

Eleventh meeting of Chief Executive's Council of Advisers on Innovation and Strategic Development held

The Chief Executive's Council of Advisers on Innovation and Strategic Development (the Council) held its 11th meeting today (May 11). Members were briefed on the Central People's Government's (CPG's) support for Hong Kong's positioning in the 14th Five-Year Plan for National Economic and Social Development (the 14th Five-Year Plan) and development of the Airport City in Hong Kong. The Chief Executive, Mrs Carrie Lam, also took the opportunity to update members on improvements to the electoral system of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and Hong Kong's latest COVID-19 situation.

In discussions on the 14th Five-Year Plan, members recognised that Hong Kong's long-term stability and prosperity had to be underpinned by the full and faithful implementation of the "One Country, Two Systems" principle. They warmly welcomed the support given to the HKSAR in the 14th Five-Year Plan which, in addition to continuing to support Hong Kong to consolidate and advance as international financial, transportation and trade centres as well as a centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region, has recognised the city's strengths and competitiveness in developing an international innovation and technology (I&T) hub, an international aviation hub, an East meets West centre for international cultural exchanges, and an intellectual property trading hub. Members were also excited about the reference in the Plan to the development of a high-quality Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA), and inclusion of the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Loop as a major platform of co-operation in the GBA.

In addition, Dr Victor Fung, member of the Council and Chairman of the 2022 Foundation, presented to the Council the recommendations of the second phase study of the GBA, "Creating Hong Kong's New Advantages in the GBA – Identifying new pathways to growth and opportunity" (the GBA Study).

In presenting the findings of the GBA Study to the Council, Dr Fung highlighted seven areas for Hong Kong to expand and extend her competitive advantages, and to develop new roles as potential new sources of growth for the Hong Kong economy. Members spoke in support of the directions and offered advice on how each area could be taken forward with leadership from the Government and active participation of businesses and local institutions.

Members from different backgrounds offered their views on how Hong Kong should seize the opportunities under the 14th Five-Year Plan and development of the GBA for Hong Kong's better integration into the Mainland economy and for our long-term development. In particular, many Members pointed out that biopharmaceutical manufacturing had the potential to drive re-industrialisation in Hong Kong and that the Government should gear up its institutional setup and devise suitable policies in co-operation with the

Mainland counterparts to attract more international pharmaceutical companies to establish foothold in Hong Kong. Noting that the enactment and implementation of the National Security Law in Hong Kong as well as the improvement to the electoral system of the HKSAR have restored stability to the city, members were of the view that Hong Kong should leverage the opportunities arising from the development of the GBA to accelerate its economic recovery. Members emphasised that fighting the pandemic should remain the priority task for the Government at the moment and urged that the Government should step up efforts in encouraging members of the public to get vaccination.

Mrs Lam expressed appreciation for the comprehensiveness of the GBA Study, which has provided insightful suggestions on how Hong Kong can harness her strengths in areas including basic research, capital raising capacity and high degree of internationalisation to contribute to the GBA development, and thanked members for their views and suggestions on how Hong Kong could leverage the opportunities from the 14th Five-Year Plan.

"Since the promulgation of the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area in February 2019, my Government has spared no effort in seeking CPG's support for measures that are conducive to Hong Kong's businesses and professional services accessing the GBA. At the same time, a range of measures has been implemented to facilitate the flow of people, goods, capital and information between the Hong Kong and the Mainland cities in the GBA. But much more needs to be done with a clear pathway in mind. The GBA Study has certainly given us much food for thought," said Mrs Lam.

"I will continue to lead my governing team and engage stakeholders to identify new opportunities for Hong Kong in helping the economy to rebound and improving people's livelihood. In this respect, we realise that further controlling the COVID-19 epidemic to enable the resumption of normal travel between Hong Kong and the Mainland is crucial," Mrs Lam added.

Members were also briefed by Mr Fred Lam, Chief Executive Officer of the Airport Authority, on the development of the Airport City in Hong Kong. They expressed full support for the range of initiatives to transform Hong Kong's well-positioned airport into an Airport City driving Hong Kong's economy, which is in line with CPG's support for Hong Kong to become an international aviation hub and the GBA Study's recommendation that Hong Kong's function as a leading international aviation logistics hub should be enlarged.

The Council is a high-level body to give advice on Hong Kong's strategic positioning in the global and regional contexts and directions of economic development, provide guidance on evidence-based research and studies on related issues, and advise on stakeholder engagement and public participation in the policy formulation and consensus building process.