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**Transport and  
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Government Secretariat**

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Legislative Council Secretariat  
Legislative Council Complex  
1 Legislative Council Road  
Central  
Hong Kong  
(Attn: Mr Jason KONG)

Dear Mr KONG,

**Follow-up to the Meeting of  
the Establishment Subcommittee held on 27 May 2015**

Your letter of 28 May to the Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau setting out a list of follow-up items arising from the said meeting has been passed to the Transport and Housing Bureau. I am now authorised to reply as follows.

To cope with the sustained growth of demand for air transport services and to support the continuous economic development in the region, the Civil Aviation Administration of China (CAAC), the Civil Aviation Department (CAD) of Hong Kong and the Civil Aviation Authority of Macao (CAAM) set up the "Pearl River Delta (PRD) Region Air Traffic Management Planning and Implementation Tripartite Working Group (TWG)" in 2004 to formulate measures to rationalise the airspace structure and air traffic management arrangements in the PRD Region, and to optimise the use of airspace and enhance safety.

After more than ten different meetings, the TWG jointly drew up the "PRD Region Air Traffic Management Planning and Implementation Plan (Version 2.0)" (the Plan) in 2007, which has clearly stipulated the short, medium and

long-term optimisation targets and measures to be achieved and implemented before 2020. The TWG also agreed to optimise the use of the PRD airspace resources through joint airspace planning, use of common standards and harmonised flight procedure design, with a view to supporting the continued development of the civil aviation industry in the region. The air traffic management arrangements and measures in the Plan have been formulated with the practical operational needs of the major airports in the region fully taken into account, including the operational needs of the future three runway system (3RS) of Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA). The arrangements and measures in the Plan have been analysed and studied by technical personnel from the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao with the use of advanced evaluation techniques, and have incorporated the advice of air traffic control (ATC) experts of the three sides during their formulation. The Plan is a practical and feasible plan for mutual benefits and will achieve a win-win situation for the three sides.

Since the formulation of the Plan in 2007, over 20 meetings of the three sides at different levels have been held in the Mainland, Hong Kong and Macao, with the most recent one held in May this year. A number of air traffic management enhancement measures in the Plan have been implemented, including the establishment of the peripheral flight paths in the PRD Region, addition of ATC handover points and adjustment of the Zhuhai airspace structure, thereby enhancing the efficiency in flight operations and air traffic management in the region.

In response to Members' concern over "air wall", we must point out again that there is no separation by a "wall" between adjacent airspaces as such. The so-called "air wall", generally refers to the boundary between adjacent airspaces, and should be more accurately be referred to as the "transfer of control point". To ensure that aircraft in adjacent airspaces operate concurrently in a safe and efficient manner, an aircraft must reach a designated altitude and fly over specific geographical locations before an ATC unit may transfer its control of that aircraft to another ATC unit thereby avoiding conflicts between aircraft. This kind of "transfer of control point" arrangement seeks to safeguard flight safety, and is commonly applied by busy airports all over the world, including those in London and New York. This arrangement is irrelevant to runway capacity.

Given the close proximity between Shenzhen Airport and HKIA and the fact that the two airports are separately managed by two ATC units in the Mainland and in Hong Kong, an aircraft departing from HKIA must reach the designated handover altitude of 15 700 feet before it can enter the Mainland's airspace, and an aircraft from the Mainland has to fly at the designated handover altitude of over 19 000 feet when it enters the airspace of Hong Kong. After



discussions between the two sides, the handover altitude has been lowered to 12 800 feet for aircraft entering the Mainland airspace during specified non-peak hours at night (i.e. 1 am to 7 am) since 2005.

Tasks relating to the implementation of the Plan are executed and pursued by the CAD. Through the TWG, the CAD will continue discussion with the CAAC and the CAAM on the implementation of the measures and related technical details in the Plan. The CAD will also maintain close liaison with its Mainland counterparts on work relating to the "transfer of control points". The Transport and Housing Bureau supervises CAD's work at the policy level and the Airport Expansion Project Coordination Office will continue to provide analyses and related input in respect of matters relating to the implementation of the 3RS project.

Yours sincerely,



(Miss Pinky WONG)

for Secretary for Transport and Housing