

Question on progress of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB)

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Written Reply of the Highways Department

Question 1: The construction of the HZMB is comprised of the Main Bridge, Hong Kong Link Road (HKLR), Hong Kong Boundary Crossing Facilities (HKBCF) and Tuen Mun-Chak Lap Kok Link (TM-CLKL). Could Highways Department provide information on the progress of these projects?

Answer 1: The Main Bridge of the HZMB, which is located in Mainland waters, is constructed, operated, maintained and managed by the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge Authority established by the three governments. The construction of the Main Bridge commenced in end 2009. The tunnel artificial islands works commenced in 2010, whereas the construction of the bridge section commenced in 2012, and the installation of bridge decks commenced in 2014. Due to the complexity of this enormous project crossing Lingdingyang, a lot of technical challenges have been encountered during the process of design and construction. Nonetheless, the three governments are implementing the works to meet the target completion date of 2016.

The construction of the HKLR commenced in May 2012. Currently, reclamation, tunnel and bridge works are in progress.

The reclamation works of the HKBCF commenced in November 2011. The works include seawall construction and placing sand fill. The reclamation works are required to be completed in phases and the formed land handed over for the superstructure construction. The contract for the construction of the Passenger Clearance Building was awarded in April 2014. The contractor is currently carrying out preliminary works, which include the construction of temporary office and pre-drilling works.

The TM-CLKL comprises the Southern Connection in the form of sea viaducts connecting the HKBCF and the North Lantau Highway and the Northern Connection in the form of sea tunnel connecting the HKBCF and Tuen Mun Area 40. The construction commenced in mid-2013.

Since the HZMB related Hong Kong projects mentioned above (HKLR, HKBCF and TM-CLKL) are major infrastructure projects, from time to time a variety of difficulties and challenges is encountered. Nonetheless, the Highways Department is actively implementing the works of HKLR and HKBCF to meet the target commissioning date 2016 for the Main Bridge. The works of TM-CLKL is carrying out in full swing, with the Southern Connection expected to be substantially completed by end 2016 and the Northern Connection completed by 2018.

Question 2: At present, a number of major infrastructure projects are under construction in Hong Kong. Coupled with the delay of the Express Rail Link project, a large number of construction workers are needed to complete the works. In view of labour shortage in the construction industry, will the HZMB related projects be able to complete and commission by end 2016 according to the current construction progress?

Answer 2: Throughout the construction period of the project, the required level of construction workers will vary from time to time, depending on the types of works. To date, the contractors are generally able to employ the required worker. For particular processes, the contractors have made applications to the relevant authorities for the recruitment of some imported skilled workers to ensure there is adequate manpower to carry out the works. Since more construction contracts will also start, the demand of construction workers will rise in the future. We will closely monitor the progress of the whole project and take necessary appropriate measures to satisfy the demand.

Question 3: In 2012, a fatal industrial accident occurred at a project site of the HZMB. Does Highways Department have a sound mechanism to regularly monitor construction safety, and the impact and progress of the works?

Answer 3: Since the industrial accident in 2012, the contractor has established a safety improvement plan based on risk assessment for the steel sheet piling work of the site to ensure the safety of construction procedures and plant. The plan ensures safety of the design and installation of the working platform, giving the necessary safety instructions and training to workers and establishing a monitoring system for the aforesaid measures. The Highways Department will closely monitor work safety of the site and review with the contractor regularly and continuously the effectiveness of the safety measures mentioned above.

Construction safety is of prime concern of the Highways Department, and we will make sure that it will not be compromised due to time factors. In response to the impact of this industrial accident, the contractor has adopted appropriate measures to ensure the works could continue under a safe condition. These measures include enhancing construction safety and putting in additional plant and labour. The extra costs incurred from these measures are borne by the contractor. We will continue to streamline the construction methods and implement the relevant project in full swing.

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