

LCQ6: Pursuing positive interaction of airports in Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area

Following is a question by the Hon Gary Zhang and a reply by the Secretary for Transport and Logistics, Mr Lam Sai-hung, in the Legislative Council today (November 6):

Question:

The Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) puts forward consolidating and enhancing Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub, pursuing the development and positive interaction of airports in GBA, and developing a world-class airport cluster in GBA. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) whether it will study constructing certain sections of the Hong Kong Island West-Hung Shui Kiu Rail Link in parallel with the construction of the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Rail Link, so as to facilitate direct passenger access to the MTR Sunny Bay Station when the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Rail Link is commissioned and to connect with Qianhai and Shenzhen Bay as well as the airports of Hong Kong and Shenzhen, thereby creating a Hong Kong-Shenzhen super aviation hub; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(2) as the Government has indicated earlier in its reply to a question raised by a Member of this Council that the implementation of the immigration arrangement of the co-location arrangement at Hong Kong International Airport, which involves legal and implementation issues, has to be carefully considered, whether the co-location arrangement will, according to the findings of the Government's latest study, affect the transfer time of transit passengers and the mode of passenger transport for transit passengers to the Mainland; and

(3) whether it will consider expanding the mode of HKIA Dongguan Logistics Park to other GBA cities, so as to meet the demand of the manufacturing industries in GBA for international air transport; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

Hong Kong is an international aviation hub. This positioning is recognised in the National 14th Five-Year Plan and the Outline Development Plan for the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA). To implement this national strategy and to enhance the long-term competitiveness of Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and Hong Kong's aviation industry, the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) and the

Airport Authority Hong Kong (AAHK) have launched a series of measures, including enhancing the connection between HKIA and the Mainland, to proactively contribute to the development of a world-class airport cluster in the GBA.

On the other hand, the HKSAR Government promulgated the Hong Kong Major Transport Infrastructure Development Blueprint at the end of last year. The Blueprint consolidates all major transport infrastructure currently under planning, design and construction in a forward-looking manner, and holistically outlines and plans for the development of strategic transport infrastructure, including the recommendation to take forward the Hong Kong-Shenzhen Western Rail Link (Hung Shui Kiu-Qianhai) (HSWRL) and Hong Kong Island West-Hung Shui Kiu Rail Link, with a view to meeting the transport and logistics demand up to 2046 and beyond.

My reply to the three parts of the question is as follows:

(1) The Governments of HKSAR and Shenzhen are taking forward the HSWRL project through the Task Force for Hong Kong-Shenzhen Co-operation on Cross-Boundary Railway Infrastructure jointly established by the two governments. Currently, the first stage and second stage studies of the HSWRL project undertaken by the Task Force have been completed, which confirmed the strategic value and necessity of the project. The studies also initially assessed the planning, engineering feasibility, benefits, environmental impact, construction and operation arrangements of the railway scheme. The Governments of HKSAR and Shenzhen are now working together to commence the next stage of preparatory work. The current proposed alignment of the HSWRL should be able to meet the demand arising from the planned developments of the Hung Shui Kiu/Ha Tsuen New Development Area and Qianhai Co-operation Zone in Shenzhen, as well as the need for closer social, economic and personnel exchanges of the two places. In the long run, flexibility could be allowed for the Shenzhen and Hong Kong sections of HSWRL to extend northwards and southwards respectively.

Meanwhile, the HKSAR Government is planning for the transport infrastructure for the Kau Yi Chau Artificial Islands (KYCAI), amongst which the preliminary alignment of Hong Kong Island West-Hung Shui Kiu Rail Link will pass through the KYCAI, Sunny Bay, Tuen Mun East and Hung Shui Kiu for connection with the planned HSWRL. We will study the implementation programme and interchange arrangement at Sunny Bay Station, with a view to maximising the cost benefits of the related railway network.

(2) With regard to the proposal of enhancing the connection between Hong Kong and the Mainland via implementing "co-location arrangement" at HKIA, while there are precedents of the implementation of "co-location arrangement" at the road-based and rail-based boundary control points between the HKSAR and the Mainland, adopting such arrangement at HKIA will involve different legal and implementation issues and thus overall benefits, taking into account its mode of operation as an international aviation hub in connecting different destinations. As such, this has to be carefully considered.

One of the considerations under study is the transit time for passengers

as mentioned by the Member. Currently, transit passengers can proceed to their boarding gates after security check without going through any clearance procedures at HKIA. If "co-location arrangement" is implemented at HKIA, transit passengers travelling to/from the Mainland must complete immigration and customs clearance procedures of the Mainland at HKIA, which may increase the transit time for these passengers depending on the specific arrangements. We will continue our study on the benefits and implications of the proposed implementation of "co-location arrangement" at the airport from various perspectives, including its potential impact on transit time.

Meanwhile, we will work with the AAHK to continue our efforts in putting forward measures to enhance clearance efficiency and connectivity with the Mainland, which includes developing the intermodal transport connection between HKIA and other cities in the GBA. In this regard, we will continue to pursue co-operation with Zhuhai Airport, including enhancing the Fly-Via-Zhuhai-HK service by promoting the service to more cities in the Mainland with which Hong Kong does not have direct flights. By integrating the international aviation network of HKIA and the domestic aviation network of Zhuhai Airport, we can achieve greater synergy and enhance Hong Kong's status as an international aviation hub.

(3) Dongguan is the manufacturing centre in the GBA with large quantities of goods to be exported. With no airport in Dongguan, many goods manufactured in Dongguan and its neighboring regions are being transported to HKIA by land for exporting to the overseas every day. To fully capitalise on HKIA's advantages in air cargo and to meet the demand for international aviation transport from the manufacturing sector in the GBA, the AAHK is taking forward the sea-air intermodal cargo transshipment mode in collaboration with Dongguan. Under this mode, export cargo from the Mainland can go through security screening, palletisation and cargo acceptance in advance in the upstream HKIA Dongguan Logistics Park set up in Dongguan. It will then be transported seamlessly by sea to the cargo pier on the airside of HKIA for direct transshipment to overseas destinations via Hong Kong's international aviation network. International cargo may also be imported into the Mainland vice versa. This mode will provide a more seamless and convenient international air network for the cargo in the GBA, improve the efficiency of cross-border air cargo transshipment, and further leverage Hong Kong's function as an air cargo transshipment hub.

The AAHK expects to complete the first-phase construction of the permanent facility of the HKIA Dongguan Logistics Park Phase 1 by the end of next year in Dongguan and to commence the preliminary study of the development plan for Phase 2 development next year. In light of the fact that Dongguan is the manufacturing centre in the GBA, the AAHK will focus resources to press ahead with the development of the sea-air intermodal cargo transshipment mode and construction of the HKIA Dongguan Logistics Park with Dongguan to maximise the benefits of the sea-air intermodal cargo transshipment mode.

â€‹Thank you, President.