

CE's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2023 Policy Address" to LegCo (5)

Move Ahead with the Northern Metropolis as the New Engine for Growth

78. The Northern Metropolis is a new engine for Hong Kong's future growth. Upon full development, it will provide about 500 000 new housing units and create 500 000 new jobs. Adopting an "industry-driven and infrastructure-led" approach as its key planning axle, the Northern Metropolis will forge a major hub for Hong Kong to integrate into the overall development of our country.

Northern Metropolis Action Agenda

79. The Government will shortly publish the Action Agenda for the Northern Metropolis. It will integrate deeply with the planning of Shenzhen and other GBA cities. From the west to the east, the Northern Metropolis will be divided into the following four major zones:

(i) high-end professional services and logistics hub—Covering Hung Shui Kiu and the surrounding area, and connecting with the Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Co-operation Zone, the hub will provide financial and professional services, on top of capitalising on the locational advantages of the boundary control points (BCPs) for developing the modern logistics industry;

(ii) I&T zone—Covering San Tin Technopole including the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Park in the Loop, it will create synergy with the Shenzhen Innovation and Technology Zone and serve as a hub for I&T development;

(iii) boundary commerce and industry zone—Occupying the largest stretch of land, this zone enjoys the geographic advantages of the BCPs at Lo Wu, Man Kam To and Heung Yuen Wai. Apart from driving the development of industries such as advanced construction, green environment industries, health care, food technology and modern logistics, this zone will promote cross-boundary business services and entertainment spending, giving full play to its powerful function as a BCP commercial zone; and

(iv) blue and green recreation, tourism and conservation circle—Comprising areas endowed with rich cultural heritage and natural resources, such as Robin's Nest, Sha Tau Kok and Yan Tong Chau, this circle will promote recreation and tourism development.

80. The Northern Metropolis will be steered towards the development of different industries to promote economic and social development. Initiatives include: reserving sites in Hung Shui Kiu, the New Territories North New Town, etc. for the development of post-secondary institutions to build the

Northern Metropolis University Town; reserving sites in Kwu Tung North, Hung Shui Kiu, etc. for government offices buildings to accommodate government departments including those relocating from the Harbour Metropolis; and providing iconic cultural and arts facilities in San Tin Technopole, New Territories North, etc. Keeping in view the demand and supply of international school places, we will reserve sites in the Northern Metropolis for the development of international schools to meet the education needs of non-local families. We will also take forward the establishment of Sam Po Shue Wetland Conservation Park, featuring the integration of development with conservation.

81. We will leverage market forces to expedite the development of the Northern Metropolis. We will extend the "Enhanced Conventional New Town Approach" to all NDAs and improve its operational arrangements, such as applying the land exchange arrangements to designated sites for industries and private community/welfare facilities, and facilitating landowners owning 90% or above of private land within a development site to carry out consolidated development.

82. Having reviewed the plan to build a public columbarium at Sandy Ridge in the North District, the Government will change the use of the two-hectares site for I&T and related purposes given the sufficient supply of public niches in the future.

The Development Plan for Shenzhen Park of Hetao

83. The Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone is the convergence point of the Northern Metropolis and the Guangzhou-Shenzhen innovation and technology corridor. The Central Government promulgated in August the Development Plan for Shenzhen Park of Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone, setting out the development positioning of the Shenzhen Park. The HKSAR Government will render its full support and work with the Shenzhen Municipal Government to foster the synergistic development of the Hong Kong Park and the Shenzhen Park. Innovative measures under exploration are as follows:

(i) providing travel convenience for R&D personnel by, for example, enabling those who have pre-registered to enjoy streamlined access between the two parks, and adopting technology to facilitate faster movement, such as the use of facial recognition technology to achieve contactless clearance;

(ii) facilitating cross-boundary capital flow within the Hetao Co-operation Zone;

(iii) facilitating exchanges on data and samples (including clinical biological samples) collected for research or trials;

(iv) capitalising on Hong Kong's advantages in convening international talents to play leading roles in participating in the work of the Hetao Co-operation Zone; and

(v) taking forward frontier technological research and expediting pilot

production and transformation in support of the development of the Hetao Co-operation Zone. An example is the establishment of a public R&D service platform for biomedicine to dovetail with the development of the Greater Bay Area International Clinical Trial Centre in Shenzhen Park.

