

Hong Kong-Guangdong Joint Working Group on Environmental Protection and Combating Climate Change meeting held via video conference

The Secretary for the Environment of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, Mr Wong Kam-sing, and the Director-General of the Department of Ecology and Environment of Guangdong Province (GDDEE), Mr Lu Xiulu, today (October 27) co-chaired the second meeting of the Hong Kong-Guangdong Joint Working Group on Environmental Protection and Combating Climate Change (JWGEPPCC) using video conferencing. The meeting reviewed the progress of collaboration between the two sides in 2020, and agreed on a work plan for 2021.

In the past year, Hong Kong and Guangdong worked closely together on various fronts, including improving the air quality in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, protecting the water environment, enhancing co-operation in forestry and marine resources conservation as well as combating climate change (as detailed at Annex 1).

On improving air quality, Hong Kong and Guangdong implemented the PRD Regional Air Quality Management Plan and monitored the progress and effectiveness of various improvement measures to meet emission reduction targets for 2020. To implement the proposal for including ambient volatile organic compounds routine monitoring in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao PRD Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network, having reviewed their respective experience, Hong Kong planned to gradually increase the number of monitoring sites to three while the Guangdong side planned to increase the number of sites to four. The first batch of monitoring sites will start operation by end-2021.

On marine environment management, the trial of the Notification and Alert System on Marine Refuse has been functioning well since its commencement in 2017. So far, it has been activated 22 times with notifications issued in response to heavy rainfall, flooding and other major environmental incidents, which enabled relevant government departments to take timely clean-up actions as required.

The JWGEPPCC also endorsed the work plan for 2021 (as detailed at Annex 2). Hong Kong and Guangdong will launch a three-year project, namely "Characterization of photochemical ozone formation, regional and super-regional transportation in the Greater Bay Area", to identify the causes of ozone formation in the Greater Bay Area and help alleviate regional ozone pollution. The Hong Kong and Guangdong sides will continue to work together on the study on post-2020 regional air pollutant emission reduction targets and concentration levels, with a view to formulating regional air pollutant

emission measures and targets; strengthening collaboration on air quality forecasts to improve the forecasting capability of the PRD region; exploring the establishment of the Greater Bay Area Air Pollutant Light Detection And Ranging monitoring network; and promoting green facilities in airports in Hong Kong and Guangdong and formulating relevant pollution prevention strategies.

Hong Kong and Guangdong will continue to promote and deepen exchanges and co-operation on the mitigation and adaptation of climate change and the relevant scientific research. The two sides will also jointly explore technologies and measures to monitor marine refuse and tackle marine environmental incidents, with a view to further extending co-operation in marine environmental management among neighbouring cities in the region.

As regards ecological conservation, Hong Kong and Guangdong will foster in-depth exchanges and enhance collaboration in the development, management, conservation, staff training, publicity and education of nature reserves including forests and wetlands. The two sides will continue to promote co-operation in the sustainable development of marine resources and conservation of ecosystems.

Officials of the HKSAR Government attending today's meeting included representatives of the Environment Bureau, the Development Bureau, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Buildings Department, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Department of Health, the Drainage Services Department, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, the Environmental Protection Department, the Hong Kong Observatory, the Transport Department and the Water Supplies Department. Officials on the Guangdong side included representatives of the GDDEE, the Guangdong Provincial Development and Reform Commission, the Department of Industry and Information Technology of Guangdong Province, the Department of Science and Technology of Guangdong Province, the Department of Natural Resources of Guangdong Province, the Department of Housing and Urban-Rural Development of Guangdong Province, the Department of Transportation of Guangdong province, the Water Resources Department of Guangdong Province, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of Guangdong Province, the Health Commission of Guangdong Province, the Guangdong Administration for Market Regulation, the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the People's Government of Guangdong Province, the Guangdong Meteorological Service, the Guangdong Maritime Safety Administration, the Guangdong Academy of Sciences, the Environmental Monitoring Center of Guangdong Province, the Ecological and Environmental Bureau of Shenzhen, and the Ecological and Environmental Bureau of Zhuhai. The JWGEPCCC mainly discusses and exchanges views on matters relating to environmental quality, natural resources, ecological environment, sustainable development and climate change of the two sides. Eight special panels have been set up under the JWGEPCCC to take forward the implementation of the co-operation initiatives.