

LCQ20: Economic integration among HK, Macao and PRD

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Following is a question by the Hon Lau Kong-wah and a written reply by the Secretary for Constitutional Affairs, Mr Stephen Lam, in the Legislative Council meeting today (April 30):

Question:

Will the Government inform this Council whether it has discussed with the Macao Special Administrative Region Government the promotion of economic integration among Hong Kong, Macao and the Pearl River Delta Region; if so, of the number of such discussions held in the past 12 months and the topics covered; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

Madam President,

Since the return of Macao to the motherland, Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) has maintained close links with Macao Special Administrative Region (MSAR) on various fronts. In the past 12 months, about 10 official contacts have been made between Hong Kong and Macao to discuss matters relating to economic cooperation among Hong Kong, Macao and the Pearl River Delta (PRD) region. The topics covered include cooperation on intellectual property (IP) protection, air services arrangement between Hong Kong and Macao, and customs cooperation between Hong Kong and Macao.

In order to step up cooperation among the IP authorities in the three places and to gain a better understanding of the latest developments in IP protection after China's accession to the World Trade Organization, the Customs and Excise Department and Intellectual Property Department of the HKSAR

Government and the relevant authorities in Guangdong and Macao have held four meetings and seminars in the past 12 months, and jointly established a "Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao Intellectual Property Database" to facilitate the exchange of information.

As regards the air services arrangement, the HKSAR and MSAR Governments had one meeting last year. They have now concluded negotiations, and subject to the signing of the arrangement, commercial flying service companies of the two places could operate scheduled helicopter services between the two places which would facilitate commercial and economic ties within the PRD region.

On customs cooperation, the customs authorities of HKSAR and MSAR have held regular meetings to exchange views on various operational matters under their purview. In the past 12 months, the two sides have held two meetings to discuss a number of topics including the fight against smuggling, pirate CDs, drug trafficking and illegal transshipment of garments.

Moreover, the Hong Kong Tourism Board and the tourism authorities of Guangdong and Macao have, in the past 12 months, jointly implemented various tourism cooperation projects, including the launching of a website that promotes the three destinations and other promotional activities. Furthermore, the HKSAR Government and Guangdong Provincial Government have met to discuss the Hong Kong Airport Authority's (HKAA) proposal to provide ferry services between the Hong Kong International Airport (HKIA) and the main ports of the PRD region. HKAA proposes to provide ferry services between HKIA and Macao as well. The HKSAR Government is now discussing the proposed ferry services with HKAA.

End/Wednesday, April 30, 2003

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