

LCQ13: Development planning for Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

Following is a question by the Hon Carmen Kan and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (February 16):

Question:

The Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Outline Development Plan) covers the co-operation of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in different aspects, and requires the governments of the three places to strengthen their policy co-ordination, regulatory interface and connectivity of systems, with a view to achieving co-ordinated development. Regarding the development planning for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area), will the Government inform this Council:

- (1) whether the current-term Government has, in respect of the contents of the Outline Development Plan, signed any agreements or memorandums of understanding (MoU) on co-operation arrangements with the authorities of Guangdong and Macao; if so, of the contents of such agreements and MoU, including the implementation timetables and performance indicators;
- (2) of the approach adopted by the Commissioner for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (C(GBA)) for working with various policy bureaux in areas such as financial and economic development, commercial and industrial development, people's livelihood as well as innovation and technology; and the collaborative initiatives to be taken forward in the Greater Bay Area on which C(GBA) is holding discussions with various policy bureaux;
- (3) of the areas set out in the Outline Development Plan for which the current-term Government (i) has and (ii) has not completed developing interface and connectivity with the Mainland's relevant regulations and systems so far;
- (4) whether the relevant policy bureaux have set up dedicated teams responsible for reviewing the development of the Greater Bay Area; if so, of the list of officials; if not, whether they will set up the relevant teams and compile a list of such teams to enhance their communication with stakeholders; and
- (5) given that the Mainland authorities have, in respect of the latest development of the Greater Bay Area, rolled out quite a number of special measures concerning Hong Kong (e.g. the Plan for Comprehensive Deepening

Reform and Opening Up of the Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone promulgated in September last year and the "Opinions on Certain Special Measures for Relaxing Control over Market Access adopted by Shenzhen in Building a Pioneering Demonstration Zone for Socialism with Chinese Characteristics" published on January 24 this year), of the channels through which the Government seeks to gain an in-depth understanding of the relevant details; how it will make arrangements for policy bureaux to develop connectivity with the Mainland authorities concerned on the new measures?

Reply:

President,

Our consolidated reply to the various parts of the question raised by the Hon Carmen Kan is as follows:

The objectives of the development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area) are to, through further deepening co-operation amongst Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, promote co-ordinated regional economic development, leverage the complementary advantages of the three places, and develop an international first-class bay area for living, working and travelling. The Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) attaches great importance to the work relating to the development of the Greater Bay Area, and has, according to the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, all along introduced various policy measures in different areas to support Hong Kong residents and professionals who wish to live, work and start their businesses in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area, as well as to support Hong Kong enterprises and industries in which Hong Kong has clear advantages to make good use of the development opportunities of the Greater Bay Area. Such policy measures also help Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area tap into international markets, leveraging Hong Kong's roles in "attracting foreign investment" and "going global".

The Leading Group for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (the Leading Group), which is chaired by the Vice Premier of the State Council, Mr Han Zheng, is a top-level institution of the Central Authorities for taking forward the development of the Greater Bay Area. As a member of the Leading Group, the Chief Executive has all along reflected, at the national level, the aspirations of the residents and enterprises of Hong Kong for the development opportunities of the Greater Bay Area. The vast majority of the 24 policy measures announced after the two meetings of the Leading Group in 2019 have been implemented by now. They include tax concessions; facilitation of property purchase; support for young entrepreneurs; cross-boundary remittance of science and technology funding; liberalisation of legal, insurance and construction-related professional services; the use of Hong Kong-registered drugs and common medical devices in designated Hong Kong-owned healthcare institutions in the Greater Bay Area; and Cross-Boundary Wealth Management Connect. All of these measures can facilitate Hong Kong residents and professional sectors in making good use of

the Greater Bay Area's opportunities and seeking development in the Mainland cities of the Greater Bay Area. On April 22, 2021, the Chief Executive attended the thematic meeting of the Leading Group chaired by Mr Han in Guangzhou, and participated in discussions about the Shenzhen-Hong Kong Innovation and Technology Co-operation Zone and Qianhai at the meeting.

In as early as 2018, the Chief Executive announced the establishment of the high-level Steering Committee for the Development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Steering Committee), which is personally chaired by her and comprises all Secretaries of Departments and Directors of Bureaux as members, to holistically co-ordinate efforts relating to the HKSAR's participation in the development of the Greater Bay Area, including requesting policy bureaux and relevant departments of the HKSAR Government to devise strategic objectives, policy measures and concrete work plans, so as to proactively participate in the development of the Greater Bay Area and the country's high-quality development.

