Hong Kong are beyond the control of Government and closer integration with the Pearl River Delta Region will carry far-reaching consequences on Hong Kong's demographic development, the Task Force has recommended continuing review of our population policy.

### **PROGRESS OF IMPLEMENTATION**

9. Actions are in hand to take forward the recommendations. Recommendations concerning One Way Permit Scheme, tax deduction for children, and eligibility for subsidized health care services have already been implemented. Measures such as admission schemes for Mainland professionals and talents, new investment immigrants scheme, levy for the employment of foreign domestic helpers are proceeding as recommended. A number of recommended measures of an on-going nature such as providing and developing programmes to address the training needs of new arrivals and to promote active and healthy aging are actively underway.

### **PRESENTATION**

10. A presentation will be made at the meeting of the Women's Commission on 13 May 2003.

## **ADVICE SOUGHT**

11. Members are invited to comment on the recommendations in the Report of the Task Force on Population Policy, and give their views on issues related to population policy in Hong Kong.

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Central Policy Unit  
9 May 2003