

**‘CUHK’  
Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**

**The Centre for Quality of Life  
Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies**

**The Chinese University of Hong Kong**

**September 2007**

## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Centre for Quality of Life of The Chinese University of Hong Kong is the first centre specializing in quality of life research in Hong Kong and in different Chinese communities. The Centre is committed to positioning itself as the focal point for academic research and exchange in quality of life studies in China and Asia, and a solid and internationally recognized research centre in the field. One of our goals is to monitor and advocate quality of life in the world in general and Hong Kong in particular through cross-disciplinary research, academic exchange activities, and cross-institutional collaboration.
- 1.2 Hong Kong undergoes drastic changes in political, economic, cultural and environmental aspects in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, and the quality of life in Hong Kong is being affected. It is timely to compile a composite index to monitor the quality of life in Hong Kong.
- 1.3 We compiled the **‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** in 2003 to serve as an objective and analytic tool to examine the quality of life in Hong Kong. The Index is released annually.

## 2 Objectives

It is the intention of the Centre is to use this composite index to:

- measure and keep track of Hong Kong’s quality of life in the 21<sup>st</sup> century;
- engage relevant parties in promoting and advocating quality of life in Hong Kong;
- provide policy makers and the community with a useful reference tool; and
- advocate the quality of life in Hong Kong and draw public attention to the issue of quality of life.

## 3 Composition of ‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

- 3.1 The **‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** is a composite index. It consists of 21 indicators that are grouped into three subgroups (See Appendix 1).
- 3.2 The indicators are selected according to the coverage, measurability, representativeness, and importance to the quality of life in Hong Kong. Among the 21 indicators, six are compiled by the Centre, based on data collected by surveys conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. These indicators are stress index, general life satisfaction index, press freedom index, press criticism index, government performance index and index of current economic conditions. All other indices are obtained from the government and related institutions.
- 3.3 Taking the year of 2002 as the base year of the study, the **‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index** of 2002 is 100. If the Index of a year is above 100, it means that the quality of life in Hong Kong in that year is better than that in 2002. If it is below 100, it reveals that the quality of life in Hong Kong in that year is worse than that in 2002. If the Index is 100, it indicates that the Hong Kong quality of life in that year is the same as that in 2002.

## **4 Major Findings of the ‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index 2006**

4.1 According to the ‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index released this year, the score of the Index of 2006 is 108.47. It is higher than the scores of 2005 (108.34), 2004 (105.78), 2003 (104.20) and 2002 (100), indicating that the quality of life in Hong Kong has improved consistently.

4.2 Though the overall score of 2006 is slightly higher, both the social and environmental sub-indices declined slightly, while the economic sub-index increased from 2005 to 2006.

4.3 As compared with 2005, nine of the 21 indicators improved in 2006 (see Appendixes 2-3). They are:

- i) Standardized mortality rate;
- ii) Life expectancy at birth;
- iii) General life satisfaction index;
- iv) Government performance index;
- v) Housing affordability ratio;
- vi) Unemployment rate;
- vii) Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities;
- viii) Water index; and
- ix) Recycle rate of municipal solid waste.

4.4 11 indicators turned worse in 2006 (see Appendixes 2-3):

- i) Public expenditure on health as a proportion of the GDP;
- ii) Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases;
- iii) Stress index;
- iv) Press criticism index;
- v) Overall crime rate;
- vi) Real rental index;
- vii) Index of current economic conditions;
- viii) Real wage index;
- ix) Public expenditure on education as a proportion of the GDP
- x) Air index;
- xi) Noise index.

## **5 Conclusion**

5.1 In sum, as compared with 2005, nine indicators were better and 11 were worse in 2006, while the press freedom index remained unchanged.

