

22nd Plenary of Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference held (with photos/video)

The Chief Executive of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), Mrs Carrie Lam, and the Governor of Guangdong Province, Mr Ma Xingrui, leading the delegations of the HKSAR and Guangdong Province respectively, co-chaired the 22nd Plenary of the Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference through video conferencing today (May 14).

Mrs Lam said, "With our common objective of taking forward the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, co-operation between Hong Kong and Guangdong has become ever closer. 2021 marks the opening year of the country's 14th Five-Year Plan. Hong Kong and Guangdong will fully leverage our respective strengths together, achieve a win-win outcome, and seek greater policy innovation and breakthroughs, in order to bring more opportunities for enhancing economic growth and improving the livelihood of the people of both places."

Regarding individual areas of co-operation, the progress made and the directions for future co-operation are set out below:

Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area

The HKSAR Government has been actively taking forward the development of the Greater Bay Area, especially the implementation of the 24 policy measures that have been approved in principle by the Leading Group for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Leading Group) at its two meetings in 2019. With the support of the Central Government and the joint efforts of Hong Kong and Guangdong, measures already rolled out include tax concessions, facilitation of property purchases, support for young entrepreneurs, cross-boundary remittance of science and technology funding, and liberalisation of the legal and construction professional services. These measures have greatly facilitated Hong Kong residents and professionals to reside, work and develop in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area.

The HKSAR Government will continue to actively take forward the implementation of the remaining policy measures approved in principle by the Leading Group, strengthen co-operation with the Guangdong Provincial Government, and pursue policy innovation and breakthroughs in areas for consolidating and enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international financial, transportation and trade centre as well as an international aviation hub, developing an international innovation and technology hub, improving the infrastructure of land boundary control points between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, facilitating Hong Kong enterprises to tap into the Mainland domestic market, as well as supporting Hong Kong young people to work and start up their own business in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area.

Support for Hong Kong enterprises to tap into the Mainland domestic market

With staunch support of the Guangdong Provincial Government, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) will launch a one-stop "GoGBA" platform in June to support Hong Kong enterprises to tap into the Mainland domestic market. The Guangdong Provincial Government has granted permission to the HKTDC to disseminate information on the latest economic and trade policies through the "GoGBA" platform, and to use the platform as one of the windows for information on various business procedures. The platform will also provide Hong Kong enterprises with market and policy information, training and event overviews, business tools, and so forth. The HKTDC will also set up an "HKTDC Greater Bay Area Centre" in its Shenzhen office to provide multi-faceted support for Hong Kong enterprises. In addition, the "Guangdong-Hong Kong Co-operation Week" will be held in December to promote Hong Kong products and services through flagship promotional events in Guangzhou and Shenzhen.

Invest Hong Kong has commenced discussions with its Mainland counterparts on the establishment of the Pan-Greater Bay Area Inward Investment Liaison Group to collaborate with Greater Bay Area cities on global investment promotions in four major areas, including joint propositions of the Greater Bay Area, joint promotion materials, joint events, as well as joint sharing of experiences and best practices, with a view to attracting inward investment into Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area. It is expected that the first Liaison Group meeting will be conducted in the middle of this year.

Finance

Hong Kong and Guangdong have adopted early and pilot implementation in various areas of financial co-operation. Hong Kong-Guangdong financial co-operation is also a significant component of the development of the Greater Bay Area. Hong Kong will continue to leverage the unique advantages of its financial system under "one country, two systems". Together with Guangdong, Hong Kong will seize the enormous opportunities presented by the development of the Greater Bay Area to enhance financial services with a view to elevating the role of the Greater Bay Area in supporting and leading the country's development and opening up.

The HKSAR Government will continue to promote mutual access for financial markets of Hong Kong and Guangdong. Hong Kong has implemented the expansion of the scope of eligible securities under Southbound Trading of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Stock Connect from end-December last year to cover pre-revenue/pre-profit biotechnology companies listed in Hong Kong under the new listing regime. Starting from February 1 this year, qualified companies listed on the STAR Market can also be included in the scope of eligible securities under the Stock Connect. The HKSAR Government and regulators will continue to work with the relevant Mainland authorities step by step to take forward various proposals for expanding the mutual market access programmes and the arrangements for enhancing the programmes. Furthermore, since the