84. The spatial planning of the Northern Metropolis, particularly the San Tin Technopole, will align with the development positioning of the Hetao Co-operation Zone. It will also fully integrate with the strategy on enhancing Hong Kong's I&T competitiveness to pave way for the future development of the Hetao Co-operation Zone in a forward-looking manner. Out of the about 600 hectares of development land in the San Tin Technopole, half is for I&T use. We will ensure that policies on cross-boundary supporting infrastructure, land approval, public-private partnership, etc. are in active support of the relevant development to achieve synergy.

Revitalise Tourism

85. Tourism is one of the major driving forces of Hong Kong's economy. The Central Government also fully supports the enhanced collaboration between the Mainland and Hong Kong on tourism. The recently launched "Night Vibes Hong Kong" has boosted the city's vibrancy and vitality, bringing novel experience to our residents and visitors, and showcasing the unique charm of Hong Kong as a metropolis. We will continue our efforts to co-ordinate with the concerned sectors in creating new attractions with characteristics at suitable locations. CSTB will also enhance its efforts in promoting the development of tourism and related industries, such as retail, catering and hotels, including:

(i) formulate the Development Blueprint for Hong Kong's Tourism Industry 2.0. We will consult the trade in order to make enhancements in various aspects to complement tourism development. The Blueprint 2.0 will be published next year;

(ii) develop signature tourism products. The Cultural and Heritage Sites Local Tour Incentive Scheme will be transformed into the Characteristic Local Tourism Incentive Scheme to provide more in-depth itinerary design, training, etc., with a view to encouraging the trade to develop more thematic tours, including national history tours, green ecology tours, marine tours, traditional culture tours, pop culture tours, intangible cultural heritage experiences, night time adventure, etc., to showcase the diversified cultural landscape of Hong Kong;

(iii) enhance cruise tourism development. Through creating demand in source markets, developing cruise tourism products and improving support infrastructure in the vicinity of the Kai Tak Cruise Terminal, we strive to attract more cruise ships to Hong Kong and strengthen Hong Kong's competitiveness as Asia's cruise hub in the long run. An action plan on the development of cruise tourism economy will be announced in the first half of 2024;

(iv) promote smart tourism. An inter-departmental Working Group on Smart Tourism will be set up under CSTB to formulate and implement initiatives to

promote smart tourism, including launching a new round of Information Technology Development Matching Fund Scheme for Travel Agents, adopting technologies to enhance visitors' experience (such as augmented reality), driving tourist attractions to provide multilingual virtual guides, and making use of smart technologies to strengthen management of inbound tour groups; and

(v) establish Sha Tau Kok Cultural Tourism Zone—Starting from early next year, we will gradually open up the Sha Tau Kok Frontier Closed Area (excluding Chung Ying Street). In the initial stage, visitors can apply online for Closed Area Permits to enter Sha Tau Kok for sightseeing. This will promote cultural and eco-tourism of Sha Tau Kok and nearby outlying islands. We will also explore with the Shenzhen Municipal Government the feasibility of developing a cultural tourism zone in Sha Tau Kok on the Hong Kong side and Shatoujiao on the Shenzhen side, including exploring arrangements to facilitate access to the cultural tourism zone by visitors of both sides.

