

**CONTROLLING OFFICER'S REPLY**

**(Question Serial No. 0662)**

Head: (100) Marine Department  
Subhead (No. & title): (-) Not Specified  
Programme: (1) Infrastructure  
Controlling Officer: Director of Marine (Mr S.F. WONG)  
Director of Bureau: Secretary for Transport and Logistics

Question:

In view of the substantial decline in the container throughput of Hong Kong in recent years, can the Government make reference to the practices adopted by major Mainland and overseas port cities and allocate a modest budget to make the first ever annual forecast for Hong Kong Port throughput at the beginning of this year, or establish annual targets for port throughput, in order to facilitate early co-ordination with the industry for improvement?

Asked by: Hon YIM Kong (LegCo internal reference no.: 16)

Reply:

The maritime and port industry of Hong Kong is easily affected by external environmental factors, such as global economy, trade demand, geopolitical situation and competitions from neighbouring ports. The external environment and container throughput outlook for Hong Kong are widely expected to be challenging. Geopolitical tensions may also increase downside risks. In view of the uncertainty of various factors, it is not possible to make an annual forecast at the beginning of this year or set annual targets for port throughput.

The Transport and Logistics Bureau (TLB) promulgated the Action Plan on Maritime and Port Development Strategy on 20 December 2023, setting out 10 strategies and 32 specific action measures in 4 directions to support the sustainable development needs of Hong Kong's maritime and port industry, including a series of action measures to enhance port competitiveness, with a view to improving the long-term competitiveness of the industry. To enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong Port, TLB will spare no effort in developing it as a green and smart port, as well as holistically attracting cargoes from around the world to make use of Hong Kong Port and collectively tackle the challenges in relation to the zero-carbon emission target of the global maritime industry. TLB, in collaboration with the Environment and Ecology Bureau and other relevant departments, is conducting a feasibility study to provide green-methanol bunkering for local and ocean-going vessels. It is expected that an action plan for Hong Kong's development into a green maritime fuel-bunkering centre will be promulgated this year.

TLB will join hands with the industry on stepping up promotion work in different regions and exploring new business opportunities in 2024, as well as utilising the advantages of Hong Kong's multimodal transport network and taking advantage of the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge to strengthen logistics connections with western Guangdong, expand cargo sources, and open up new opportunities for the maritime and port industry. TLB will continue to leverage on Hong Kong's unique advantages to serve as the "super-connector" within the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area, and signed the Memorandum of Understanding on Greater Bay maritime co-operation with the Guangzhou Port Authority in May 2023 to establish a communication and co-operation mechanism for port and shipping matters between the two parties. TLB will seek to establish co-operation and exchange mechanisms with other ports and cities in the region, and work with the industry to identify areas where we can leverage our complementary strengths to promote bilateral co-operation. TLB has also been actively engaging the industry to expand the international connections of Hong Kong Port and increase the number of origins and destinations of goods handled by Hong Kong Port.

Hong Kong's vibrant maritime ecosystem is also one of the key factors attracting international maritime enterprises to use Hong Kong Port. In view of this, the Government has, over the past few years, introduced a series of tax concession measures for the maritime industry in the areas of ship leasing, marine insurance, ship agency, ship management, shipbroking and so forth, with the aim of expanding the local maritime network. To continue to develop high value-added maritime services, the Government announced in the 2024-25 Budget that it would commence studies on further enhancement of the relevant measures in 2024.

Hong Kong will continue to leverage on its unique advantages and enhance its port competitiveness through various measures to consolidate its position as a regional transshipment hub and international maritime centre.

- End -