announcement of the decision to implement the two-way wealth management connect scheme in the Greater Bay Area in June 2020, the regulators of the three places have signed a memorandum of understanding on the principles of supervisory co-operation under the scheme. Hong Kong welcomes the promulgation of the draft implementation guidelines by the Guangdong regulators for consultation in early May, and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority will continue to work with the authorities closely with a view to expediting its implementation. On insurance, the HKSAR Government will continue to strive for early establishment of after-sales service centres by the Hong Kong insurance industry in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, with a view to providing Hong Kong, Macao and Mainland residents who are holders of Hong Kong policies with comprehensive support in different areas including enquiries, claims and renewal of policies. We are also striving for early implementation of the "unilateral recognition" policy for Hong Kong motor vehicles entering Guangdong through the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge control point to facilitate movement of people within the Greater Bay Area.

Legal and dispute resolution services

Hong Kong's legal sector has responded enthusiastically towards the Greater Bay Area Legal Professional Examination, promulgated in October last year, with more than 650 applicants. It is hoped that the Greater Bay Area Legal Professional Examination could be held soon. The pilot measure to allow "WOKEs (wholly-owned Hong Kong enterprises) to adopt Hong Kong law" has been implemented in Qianhai, under which WOKEs registered in the Qianhai co-operation zone may agree to use Hong Kong law as the choice of applicable law when they enter into civil and commercial contracts. This demonstrates the feasibility of extending the pilot measure to Shenzhen and then the entire Greater Bay Area. The HKSAR Government will continue to discuss with the relevant Mainland authorities to strive for the application and extension of the measures of "WOKEs to adopt Hong Kong laws and arbitration to be seated in Hong Kong" to Shenzhen and then the whole Greater Bay Area, so as to contribute to the building of a law-based and internationalised business environment in the Greater Bay Area. Meanwhile, we will continue to collaborate with the legal departments of the Guangdong Province and Macao SAR, making use of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Bay Area Legal Departments Joint Conference mechanism to take forward mediation work in the Greater Bay Area and development of the Greater Bay Area mediation platform. The HKSAR Government will continue to keep in close contact with the Guangdong Provincial Government to deepen the exchange and collaboration on aspects of law and dispute resolution, and strive for further liberalisation measures for the development of the Greater Bay Area.

Innovation and technology

On innovation and technology (I&T) development, Guangdong Province has always been Hong Kong's important collaborating partner. Both sides have so far jointly funded more than 140 research projects under the Guangdong-Hong Kong Technology Cooperation Funding Scheme. Meanwhile, Hong Kong's universities participate in constructing 19 Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Joint

Laboratories approved by Guangdong Province. For I&T resources, some major research and development (R&D) infrastructures, R&D equipment and facilities in Guangdong have been open to users from Hong Kong. Moreover, the Ministry of Science and Technology of the Central Government approved under a pilot scheme in last September that three Guangdong branches of Hong Kong's universities could independently submit applications for exporting Mainland human genetic resources to Hong Kong.

The National "14th Five-Year Plan" mentions supporting Hong Kong to develop into an international I&T hub, and enhancing the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong I&T corridor and Hong Kong-Shenzhen Loop I&T pole. According to this strategic planning, the HKSAR Government is pressing ahead with the development of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen I&T Park (HSITP) in the Lok Ma Chau Loop, and taking forward the initiative of "one zone, two parks" in the Shenzhen-Hong Kong I&T Co-operation Zone (Co-operation Zone), which comprises the HSITP and the Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Zone (SZ I&T Zone), together with the Shenzhen Municipal Government. The initiative includes the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation (HKSTPC) leasing and managing certain areas of the SZ I&T Zone as the Hong Kong Science Park branch site, and formulating a joint policy for Hong Kong and Shenzhen so as to attract talent and enterprises from the Mainland and overseas in joining the Co-operation Zone.

Talent is particularly significant to the development of an international I&T hub. The HKSAR Government will roll out the Global STEM Professorship Scheme in the first half of this year to provide strong support for Hong Kong's universities in recruiting internationally renowned I&T scholars and their teams to participate in Hong Kong's STEM teaching and research activities. Moreover, the HKSTPC is also planning to provide comprehensive services and support covering three key functions of resources, training and exchange in the SZ I&T Zone of the Co-operation Zone. This will help Hong Kong's I&T enterprises develop on the Mainland, and also provide services for Mainland enterprises interested in tapping into overseas markets.

