

**Visit of the Advisory Council on the Environment
to the Environmental Protection Bureau of Guangdong Province
on 31 October 2003**

Purpose of the visit

A delegation of the Council attended a visit to the Environmental Protection Bureau of Guangdong Province (EPBGP)(廣東省環境保護局) on 31 October 2003. The main objective of the visit is to exchange views with officials of EPBGP on cross-boundary environmental issues such as regional air quality improvements, and to visit the Guangzhou Environmental Monitoring Centre (廣州市環境監測中心站) and a mobile unit operated by the Centre for the measurement of vehicle emissions (廣州市汽車尾氣測定站).

Membership of the delegation

2. The membership of the delegation led by Prof. Lam Kin-che, Chairman of the Council, is at Annex A.

Visit programme

3. The programme comprised a meeting with Mr. Li Qin (李清先生), Director of EPBGP (廣東省環境保護局局長), Ms Li Yi Hui (李伊惠女士), Vice Director of EPBGP (廣東省環境保護局副局長) and other Bureau officials, and a visit to the Guangzhou Environmental Monitoring Centre and a mobile unit operated by the Centre for the measurement of vehicle emissions at the roadside. Details of the itinerary are at Annex B.

Brief notes on the visit

Discussion with EPBGP officials

4. The Director of EPBGP briefed the delegation on the key environmental protection work in Guangdong Province, including major environmental issues in Guangdong Province and measures taken to deal with them; planning of economic development and environmental protection, improvement work of Zhujiang (珠江整治工程) and other rivers in the Province; wastewater treatment and related issues; compliance of environmental objectives by trades and industries; the new community monitoring officers system (社會監督員制度); and the enforcement of environmental laws.

5. Members exchanged views with the Director and Vice Director on subjects of common concern including funding of environmental projects and how to ensure that the operator can collect sufficient funding from service charges if the Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) approach was adopted; improvements made in respect of the sulphur content of motor diesel; the control over vehicles entering Hong Kong from the Guangdong Province; the difficulties in controlling vehicles entering the Guangdong Province from other provinces; the implementation of the newly-enacted environmental impact assessment (EIA) law; and dumping of overseas imported wastes in Gui Yu (貴嶼) as reported recently by a publication and the difficulties of the Guangdong authorities in taking enforcement actions.

6. The Chairman had quoted the joint efforts of the Guangdong authorities and the Hong Kong side in conducting the EIA study on the improvement works to Shengzhen River as an example and suggested more cooperation of that nature in future. Some delegation Members also enquired about the possibility of involving green groups and relevant Hong Kong experts in the Mainland consultation process of individual major cross-boundary projects such as the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge or co-opting them to expert groups set up in Guangdong Province for providing advice on major projects including cross-boundary projects. In response, Ms Li Yi Hui explained that cooperation between Guangdong Province and Hong Kong started as early as 1980's during which experts of both sides exchanged views on a number of projects and issues. At present, channels of communication and cooperation between Guangdong Province and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government were well established through the Hong Kong-Guangdong Joint Working Group on Sustainable Development and Environmental Protection. Together with six other special panels, the Special Panel on the Pearl River Delta Air Quality Management and Monitoring (珠江三角洲空氣質素管理及監察專責小組) and the Pearl River Delta Water Quality Protection Special Panel (珠江三角洲水質保護專題小組)

had been set up to work on cross-boundary water quality and regional air quality matters. As regards enhanced cooperation with non-government organizations, she agreed that there should be continued liaison between the EPBGP and the Council and visit by individual Members or groups of Members would be welcome.

7. It is also noted that a mechanism was in place in Guangdong Province to keep the stakeholders and the general public informed of the progress of major infrastructure projects, including uploading of related information onto the Internet, and the public notification system (公示制度). The latter also applied to appointment of officials at the provincial level.

Visit to the Guangzhou Environmental Monitoring Centre

8. The delegation visited the Guangzhou Environmental Monitoring Centre which was set up in 1974 as one of the major and the earliest Environmental Monitoring Centres established in the Mainland. The Centre performs monitoring work on air quality, water quality, waste water, solid waste, noise, radiation, vehicle emissions, etc. In particular, the Centre is equipped with automatic monitoring systems on air quality that operate round the clock. An air pollutant index based on respirable suspended particulates, nitrogen dioxide and sulphur dioxide is reported on a daily basis. The Centre has won various environmental awards at both the national and provincial levels.

Demonstration on the measurement of vehicle emissions by remote sensing equipment

9. The delegation also visited a mobile unit that measured vehicle emissions at the roadside by using remote sensing equipment. The system is still at an experimental stage. Consideration is being made by the authorities to make use of the system to alert the owner of the vehicle concerned if exceedance is recorded.

10. The delegation also took the opportunity to observe the water quality of the Guangzhou reach of Zhujiang (珠江).