Meanwhile, the HKSAR Government has also been maintaining close liaison with relevant Central Ministries and Commissions, the Guangdong Provincial Government, and the Macao Special Administrative Government, with a view to seeking policy innovation and breakthroughs in different areas, and strengthening connectivity between Hong Kong and other cities of the Greater Bay Area under the unique advantages of "One Country, Two Systems". The HKSAR Government will also proactively take forward the high-quality development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area based on the principles of complementarity and mutual benefits. Hong Kong's relationship with Guangdong Province and Shenzhen Municipality are especially close. On May 14, 2021, the Chief Executive led the HKSAR delegation to convene, through video conferencing, the 22nd Plenary of the Hong Kong-Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference, together with the Guangdong delegation led by the then Governor of Guangdong Province, Mr Ma Xingrui. The Hong Kong-Guangdong Co-operation Joint Conference was established in 1998 and is the closest co-operation platform between the HKSAR and the Mainland. At the conference, both sides held discussions on various co-operation areas, including the development of the Greater Bay Area; support for Hong Kong enterprises to tap into the Mainland domestic market; finance; legal and dispute resolution services; innovation and technology; Safe Greater Bay Area; medicine and healthcare; youth development; education; cross-boundary infrastructure; equine industry; and investment promotion. After the conference, both sides signed three co-operation agreements covering economic and trade areas, investment promotion and sports projects, as well as two agreements on equine industry co-operation.

Moreover, the Central Authorities promulgated the Plan for Comprehensive Deepening Reform and Opening Up of the Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone (Qianhai Plan) on September 6, 2021, which is a key strategic plan to elevate the level of co-operation amongst Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. The Qianhai Plan utilises modern service industries as an entry point to further promote Hong Kong-Guangdong and Hong Kong-Shenzhen co-operation, with a view to enabling Hong Kong to better integrate into the overall development of the country. The Chief Executive

and the Secretary of the Shenzhen Municipal Committee of the Communist Party of China, Mr Wang Weizhong, leading the delegations of the HKSAR and Shenzhen respectively, held the High-level Meeting cum Hong Kong-Shenzhen Co-operation Meeting 2021 in Shenzhen on the same day. At the meeting, both sides discussed various areas of co-operation, including innovation and technology; financial services; professional services; Qianhai development; education co-operation; medical co-operation; youth development; investment promotion; environmental protection; culture; and retirement services. Both sides agreed they would continue to promote high-level co-operation in different fields, and contribute jointly to the development of the Greater Bay Area and the overall development of the country in the spirit of complementarity and mutual benefits. The governments of the HKSAR and Shenzhen have earlier agreed to set up 19 working groups to take forward Hong Kong-Shenzhen co-operation on all fronts.

As clearly stated in the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, Qianhai is one of the major co-operation platforms in the Greater Bay Area. According to the Qianhai Plan, the area of the Qianhai Shenzhen-Hong Kong Modern Service Industry Cooperation Zone will be increased significantly from 14.92 square kilometres to 120.56 square kilometres. It also focuses on the promotion of high-level opening up in Qianhai, the fostering of innovative development of modern service industries, and the acceleration of the building up of a system of modern services that is compatible with Hong Kong and international standards. Hong Kong will capitalise on its own advantages to assist in promoting full liberalisation of trade in services in Qianhai, greater mutual access of financial markets, and a higher level of opening up in legal matters, thereby expanding the room for development for professionals in different sectors and enterprises of Hong Kong.

Separately, to help Hong Kong enterprises tap into the domestic market of the Mainland, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council (HKTDC) launched the GoGBA One-stop Platform and set up the HKTDC Greater Bay Area Centre in Shenzhen in June 2021. InvestHK also signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Deepening Investment Promotion Co-operation in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area with Guangdong Province to take forward co-operation in investment promotion and establish the Pan-Greater Bay Area Inward Investment Liaison Group.

In November 2020, approval was given by the Finance Committee of the Legislative Council for the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau to formally establish the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area Development Office (the Office). The Office is the main unit of the HKSAR Government responsible for liaison with the Mainland authorities and the Macao Special Administrative Region Government on the development of the Greater Bay Area. The Office is also responsible for strengthening internal co-ordination within the HKSAR Government, including providing support for the Steering Committee, as well as fostering exchanges with local and overseas stakeholders, such as chambers of commerce and professional organisations. At the same time, the Office disseminates information about the development of the Greater Bay Area to different sectors of the community more frequently

and comprehensively through strategic publicity and promotion efforts. Relevant channels include maintaining close liaison with business associations, professional bodies and relevant stakeholders; promoting the Greater Bay Area through a dedicated website, social media, and radio and television broadcasts; as well as organising exhibitions. The HKSAR Government will also encourage active participation by different sectors of society in the development of the Greater Bay Area to reap the benefits that the development brings about.

As the development of the Greater Bay Area involves many policy areas, the Office will conduct effective co-ordination and liaison for different policies within and outside the Government. The complexity, areas of work involved, timing of promulgation, and impact of different policies vary substantially. The Office will, according to the progress of these policy measures, continue to strengthen its work proactively in taking forward the development of the Greater Bay Area by publicising and summarising policy measures introduced by Hong Kong and other cities of the Greater Bay Area through the HKSAR Government's dedicated website (bayarea.gov.hk), the official WeChat account (hkcmab), as well as the dedicated platforms of the HKTDC and InvestHK.