

CE's speech in delivering "The Chief Executive's 2024 Policy Address" to LegCo (8)

VII. Take Forward the Northern Metropolis as Growth Engine and Deepen GBA Collaboration

(A) Take Forward Development of the Northern Metropolis

138. The Northern Metropolis is the new engine of Hong Kong's economic development. We will expedite the implementation of economic and housing-related projects in the Northern Metropolis, while maintaining a prudent fiscal position.

139. The Northern Metropolis will gradually enter the maturity phase. In the next five years, some 60,000 housing units involving about 10 new PRH estates will be completed and ready for intake. The first batch of land at the San Tin Technopole will be put to the market, and the new Huanggang Port building with co-location of immigration and customs clearance arrangement will be completed. In the second five-year period, the number of new housing units will increase by about 150,000, with over 10 million square metres of gross floor area available for economic uses. The first joint-user government building in Kwu Tung North will be put to use, and the expanded North District Hospital will be ready for service. As for transport infrastructure, construction of the Northern Link (NOL) Main Line is scheduled for completion in 2034, and the Northern Metropolis Highway (San Tin Section) is set to open in 2036. These developments will significantly boost our economic growth and bolster our R&D and technology industries, while providing a better living environment which will help attract talents and encourage them to settle in Hong Kong for good. It will also enhance the quality of life of the people of Hong Kong, improving their livelihood and well-being.

140. The Government will seek funding for the first stage of San Tin Technopole's infrastructure and begin construction works this year. The target is to deliver about 20 hectares of new I&T sites in phases, beginning in 2026-27, for the Hong Kong Science and Technology Parks Corporation's development and operation. In addition, the second phase of the Yuen Long South NDA will begin in mid-2025. The preliminary development proposal for Ngau Tam Mei will be announced shortly, with land reserved for developing the Northern Metropolis University Town, the third medical school and an integrated teaching hospital. This will be followed by the announcement of the preliminary development proposals for the New Territories North New Town and the Ma Tso Lung area before end this year. The rezoning process for Sandy Ridge in the North District will begin this year, expanding its I&T sites to 10 hectares for use as data centres and related purposes.

141. We are exploring the establishment of a pilot industrial park by

granting some of the logistics sites in the Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen NDA to a company established and led by the Government. The company will, in accordance with the Government's industrial policies, be responsible for formulating the park's development and operation strategies (including considering whether to accept strategic investment), taking up day-to-day management and attracting businesses and investment. We will announce the details in the first quarter of next year. Separately, we will consider flexible disposal approaches for industry land to meet the development needs of individual industries, with a view to driving industry development.

142. To expedite development of the Northern Metropolis, the Government will adopt, on a pilot basis, a large-scale land disposal approach, under which sizable land parcels with commercial value and earmarked for provision of community facilities will be selected and granted to successful bidders for collective development. This approach can speed up development of the land parcels, enabling a more coordinated design for the area. We have identified three land parcels, each of 10 to 20 hectares, as pilot sites.

(B) Promote Development of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen I&T Park in the Loop

143. The Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone, located on both sides of the Shenzhen River, consists of the Shenzhen Park and the Hong Kong Park. Capitalising on the strengths of "One Country, Two Systems" with the geographic advantages of "one river, two banks", the Government will develop the Hong Kong Park in the Loop into a world-class, industry-academia-research platform, an internationally competitive R&D transformation and pilot production base for industries, a hub for pooling global I&T resources, as well as a testing ground for institutional and policy innovation.

144. I have established the Steering Committee on the Hong Kong-Shenzhen I&T Park in the Loop, chaired by myself, to lead the HKSAR Government to formulate the overall strategy, planning and layout for the development of the Hong Kong Park. The Development Outline for the Hong Kong Park of the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone will be published later this year, setting out innovative policies to facilitate the flow of personnel, materials, capital and data between the two parks, making the co-operation zone a crucial source of new quality productive forces for our country.

145. The Hong Kong Park will be developed in two phases from west to east. The Government is boosting both the speed and quantity, doubling the first-phase development's gross floor area to 1 million square metres. Construction of the first three buildings will be completed in phases, from the end of this year. The first batch of tenants, from life and health technology, AI, data science and other pillar industries, will begin to move in next year. The remaining five buildings will be completed in the coming five years.

