

KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

(March to May 2006)

2 March 2006	The HKMA and the Bank of China (Hong Kong) Limited jointly announce the launch of the new Renminbi Settlement System.
17 March 2006	HKMA officials speak at a City University of Hong Kong seminar on Basel II compliance to provide an update of Basel II implementation issues to nearly 400 banking and finance professionals, students and faculty members.
17 March 2006	The HKMA announces the composite interest rate at the end of February 2006. The composite rate increased to 2.94% from 2.84% at the end of January.
23 March 2006	In a speech titled "A financial development strategy for Hong Kong" delivered at the Pan-Pearl River Delta Financial Services Forum, Joseph Yam, Chief Executive of the HKMA, proposes a five-pronged financial development strategy for the maintenance of the status of Hong Kong as an international financial centre.
24 March 2006	The monthly survey of residential mortgage lending shows that new mortgage loans drawn down during February increased by 25.4% to HK\$7.5 billion, the first increase in nine months. New loans approved by the surveyed institutions increased by 2.4% to HK\$7.7 billion.
21 April 2006	The HKMA announces the composite interest rate at the end of March 2006. The composite rate increased to 3.00% from 2.94% at the end of February.
21 April 2006	The HKMA publishes its <i>Annual Report</i> for 2005.
25 April 2006	The HKMA's monthly survey of residential mortgage lending indicates that new mortgage loans drawn down during March were little changed at HK\$7.5 billion. New loans approved by the surveyed authorised institutions increased significantly by 63.0% to HK\$12.6 billion.
1 May 2006	Commenting on recent public interest in the investment management of the Exchange Fund, a HKMA spokesperson says that the Exchange Fund has specific statutory objectives and is not an ordinary investment fund. The substantial investment return earned by the Fund over the years has enabled Hong Kong to strengthen its ability to defend the Linked Exchange Rate system and maintain financial stability.
4 May 2006	The results of the latest survey on residential mortgage loans in negative equity shows that the number of these loans decreased by 1,790 cases to about 9,200 cases with an aggregate value of HK\$16 billion during the first quarter of 2006, after having risen for two consecutive quarters. Compared with the peak of about 106,000 cases at the end of June 2003, the number has fallen by 91%.

16 May 2006	The survey on credit card lending for the first quarter of 2006 shows that total card receivables decreased by 9.9% (or HK\$6.7 billion) in the first quarter after rising by 14.6% in the previous quarter.
18 May 2006	The HKMA announces the composite interest rate at the end of April 2006. The composite interest rate increased to 3.10% from 3.00% at the end of March 2006.
25 May 2006	The monthly survey of residential mortgage lending shows that new mortgage loans drawn down during April rose by 18.8% to HK\$8.9 billion and new loans approved by the surveyed authorized institutions decreased by 9.1% to HK\$11.5 billion.

Four press releases relating to the Exchange Fund's data are issued by the HKMA each month. Three of these releases are issued to disseminate monetary data in accordance with the International Monetary Fund's Special Data Dissemination Standard (SDDS). The fourth press release, on the Exchange Fund's Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account, is made in accordance with the HKMA's policy of maintaining a high level of transparency. The order of issue of the press releases each month is as follows:

- SDDS International Reserves (Hong Kong's Latest Foreign Currency Reserve Assets Figures)
- SDDS Analytical Accounts of the Central Bank (Exchange Fund Balance Sheet Data)
- Exchange Fund Abridged Balance Sheet and Currency Board Account
- SDDS Template on International Reserves and Foreign Currency Liquidity

The above press releases on the Exchange Fund data may be found on the HKMA's website at www.info.gov.hk/hkma/eng/press/category/exchange_index.htm

Other latest press releases may also be found at www.info.gov.hk/hkma/eng/press/index.htm