## **Working Group of the 'CUHK' Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**

Prof. Paul S. N. Lee  
Dean, Faculty of Social Science  
Director, Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific  
Studies  
Professor, School of Journalism and Communication  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Tel: 2609-6234  
Email: [plee@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:plee@cuhk.edu.hk)

Prof. Andy C. C. Kwan  
Associate Director, Centre for Quality of Life and  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Economics  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Tel: 2609-8196  
Email: [kwan1882@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:kwan1882@cuhk.edu.hk)

Prof. Chan Ying Keung  
Adjunct Professor, Department of Sociology  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Tel: 2609-6619  
Email: [yingkchan@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:yingkchan@cuhk.edu.hk)

Prof. Ng Sai Leung  
Associate Professor,  
Department of Geography and Resource Management  
The Chinese University of Hong Kong  
Tel: 2609-6527  
Email: [slng@cuhk.edu.hk](mailto:slng@cuhk.edu.hk)

The Centre for Quality of Life website: <http://www2.cuhk.edu.hk/ssc/qol>

## **Appendix 1: Composition of ‘CUHK’ Hong Kong Quality of Life Index**

### **SOCIAL SUB-INDEX**

1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)<sup>(1)</sup> refers to the number of deaths per 1000 standard population.
2. Life expectancy at birth (in years) refers to the life expectancy at birth for males and females.
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP.
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population) refers to the number of notified infectious diseases per 1000 population.
5. Stress index refers to the stress that the Hong Kong people are facing (base rate = 100).
6. General life satisfaction index refers to the degree of satisfaction of Hong Kong people with their current lives (base rate = 100).
7. Press freedom index refers to the degree of press freedom in Hong Kong (base rate = 100).
8. Press criticism index refers to the frequency of criticisms by the press of the Hong Kong Corporation, the Hong Kong SAR Government, and the People’s Republic of China Government (base rate = 100).
9. Government performance index refers to the degree of satisfaction of Hong Kong people with the performance of Hong Kong SAR Government (base rate = 100).
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population) refers to the total number of violent and non-violent crimes reported per 1000 population.

### **ECONOMIC SUB-INDEX**

11. Housing affordability ratio refers to the annual average of affordable property price (i.e. average property price times 39.9 sq. feet, divided by monthly medium income times 12).
12. Real rental index refers to the real rental index for the Hong Kong property market.
13. Unemployment rate refers to the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate (in percent).
14. Index of current economic conditions refers to the public attitude towards economic conditions in Hong Kong.
15. Real wage index<sup>(2)</sup> refers to the real wages for employees up to supervisory level (excluding managerial and professional employees) in all selected industry sectors.
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP.
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent).

### **ENVIRONMENTAL SUB-INDEX**

18. Air index refers to the daily air pollution index.
19. Water index refers to the percentage of rivers in Hong Kong categorized as ‘good’ and ‘excellent’ by the monitoring station.
20. Noise index (per 1000 population) refers to the number of noise complaints received by the Environmental Protection Department and the Police per 1000 population.
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste refers to the recycle rate (in percent) of solid waste from households and from commercial and industrial sources.

#### **Notes:**

<sup>(1)</sup> Standardized mortality rate is compiled based on the world standard population published in the 1997-1999 *World Health Statistics Annual*.

<sup>(2)</sup> As from 2001, the real wage index is derived by deflating the nominal wage indices by the 1999/2000-based CPI(A).

#### **Sources:**

Stress index, general life satisfaction index, press freedom index, press criticism index, government performance index and index of current economic conditions are compiled by the Faculty of Social Science of The Chinese University of Hong Kong, based on data collected by surveys conducted by the Hong Kong Institute of Asia-Pacific Studies of The Chinese University of Hong Kong. All other indices are obtained from the government and related institutions.

## Appendix 2: Data for Compiling the 'CUHK' Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
<b>Social sub-index</b>					
1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)	3.70	3.80	3.80	3.70	3.50#
2. Life expectancy at birth (in years)	F : 84.5 M : 78.6	F : 84.3 M : 78.5	F : 84.7 M : 79	F: 84.6 M: 78.8	F: 85.6# M: 79.5#
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	2.70	2.70	2.70	2.30	2.10
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population)	3.73	2.33	2.89	2.91	3.29
5. Stress index	100.00	88.75	79.51	72.95	74.42
6. General life satisfaction index	100.00	100.68	105.62	109.94	112.47
7. Press freedom index	100.00	101.22	100.26	101.43	101.55
8. Press criticism index	100.00	103.75	91.02	78.82	77.25
9. Government performance index	100.00	103.23	132.23	169.79	176.29
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population)	11.18	12.99	11.81	11.37	11.83
<b>Economic sub-index</b>					
11. Housing affordability ratio	4.68	4.49	5.31	6.22	5.88
12. Real rental index	87.97	79.67	84.55	93.11	96.68
13. Unemployment rate	7.34	7.93	6.76	5.55	4.69
14. Index of current economic conditions	76.55	81.32	99.95	109.75	109.48
15. Real wage index	117.53	117.70	116.35	115.78	115.48
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.10	4.40	4.40	4.00	3.80
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent)	17.04	17.70	17.50	17.60	18.00
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>					
18. Air index	46.90	49.93	49.32	45.10	45.68
19. Water index	74.40	75.60	78.30	80.80	82.00*
20. Noise index (per 1000 population)	1.84	1.43	1.63	1.24	1.39*
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	36.30	40.82	40.35	43.09	44.96*

