

[CE attends meeting of leading group for development of Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and visits China Railway Corporation in Beijing \(with photos/video\)](#)

The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, attended the first plenary meeting of the leading group for the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area as a member at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing today (August 15). The meeting was hosted and convened by the Vice Premier of the State Council, Mr Han Zheng, to discuss and plan for priority areas of work for the next stage of the Bay Area's development. The Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Patrick Nip, and the Director of the Chief Executive's Office, Mr Chan Kwok-ki, sat in on the meeting as working staff.

Mrs Lam expressed her gratitude to the Central Government for setting up the leading group as a top-tier body to advance the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area and strengthen its co-ordination. Noting that Hong Kong's integration into the development of the Bay Area will enrich the implementation of "One Country, Two Systems" and is conducive to maintaining Hong Kong's long-term prosperity and stability, she said the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government will seize the opportunity and collaborate fully in the development of the Bay Area.

She reported at the meeting the latest work progress of Hong Kong on the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area into an international innovation and technology (I&T) hub, including the advancement of I&T development by the HKSAR Government in accordance with the eight-pronged approach set out in the Policy Address delivered last year, establishment of a presence in the two research clusters to be set up at the Hong Kong Science Park by the Chinese Academy of Sciences for its research institutions to enable collaboration with local higher education institutions or research and development (R&D) centres for R&D projects; a co-operation arrangement to be signed between the national Ministry of Science and Technology and the Innovation and Technology Bureau of the HKSAR Government to promote exchanges and collaboration on science and technology; and the establishment of a Bay Area academician alliance in Hong Kong to promote the participation of academicians of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Engineering in the development of the Bay Area.

In the evening, Mrs Lam, accompanied by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, as well as Mr Nip and Mr Chan, visited China Railway Corporation (CR) to meet with the General Manager of CR, Mr Lu Dongfu, and tour its dispatch and command centre. The centre is responsible

for monitoring the operation and dispatch of the major rail lines in the Mainland to ensure their smooth running.

Mrs Lam expressed her gratitude to CR for its staunch support in the construction of and operational arrangements for the Hong Kong Section of the Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link (XRL) over the years. She said that after her meeting with Mr Lu in Beijing in August last year, the two parties immediately established a High-Level Liaison Mechanism to discuss regularly the operational arrangements and financial matters in relation to the Hong Kong Section of the XRL. In the past year, five High-Level Liaison Mechanism meetings have been held and the sixth meeting will be held tomorrow (August 16). The two parties also signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the Arrangements for Preparation of Key Operational Issues for the Hong Kong Section of the XRL in January this year, marking the reaching of consensus in principle on financial and operational matters.

Mrs Lam particularly thanked CR for including Guilin and Kunming, which are popular travel places for Hong Kong people, as destinations for direct long-haul services, as well as improving train frequency, adjusting the train pairs flexibly according to passenger flow, lowering significantly the service fees for selling Mainland journey tickets at counters at West Kowloon Station, and supporting the study on enhancing the Mainland ticketing system to allow Hong Kong people to purchase Mainland journey tickets directly online free of service fees in the future. She invited Mr Lu to visit Hong Kong to attend the commencement ceremony of the Hong Kong Section of the XRL in late September to witness the commissioning of the new cross-boundary infrastructure of Hong Kong.

Mrs Lam will return to Hong Kong tomorrow morning (August 16).