146. We are also exploring with the Mainland authorities the trial implementation of innovative facilitation measures, including facilitating cross-boundary travel of designated personnel of the two parks, enabling

the cross-boundary movement of materials by using low-altitude, unmanned aerial vehicles, and facilitating cross-boundary fund transfers by Mainland enterprises settling in the Hong Kong Park.

(C) Leverage the Strengths of the GBA to Foster Mutual Capacity Development

147. The GBA is a strategic fulcrum of the new development pattern of our country, a demonstration zone of high-quality development, and a pioneer of Chinese modernisation. And Hong Kong is an active participant, facilitator and beneficiary.

148. To strengthen top-level planning and steer, I have established the Steering Group on Integration into National Development to lead the HKSAR Government and all sectors of the community to take a more proactive role in promoting the integrated development of Hong Kong and the Mainland, particularly the Mainland cities of the GBA, deepening collaboration through various co-operation task forces between the two sides. The Government will continue to promote the GBA development by building a higher level of connectivity, facilitating policy innovations and breakthroughs, pursuing wider harmonisation of rules and mechanisms, and expediting co-ordinated development of I&T and related industries.

Capitalise on the Mainland's Land Resources and Hong Kong's Advantages in Cargo Flow to Develop a Logistics Industry Circle

149. The HKIA Dongguan Logistics Park is an excellent example for the development of an innovative co-operation mechanism. The park, built with Hong Kong investment, combines our strengths in aviation and logistics with the Mainland's advantages in terms of land and manpower resources, leading to a reduction in operating costs and cargo handling time. We will work with the Dongguan Municipal Government to jointly develop the permanent logistics park.

Promote Collaboration in the Airport Cluster of the GBA to Expand Business Networks

150. We will combine the strengths of the HKIA and the Zhuhai Airport, enhancing the Fly-Via-Zhuhai-Hong Kong direct passenger service and promoting the development of the international air-cargo business in collaboration with the Zhuhai Municipality, to achieve mutual benefits.

Enhance the Mechanism on Recognition of Professional Qualifications

151. In collaboration with the Guangdong Province, we have established an evaluation mechanism of post titles for the first batch of Hong Kong engineering professionals. We will continue to do so for other construction professions on a gradual basis. We are also collaborating with the Guangdong Province and Macao to create GBA Standards on the skill level for skilled workers in the construction sector, and will work with the "One Examination, Multiple Certification" arrangement so that those who pass the examinations adopting the GBA Standards can concurrently obtain vocational skill certificates issued by the three places. This will enhance the training

quality of the construction industry in the GBA and nurture talents.

Mobilise Capital for Joint Investment in the GBA

152. The HKIC is proactively exploring with relevant Mainland organisations co-operation opportunities for joint investment in GBA projects that present the potential to realise economic and social benefits, taking into account market developments.

Promote Data Flow for Public Convenience and Business Facilitation

153. The Standard Contract for the Cross-boundary Flow of Personal Information Within the GBA (Mainland, Hong Kong), piloted in the banking, credit referencing and healthcare sectors since last year, has been operating smoothly, streamlining cross-boundary data flow in compliance with relevant rules. We will extend the measure to all sectors, promoting more cross-boundary services to benefit the public and businesses while facilitating data flow throughout the GBA.

Scale up Medical Collaboration in the GBA

154. We will extend the Elderly Health Care Voucher GBA Pilot Scheme to cover nine Mainland cities in the GBA, and expand the sharing of cross-boundary medical records via the eHealth platform. We will work to enable the cross-boundary use of data, samples, drugs and medical devices through the GBA Clinical Trial Collaboration Platform and the Real-World Study and Application Centre in the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone. That will accelerate development of the pharmaceutical industry for medical innovation. We will also foster collaboration with the GBA to promote specialist training that aligns with international standards.

Strengthen Legal Co-operation

155. We will continue to follow up on the implementation of the enhanced arrangement for cross-boundary service of judicial documents, and promote the establishment of a GBA legal information platform and a dedicated platform for GBA lawyers to facilitate professional exchange and training.

Nurture Talents and Create Opportunities for Youth Development

156. We have been encouraging local universities to offer education services in the GBA. To date, four GBA campuses have been set up. In addition, we have set up the GBA Youth Employment Scheme to encourage Hong Kong youths to work in the region. We are exploring the provision of a reciprocal arrangement.

(To be continued.)