

Parliamentary Reply by DPM Teo Chee Hean on immigration and TFR issues

**TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF SINGAPORE
WRITTEN ANSWER
MONDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2012**

Mr Pritam Singh:

To ask the Prime Minister what scenarios has NPTD deliberated upon to address the prospect of new immigrants unwittingly creating an even larger elderly population for future generations of Singaporeans to look after in light of trends towards marriage and singlehood in developed countries and the data from Census 2010 which show a downward trend in the average number of children born to ever-married female PRs between 2000 and 2010.

Mr Teo Chee Hean (for the Prime Minister):

Singapore's resident¹ Total Fertility Rate (TFR) has been below replacement level for more than 30 years, and has been on a general downward trend. This is a common challenge faced by other East Asian urbanised societies such as Hong Kong, Taiwan, South Korea and Japan. Singapore's low TFR has resulted in an ageing citizen population as life expectancies increase.

Without immigration, and if our current low TFR continues, the citizen population will age and shrink rapidly. The size of the citizen population will decline from 2025 onwards, and the citizen population will age from a median age of 39.6 in 2012 to 46.9 in 2030.

Immigration delays the ageing and decline of our citizen population. The effects of immigration on the share of the citizen population aged 65 and above were examined in NPTD Occasional Paper on Citizen Population Scenarios published in April 2012 and widely reported in the media. The data provided in the Occasional Paper is summarized below.

Table 1: Characteristics of Citizen Population under Various Scenarios

	Scenario					
	2012	Replacem ent TFR 2.1	Number of new SCs granted per year			
			0	15,000	20,000	25,000
Share of citizens aged 65 & above in 2030 (%)	11	24	27	25	24	23
Median age in 2030	39.6	42.8	46.9	45.4	44.9	44.4

(yrs)						
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[Note: Please refer to NPTD Occasional Paper on Citizen Population Scenarios for more information]

While a calibrated pace of immigration can help to delay the decline and ageing of our citizen population, supporting Singaporeans in getting married and having children is our key priority, and it will continue to be so.

¹ The resident population comprises Singapore Citizens and permanent residents.