

For information

**NOTE FOR LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
PANEL ON COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY**

**Progress Report on
Hong Kong Guangdong Cooperation Coordination Unit's Work**

Introduction

When the Establishment Subcommittee considered EC(2001-02)22 on 21 November 2001, Members requested the Administration to provide a progress report on the work of the Hong Kong Guangdong Cooperation Coordination Unit (HKGCCU) to relevant LegCo Panels after one year of operation.

Work Progress of the HKGCCU

2. The work focus of the HKGCCU in the past eleven months was mainly on facilitation of people and cargo flows. The aims are to increase the efficiency of passenger and truck clearance at our boundary control points and to improve the customer service environment. In addition to the on-going improvement programmes of individual departments to facilitate the two-way passenger flow between Hong Kong and Mainland through our air, sea and land control points, HKGCCU has, since its establishment in August 2001, been proactively pursuing with –

- the Immigration Department to examine ways to shorten the waiting time at the Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau Control Point during normal days and festive periods;
- the Immigration Department to explore the possibility of using the Travel Pass Scheme to further facilitate the clearance of foreign businessmen at boundary control points;
- the Kowloon-Canton Railway Corporation to improve the passenger waiting environment at the Lo Wu train platform;
- the Hong Kong Tourism Board to try out the effect of deploying tourism ambassadors at the Lo Wu Control Point and the China

Ferry Terminal to hand out information pamphlets to visitors from the Mainland;

- the Tourism Commission, the Architectural Services Department and the Government Property Agency to improve the customer service environment at and the management of boundary control points;
- the Marine Department to enlarge the departure hall at the China Ferry Terminal and to improve the customer service environment there; and
- the Central Policy Unit on the socio-economic study on 24-hour operation of the boundary control points.

3. On cargo flow, the HKGCCU has been working closely with all the operation departments at various control points. It has also established a rapport with the Port Office of the People's Government of Shenzhen, the Shenzhen General Station of Exit and Entry Frontier Inspection and the Shenzhen Customs. The key achievements in the past eleven months are as follows -

- Conducted expert group discussions with the Mainland side to open up three additional southbound lanes and one additional northbound lane at Lok Ma Chau Control Point for cargo clearance during the extended hours of 2200 to 2400 with effect from 1 December 2001. Feedback from the trade has been favourable;
- Launched pre-arrival immigration clearance for river trade vessels of 700 gross tones or above in May 2002 to facilitate the operation of sea cargo transportation;
- Streamlined the customs procedures for goods vehicles at boundary control points to shorten the processing time of a cross-boundary goods vehicle by one-third, i.e. from 45 to 30 seconds by phases;
- Established ad-hoc communication channels with the Mainland authorities to map out contingency measures to deal with the likely upsurge in cargo flow demands during festival periods; and
- Launched and completed the first survey on the time required for cross-boundary goods vehicles to pass through the Lok Ma

Chau/Huanggang Control Point.

4. The above initiatives, together with efforts from different departments, have resulted in discernible improvements of the throughput of boundary control points. Lo Wu Control Point for instance, has witnessed the total number of passengers cleared within 15 minutes increased from 84% in October 2001 to 87% in April 2002. This was achieved against the background of an upsurge in daily passenger flow from 242,000 to 267,000 in the same period.

5. Similarly, the handling capacity of trucks at the Lok Ma Chau Control Point has also been increased from approximately 90 vehicles per kiosk per hour in October 2001 to approximately 130 vehicles in June 2002. We expect that when further facilitation measures, such as the implementation of Automatic Vehicle Recognition System, are in operation later this year, there will be further enhancement in the handling capacity of the kiosks at all land boundary control points.

6. With concerted efforts from all departments concerned, more comprehensive arrangements were mapped out before and during festive periods when cross-boundary traffic was busy. Anecdotal feedback has been that things have improved. Nonetheless, there is a lot more work to be done. Given the upsurge of Mainland tourists as a result of the abolition of the quota on "Hong Kong Tour" and in the light of our experience in handling the Mainland visitors during the recent Labour Day Holidays, we need to ensure that we can sustain a satisfactory efficiency level in passenger clearance and to continuously improve customer service at various control points. On this, the HKGCCU will carry on working closely with departments concerned.

7. Another main task of the HKGCCU is to help the Chief Secretary for Administration oversee the conduct of the Hong Kong/Guangdong Cooperation Joint Conference (the Joint Conference) and to expedite action on agreements reached. Since inception, the HKGCCU coordinated the fifth meeting of the Joint Conference held on 15 March and has been actively involved in spearheading the co-location of customs and immigration facilities at the Shenzhen Western Corridor and at the Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point. The HKGCCU assumes a leading role on matters relating to boundary cooperation. It maintains an on-going dialogue with the Shenzhen and Guangdong authorities to see how the throughput at Lok Ma Chau/Huanggang Control Point could be further improved. Besides, it has been overseeing the progress of the

various committed projects at Lo Wu and Lok Ma Chau and has been monitoring the effect brought by the extension of operation hours since 1 December 2001.

8. For the purpose of better coordinating the implementation of the agreements reached at the fourth and the fifth Joint Conference meetings, we have set up various expert groups to pursue the initiatives on Tonggu Waterway, exchange of planning information, co-location, the Shenzhen Western Corridor and the passenger ferry service between the Hong Kong International Airport and the Pearl River Delta Region etc.

9. Since January 2002, the HKGCCU has been actively involved in the activities of the Mainland/HKSAR Conference on the Coordination of Major Infrastructure Projects. This high-level Conference is co-chaired by the Chief Secretary for Administration and the Vice Chairman of the State Development Planning Commission (SDPC) to ensure co-ordination of infrastructure development in the Pearl River Delta area and to identify co-operation opportunities. In late February this year, the HKGCCU organised the visit to Hong Kong by the Mainland delegation led by the Vice Chairman of the SDPC. It coordinated the return visit to PRD in late March by the HKSAR delegation led by the Chief Secretary for Administration. In future, the HKGCCU will monitor the progress of work of the two expert groups under the Conference, i.e. the Expert Group on Port and Logistics Development and the Joint Expert Group on Guangzhou-Shenzhen-Hong Kong Express Rail Link. It will soon be liaising with the SDPC to plan for the third meeting of the Conference to be held in the third quarter of this year.

10. Last but not least, the HKGCCU has been proactively reaching out to different sectors of the community to tap their views on Hong Kong/Guangdong cooperation. These include various chambers of commerce, industry and professional associations, as well as the academia and think tanks here in Hong Kong. Effective communication channels have been built up and this will help the Administration shaping the future policy over Hong Kong/Guangdong cooperation. Moreover, the HKGCCU has also established dialogues with some research institutions in PRD to tap their views on this subject.

**Hong Kong Guangdong Cooperation Coordination Unit
July 2002**