

Full participation in typhoon relief work and disaster prevention and mitigation



During the year, Macao was hit by the strongest typhoon of the past half century, causing severe social and economic damage and losses. With the full support of the Central People's Government, the MSAR Government and all sectors in Macao contributed their maximum efforts to the aftermath work, and jointly overcame the hard time. Meanwhile, the Government thoroughly reviewed, and investigated the responses to natural disasters, with a focus on system building and resources investment, to develop a long-term mechanism for disaster prevention and mitigation with short-, medium- and long-term measures, with the aim of laying a more solid foundation for the future development of Macao.

Severe Typhoon Hato hit Macao on 23 August 2017. A high astronomical tide, coupled with storm surges, led to severe flooding in low-lying areas. This resulted in prolonged suspension of electricity and water supplies in certain districts. The typhoon caused 10 deaths and over 200 injuries. Integrating all data collected, the Government estimated Macao's direct and indirect economic losses caused by Typhoon Hato were 9.045 billion patacas and 3.5 billion patacas, respectively, leading to a total loss of 12.545 billion patacas.

In order to more quickly restore order in society and reduce the threats and impacts caused by the typhoon, Chief Executive Chui Sai On – in accordance with the Basic Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region and the Garrison Law of the Macao Special Administrative Region – obtained immediate permission from the Central Government to seek the PLA Garrison in Macao's assistance with disaster relief. With the concern and support of the Central People's Government, the PLA Macao Garrison joined in the relief work from 25 August, acting effectively and efficiently.

This was the first time that the PLA Macao Garrison provided assistance to the Government in relief work since the establishment of the MSAR. After working hard for three consecutive days, the PLA Macao Garrison completed the cleaning up in 11 districts – Rua de Cinco de Outubro, Almirante Sergio Road, Avenida de Horta e Costa, Santo Antonio, Avenida de Kwong Tung, Hou Kong Middle School, from Rua da Ribeira do Patane to Avenida do Almirante Lacerda, from Estrada Marginal da Areia Preta to Rua Nova da Areia Preta, Ilha Verde, and from Avenida Dr. Sun Yat-Sen to New Yaohan. The operation covered an area of about 1.076 million square metres, and streets with a total length of about 120,500 metres; about 680 trees were felled and transported away, and more than 700 truckloads of rubbish were disposed of.

Neighbouring regions also gave Macao a helping hand. Guangdong and Zhuhai actively took part in the relief work, and organised and mobilised relief supplies, greatly reducing Macao's pressure in relief work.

The Central People's Government's concern and support for Macao once again demonstrated that the MSAR is strongly backed by support from the motherland.

Mutual aid and unity are fine traits of Macao society. Macao residents joined hands and helped each other, making great contributions in responding to the disaster and the relief work.

During the relief and clean-up operation, over 8,800 members of the disciplinary forces provided relief efforts, and cleared streets of rubble day and night. Residents and community groups formed volunteer teams to clear up waste after work. Responding to the Government's call for volunteers, over 2,200 civil servants from more than 30 public departments joined the volunteer force.

Emergency relief measures coping with difficulties

The Government implemented a series of emergency relief measures, including the "Special Assistance Plan for Damage Caused by the Passage of Typhoon Hato" supported by the Macao Foundation, and the "Special Support Plan for SMEs affected by Typhoon Hato" and the "Post-disaster Allowance" offered by the Industrial and Commercial Development Fund, to assist local residents and small and medium enterprises with overcoming difficulties.

As at the end of 2017, the total amount of allowances and subsidies paid under the "Special Assistance Plan for Damage Caused by the Passage of Typhoon Hato" was around 494 million patacas. By 30 September – the deadline for applications for allowances and subsidies from the Industrial and Commercial Development Fund, 14,536 applications for "Post-disaster Allowance" and 6,640 applications for "Special Support Plan for SMEs affected by Typhoon Hato" were received, involving a total amount of 2.364 billion patacas.

Improve emergency response by focusing on development of a long-term disaster prevention and mitigation mechanism

Typhoon Hato led to huge losses, stimulating non-stop reflections and reviews. The Government has clearly requested further enhancement of its disaster prevention and mitigation mechanism, by summarising the experiences and lessons learnt, and implementing short-, medium- and long-term disaster prevention and mitigation work.

Chief Executive Chui Sai On issued an Executive Order on 27 August to establish the Commission for Reviewing and Monitoring the Improvements to the Response Mechanism for Major Disasters, to review the current crisis management mechanisms – including weather forecasting, coordination of civil protection work, coordination of information dissemination, and status of related infrastructure; develop overall planning to enhance the synergy for future crisis management, especially on unified planning, operations and information dissemination, to strengthen the ability to respond to emergencies, protect residents’ lives and property, and maintain society’s stability.