Promote the New Energy Transport Industry

86. The Government will make every effort to promote the use and supply of new energy in sea, land and air transport so as to spearhead green transformation of the relevant trades. We will also explore the development of new energy industrial chains to promote green economy. We will:

(i) develop a green maritime fuel bunkering centre—We will study the feasibility of providing green methanol bunkering for both local and ocean-going vessels, and promulgate next year an action plan for the construction of bunkering facilities and development of supply chains. We will also take forward the preparatory work, including technical studies and installations, on providing liquefied natural gas (LNG) bunkering for ocean-going vessels;

(ii) promote the supply of sustainable aviation fuel (SAF)—With the increasing use of SAF by airlines around the world, the AAHK will formulate an action plan to drive the use of SAF in Hong Kong. The Government will monitor the development trend closely for forward-looking planning;

(iii) support green transformation of public land transport—Between the end of this year and next year, we will continue to test out more new energy vehicles, including electric public light buses, electric heavy goods vehicles, electric coaches, hydrogen double-deck buses and hydrogen street washing vehicles. We will earmark \$50 million to subsidise the trade to purchase wheelchair accessible electric taxis. In the first half of 2024, we will formulate a citywide green transformation roadmap and timetable for public buses and taxis, with a view to achieving zero vehicular emissions by 2050. Besides, we will provide support to realise our goal of introducing about 700 electric buses and about 3 000 electric taxis by end-2027;

(iv) promote the use of electric private cars—The first registration tax concession arrangements for electric vehicles have borne fruit. Over 60% of newly registered private cars in the first half of this year were electric. The growth rate is among the fastest in the world. The Government

strives to expand the network of charging facilities, and aims to increase the number of public and private parking spaces with charging infrastructure to about 200 000 by mid-2027. To expedite the expansion of the private charging network, the Government will, from the end of this year, marketise the free charging services currently provided in government carparks. The Government will also refine the land lease conditions for petrol-filling stations with a view to offering incentives to retrofit electric vehicle charging facilities in the stations, and convert them into green energy refuel stations in the longer run. To this end, the Government will invite tender in the first quarter of next year for the conversion of two vacant petrol-filling station sites to charging stations; and

(v) formulate the Strategy of Hydrogen Development in Hong Kong—Hydrogen fuel can be used in the fields of transport, power generation and energy storage, as well as construction site equipment. In the field of transport, it is particularly relevant to the green transformation of commercial and heavy goods vehicles. We will formulate the Strategy of Hydrogen Development in Hong Kong in the first half of next year, and commence the preparatory work for the necessary legislative amendments pertaining to the production, storage, transportation and application of hydrogen fuel with a view to introducing a bill into the LegCo in 2025.

Promote the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Fisheries Industries

87. In collaboration with the trade, the Environment and Ecology Bureau will publish the Blueprint for the Sustainable Development of Agriculture and Fisheries by the end of this year. Priority measures include: introducing a public-private partnership model for designated sites under the Agricultural Park Phase 2 in Kwu Tung South; setting aside a plot within the Ma On Shan Sai Sha Road Garden for launching a pilot project on modern urban farming; introducing the concept of "harvest-to-sale" and setting up modern hydroponic farms and stalls on suitable rooftops of public markets, with the first project to be set up in the Tin Shui Wai Public Market under construction; exploring the feasibility of allowing farms engaged in commercial agricultural production to offer leisure farming activities as ancillary businesses; offering government sites in Sheung Shui area to livestock farms affected by government development projects with the provision of technical and financial assistance; and providing new deep-sea cages in four new fish culture zones for rental by the fisheries industry in stages.

Streamline the Licensing Regime of Food Businesses

88. The Food and Environmental Hygiene Department will streamline the licensing regime of food businesses from the first quarter next year. The measures include: expanding the scope of the Professional Certification System, which adopts a "licence first, inspection later" approach, to cover general restaurants; introducing a "composite permit" that covers multiple restricted food items to obviate the need for separate applications; setting more lenient licence terms for farms engaged in commercial agricultural production to facilitate the sale of their cooked produce; issuing e-licences for all food business applications and providing applicants with information on the application status online; and enhancing guidelines on licence

application to help reduce start-up costs of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises.

(To be continued.)