

**Motion Debate on
Enhancing co-operation between Hong Kong and Macao
moved by the Hon Jasper Tsang Yok-sing
at the Legislative Council meeting
of 25 June 2008**

Progress Report

Purpose

At the meeting of the Legislative Council held on 25 June 2008, the motion on “Enhancing co-operation between Hong Kong and Macao” moved by the Hon Jasper Tsang Yok-sing was passed. This report provides an overview of the progress in the past two months and future plans of the Administration in promoting Hong Kong and Macao cooperation.

Enhancing Hong Kong and Macao Cooperation

2. Hong Kong and Macao have been co-operating in various areas at different levels. In view of the similar background of development of the two places and their relative strengths in different areas, the Hong Kong and Macao Special Administrative Region (SAR) Governments agree that there are solid grounds for the two regions to further enhance co-operation and to achieve synergy in various fields through complementing each other and to cope with competition from the neighbouring areas. To strengthen co-operation between Hong Kong and Macao, the Chief Executives of the two SARs agreed in November 2007 to establish a formal communication mechanism, to be led by the Financial Secretary of Hong Kong and the Secretary for Economy and Finance of Macao. The two sides also established a co-ordinator system in February 2008, under which representatives from the respective bureaux or departments would serve as co-ordinators in 16 co-operation areas. The overall co-ordination work is jointly taken up by the Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau of the Hong Kong SAR and the Office of the Chief Executive of the Macao SAR.

3. To enhance cooperation between the two sides, the Financial Secretary, Mr John Tsang visited Macao again on 30 June to have the first high-level co-operation meeting with the Secretary for Economy and Finance of the Macao SAR, Mr Tam Pak Yuen, to discuss the latest progress and future direction of co-operation between Hong Kong and Macao. At

the meeting, both sides were pleased with the progress in a number of co-operation areas, in particular proposed measures to facilitate cross-boundary people flow.

Immigration Matters

4. We note Members' views on how to enhance cooperation between Hong Kong and Macao on immigration related matters. In fact, the Security Bureau and the Immigration Department of the Hong Kong SAR have engaged in active discussions on measures to further facilitate the flow of residents between the two places with the Identification Department of the Macao SAR, the Office of the Secretary for Security and the Immigration Department of the Macao Police. Experts from the two sides have also reached consensus on the direction of co-operation, and are actively taking forward the related study and discussions. Both sides expect to complete the study and to draw up a co-operation agreement as well as concrete implementation plans on the facilitation measures by the end of 2008.

Tourism and Convention

5. In respect of tourism cooperation, the Tourism Commission, the Hong Kong Tourism Board and the Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong have established an annual tourism exchange mechanism with the Macao Government Tourist Office ("Macao Tourist Office"). The first meeting took place in April 2008 in Macao. The mechanism provided an effective platform for officials and tourism organisations of both sides to exchange views on tourism policy issues of mutual concern, and to deepen collaboration and foster partnership in tourism development and promotion between the two places. The cooperation will cover areas such as the promotion of honest and quality tourism, joint development of multi-destination itineraries etc. The next meeting will be held in Hong Kong early next year.

6. Meanwhile, the Hong Kong Tourism Board has been maintaining close liaison with the Macao Tourist Office to jointly promote tourism of the two places through regular communication channels, participating in international tourism exhibitions and organising study tours for overseas trade.

Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB)

7. The governments of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao reached consensus on a new financing arrangement for the HZMB in August 2008, a major breakthrough in the implementation of this project. Apart from the earlier agreement for each of the three governments to be responsible for the construction of the Boundary Crossing Facilities and link roads within their respective territory, the three sides have further agreed to take up the responsibility for the construction of the Main Bridge as well. To demonstrate its full support for the HZMB and the development of Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao, the Central People's Government has agreed in principle to the construction of the HZMB, and has decided to make contribution to the construction cost of the Main Bridge. Together with the contribution of Guangdong, the Mainland would be contributing a total of RMB ¥7 billion, whilst Hong Kong and Macao will contribute RMB ¥ 6.75 billion and RMB ¥ 1.98 billion respectively. The total contribution of the three sides would be RMB ¥15.73 billion, which is about 42% of the total construction cost of the Main Bridge. With the three governments agreeing to fund the construction of the Main Bridge, the submission of the feasibility study report can be greatly accelerated, and the programme of the HZMB much more certain. The three governments will also have better control over the toll level of the bridge, thus maximizing its economic benefits.

8. Since the feasibility study report has yet to be submitted, the exact amount of contribution may still be subject to changes. Moreover, as the new financing arrangement would involve funding applications in the three territories, the arrangement is also subject to the relevant approval procedures. The next step would be for the three sides to come up with a formal agreement and institutional set-up for the implementation of the project. There is also a need to tender out the design work of the bridge. It is expected that with this new financing arrangement, construction of the Main Bridge will commence in 2010.

Education and Training

9. We have been encouraging educational co-operation and exchanges between Hong Kong and Macao. Invited by Macao's Education and Youth

Affairs Bureau, 10 secondary and primary school principals will attend the “2008 Principals’ Forum” to be held in October this year. A professor from a university in Hong Kong will serve as one of the speakers in the forum. Besides, the Education Bureau will continue to encourage our tertiary education institutions to develop co-operation and exchanges with their counterparts in other countries and regions (including Macao) according to their education vision and developmental needs.

