

CS meets with Vice-Governor of Guangdong Province to prepare for resumption of quarantine-free travel

The Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr John Lee, today (December 14) led representatives of relevant bureaux and departments of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to meet with Vice-Governor of Guangdong Province Mr Zhang Xin and representatives of relevant departments and municipal governments of the Mainland in Shenzhen to discuss arrangements on the orderly resumption of quarantine-free travel, including co-ordination and co-operation at boundary control points, code conversion of the health code systems and joint efforts in disease prevention and control mechanisms.

Mr Lee thanked the People's Government of Guangdong Province, the General Administration of Customs, the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government and the Zhuhai Municipal People's Government for their support and multifaceted efforts to push forward the arrangement for resumption of quarantine-free travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland, and to ensure a smooth, orderly and safe process of travel resumption. He said that with continuing efforts in guarding against the importation of cases and the resurgence of local infection as well as the goal of "dynamic zero infection", the HKSAR Government is now getting fully prepared for the implementation of orderly resumption of quarantine-free travel, and aiming to be ready at all times.

At the meeting held on November 25 on anti-epidemic work of the Mainland and Hong Kong, hosted by Deputy Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr Huang Liuquan, both sides agreed to set up task forces to specifically study the management and co-operation at boundary control points and joint efforts in disease prevention and control, as well as the interface of the health code systems of Hong Kong and the Mainland.

For the task force on boundary control points, the meeting focused on matters including the quarantine procedures, crowd control, operational flow and contingency arrangements, which are of utmost importance as there will be a gradual increase of the flow of people arising from the resumption of quarantine-free travel with the Mainland. Both sides will continue to discuss the implementation details of different stages with effective and mutual co-operation.

As regards the task force on the alignment of health codes, representatives from Hong Kong reported the progress on the launching of the "Hong Kong Health Code". Since its inception on December 10, over 460 000 users have registered within five days, enabling members of the public to familiarise themselves with its functions earlier with a view to facilitating smoother operation when quarantine-free travel officially resumes. Both sides

also agreed on details concerning code conversion and mutual assistance, and will conduct further system interface tests.

The two sides actively followed up on the matters of focus by the task forces, co-operation on joint efforts in disease prevention and control, and contingency mechanisms, reached consensus on various fronts and allocated work on the detailed arrangements in preparation for resumption of quarantine-free travel. This fully demonstrates the well-established close co-operation between Guangdong and Hong Kong. Both sides agreed that the respective units should maintain close communication and comprehensive collaboration for the implementation of resumption of quarantine-free travel.

The Mainland representatives led by Mr Zhang to attend included representatives from the General Administration of Customs, the People's Government of Guangdong Province, the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government and the Zhuhai Municipal People's Government.

HKSAR representatives led by Mr Lee to attend included the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung; the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan; the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit; the Under Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Clement Woo; and representatives of the Immigration Department, the Customs and Excise Department, the Hong Kong Police Force, the Department of Health, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer and the Transport and Housing Bureau.