

LCQ3: Guangdong-Hong Kong and Shenzhen-Hong Kong collaboration

Following is a question by the Hon Chan Yung and a reply by the Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Erick Tsang Kwok-wai, in the Legislative Council today (January 8):

Question:

At present, Guangdong-Hong Kong and Shenzhen-Hong Kong collaborations are continuously strengthening and deepening, and Hong Kong is also accelerating its integration into the overall development of the country. Guangdong-Hong Kong and Shenzhen-Hong Kong cooperation task forces have even been set up to cover various major areas of cooperation, with the common goal of taking forward exchange and cooperation projects in the direction of complementarity and mutual benefits, and promoting Hong Kong's better integration into the overall development of the country from different aspects. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the cooperation projects which have been taken forward and implemented through Guangdong-Hong Kong and Shenzhen-Hong Kong collaborations so far, and the specific development directions between Guangdong and Hong Kong and between Shenzhen and Hong Kong in the future to promote the high-quality development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA);

(2) whether it has plans to report regularly to this Council on the work progress of Guangdong-Hong Kong collaboration and the GBA development, so as to enable this Council to better follow up on the relevant work; and

(3) as there are views that the Northern Metropolis project is an important new driving force for Hong Kong's development as well as a representative project under the task forces, and that it appears that its development can be even faster and more efficient, how the Government will expedite the development of the Northern Metropolis, and of the project's latest timetable and roadmap?

Reply:

President,

Guangdong has all along been an important partner of Hong Kong in regional co-operation with the Mainland. Guangdong and Hong Kong share an all-round, deep and multi-disciplinary co-operation relationship. Since the establishment of the current-term Government, communication, exchanges and visits at different levels between the two sides have become more frequent. In particular, Hong Kong and Shenzhen are only a river apart. They share the same cultural roots and maintain a close relationship through ongoing exchanges between their people and economies. With the strong support from

the Central Authorities and the concerted efforts of all parties, Guangdong and Hong Kong, as well as Hong Kong and Shenzhen, have worked with one mind and made good use of the co-operation mechanisms to jointly promote a higher level of Hong Kong-Guangdong and Hong Kong-Shenzhen co-operation under the principle of complementarity, and drive the high-quality development of the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (Greater Bay Area). This has not only injected continuous impetus to the growth of Hong Kong and supported Hong Kong's better integration into the overall national development, but also significantly contributed to the development of the Greater Bay Area, and further deepening reform comprehensively and high-level opening-up of the country.

Having consulted relevant bureaux, a consolidated reply in response to the questions raised by the Hon Chan Yung is as follows:

(1) and (2) The Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government attaches great importance to the work on Hong Kong's integration into the overall national development. Shortly upon the establishment of the current-term Government, the Steering Group on Integration into National Development, which was chaired by the Chief Executive and with three Secretaries of Departments as deputies, was set up to take forward and provide steer from the top level on the work on Hong Kong's integration into the overall national development, and dovetailing with key national strategies such as the development of the Greater Bay Area. With the strong support of the Central Authorities, Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao have worked with concerted efforts and achieved fruitful results. So far, the infrastructure of the Greater Bay Area has continued to improve and the cross-boundary movement of people has become more convenient; the development and formation of new quality productive forces have accelerated; innovation and technology resources and international high-end talents have converged. This has, on the one hand, supported different sectors of the HKSAR in capitalising on the opportunities arising from the development of the Greater Bay Area, and at the same time supported Mainland and overseas talents and enterprises in leveraging Hong Kong's important roles for "going global and attracting foreign investment" under the principle of "one country, two systems".

For example, to promote the cross-boundary movement of people, the "Northbound Travel for Hong Kong Vehicles" scheme, the facilitation measures for "southbound and northbound" two-way flow of talent, and schemes for supporting youth innovation, entrepreneurship and employment within the Greater Bay Area have been introduced and have been well-received; whilst the Greater Bay Area Legal Professional Examination, the registration system for architectural and engineering related professionals, and the measures of allowing Hong Kong-invested enterprises to adopt Hong Kong law and to choose Hong Kong as the seat of arbitration have also greatly facilitated the professional services sector of Hong Kong in tapping the Mainland market of the Greater Bay Area.

To promote the flow of goods, the Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) has been developing the "sea-air intermodal cargo-transshipment" mode in collaboration with Dongguan, which has greatly improved the efficiency of

cross-boundary air cargo transshipment; and the AAHK's equity acquisition of Zhuhai Airport according to market principles has also promoted co-operation in and development of the high-end aviation industry between the two places.

There have been fruitful results in the interconnectivity of the financial markets. The steady development of the Cross-boundary Wealth Management Connect Scheme since its launch has created new opportunities for financial institutions in the three places, and benefitted the further opening-up of the financial markets of the Mainland. Besides, the issuance of offshore Renminbi local government bonds by the Shenzhen Municipal Government and the Guangdong Provincial Government, etc. in Hong Kong has further consolidated Hong Kong's position as the world's largest offshore Renminbi business hub.

