

Major achievements in Hong Kong-Guangdong Environmental and Climate Change Collaboration in 2021

* 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; announcing the first “Hong Kong Roadmap on Popularisation of Electric Vehicles” and “Clean Air Plan for Hong Kong 2035”; and formulating control proposals with a view to tightening the VOC content limits of regulated architectural paints before 2024, and extending the control to cleaning products. New measures in Guangdong included strengthening the control of non-road mobile machinery emissions; implementation of differentiated management on the VOC emitting industries; enhancement of the differentiated management on the control of industrial furnace; promotion of clean energy conversion in industries such as steel and aluminum; and promotion of low carbon conversion in iron and steel industries.

* 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 2020 decreased by 86 per cent, 43 per cent and 49 per cent respectively when compared with 2006¹. As for carbon monoxide and fine suspended particulates, these two parameters were added to the Network in September 2014 and their annual averages decreased by 16% and 31% respectively between 2015 and 2020.

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

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

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 (PRD) Regional Air Quality Monitoring Network.

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

* Communicated and exchanged information on the implementation of pollution reduction measures for both sides and the 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.

* Explored the opportunities to enhance the performance 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 Guangdong and Hong Kong in relation to climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience and jointly promoted the implementation of various related work, including strategies and research progress of paths to achieve carbon peak and carbon neutrality, renewable energy technologies

and projects, the retro-commissioning technology for existing buildings and technologies and development of new energy vehicles, etc. In addition, Hong Kong announced the “Hong Kong’s Climate Action Plan 2050” in October 2021 which commits to a more aggressive medium-term target to reduce total carbon emissions of Hong Kong by half against the 2005 level before 2035, and sets out in greater detail the four major decarbonisation strategies, namely “net-zero electricity generation”, “energy saving and green buildings”, “green transport” and “waste reduction” leading Hong Kong towards the goal of carbon neutrality before 2050.