

Major achievements in Hong Kong-Guangdong Environmental and Climate Change Collaboration in 2020

* Implemented various measures under the PRD Regional Air Quality Management Plan and followed up on their progress and results to continuously improve regional air quality. New measures implemented in Hong Kong included increasing the use of natural gas for power generation; taking forward the new round of Air Quality Objectives review; requiring all vessels within Hong Kong waters (irrespective of whether they are sailing or berthing) to use low-sulphur marine fuel with sulphur content not exceeding 0.5 per cent starting January 1, 2019; and tightening the emission standards for newly approved non-road vehicles to Euro VI from January 1, 2019. New measures in Guangdong included guiding cities within the province to prepare a sectoral plan for air quality compliance; imposing specific air pollutants emission limits for steel, petrochemical and cement industries; putting forward measures to combat PRD regional ozone pollution; commencing remedial actions against industrial enterprises with irregularities; promoting the electrification of public transport and the use of motor fuels meeting the National VI standard; and striving to advance the implementation of the National VI emission standards for motor vehicles.

* The Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao PRD Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network showed that the annual concentration levels of sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide and respirable suspended particulates in the region in 2019 decreased by 84 per cent, 29 per cent and 37 per cent respectively when compared with 2006¹.

* Completed a comprehensive review of monitoring ambient VOCs in the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao PRD Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network. Preparation for the related ongoing monitoring commenced.

* Commenced the study on post-2020 regional air pollutant emission reduction targets and concentration levels as planned.

* Proactively took forward the co-operation and exchange regarding air quality forecasting.

¹ Hong Kong and Guangdong set up the PRD Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network in November 2005. The report on monitoring results in 2006 was the first annual report of the regional monitoring network. In September 2014, Hong Kong, Guangdong and Macao enhanced the regional monitoring network and renamed it as Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Pearl River Delta Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network.

* Communicated and exchanged information on the implementation of pollution reduction measures for both sides and the coastal water quality in the Pearl River Estuary in accordance with the jointly prepared Pearl River Estuary Water Quality Management Co-operation Plan.

* Continued to develop sewage treatment facilities and sewage collection systems in Shenzhen and Hong Kong, and to strengthen pollution discharge control to jointly protect the water quality of Deep Bay (Shenzhen Bay) and Mirs Bay.

* Implemented various environmental supervision measures and planning requirements, including expediting construction of sewage treatment works and network to continuously improve sewage collection and treatment capability; strengthening research on pollution mechanism, and vigorously promoting the pollution remediation work at the Dongjiang tributaries; implementing stringent control of construction projects in the Dongjiang River Basin and enhancing environmental supervision and industrial pollution control; taking forward ecological compensation work in the Dongjiang River Basin in Guangdong Province, and strengthening the protection of the water source in the Dongjiang River Basin to further ensure the water quality of Dongjiang.

* Fostered close collaboration and exchange on issues including the establishment, management, publicity and public education of nature conservation areas; techniques on native rural tree seedlings propagation; woodland enhancement work; as well as hill fire monitoring and fighting. Conducted site visits on conservation of rare marine species and research on marine resources; and fostered exchange and co-operation in areas including joint enforcement action against illegal fishing and technical training.

* Continued the trial of the notification and alert system on marine refuse, and communicated timely under the “Hong Kong-Guangdong Notification Mechanism on Marine Refuse” to facilitate prompt clean-up actions.

* Continued to conduct exchange activities between Hong Kong and Guangdong in combating climate change, including participation in courses and meetings organised by professional and academic institutions of both sides on the retro-commissioning technology for existing buildings and energy saving plans; sharing of Guangdong’s experience in promoting its carbon reduction incentives (Tanpuhui) scheme; co-operation in developing short-term climate forecasting technologies, exchange of views on climate forecast and the relationship between climate and influenza; sharing of the research results on sea level rise projection in adjacent waters; and technical exchanges on urban drainage systems and slope safety management.