Safe Greater Bay Area

As the development of the Greater Bay Area gathers speed, the flow of people, finance, goods, information, and capital in the Greater Bay Area has become more frequent, bringing new challenges to work in maintaining safety and stability. Over the years, law enforcement officers of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao have co-operated seamlessly in various areas, such as interception at source, detection, intelligence and law enforcement to combat crimes on all fronts and smash cross-boundary criminal activities. Looking ahead, the HKSAR Government will, on the basis of good collaboration, continue to actively participate in large-scale Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao joint anti-crime special operations, strengthen counter-terrorism capabilities, improve emergency rescue response, and enhance the professional knowledge of law enforcement personnel. It will also assist in elevating various aspects of professional training, covering talents, skills and exchange of work experience, in the three places, and jointly build a safe

Greater Bay Area of a higher standard and maintain regional social security and stability.

Medicine and healthcare

On medical and health co-operation, the HKSAR Government maintains close communication and liaison with the Guangdong Provincial Government in order to foster mutual benefits, connectivity and in-depth integration of the medical and health industries of the two places, as well as provide more convenience in accessing medical services for Hong Kong people working and living in Guangdong Province and the Greater Bay Area.

On medical and pharmaceutical collaboration, the measure of allowing designated healthcare institutions operating in the Greater Bay Area to use Hong Kong-registered drugs and medical devices used in Hong Kong public hospitals with urgent clinical use has been officially implemented in April. The first drug item and first medical device have already been delivered to the University of Hong Kong-Shenzhen Hospital (HKU-SZH) for clinical use. The Guangdong Provincial Medical Products Administration is also preparing the implementation arrangements to allow traditional proprietary Chinese medicines for external use registered in Hong Kong to be registered and sold in the Greater Bay Area through a streamlined approval process, with a view to launching the arrangements as soon as possible to create favourable conditions for Chinese medicines to "go global". The HKSAR Government also appreciates the Guangdong Provincial Government's support in the HKSAR Government's appointment of the HKU-SZH to provide consultations for the Hospital Authority's patients living in Guangdong Province under the COVID-19 epidemic. Meanwhile, in order to nurture more healthcare professionals, the HKSAR Government will continue to co-operate with Mainland authorities to accelerate the development of the Faculty of Medicine of The Chinese University of Hong Kong (Shenzhen) and the establishment of the Faculty of Medicine of The University of Hong Kong in Shenzhen.

Youth development

The HKSAR Government announced in February this year the list of funded non-governmental organisations under the Youth Development Fund. It is estimated that a capital subsidy will be provided to around 230 Hong Kong youth start-ups (involving more than 800 Hong Kong young people), while entrepreneurial support and incubation services will be rendered to around 4 000 young people. The HKSAR Government will establish the Alliance of Hong Kong Youth Innovative and Entrepreneurial Bases in the Greater Bay Area to serve as a one-stop information, publicity and exchange platform to further support innovation and entrepreneurship of Hong Kong youth in the Greater Bay Area. In addition, the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Hong Kong Youth Internship Scheme launched under the Funding Scheme for Youth Internship in the Mainland has been expanded to cover all Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area. Hong Kong will, having regard to the development of the pandemic, resume the relevant projects when it is safe and practicable to do so, and will continue to enhance and expand the scheme, including providing quality internship opportunities at the headquarters of top-tier leading

innovation and technology enterprises.

The HKSAR Government launched the Greater Bay Area Youth Employment Scheme in January, providing 2 000 jobs with a monthly salary of not less than \$18,000 for university graduates to work in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area. The Guangdong Provincial Government supported the launch of the scheme and announced earlier that it would provide a living allowance of no more than RMB1,000 per month to every Hong Kong young person who takes part in the scheme. Enterprises' response to the scheme has been very enthusiastic. As of April 30, 321 enterprises provided a total of 2 394 job vacancies, with 1 127 general posts and 1 267 innovation and technology posts for eligible graduates to apply. The HKSAR Government will continue to carry out a series of publicity work to reach out to more young people, explore possible support and facilitating measures for participating graduates and encourage more qualified graduates to participate in the scheme.

Education

A number of Hong Kong higher education institutions, including the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology, City University of Hong Kong, The Open University of Hong Kong and the Faculty of Medicine of the Chinese University of Hong Kong are actively taking forward their plans to provide education services in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area. Their Mainland campuses will be established in the coming few years, thereby promoting research and teaching co-operation between the two places. The HKSAR Government will continue to actively promote and foster higher education collaboration in the Greater Bay Area.

