

Year-end population for 2020

According to the statistics released by the Census and Statistics Department today (February 18), the provisional estimate of the Hong Kong population was 7 474 200 at end-2020, representing a decrease of 46 500 or 0.6% from 7 520 800 at end-2019 (Table 1).

The population decrease at end-2020 comprised a natural decrease (i.e. deaths surpassing births) and net outflow of Hong Kong residents (i.e. inflow less than outflow). A natural decrease of 6 700 was recorded for the first time in 2020, with 43 100 births and 49 800 deaths. Meanwhile, a net outflow of 39 800 persons was recorded during 2020, with an inflow of 10 100 One-way Permit holders and a net outflow of 49 900 other Hong Kong residents.

"Largely due to the border control and quarantine measures in place in Hong Kong and other places around the world, as well as the severe interruption of international travel amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, we see a substantial drop in the inflow of people into Hong Kong, such as One-way Permit holders, foreign domestic helpers and those coming to work or study in Hong Kong under various admission schemes in 2020. Among others, the number of One-way Permit holders who arrived in Hong Kong in 2020 showed a year-on-year decrease of 74%. Meanwhile, Hong Kong residents who had left Hong Kong before the pandemic may have chosen to remain outside Hong Kong. All these might have contributed to the net outflow of Hong Kong residents in 2020," a government spokesperson said.

"Net movement, which includes the movement of Hong Kong residents into and out of Hong Kong for various purposes including work and study, is conceptually different from immigration and emigration. Being an international city, Hong Kong's population has always been mobile. In the last five years from 2016 to 2020, net outflows of Hong Kong residents other than One-way Permit holders were recorded in all years except 2018," the government spokesperson added.

The Hong Kong population is measured on the definition of Resident Population, which comprises Usual Residents and Mobile Residents. Among the total population at end-2020, 7 401 000 (provisional) were Usual Residents and 73 200 (provisional) were Mobile Residents.

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.

The revised figure for the mid-year population for 2020 was 7 481 800. The number of Usual Residents was revised to 7 391 600 and the number of Mobile Residents to 90 200. The population growth rate from mid-2019 to mid-2020 was also revised to -0.3%.

The population figures for recent years are shown in Table 2.

Under the current practice, the latest population figure is released on a provisional basis in each round. The revised figure will be released six months later. In other words, while the provisional population figure for end-2020 is released today, the corresponding revised figure will be released in August 2021.