

Parliamentary Reply by DPM Teo Chee Hean on the number of locals with foreign spouses and granting of PR/ SC to foreign spouses

TWELFTH PARLIAMENT OF SINGAPORE

WRITTEN ANSWER

MONDAY, 14 JANUARY 2013

Ms Tin Pei Ling:

To ask the Prime Minister for each of the years from 2003-2012 (a) what is the number of (i) locals with foreign spouses and (ii) locals with foreign spouses who have children together; (b) what are the demographic and financial profiles of families with foreign spouses; (c) what is the number of foreign spouses of locals whose applications for PR and citizenship were rejected and the reasons for the rejection; and (d) what proportion of the rejections were due to the applicants' suspicious backgrounds.

Mr Teo Chee Hean (for the Prime Minister):

a (i) Based on the Census of Population 2010¹, there were an estimated 114,000 married couples comprising a citizen and a non-citizen. 86% of the non-citizen spouses were Permanent Residents, with the remainder residing on other pass types such as the Long-Term Visit Pass.

a (ii) Amongst these couples, about 66% had at least one child aged below 21 (including children from a previous marriage and adopted children).

b. 68% of the foreign spouses were from Southeast Asia, with 25% from other parts of Asia, and the remainder from other regions. About 59% of such households had a monthly household income that was above the median resident household income (\$5,600).

c. From 2007 to 2011, an average of about 4,300 permanent residence (PR) and 480 Singapore citizenship (SC) applications from foreign spouses sponsored by citizens were rejected each year.

Various factors are considered in deciding the grant of PR/ SC to foreign spouses, including the duration of marriage, length of stay in Singapore and whether the couple has children from the marriage. Citizens who sponsor their foreign spouses for PR/SC will also have to show that they are able to support them financially. Applications are considered holistically and there may be a number of reasons, taken together, for rejecting an application. Foreign spouses who do not qualify for PR status may be granted a Long-Term Visit Pass or Long-Term Visit Pass-Plus for them to remain in Singapore.

¹ Latest available data is from Census 2010; the relevant data is not collected on an annual basis.