The Shenzhen-Hong Kong Loop is one of the key co-operation platforms in the Greater Bay Area. In November 2024, the HKSAR Government promulgated the Development Outline for the Hong Kong Park of the Hetao Shenzhen-Hong Kong Science and Technology Innovation Co-operation Zone to lead the high-quality development of the Hong Kong Park. In accordance with the principles of "one country, two systems" and "one zone, two parks", the HKSAR Government will continue to join forces with the Shenzhen Municipal Government in developing the Loop into a world-class key innovation and technology co-operation platform and an important engine for the high-quality development of the Greater Bay Area.

As for the other policy areas, there is also extensive co-operation among the three places. Examples include the special measure of using Hong Kong-registered drugs and medical devices used in Hong Kong public hospitals in the Greater Bay Area, the Elderly Health Care Voucher Greater Bay Area Pilot Scheme, Residential Care Services Scheme in Guangdong, as well as co-operation in the areas of higher education, ecological conservation and emergency response, etc. They are of great significance to the promotion of wider scope of integrated development in the Greater Bay Area.

The Resolution of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China on Further Deepening Reform Comprehensively to Advance Chinese Modernization, adopted by the Third Plenary Session of the 20th Central Committee of the Communist Party of China in July 2024, emphasised the need to enable the Greater Bay Area to better play its role as engine of high-quality development. In his 2024 Policy Address, the Chief Executive has also set out the directions for development of the Greater Bay Area in various policy areas, i.e. building a higher level of connectivity; facilitating policy innovations and breakthroughs; pursuing wider harmonisation of rules and mechanisms; and expediting co-ordinated development of innovation and technology and related industries. Relevant measures for promoting the development of the Greater Bay Area include developing the Hong Kong International Airport Dongguan Logistics Park; promoting collaboration in the airport cluster of the Greater Bay Area; enhancing the mechanism on recognition of construction professional qualifications; mobilising capital for joint investment in the Greater Bay Area; promoting data flow within the Greater Bay Area; strengthening legal co-operation and nurturing talents,

etc. Based on the spirits of pragmatism and mutual benefits, bureaux will continue to strengthen liaison with relevant Central Ministries and Commissions, the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Macao Special Administrative Region Government, jointly seek policy innovations and breakthroughs, and strive to pursue more policy measures which will benefit Hong Kong and contribute to the development of our country and the Greater Bay Area.

Bureaux of the HKSAR Government have all along attached great importance to the views of the Legislative Council (LegCo), and have been regularly reporting to the LegCo and the public progress made by the HKSAR Government in promoting the development of the Greater Bay Area (including co-operation between Guangdong and Hong Kong, and between Hong Kong and Shenzhen) through different channels, including briefings to the relevant panels of the LegCo, responses to questions and motions raised by Members, as well as meetings and exchanges with Members, etc. In future, we will continue to report to the LegCo at appropriate junctures and listen to the valuable views of Members, with a view to promoting together the high-quality development of the Greater Bay Area.

(3) The Northern Metropolis (NM) is Hong Kong's new engine for future growth, promoting Hong Kong-Guangdong high-quality development. The Development Bureau (DEVB) will, in collaboration with other bureaux, continue to expedite the NM development along three directions. Firstly, we will take forward the work in full steam according to the NM Action Agenda promulgated in 2023 as the blueprint. In particular, the DEVB has already completed one of the targets, by promulgating the land use proposals for the remaining four new development areas last year, presenting the overall planning of the NM in full view. Moreover, construction works for the new development areas are in good progress, enabling our steady attainment of the next target of the NM Action Agenda, i.e. to form 40 per cent of the new development land and to complete 40 per cent of the new residential units by 2032.

Secondly, the DEVB will adopt a multi-pronged development approach, proactively leveraging market forces in expediting the NM development. In particular, the DEVB has enhanced the arrangements in end-2023, facilitating the fruition of more in-situ land exchange applications. The DEVB also organised an event in November last year to outline the NM development and the three pilot areas under large-scale land disposal. The event was attended by 85 enterprises from different backgrounds, who signed a memorandum of understanding on participating in the NM development. The DEVB also initiated a three-month market sounding exercise in end-2024, inviting interested enterprises to submit expression of interest for the three pilot areas under large-scale land disposal, with a view to commencing their tendering work progressively from the second half of 2025 to 2026.

Thirdly, the DEVB will continue to maintain close dialogue with the Mainland counterparts on the NM development through the Task Force for Collaboration on the NM Development Strategy led by the Deputy Financial Secretary of the HKSAR Government and the Vice Mayor of the Shenzhen Municipal Government, ensuring mutual collaboration on matters concerning

cross-boundary development.

â€‹ Thank you, President.