

Second meeting on Mainland and Hong Kong anti-epidemic work achieves good progress

The second meeting on the anti-epidemic work of the Mainland and Hong Kong was held today (November 25) in Shenzhen. The meeting was hosted by Deputy Director of the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council, Mr Huang Liuquan, and the Chief Secretary for Administration, Mr John Lee, led representatives of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) to attend the meeting. Good progress was made in the meeting on exploring the resumption of quarantine-free travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong in a gradual and orderly manner.

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Mr Huang said at the meeting that, since the first meeting on the anti-epidemic work of the Mainland and Hong Kong on September 26, the HKSAR Government has actively maintained close communication and liaison with relevant authorities of the Central Government, and strengthened the epidemic prevention and control measures in Hong Kong with the dynamic "zero infection" goal and guarding against the importation of cases and the resurgence of local infection, in turn achieving consistency with the epidemic prevention and control strategy of the Central Authorities. He affirmed the work of the HKSAR Government in this regard.

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The experts of the National Health Commission briefed the meeting on their comments and observations during their visit to Hong Kong concluded two days ago, and both sides had a detailed and constructive discussion. The meeting was conducted in a positive manner, and good progress was made in the discussion on the orderly resumption of quarantine-free travel. The Mainland experts affirmed that Hong Kong has strengthened a series of anti-epidemic measures and fostered a favourable environment for resumption of quarantine-free travel. The experts considered that Hong Kong has basically achieved the conditions of resumption of quarantine-free travel.

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Both sides agreed to submit reports on the relevant anti-epidemic measures and the implementation plan of resumption of quarantine-free travel in accordance with relevant procedure. Afterwards, further exchange of views would be conducted if needed, with a shared objective of pressing ahead with the orderly resumption of quarantine-free travel.

Mr Lee expressed gratitude to the Central Government at the meeting for its care and great importance attached to the aspiration of the public for the resumption of quarantine-free travel between the Mainland and Hong Kong, as well as the great importance attached to the request by the Chief Executive about resumption of travel. He thanked the Hong Kong and Macao Affairs Office of the State Council for immediately and positively pressing ahead with the resumption of travel, and thanked the National Health Commission for its active participation not only in providing useful comments

but also in paying a four-day visit to Hong Kong to learn about the anti-epidemic measures of Hong Kong. He also thanked the People's Government of Guangdong Province, the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government and the Zhuhai Municipal People's Government for their support towards the resumption of travel.

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Both sides agreed to set up task forces to study (a) the interface, code conversion and operation issues of the health code systems of Hong Kong and the Mainland; and (b) the management of and cooperation as well as joint prevention and control mechanism at boundary control points, ensuring a smooth and orderly operation with effective risk management.

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The HKSAR Government is now moving on to get fully prepared for the implementation of orderly resumption of quarantine-free travel, including the roll-out of the "Hong Kong Health Code", the plan of workflow at boundary control points, the allocation of manpower, the co-operation mechanism between Hong Kong and the Mainland, as well as the mechanism to identify high risk persons. Mr Lee has requested the Food and Health Bureau to immediately follow up on the comments provided by the Mainland experts and strengthen the management of high-exposure groups. He also requested the Innovation and Technology Bureau to announce implementation plan of the "Hong Kong Health Code" next week to enable citizens to download and familiarise themselves with the mobile app soonest, with a view to facilitating a smooth operation when quarantine-free travel with the Mainland official resumes.

The meeting, hosted by Mr Huang, was attended by Mainland representatives including Deputy Director of the Liaison Office of the Central People's Government in the HKSAR Mr Yin Zonghua, experts from the National Health Commission and representatives from the General Administration of Customs, the National Immigration Administration, the Civil Aviation Administration of China, the People's Government of Guangdong Province, the Shenzhen Municipal People's Government and the Zhuhai Municipal People's Government.¶¶¶

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HKSAR representatives led by Mr Lee to attend included the Secretary for Food and Health, Professor Sophia Chan; the Secretary for Innovation and Technology, Mr Alfred Sit; the Under Secretary for Constitutional and Mainland Affairs, Mr Clement Woo; and representatives of the Department of Health, the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, the Security Bureau, the Transport and Housing Bureau and other related bureaux and departments.