As regards vocational and professional education and training, the Hong Kong Vocational Training Council (VTC) and the Shenzhen Polytechnic (SZPT) signed a collaborative framework agreement in December 2020 to pursue further collaboration in areas including offering joint programmes, providing vocational training, internships, and exchange opportunities for students from Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, and research and development. The HKSAR Government will continue to support the VTC and the SZPT in implementing the relevant collaborative initiatives.

The HKSAR Government encourages and supports Hong Kong school sponsoring bodies to establish schools offering Hong Kong curriculum or Hong Kong and international curricula in the Greater Bay Area. The setting up of a through-train primary-cum-secondary school by Hong Kong Pui Kiu College in Longhua, Shenzhen, is in good progress. The organisation expects that the school will start to operate in September this year.

As regards co-operation in special education, the HKSAR Government and the school sponsoring bodies in Hong Kong will explore the direction of strengthening co-operation in special education in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area.

Cross-boundary infrastructure

Guangdong and Hong Kong are now pressing ahead with the "Quota-free scheme for Hong Kong private cars travelling to Guangdong via the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge", and will strive for streamlining the relevant application procedures and lowering the fees, as well as early implementation and announcement of the details of the scheme.

Regarding the redevelopment of Huanggang Port Control Point and the implementation of co-location arrangement thereat, the HKSAR Government moved a government motion at the Legislative Council on March 24, 2021, which was supported by all attending Members. The HKSAR Government will continue to press ahead with the corresponding work in collaboration with the Shenzhen Municipal Government.

Other areas

Apart from the above, both sides have also made steady progress in other areas of co-operation such as equine industry and investment promotion.

Co-operation agreement signing ceremony

Five co-operation agreements were signed after the meeting:

- Memorandum of Understanding on Deepening HKSAR and Guangdong Economic Co-operation to Create Opportunities arising from the 14th Five-Year Plan and "Dual-Circulation" Strategy;
- Memorandum of Understanding on Deepening Investment Promotion Co-operation in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area;
- Co-operation Agreement between Guangdong and Hong Kong on Equine Industry Development;
- Framework Co-operation Agreement on the Joint Promotion of the Development of the Guangzhou-Hong Kong Racing Economic Cluster; and
- Supplementary Memorandum of Understanding on Sports Projects Co-operation.

Resumption of cross-boundary travel of Hong Kong and Guangdong residents in an orderly manner

The pandemic has recently been under control locally in Hong Kong. To strictly prevent importing cases, the HKSAR Government has completely restricted flights from extremely high-risk places from landing in Hong Kong. Having regard to the situation on the Mainland, the HKSAR Government will shortly launch the Come2hk Scheme for non-Hong Kong residents which will exempt them from quarantine requirements upon entering Hong Kong. Mrs Lam wishes to have the support from Guangdong Province to secure the gradual relaxation of quarantine requirements for entering the Mainland in an orderly and restricted manner, so as to respond to the intense desire of Hong Kong and Guangdong residents to resume cross-boundary travel.

The 22nd Plenary

The Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference was established in 1998 and is the closest co-operation platform between the HKSAR and the Mainland. Due to the pandemic, the plenary last year was not held. Instead, both sides signed the 2020 Work Plan of the Framework Agreement on Hong Kong/Guangdong Co-operation in the form of an exchange of letters. The 22nd Plenary held today was co-chaired by the Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, and the Governor of Guangdong Province, Mr Ma Xingrui. Officials of the HKSAR Government attending the meeting included the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr Matthew Cheung Kin-chung; the Financial Secretary, Mr Paul Chan; the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai; the Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development, Mr Edward Yau; the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing; the Secretary for Security, Mr John Lee; the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan; the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan; the Secretary for Development, Mr Michael Wong; the Secretary for the Civil Service, Mr Patrick Nip; the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Caspar Tsui; the Secretary for Financial Services and the Treasury, Mr Christopher Hui; the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit; the Director of the Chief Executive's Office, Mr Chan Kwok-ki; the Under Secretary for Education, Dr Choi Yuk-lin; the Under Secretary for Labour and Welfare, Mr Ho Kai-ming, and other relevant officials.



