

Press release

LCQ9: 2011 Population Census

Wednesday, May 26, 2010

Following is a question by the Hon Jeffrey Lam and a written reply by the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Professor K C Chan, in the Legislative Council today (May 26):

Question:

The Census and Statistics Department conducted a small-scale test survey from December 21 last year to January 14 this year to test the questionnaire design and operational arrangements for the 2011 Population Census (11C) and consult households' views on related arrangements. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(a) of the outcome of the aforesaid test survey and the modifications to be made to the questionnaire design and operational arrangements of 11C;

(b) how the current questionnaire design and statistical content of 11C differ from those of the last Population Census, and whether it will further add new statistical items;

(c) how it will protect the privacy of the data collected from the households by self-enumeration via the Internet and ensure the accuracy of the data they enumerate; and

(d) how it will publicise 11C to remind the households to check carefully the identity of enumerators and protect the personal safety of enumerators when conducting face-to-face interviews?

Reply:

President,

(a) The Census and Statistics Department (C&SD) completed a small-scale test survey for the 2011 Population Census in January this year. Participating households generally found the questionnaire design appropriate and that the operational arrangements were smooth.

In light of the findings of the survey, C&SD is now considering making certain modifications to the design and operations of the questionnaire so as to improve the relevant arrangements. Such modifications include making slight revisions to some wordings of the questionnaire, providing examples to facilitate households in understanding and completing the questionnaire; and arranging the attachment of short form questionnaire with the notification letter to the relevant households for their early completion of self-enumeration.

(b) The questionnaire design and statistical contents of the 2011 Population Census are similar to those of the 2006 Population By-census. As in the past censuses, the questionnaire will cover 41 data topics to ensure continuity of the data collection and analysis. With reference to past experience and the need of data users, C&SD will make appropriate modifications to certain details of the questions.

(c) To protect privacy, C&SD will request all households who opt for self-enumeration through the Internet to register with C&SD and open separate accounts for the completion and submission of questionnaires. Information provided by these households will also be encrypted during online transmission from the relevant registered accounts.

Furthermore, C&SD will not disclose any information collected from the census concerning individuals or households to any unauthorised parties and government departments.

C&SD will establish a computer-assisted validation system to assure data quality. When households complete questionnaires on the Internet, the computer programmes will instantaneously carry out a preliminary checking on the relevant information and alert the households on suspected errors. On receipt of the completed questionnaires, C&SD will carry out a more comprehensive validation with the assistance of computer system to identify dubious entries for follow-up with the households concerned. Besides, C&SD will take samples of completed questionnaires (including those completed by

self-enumeration and face-to-face interviews) for verification of key information therein with the households concerned.

(d) During the 2011 Population Census, C&SD will work with the Information Services Department to introduce to the general public the uniform, equipment and identity card of enumerators, through various publicity means such as posters, announcements of public interest, newspaper advertisements and press conference, so as to assist households in recognising enumerators and verifying their identities. Furthermore, households may call the enquiry line to be set up by the 2011 Population Census Office to verify the identity of the enumerators concerned.

In drawing up the fieldwork operational procedures, C&SD has adopted a series of measures to ensure the personal safety of the enumerators. These measures include:

- (i) arranging enumerators to carry out fieldwork in partnership;
- (ii) requiring enumerators to notify the building caretakers when commencing and completing their visits as far as practicable;
- (iii) requiring enumerators to report their locations and progress of work to their supervisors regularly;
- (iv) providing enumerators with training to enhance their awareness of personal safety; and
- (v) providing enumerators with safety equipment such as torches and alarms.

In addition, C&SD will notify the Police, building management offices and village representatives in the rural areas, etc. of the fieldwork arrangement of Population Census and request them to pay special attention to the personal safety of the enumerators during the census period.