

Hong Kong-Guangdong Joint Working Group on Environmental Protection and Combating Climate Change meeting held via video conferencing (with photos)

The Secretary for Environment and Ecology of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) Government, Mr Tse Chin-wan, and the Director-General of the Department of Ecology and Environment of Guangdong Province (GDDEE), Ms Xu Xiaoxia, today (January 7) co-chaired the sixth meeting of the Hong Kong-Guangdong Joint Working Group on Environmental Protection and Combating Climate Change (JWGEPPCC) via video conferencing. The meeting reviewed the progress of collaboration between the two sides in 2024 and agreed on the work plan for 2025.

In the past year, Hong Kong and Guangdong have continued to maintain close co-operation on various fronts, including the improvement of air quality in the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region, protection of the water environment, strengthening forestry and marine resources conservation, as well as combating climate change.

On improving air quality, Hong Kong and Guangdong implemented the PRD Regional Air Quality Management Plan and monitored the progress and effectiveness of various improvement measures. Promoting green transportation helps improve air quality. As of late November 2024, the number of electric vehicles in Hong Kong has exceeded 100 000, a significant increase by approximately seven times when compared with five years ago. To further promote a green transformation of public land transport, the Green Transformation Roadmap of Public Buses and Taxis was announced in Hong Kong in December 2024. In the coming years, Hong Kong and Guangdong will work together on demonstration projects for cross-boundary goods vehicles transitioning into new energy vehicles and on the construction of the GBA Air Quality Health Index.

On marine environment management, the Notification and Alert System on Marine Refuse has been functioning well since its commencement in 2017. To further enhance the effectiveness of the system, the Environmental Protection Department (EPD) has used the latest wind forecast and relevant data together with a new generation of regional hydrodynamic model for a more accurate prediction of areas potentially affected by marine refuse. As of late November 2024, it has been activated 56 times with notifications issued in response to heavy rainfall or other major marine environmental incidents, which enabled relevant government departments to take timely clean-up actions as required.

Hong Kong and Guangdong will continue to promote and deepen exchanges and co-operation on mitigation, adaptation and resilience to climate change

and relevant scientific research.

The two sides will also jointly explore technologies and measures to monitor marine refuse and tackle marine environmental incidents with a view to further extending co-operation in the management of the marine environment with neighbouring cities in the region.

As regards ecological conservation, Hong Kong and Guangdong will continue to foster exchanges and enhance collaboration on forestry, ecological corridors across the boundary and wetland reserve projects, regarding their construction, management, conservation, staff training, publicity and education, etc. The two sides will continue to take forward the sustainable development of marine resources and the conservation of marine environment, including projects of conservation of rare marine animals, ecological and environmental quality monitoring, sustainable development of mariculture and joint enforcement actions between Hong Kong and Guangdong.

In addition, the establishment of the Special Panel for Building "Zero Waste Bay Area" has been endorsed at the meeting. Hong Kong and Guangdong will tackle waste management issues through regional strategies and enhance regional recycling of recyclable materials in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area by leveraging each other's competitive advantages, complementing strengths, and mutually developing a circular economy.

Officials of the HKSAR Government attending today's meeting included representatives of the Environment and Ecology Bureau, the Development Bureau, the Buildings Department, the Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation Department, the Civil Engineering and Development Department, the Drainage Services Department, the Electrical and Mechanical Services Department, the Department of Health, the Transport Department, the EPD, the Hong Kong Observatory and the Water Supplies Department. Officials on the Guangdong side included representatives of the GDDEE, the Hong Kong and Macao Work Office of the CPC Guangdong Provincial Committee, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Affairs of Guangdong Province, the Forestry Administration of Guangdong Province, the Guangdong Ecological and Environmental Monitoring Center and the Ecological and Environmental Bureau of Shenzhen. The JWGEPPCC mainly discusses and exchanges views on matters relating to environmental quality, natural resources, ecological environment, sustainable development and climate change on the two sides. Including the establishment of the new Special Panel for Building "Zero Waste Bay Area", a total of nine special panels have been set up under the JWGEPPCC to take forward the implementation of the co-operation initiatives.

