Update on supplies from Mainland

The Task Force of Supplies from the Mainland led by the Transport and Housing Bureau (THB) has been working closely with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government to explore various means to stabilise the supply of goods from the Mainland to Hong Kong. In addition to land transport arrangements, transportations by water and railway are already in service.

A spokesperson for the THB said that the "Sea Express" water transportation service from the Mainland to Hong Kong has been fully launched and its capacity is on the rise to increase the supplies of fresh food, other daily necessities and manufacturing materials.

Currently, there are three water transportation routes between Hong Kong and Shenzhen, respectively (1) from Shenzhen Yantian International Container Terminals to Hong Kong Kwai Tsing Container Terminals (KTCT); (2) from Shenzhen DaChan Bay Terminals to KTCT; and (3) from Shenzhen Mawan Container Terminal to Hong Kong River Trade Terminal. Together with the water transportation routes from other cities in the Guangdong Province, including the routes from Guangzhou Lianhuashan Port, Zhongshan Huangpu Port and Zhuhai Doumen Port to Hong Kong Tuen Mun Chu Kong Pier, the water transport capacity amounts to tens of thousands tonnes daily.

According to the information from the Mainland authorities, the spokesperson pointed out today (March 18) that around 2 440 twenty-foot equivalent units (TEUs) of supplies were transported to Hong Kong from Shenzhen yesterday (March 17), equivalent to about 20 190 tonnes of goods. Among which around 30 TEUs (about 240 tonnes) were fresh food and around 2 410 TEUs (about 19 950 tonnes) were non-fresh food.

Since the launch of services from the three ports in Shenzhen since February 18 to yesterday, a total of around 33 470 TEUs of supplies have been shipped to Hong Kong, equivalent to about 222 150 tonnes of goods. Among which around 780 TEUs (about 7 110 tonnes) were fresh food and around 32 690 TEUs (about 215 040 tonnes) were non-fresh food.

As for rail cargo, it mainly transports anti-epidemic supplies at the moment. Twenty two TEUs with a total of 48 tonnes of goods were transported to Hong Kong yesterday. Since its launch on March 2 and up to yesterday, more than 950 tonnes of goods including anti-epidemic supplies like COVID-19 rapid antigen test (RAT) kits and protective gowns, etc, were transported to Hong Kong.

To further ensure a stable goods supply to Hong Kong through land transport, the THB is working with the Guangdong Provincial Government and the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government to accelerate the establishment of centralised cargo transfer points for non-fresh food items and other goods at the cargo facilities of Hong Kong International Airport, KTCT and the Tuen Mun River Trade Terminal. Other than that, the THB is planning to have a

trial operation of cargo transfer at a yard situated on Kam Pok Road, San Tin, Yuen Long next week. These are contingency measures in response to the latest epidemic situation in the city so as to reduce the risk of epidemic transmission in both the Mainland and Hong Kong and to ensure a smooth cross-boundary land transport.

On the other hand, to avoid the spillover of the epidemic, the Transport Department has arranged dedicated staff to conduct RATs for cross-boundary goods vehicle drivers at various land boundary control points (BCPs) from February 28 onward. Only drivers with a negative result are allowed to enter the Mainland. In order to further improve the accuracy of the tests, the RATs conducted at the BCPs will gradually be replaced with rapid nucleic acid tests starting from March 20.

The THB will closely monitor the situation and co-operate with the Mainland authorities to facilitate and implement various measures to ensure a stable goods supply to Hong Kong, with a view to complementing the supply through land, water and railway transport, enhancing the capacity and efficiency as well as optimising the flow of cross-boundary supplies.