The Commission is chaired by the Chief Executive, with members including the five Secretaries, the Commissioner-General of the Unitary Police Service and the Director-General of the Macao Customs. Relevant experts, scholars and community members may be invited to attend the commission meetings when needed. The Commission will also form various task forces and invite engagement of professionals, experts, scholars and community members.

On 6 September, Chief Executive Chui Sai On led the five Secretaries to hold the first press conference after the establishment of the Commission. The press conference introduced ways the Government will prepare for and respond to future disasters, including immediate commencement of work to raise all seawalls by the coast, and the follow-up with Guangdong Province on the construction of sluices at the Inner Harbour; increase the proportion of locally generated electricity by up to 50 percent; attain the ability to maintain water supplies for at least 12 hours in times of emergencies; an invitation to experts from mainland China to assist in reviewing and enhancing the disaster prevention mechanism; and establishment of a department provisionally named the Civil Protection and Emergency Coordination Bureau.

On 11 September, Chief Executive Chui Sai On led a government delegation to Guangzhou, to attend a meeting with the Governor of Guangdong province, Mr Ma Xingrui, to discuss the plan for constructing sluices in Macao. Relevant departments of Macao and Guangdong will enhance communications and continue with the coordination work, to commence an in-depth analysis of the sluice construction project, within the current cooperation framework between Guangdong and Macao.

At the end of September and November, the Government invited the expert group of the National Commission for Disaster Reduction to Macao, to conclude and evaluate the responses to Typhoon Hato and study the enhancement of the emergency management mechanism. The experts advised the Government on how to enhance responses to and prevention of disasters.

In the “Work Report of the China National Commission for Disaster Reduction’s Expert Group on Assessing Typhoon Hato Damage in Macao”, the experts gave detailed, specific recommendations on the short-, medium- and long-term disaster prevention and mitigation plans formulated by the Government. Major recommendations include enhancing mechanisms for disaster prevention; mitigation and relief work, and emergency responses; strengthening fundamental infrastructure for operations linked to saving lives and to disaster prevention and mitigation; optimising the coordination mechanism between Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao; improving the ability to respond to disasters, catastrophes and their risks; improving the mechanism and the legal system for disaster prevention and mitigation, and management of a public emergency; comprehensively developing a safety culture and quality construction; and focusing on important initiatives.

Finding ways to improve the ability to withstand disasters has become a critical issue to be solved by the Government and various sectors of society. To standardise and normalise disaster prevention and mitigation work, Chief Executive Chui Sai On put forward “Optimise the emergency

response mechanism and enhance public safety” in the Policy Address for the Fiscal Year 2018, to prioritise people’s lives, properties and public safety, enhance disaster prevention and mitigation capability, propose short-, medium- and long-term measures for disaster prevention and mitigation, and announce the commencement of formulation of a ten-year plan for disaster prevention and mitigation (2019-2028) during 2018.

According to the Policy Address, short-term measures include: commence formulation of emergency response action plans in all departments; establish a department focused on civil protection and emergency response coordination, including integrated civil protection drills, emergency response actions by the entire community and protection centres; perfect the laws and regulations on risk management and emergency responses, focusing on the revision of the by-laws and standards for meteorological warnings; and improve flood prevention and drainage infrastructure at the Inner Harbour, to improve the emergency response abilities of the facilities for water and electricity supplies and communications.

Medium-to-long-term measures include: enhance safe operating capacity of the city by prioritising infrastructure development in new urban planning, including the planning of underground pipeline networks and wind-resistant designs for buildings; make use of big data to establish a crisis information management system to foster disaster information sharing and establish a unified information dissemination platform; and establish a professional and efficient emergency rescue team, and improve the professional training of meteorological staff.

Always upholding the principle of serving the public, the Government is implementing disaster prevention and mitigation work in an orderly manner, amending the Civil Protection Law, and formulating a 10-year plan for disaster prevention and mitigation (2019-2028). Major tasks have commenced, including the establishment of a new command system for the management of public emergencies. The Government will also strive to initiate the establishment of an insurance system to cover losses from major disasters, an overall emergency response plan, construction of fundamental major infrastructure, and promotion of safety awareness. The Government will continue dedicating its utmost efforts to overall disaster prevention and enhancing mitigation capability; prioritising people’s lives, properties and public safety; and investing more resources to facilitate development of a long-term disaster prevention and mitigation mechanism with short-, medium- and long-term measures.



PLA Macao Garrison joins hand with the MSAR Government and Macao people in disaster relief

MSAR Adopts Top-down Design to Enhance Coordination Ability

In 2017, in designing and executing its plans for the MSAR, the Government remained steadfast in aligning with the country’s overall development strategy and aiming for Macao’s ultimate prosperity and stability. The Government gradually implemented various measures under Macao’s first Five-Year Development Plan, speeded up economic development, constantly improved the people’s livelihoods and integrated the MSAR into the country’s overall development. Consolidated analyses by the Government and third parties revealed that the effective implementation of plans was over 80 percent in 2016.