

## Family planning commission 'satisfied' with birth rate

China's second-child policy pushed the fertility rate up to more than 1.7 last year, an increase from between 1.5 and 1.6 between 2000 and 2015, Wang Pei'an, deputy minister in charge of the National Health and Family Planning Commission, told a news conference on Saturday.

More than 18.4 million babies were born in China last year, 2 million more than the annual number of new births for the previous five years, and the highest number since 2000, Wang said.

The fertility rate is the average number of children a woman gives birth to in her lifetime.

"The second-child policy has produced satisfactory results," Wang said. "They totally met our expectations."

More than 90 million couples became eligible to have a second child under the new policy, but only 28 percent of them are expected to have a second baby due to old age or unwillingness to have a bigger family, he said.

China is not lacking in population and even by the end of the century China's population will remain at more than 1.1 billion, Wang said.