

STH's opening remarks at press briefing on preparation work of Government for commissioning of HZMB

Following is the opening remarks by the Secretary for Transport and Housing, Mr Frank Chan Fan, at a press briefing today (October 19) on preparation work of the Government for the commissioning of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge:

Good afternoon. I am pleased to announce that the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge will commence operation on October 24 at 9am. The opening ceremony will be held one day earlier on October 23 at 9am at the passenger clearance building of the Zhuhai Port.

The Bridge is not just a mega transport infrastructure jointly built by Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao. The Central Authorities also attach great importance to it. With the unfailing efforts of the engineering teams, and as demonstrated by the outcome of the joint trial last month, the Bridge is now ready for commissioning.

The Hong Kong Port of the Bridge is situated in Lantau and next to the Hong Kong International Airport. It will serve as the focal point between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, thereby further consolidating Hong Kong's position as a regional aviation and logistics hub.

The Bridge, apart from being a new land-based boundary crossing between Hong Kong and Guangdong, is also the first land transport link between Hong Kong and Macao.

With the Bridge, the travelling time between Hong Kong and the Western Pearl River Delta region will be shortened significantly, thereby bringing the Western Pearl River Delta region within three hours' drive from Hong Kong. For instance, the travelling time between Zhuhai and Hong Kong International Airport is about four hours at present. It will be shortened to roughly about 45 minutes. Similarly, the travelling time between Zhuhai and Kwai Tsing Container Terminal will be shortened from 3.5 hours to only 75 minutes.

It is envisaged that the collaboration between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in terms of trade, finance, logistics and tourism will be strengthened. Hong Kong will assume a more proactive role in the development of the Greater Bay Area.

Similar to many other infrastructures, the utilisation rate of the Bridge will increase gradually given more time and experience.

In light of the development of the Greater Bay Area, the Bridge will be

instrumental in enhancing the flow of people, goods and capital, as well as technological collaboration within the region. The Government will closely monitor the utilisation rate of the Bridge and actively explore measures in conjunction with our counterparts with a view to optimising the utilisation and benefits of the Bridge.

The mission to construct the Bridge has been accomplished. Our next mission is to make the best use of the topside development at the artificial island and to capitalise on the strategic advantage of the Bridge.

The Policy Address 2018 has proposed to enhance the function of Lantau as a "Double Gateway" connecting Hong Kong to the world and other cities in the Greater Bay Area. We have invited the Airport Authority Hong Kong to study and submit a proposal for the topside development at Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities Island. The Government has previously conducted public consultation on the topside development and has received preliminary ideas and direction.

With a view to building an Aerotropolis as a next step, we will progressively take forward the topside development as well as the airport and aviation-related businesses, so as to create synergy with the operation and development of the Hong Kong International Airport. All these are part and parcel of the Lantau Tomorrow Vision. Thank you.