\* Forecasted figure

# Provisional figure

### Appendix 3: 'CUHK' Hong Kong Quality of Life Index

	Quality of Life Index [remark]					2006 compared w/ 2005
	2002 (Base year)	2003	2004	2005	2006	
<b>Social sub-index</b>						
1. Standardized mortality rate (per 1000 standard population)	4.76	4.63	4.63	4.76	5.02#	Better
2. Life expectancy at birth (in year)	4.76	4.75	4.78	4.77	4.82#	Better
3. Public expenditure on health as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.76	4.76	4.76	4.05	3.70	<b>Worse</b>
4. Notification rate of notifiable infectious diseases (per 1000 population)	4.76	6.55	5.83	5.81	5.32	<b>Worse</b>
5. Stress index	4.76	5.30	5.74	6.05	5.98	<b>Worse</b>
6. General life satisfaction index	4.76	4.79	5.03	5.23	5.35	Better
7. Press freedom index	4.76	4.82	4.77	4.83	4.83	Unchanged
8. Press criticism index	4.76	4.94	4.33	3.75	3.68	<b>Worse</b>
9. Government performance index	4.76	4.91	6.29	8.08	8.39	Better
10. Overall crime rate (per 1000 population)	4.76	3.99	4.49	4.68	4.48	<b>Worse</b>
<b>Social sub-index</b>	<b>47.62</b>	<b>49.44</b>	<b>50.65</b>	<b>52.01</b>	<b>51.57</b>	<b>Worse</b>
<b>Economic sub-index</b>						
11. Housing affordability ratio	4.76	4.95	4.12	3.19	3.54	Better
12. Real rental index	4.76	5.21	4.95	4.20	4.00	<b>Worse</b>
13. Unemployment rate	4.76	4.38	5.14	5.92	6.48	Better
14. Index of current economic conditions	4.76	5.06	6.22	6.82	6.81	<b>Worse</b>
15. Real wage index	4.76	4.77	4.71	4.69	4.68	<b>Worse</b>
16. Public expenditure on education as a proportion (in percent) of the GDP	4.76	4.99	4.99	4.53	4.41	<b>Worse</b>
17. Age participation rate for first-degree programmes and postgraduate programmes in local universities (in percent)	4.76	4.94	4.89	4.92	5.03	Better
<b>Economic sub-index</b>	<b>33.32</b>	<b>34.30</b>	<b>35.02</b>	<b>34.27</b>	<b>34.95</b>	<b>Better</b>
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>						
18. Air index	4.76	4.45	4.51	4.94	4.88	<b>Worse</b>
19. Water index	4.76	4.84	5.01	5.16	5.25*	Better
20. Noise index (per 1000 population)	4.76	5.82	5.30	6.31	5.92*	<b>Worse</b>
21. Recycle rate of municipal solid waste	4.76	5.35	5.29	5.65	5.90*	Better
<b>Environmental sub-index</b>	<b>19.04</b>	<b>20.46</b>	<b>20.11</b>	<b>22.06</b>	<b>21.95</b>	<b>Worse</b>
<b>Quality of Life index</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>104.20</b>	<b>105.78</b>	<b>108.34</b>	<b>108.47</b>	<b>Better</b>

[remark] The higher the score, the better is the performance of the indicator.

\* Forecasted figure

# Provisional figure