Culture and Sports

10. Under the framework of the “Guangdong/Hong Kong/Macao Sports Co-operation and Exchange Agreement” signed in 2003, the three cities had agreed to continue to jointly organise four sports exchange programmes in this financial year which include: “the 5th GD/HK/MAC International Sporting Goods Fair” which will be staged from 5 to 7 September in Guangzhou, “the 3rd GD/HK/MAC Youth Football Exchange Programme” which will be held from 10 to 12 October in Macao, “the 2nd GD/HK/MAC Youth Basketball Exchange Programme” which will be organised from 20 to 22 February 2009 in Hong Kong, while arrangements of “the 4th Pan-Pearl River Delta Rally” will be confirmed at a later stage. Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao will continue to work closely and to explore the feasibility of developing more new exchange programmes in the field of sports.

Heritage Conservation

11. Hong Kong and Macao have close exchanges on heritage conservation. The Secretary for Development (SDEV), Mrs Carrie Lam, at the invitation of the Macao SAR Government, visited Macao on 23 July 2008 to learn about the city’s heritage conservation work. During the visit, SDEV met with the Macao SAR Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture, Mr Fernando Chui Sai-on and President of the Instituto Cultural, Ms Ho Lai-chun da Luz to exchange views and experiences on conservation and revitalisation of historic buildings. The delegation was briefed on Macao’s UNESCO World Heritage status, the means to protect and revitalise historical buildings in Macao, as well as laws related to heritage protection in the Macao SAR. The delegation also visited various special buildings in the historic centre of Macao which had been inscribed on the prestigious UNESCO World Heritage List since 2005. The visit had provided very useful reference to our heritage conservation work in Hong Kong.

Other Areas

12. Apart from the above areas which were mentioned at the Legislative Council meeting, there are also new developments and plans in the following areas after the meeting.

Environmental Protection

13. On the invitation of the Macao SAR, Hong Kong SAR Government participated in the Macao International Environmental Cooperation Forum & Exhibition (MIECF) in April 2008. The Secretary for the Environment led a Hong Kong delegation to attend the event. Hong Kong Environmental Protection Department (HKEPD) was one of the sponsoring parties of the event, and it set up a booth at the Exhibition to introduce the environmental protection initiatives carried out in Hong Kong. The Acting President of the Executive Committee of the Macao SAR Environment Council also visited HKEPD on 30 July 2008 to exchange views on environmental protection efforts carried out at two places, and explore the future direction of environmental collaboration. Both sides agreed to further discuss and strengthen environmental collaboration between the two places, with a view to enhancing environmental quality for the Greater Pearl River Delta region. In addition, HKEPD, the Meteorological & Geophysics Bureau of Macao and nine other cities in the Pearl River Delta take turns to hold an annual technical exchange on air quality monitoring. HKEPD and the Macao Meteorological & Geophysics Bureau will participate in the event to be held in Zhuhai in late 2008.

Public Health

14. The former Health, Welfare and Food Bureau signed a “Cooperation Agreement on Response Mechanisms for Public Health Emergencies” with the Ministry of Health and the Office of the Secretary for Social Affairs and Culture of Macao in October 2005 to forge collaboration between the three places on issues such as strengthening the notification mechanism to deal with public health incidents and infectious diseases, dissemination of information, coordination and further cooperation and exchanges in training and scientific researches. The three sides subsequently concluded the implementation details in April 2006 to provide clearer guidelines on the details of notification and arrangements of drilling exercises. Subsequent

to the signing of the Cooperation Agreement, the health authorities of the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao organised two joint communication exercises (code-named “Great Wall”) in November 2006 and December 2007 respectively to test the emergency response and notification mechanisms of the three places in handling cross-boundary cases of human infection of avian influenza. In addition, the third “Great Wall” exercise is scheduled for end 2008 with a view to further fine-tuning the cross-boundary and inter-departmental emergency response mechanisms.

15. On prevention and control of infectious diseases, the Department of Health of the Guangdong Province, the Health Bureau of Macao and the Department of Health of Hong Kong have held a Tripartite Meeting of Guangdong, Macao and Hong Kong on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases on a regular basis since 2003. With this Meeting as a platform, scientific research projects have been launched by the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Expert Group on Prevention and Treatment of Infectious Diseases and these include: (1) a telephone influenza survey among residents in Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao to explore the feasibility of using telephone surveys in influenza surveillance as influenza surveillance can provide information on influenza incidence in the community to be used as baseline data for the prevention of influenza; (2) an epidemiological research on dengue fever for analysis on the information of dengue fever cases and epidemiological data can help the prevention and control of the disease. The 8th Tripartite Meeting of Guangdong, Macao and Hong Kong on the Prevention and Control of Infectious Diseases was held in Macao in June 2008.

Civil Service Training

16. The Hong Kong Civil Service Bureau has close contact with the Macao Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau all along. The two sides have maintained exchanges and cooperation in the training and development of civil servants over the past years. For example, a group of seven Macao officials led by a deputy secretary visited the Hong Kong Civil Service Bureau in August 2008 recently to learn about our experience in staff communication, staff complaints handling and posting arrangement. Moreover, the Hong Kong Civil Service Training and Development Institute and the Macao Human Resources Department had shared their e-learning resources for civil servants.

17. On the basis of our previous collaboration, we are looking into ways to deepen our exchange and cooperation in various aspects, focusing on such areas as e-learning resources, management skills training, experience sharing among professional staff as well as the development of training administration system. Details of cooperation modes and items are being worked out.

Conclusion

18. The Administration is dedicated to enhance Hong Kong and Macao cooperation and has achieved significant progress in a number of areas. We have reported the detailed progress of cooperation areas such as clean governance, anti-drug trafficking, anti-money laundering and financial cooperation at the Legislative Council meeting on 25 June 2008. The relevant policy bureaux and departments will continue to cooperate closely with their counterparts in Macao in these areas. We believe that Hong Kong and Macao cooperation will continue to be enhanced on the basis of mutual benefits in the future, which can help the developments of the two places.

19. Members are asked to note the progress report of Hong Kong and Macao cooperation.

**Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau
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